

Rebuilding a Social Contract: The Role of Media and Academia in shaping a new narrative in Pakistan

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Abstract

The paper aims to provide an insight into the role of media and academia in shaping a new narrative in Pakistan (by strengthening the national cohesion, economic and social progress), with reference to the fundamental laws as enunciated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The initial research hypothesis envisages the necessity of providing an updated narrative for rebuilding the social contract in order to introduce greater social equality and provide better chances for the multidimensional development of Pakistan's citizens. There are three major assumptions in this research: There is a need to come up with an updated formula for the state-society relations and need to re-negotiate the social contract at multiple levels by taking into consideration the voice of the public. All decision-makers and influencers from the media, civil society, civil and military bureaucracy, business and academia, have their distinctive role in rebuilding/renewing the social contract. The media and academia have unprecedented role in the development of a rules-based society, thus their contribution to reshaping a narrative in Pakistan should not be underestimated. Modern, 21st century social order should adhere to the principles of equality and empowerment of the underprivileged groups, as articulated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan; social contract; the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan; media; academia

Introduction

Pakistan's unique history is reflected in the racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity of its population (QADEER 2006: 7). It is the second biggest South Asian state, with population exceeding 200 million people, with distinct ethnic and cultural features which characterize every province. This rich heritage and

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diversity has direct impact on the specificity of Pakistan and its socio-cultural distinctiveness. Today, more than 7 decades after its inception, Pakistan is an important regional player and 6th most populous state in the world. As a strategically located nuclear power it holds special position in the region of Asia and Pacific. Due to geopolitical and economic reasons, it remains a focal point of reference in the policies of such powers as the United States and China. Pakistan's security framework is therefore deeply interconnected with regional and global geopolitics and it may be assumed that it is likely to get even more complex in the foreseeable future. The protracted, escalation-prone conflict with India over Kashmir will remain one of the major points of reference of Pakistan's regional policy. The situation in war-torn Afghanistan remains unstable and the Taliban extremists pose serious threat to the entire region.

Apart from regional security challenges, Pakistan is continuously tormented with plethora of internal problems, including economic marginalization of impoverished regions of the state, poverty, corruption, nepotism, unequal distribution of the resources, illiteracy, growing radicalization and extremism. The security situation in Pakistan has gradually improved over the last few years, but the terrorist activity unleashed by the Islamist groups still pose grave threat to the life and property of Pakistani citizens. The multi-faceted economic and security-related challenges need to be dealt with in order to improve the situation in the country and attract foreign investors and visitors. There is an urgent need to come up with solutions to these problems in order to provide Pakistani society with enhanced capabilities of dealing with their socio-political and economic challenges in the dynamically changing world. It remains a crucial pre-condition for more prosperous, stable, equal society which will also enable to improve Pakistan's image and position on the international scene. In Pakistan, situated in the region torn with security challenges, an internal debate over well-functioning, updated social contract, seems to be of utmost importance.

Based on the theoretical and empirical research, the paper highlights the idea of redesigning a narrative in Pakistan by rebuilding a social contract in order to introduce greater equality, national cohesion and provide better chances for the multidimensional development of its citizens. In this regard, the role of media and academia in shaping a new narrative is subjected to thorough analysis.

The overall assumption presented in this paper is as follows:

1. There is a need to come up with an updated formula for the state-society relations and need to update the social contract at multiple levels by taking into

consideration the voice of the public. This might include some changes in the relevant articles of the Constitution and introduction of necessary amendments.

2. All Pakistani decision-makers and influencers from the media, civil society, civil and military bureaucracy, business and academia, have their special responsibility and role in rebuilding/renewing the social contract.

3. The media and academia may have unprecedented role in shaping a new narrative in Pakistan, based on the principles of equality as enunciated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. As major public opinion influencers, they both have a special mission in strengthening democracy, verifying the trust to the institutions and shaping the system based on equal rights with respect to the public voice, especially of those communities which are economically backward and socially excluded.

In order to address the above mentioned problems, the following research questions need to be raised:

1. What is the role of media and academia in building a national cohesion, economic and social progress in Pakistan?
2. What impact media has on shaping public discourse with reference to wider socioeconomic agenda?
3. What is the role of media and academia play in addressing and dealing with social and political grievances of the people?
4. Is there any need of any Constitutional amendments for a new social contract?

Methodological framework is based on in-depth quality research, including the interviews with the representatives of Pakistani media and academia, as well as other social groups, and contacts with South Asian experts in Europe.

The social contract: theoretical framework

Although the idea of the social contract is as old as philosophy itself, the 17th and 18th centuries are correctly pointed out as the great age of the development of the social contract theory. This political doctrine points out that political legitimacy, authority, and obligations are derived from the consent of those who create a government (sometimes a society) and who operate it through representation, majoritarianism, or tacit consent (RILEY 1982: 1). It takes its conceptual and theoretical framework from many outstanding philosophical deliberations. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are considered as renowned proponents of this significant concept, which has tremendously influenced the history of the modern West. Michael

LESSNOFF (1990: 3) rightfully claims that ‘a social contract theory can be defined as, most typically, one which grounds the legitimacy of political authority, and the obligations of rulers and subjects (and the limits thereof), on a premised contract or contracts relating to these matters’. He points out that this would be ‘an acceptable definition of social contract theory in the pre-Rawls era. Conspicuously, Rawls revived the theory with a distinctly non-traditional end in view — to furnish (from contractarian premises) principles of social justice’ (LESSNOFF 1990: 3, TIMMERMAN 2014: 5).

John RAWLS (1988: 252–254) describes the political conception of justice and emphasizes the significance of shared legitimate values which can be incorporated into the basic social structure via an overlapping consensus among the citizens. He writes that ‘a conception of political justice must contain within itself sufficient space’ and that ‘although to be acceptable a political conception of justice must leave adequate room for forms of life citizens can affirm, the ideas of the good it draws upon must fit within the limits drawn – the space allowed – by that political conception itself.’ In his research while describing justice as fairness, John Rawls points out that it is a matter of rational choice that the free and equal persons agree to establish certain social institutions under fair circumstances. Therefore, the citizens are ‘autonomous and the obligations they recognize self-imposed’ (RAWLS 1971: 11–13).

In Pakistan the discourse of power politics and force has over decades significantly weakened the civil bureaucracy and institutions. The persistent problems of governance are directly connected with the deeply imbalanced and unequal relations between the elitist state structure and weak civic institutions (KAPUR 1991: 20–21). These institutions are incapable of sufficiently providing the basic public goods, such as education, healthcare, gender empowerment or economic development. The wealth and power in Pakistan is accumulated in the hands of narrow civilian and military political and business elites, who enjoy the access to all privileges. Unfortunately, Pakistani policymakers have failed to address properly Pakistan’s systemic problems, which enhances the sense of marginalization among underprivileged groups. The transparency-based institutional development is a sine qua non condition for the system based on justice and equality. In order to improve the economic inequalities and marginalization of the poor, the reshaped and improved social contract should be offered by the policymakers and elites. This contract should strengthen and highlight the already existing laws which are enunciated in the Constitution, and introduce some new elements, which will provide an adequate basis for the equality-based, progressive development of the society and the state.

Media and academia: on a special mission

It is impossible to neglect the unique role of the academia and media in a successfully prospering, democratic state. Both academics and journalists are responsible for shaping the discourse, educating people, provoking discussions, offering solutions to the various problems. Paradoxically, the unprecedented access to information in our globalized world, does not always correspond with growing awareness and knowledge of common citizens of different parts of the world about geographically distant regions. Sometimes media, working in the name of ruling elites, present distorted image of the world, raising hostility and stereotypes: this is happening in different regions of the world. For example, the ultra-right-wing media in the West would focus in presenting Muslim world in mostly negative way, showing the terrorist, violent, politically, economically and socially troubled countries. Due to protracted conflict and deeply rooted mutual lack of trust between India and Pakistan, the media would quite often focus on presenting the negative aspects of the political/economic/social issues in the neighbouring country. It has tremendous impact on shaping the attitudes of the public opinion, strengthens stereotypes and oversimplified, binary perception of the world. Paradoxically therefore, while having an unprecedented access to the information, the statistical citizen in different parts of the globe is bombarded with these stereotypical clichés and has serious difficulties with selecting the verified, unbiased information.

Globally, the media retains tremendous impact on shaping public discourse with reference to wider socioeconomic agenda. Pakistani media has been playing crucial role in the political and social transitions but unfortunately it has been subjected to violence and economic pressure. The policymakers have repeatedly used their constitutional powers to prevent mass media from active engaging in critical, political debate (KUMAR 2015: 153). The meaning and significance of media has transformed in the era of simplified image-based information, proliferation of signs and televisual sensation-oriented populism. It is the phenomenon which can be observed everywhere. As Jeff LEWIS (2005: 31, 37) rightfully points out, ‘the conduit of mediated truth and information which connects the state to the citizen becomes a complex matrix of economic, ideological and textual interplays. A politician no longer simply represents the interests of an electorate; s/he becomes a media representation by which the consumer/elector and the media text are transposed and become increasingly indistinguishable. In a politics of the hyperreal, in which the momentum of representation is perpetually seeking to overcome its semiotic and fiscal deficits, the televisual media becomes the new public sphere – the mediasphere – where knowledge and judgement are perpetually undermined by their own self-referencing and exigent contingencies’. The using of media with the aim to bring about the changes is a widespread strategy of many states and should also

be upheld by the Pakistani government both on federal and on provincial levels. This technique may be referred to as an entertainment-education, which is useful especially among less educated, underprivileged communities. According to SINGHAL-ROGERS (1999:12) ‘the entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour. Entertainment-education seeks to capitalize on the appeal of popular media to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier, and happier lives. LEWIS (2015: 45) emphasizes the fact that ‘the media is to be understood as a set of relationships that are discursively formed through a cultural and governmental context. (...) The media, in fact, is a principal agent in the interaction between this public authority and private interests – corporate, community and individual. The government, therefore, asserts its interests and authority through these processes of governmentality and the exercise of <power>’.

The responsibility of mass media to offer undistorted and balanced image of the contemporary political, economic and social complexities, cannot be overestimated. According to 2018 World Press Freedom Index, Pakistan holds 139th position out of 180 countries. Noticeably, the authors of the Index, which was published by Reporters without Borders, highlight that ‘the Pakistani media are regarded as among the most vibrant in Asia but they are targeted by extremist groups’ (2018 World Press Freedom Index Pakistan). Eradication of violent extremism and successful anti-terrorist campaigns should provide security to the Pakistanis, including the representatives of the academia and media, therefore reinforcing the media pluralism and improving the information quality. It is a huge challenge in Pakistan as the society is divided in terms of literacy rates, access to the mass media, the quality of information and the ability to read in English. The Urdu and English media reach different target – the former mostly rural, more conservative readers or viewers, the latter – the slowly growing educated and more liberal urban elites. Relatively high prices of the press exclude many potential readers from acquiring the information and deepens the social gap within the society. As mass media discusses all crucial problems of common people, such as unemployment, health and education problems, nepotism, corruption, social transformations, environmental issues, electricity load shedding, security problems, such as terrorist activities, the widespread access to the reliable source of information (for example better circulation of the newspapers) is indispensable for strengthening democracy and welfare state in Pakistan.

Poor literacy rate remains one of the most burning issue for Pakistani policymakers. It needs to be emphasized that Pakistan’s largest and most renowned universities, both state and private, such as Quaid-e-Azam University

in Islamabad, University of Peshawar, University of the Punjab in Lahore, LUMS (Lahore University of Management Sciences) in Lahore – to name the few – very often present relatively high level of scientific research and debate. One must not forget about women’s universities (for example Lahore College for Women University) which provide excellent source of future elites and the forum for strengthening the gender equality, empowerment of women and paving their way into broad political, economic and social life of Pakistan. The 4th Annual International Conference ‘The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan: Status and the Role of Institutions’ organized by the Department of History, University of Peshawar in November 2018, was an unquestionably relevant example of such high level quality academic debate. The emphasis on transparent and successfully working institutions, the significance of the freedom of the exchange of thoughts on multiple levels and other rights guaranteed by the 1973 Constitution, overwhelmed the debate. It was contextualized within the contemporary internal challenges and the future solutions to the problems of Pakistan. Other examples of the debate over the future of Pakistan are the conferences/roundtables in Lahore or Islamabad, in which the Author had the opportunity to participate. The academic discourse which includes all stakeholders and common citizens should be propagated as an inalienable element of the new Pakistan’s social contract. The freedom of academic discourse is an inalienable element of a democratic state system, where exchange of thought is considered not as some rare privilege, but as a valuable input into the multi-faceted discussion on political, social, economic and cultural issues. Moreover, within the renewed social contract it has to be clearly stated what is the role and place of the academia and media in Pakistan’s political, socio-cultural and religious contexts.

The Constitution of Pakistan and the political dynamics

Pakistan was carved out of the Indian subcontinent in August 1947, when the British colonial occupation came to an end and the two sovereign states, India and Pakistan, were established. The territories of the new state were inhabited by predominantly Muslim communities with some religious minorities; at the same time the society of Pakistan was multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-lingual. This internal diversity combined with the aim to provide political and social equality to the people, laid the ground for the political structure of the state as a federation with clear division of rights, obligations and areas of activities between the central/federal government and the provinces. Federal laws were supposed to be applicable to the entire state, provincial laws to the provinces (ALI-REHMAN 2001: 2).

It needs to be emphasized that Pakistan inherited underdeveloped economy, regional and sub-regional imbalances, and the bureaucracy which

followed the colonial practice of the recruitment into the (weak) state institutions (ROUSE 2015: 777–779). The new political and social order, based on the Islamic ideological paradigm, was gradually shaped and the first constitution was enacted by the Constituent Assembly in 1956. Pakistan was declared an Islamic state, but the major power stayed in the hands of civil-military decision makers. Soon (in October 1958) the Constitution was abrogated by President Iskander Mirza, which paved the way to the military coup by General Ayub Khan. It is the Constitution of 1973, adopted by the National (also Constituent) Assembly on 10th April that year, which shaped the new socio-economic orientation of Pakistan, based on social progressivism and economic justice (JONES 2015: 584). The document was a result of the compromise the Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made with his ideological opponents, including the conservative, religious parties. The ideological rivalry between the proponents of a modernist agenda and those who adhere to more traditional or even sharia-based political system, has become an inalienable characteristic feature of Pakistan's political landscape. Pakistan's political system was based on the parliamentary democratic republic with Islam declared as the state religion; hence according to the Constitution, it is named the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It is based on Westminster parliamentary system of governing the state with strong political role of Islam. Since its inception Pakistan has been facing plethora of multi-faceted challenges, which originate in both its internal situation and external/geostrategic affairs. The struggle for eradicating the polarization among the regions and different groups to shape a more just and equitable society continues till today. In 1977-88 during the army rule in Pakistan, General Zia ul- Haq, who declared himself 'soldier of Islam', amended the constitution through a series of martial law orders. The process of Islamization of Pakistan had its impact on every aspect of its socio-political existence, and included the discussion about the constitution, primarily regarding to the level of Islamic content in Pakistan's constitutional and political affairs (KAPUR 1991: 43-44).

During the pre-election campaign in 2018 the hopes for '*Nayā Pakistan*', or 'New Pakistan' have enabled the followers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its leader, Imran Khan, to generate massive social support among the Pakistani people. The ex-cricketer turned politician, whose nickname is 'The Captain', emerged as the 'nation's saviour' (HUSSAIN 2018) to many voters. He made vociferous promises of bringing peace, law and order, eradicating corruption, reducing unemployment and ending load-shedding. The opponents criticized his promises as largely populist and power-oriented. Nevertheless, he became Pakistan's Prime Minister following the July 2018 general elections, and as the head of the state he faces tremendous challenge of fulfilling the promises given during the election campaign. This new political opening gave hopes to many that Pakistan's multi-faceted problems and challenges will be

gradually resolved. The inequality of development in Pakistan is striking and remains one of the most crucial challenges for the new government. Marginalized rural areas with lack of access to the proper education and largely limited chances for the improvement, contribute to building negative international perception of Pakistan as a backward country with high poverty rate and uneducated masses.

According to Human Development Index (HDI), Pakistan is ranked 150, with very slow, but constant progress since 1990. Literacy rate reaches only 57%, expected years of schooling for females is 7.8, for the males 9.3. Government's expenditure on education is only 2.8% of Pakistan's GDP (United Nations Development Programme). The appropriate steps aimed at providing the education to all children in Pakistan are of utmost importance. Therefore, a significant part of the new social contract should be devoted to the crucial role of education and academia and to strengthening their role in the lives of underprivileged masses, by providing better access to education at least at primary and secondary level. It is undoubtedly, one of the most serious challenges for all Pakistani decisionmakers.

It is worth to emphasize, that media and academia play an important role in educating the new elites in Pakistan. Pakistan has growing number of middle class families, vibrant civil society and impressive number of activists who willingly engage in the activities aimed at supporting the marginalized and underprivileged groups. Intellectual, academic and artistic activity flourishes, especially among the young people in big cities, which are considered as political/cultural centres of Pakistan, such as Lahore, Karachi or Islamabad. The state should support such activities as it is of crucial importance to provide free exchange of thought, ideas, and solutions. Civil society guarantees critical/constructive analysis of the state institutions' activities, and the quality of reforms being introduced by the government. Therefore such activities, with significant contribution of the academia and media, should without any doubt remain one of the basic rights of the citizens.

Conspicuously, the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan enumerates and safeguards the most fundamental rights provided to the citizens of Pakistan, including the equality, protection of minorities, women's empowerment, the right to information, education, as well as freedom of speech. Therefore, there is a strong legal basis which might serve as a framework for an updated social contract. The selected articles of the Constitution, highly relevant to this analysis are presented below:

Part I (Introduction), Chapter 4 guarantees basic right of the individuals to be dealt in accordance with the law (The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: 4):

4. 'Right of individuals to be dealt with in accordance with law, etc.

- (1) To enjoy the protection of law and to be treated in accordance with law is the inalienable right of every citizen, wherever he may be, and of every other person for the time being within Pakistan. (...)

Part II (Fundamental Rights and Principles of Policy) Chapter 1 (Fundamental Rights) and Chapter II (Principles of policy) of the Constitution guarantee the following fundamental rights (selected are enumerated below):

19. Freedom of speech, etc.

According to Art. 19, 'Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan (...).

19A. Right to information

Article 19 A states that 'Every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law'.

25. Equality of citizens.

Article 25 remains a crucial constitutional guarantor of Pakistani equality-based social system, where all citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.

25A. Right to education.

Article 25 A guarantees the right to free education. It states that 'the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law'.

34. Full participation of women in national life.

Article 34 aims to ensure that the adequate steps shall be taken to guarantee full participation of women in all spheres of national life.

36. Protection of minorities.

Article 36 guarantees the ‘legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the Federal and Provincial services’.

37. Promotion of social justice and eradication of social evils.

According to this Article, the State is obliged to:

- (a) promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of backward classes or areas);
- (b) remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period;
- (c) make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of merit;

The above mentioned articles of the Constitution prove that, at least in theory, the state declares to deliver the system based on multi-faceted equality. They provide an essential legal basis for struggling with inequalities and play crucial role in safeguarding most fundamental rights of all citizens of Pakistan, irrespective of their gender, ethnic or religious differences. Providing education, removing illiteracy and promoting the rights of backward, marginalized groups and all rights and state’s obligations as articulated in the paragraphs of the Article 25A and 37 (especially those highlighted by the Author), remain a serious challenge for the Pakistani policymakers. As presented above, the crucial legal principles are provided by the Constitution of Pakistan, but unfortunately, the practice and reality are quite often not on par with the written standards. Nevertheless, the state authorities and all the stakeholders are obliged to abide by these laws. The constitution of any democratic welfare state should reflect the dynamics of social changes and should incessantly provide a fundament for strengthening the rights of the citizens and their equality. Taking into consideration these legal obligations and current political, socio-economic challenges of Pakistan, the role of media and academia in providing a thorough and professional debate on social and economic inequalities, cannot be overestimated. People’s economic and social grievances in all regions of Pakistan need to be analysed and addressed in a proper way, with special focus on equitable distribution of resources and opportunities and eradicating the

corrupt patronage system of politics. It is the role of the journalists in every democratic state to highlight these problems and raise awareness among the citizens, and the role of academics to provide in-depth discussion regarding the possible solutions. Moreover young generation should be utilized and engaged to come up with new, more creative ideas.

Conclusion. Reshaping a social contract: challenge for the upcoming future

Pakistan is a country with a large, diverse and vibrant civil society (RAIS 2017: 25), with significant role of media and academia in building a narrative on national cohesion, economic and social progress. Pakistani media are not only primary source of information, but also retain the position of crucial forum where social and political grievances of the people are presented and addressed, importantly, on federal and local level. The role of the educated elites, including the groups represented by academia and independent media in rebuilding a social contract on the basis of the existing legal framework, is undoubtedly, unprecedented. This obviously assumption refers to any modern or developing society of the 21 century. Multi-faceted development and modernization of Pakistan remains an unmet challenge and the threat of extremism and radicalization has to be challenged while implementing an updated version of a social contract. Pakistan's decisionmakers should undertake serious efforts to fulfil their '*Nayā Pakistan*' pledge, otherwise the recently elected political elites will share the fate of previous political parties, which were unable to introduce necessary reforms and pursue their policy with reference to the constitutionally guaranteed prerogatives of equal rights, including the right to education. Unrestricted access to education should be a major reference point in the updated social contract in Pakistan, as this is an urgent need, given the rapidly changing regional security environment and internal socio-political and economic dynamics. Renewed social contract should basically refer to the already existing rights and freedoms articulated in the constitutional system of Pakistan.

The enumerated above, selected provisions of the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, enunciate the fundamental rights of the citizens with special reference to social inequalities, marginalized communities, and the equal rights to education and appropriate access to information. The existing law (selected articles of the constitution, enumerated above) provides legal background for rebuilding and expanding the social contract with the aim of addressing and dealing with economic, social and political grievances of the Pakistani citizens. Therefore, we may assume that there is no need to provide special constitutional amendments for a new social contract. Unfortunately, due to various historical and contemporary reasons, Pakistan remains a weak state in terms of institutions, which are mostly corrupt and badly managed, and some of

them serve the establishment elites' interests with their strongly hierarchical tint. This might have a negative impact on the prospect of social and economic development of the state. Taking into consideration the persistent problems of Pakistan, it seems accurate to conclude that there is an urgent need to come up with an updated formula for the state-society relations and need to re-negotiate the social contract at multiple levels by taking into thorough consideration the voice of the public. Strengthening the social justice, equality as well as the economic and social potential among the citizens in Pakistan, a state which may be termed as regional power due to its strategic location and assets, is crucial not only for Pakistan itself, but also for the entire region. Building an inclusive and robust Pakistani state based on the progressive Islamic values (HAIDER 2010: 45) with trustworthy, transparent institutions, remains a key challenge for the Pakistani policymakers, intellectual elites, including the media and academia.

Without any doubt, there is a need for developing a broader spectrum of discussions in the media and academia which may conclude with some further recommendations for policy planners, all state institutions, civil society, etc., regarding the implementation of the laws in true spirit and addressing the actual challenges. The element of new social contract could be reflected by adding some special provisions to the Constitution, for example in the Article 25A the freedom of the speech could be more specified and guaranteed as a fundamental principle of the public discourse.

An updated social contract should address many challenges Pakistan faces, including poverty, marginalization of vulnerable groups, and all insecurities arising from inequality and lack of access to basic goods by significant portion of the society. The government should take appropriate steps, but the role of media and academia in rebuilding a social contract and shaping a new narrative of equality in Pakistan, is unprecedented. Taking into consideration all above mentioned observations, it is crucial to conclude that the reshaped social contract in Pakistan, implemented by the policymakers and all other stakeholders, with crucial role of media and academia, should put emphasis on the following prerogatives:

- Empower and safeguard the transparency of the state institutions which should act and fulfil their duties in accordance with the law;
- Strengthen the position of the non-governmental organizations which deal with human rights protection and promotion of media/academic freedom;
- Address the needs of vulnerable, marginalized and impoverished groups appropriately by providing them unrestricted access to the state institutions, civil society organizations, etc.;

- Assure the protection of basic freedoms and liberties including the rights to equality before the law. Protect legitimate academic and press freedom adequately. Emphasize the necessity to discuss vital socio-economic and political issues with unbiased and critical approach;
- Stress the basic right of all people to be heard, to speak for themselves and represent their interests;
- Safeguard universal literacy and decent educational system: engaging and empowering marginalized communities by providing the access to the education on all levels, including free and compulsory education on the secondary levels;
- Raise the awareness of the inalienable human rights as proclaimed by the 1973 Constitution. That may include special courses on basic freedoms and liberties (including free speech in academia and media) in the school curriculum;
- Promote the variety of additional activities that foster education and meet the needs of the pupils/students;
- Facilitate bridges among different ethnic/cultural/religious communities by using common pursuits such as music, theatre, religion, art, media and academia;
- Build parliamentary support for authorizing and funding the above mentioned efforts;
- Ensure accountability of the state institutions responsible for multi-faceted development challenges,
- Increase the number of cultural centres accessible to the local public;
- Utilize different means of communication (for example media and entertainment education) to push for social changes, raise awareness and launch meaningful debate on such problems as inequality, diseases, poverty, illiteracy, poor family planning, women empowerment, domestic violence, etc.
- Introduce and popularize (for example in the media) the new code of ethics/standards in the state institutions with emphasizing the accountability of the policymakers.
- Enhance public confidence in ethically sound governance by guaranteeing the accountability of the state institutions.
- Undertake the efforts to lay down the foundations of more equitable, just and effective provisions to enable the academia and media to perform their activities regarding the social needs and in accordance with the law.

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