

Bad Governance Breeds Environment Of Favouritism: Ombudsman



Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Tuesday said maladministration and bad governance bred an environment of favoritism, discrimination and corruption
ISLAMABAD, (APP - UrduPoint / Pakistan Point News - 24th Jan, 2023) :Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Tuesday said maladministration and bad governance bred an environment of favoritism, discrimination and [corruption](#).

An efficient administration was essential for ensuring the sanctity of human rights and achieving the ultimate goals of good governance and the rule of law, he said while addressing a press conference in connection with the 40th year of the establishment of the institution of [Federal Ombudsman](#) in [Pakistan](#).

Ejaz Qureshi said the ombudsman's institution had evolved over the years and "is recognized today as an essential feature of every modern democratic society". However, its structure, scope and powers varied [from](#) one society to another and were directly related to the larger social, political and legal systems being followed in that country.

The ombudsman institutions around the [world](#), he said, "act in support of supreme judiciary and contribute in making dispensation of justice more accessible and inexpensive." Likewise, he added, the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution was fundamentally the [poor man's court](#) in [Pakistan](#). "It is not an alternative to the supreme judiciary but plays a complementary role." He said the [government](#) expenditure per complainant in disposing of the complaints through Wafaqi Mohtasib "construes a negligible amount, thus it is the most cost-effective way of providing relief to the common [man](#)".

He said the people's trust had immensely increased in institution resulting in a dramatic increase in the registration of complaints. Complaints worth over Rs [3 billion](#) of disputed amounts were addressed by his office during the last year, which otherwise would have added a burden to the civil courts, he added.

Ejaz Qureshi said more than [1.9 million](#) households had benefitted [from](#) the the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution since its inception 40 years ago.

He said during the year 2022, the number of complaints increased [from](#) 110,405 in 2021 to the highest-ever number of 164,174 (49 per cent raise) and disposal reached an all-time high of 157,770, marking an increase of 47.7 per cent over the figures of the previous year.

About 137,423 complaints of the overseas Pakistanis were also resolved in 2022 with an increase of 133 per cent as compared to 2021, he added.

Ejaz Qureshi lauded the services of his predecessors, who, he said, had contributed in developing the institution into a premier institution of administrative accountability in the country.

He said the Office of the Federal Ombudsman was established vide the President's Order No. 1 on 24 [January](#) 1983 with the explicit objective to diagnose, investigate, redress and rectify any injustice done to a person through maladministration by [government](#) agencies. The complainants were not required to hire the services of a lawyer nor have to face lengthy legal processes as the cases were disposed of within the prescribed limit of 60 days, he added.

Qureshi stated that the institution had expanded its operations by opening three regional offices in [Mirpurkhas](#), [Khuzdar](#) and [Swat](#) and two sub-offices at [Wana](#) ([South Waziristan](#)) and Sada (Kurram District) during the year 2022. He added that the ever increasing of complaints received was in fact a direct consequence of the massive support that the Ombudsman's Office always received [from](#) the print and electronic [media](#) in rising awareness about the scope and extent of its services to the general public. It was also a clear manifestation of the confidence and trust reposed by the people in the institution, he added.

He said during his first year in office, the institution had diversified its activities by undertaking inspections of various agencies against whom persistent complaints were pouring in order to improve their service delivery.

An Informal [Resolution](#) of Disputes (IRD) project, he said, was initiated in [April](#) last year to informally conciliate and settle disputes between the two parties with their mutual consent. So far, 1114 cases had been disposed of while 266 were in process.

He added periodic inspections of different agencies by a team of his senior officers such as Passport Office, [Islamabad](#) International [Airport](#), NADRA, Polyclinic, PIMS, [CDA](#) Facilitation Centre, Railway Stations and Utility Stores in different cities had helped improve their service delivery.

Referring to the legal framework which governs the operations of the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution, Ejaz Qureshi said the efficiency and efficacy of its operations was directly related to the enabling statutory provisions. "These include, powers to undertake any investigation of his own motion into any allegation on the part of any agency, and stay operation of the impugned order/decision for a period not exceeding 60 days. Likewise, the Ombudsman enjoys [same](#) powers, mutatis mutandis, as the [Supreme Court](#) to punish for contempt." He said while focussing on resolving individual complaints, equal emphasis was placed on ascertaining the root causes of corrupt practices and injustice. Accordingly, study reports had been prepared in the context of systemic reforms in regard to 28 [government](#) agencies and recommendations submitted to the [government](#) for ameliorating their operations.

Recently, the first ever empirical study focussing on street children in the [Islamabad](#) Capital Territory had been completed, he added.

Highlighting the success of ombudsmanship in [Pakistan](#), Qureshi said the concept had been replicated into other areas of governance i.e. insurance, taxation, banking and harassment against [women](#) at work place. Accordingly, 14 ombudsman institutions including at provincial level were functioning in the country.

The Federal Ombudsman said his office had played an important role in promoting ombudsmanship in [Asia](#) and the [Muslim world](#). He was the current president of the [Asian](#) Ombudsman Association (AOA), which maintained its secretariat in the Wafaqi Mohtasib premises.

The AOA, he added, was a non-political, democratic and professional body of international character with 44 members representing more than two third of population of the [world](#).

Ejaz Qureshi concluded that [Pakistan's](#) active role in the global ombudsman fraternity projected an international face of the country promoting the cause of good governance, rule of law and inviolability of human rights.

Recognizing the significance of the role of ombudsman institution and its successful journey of four decades in providing speedy and inexpensive relief to the common [man](#), the [Pakistan Post](#) has issued a commemorative postage stamp of Rs 20 on the occasion.

The launching ceremony of the stamp was also held on the side lines of the press conference. The postage stamps are available in [all](#) the [post](#) offices in the country.