

World Justice Project 2020: Pakistan slips down in absence of corruption, rule of law index

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan fell four places down in the global ranking of "Absence of Corruption" factor whereas the country's overall ranking in the rule of law index for the year 2020 has dropped by one position as compared to the previous year, detailed report of the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2020 reveals.

The World Justice Project (WJP) measures rule of law performance in 128 countries and jurisdictions across eight primary factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice. The Index is the world's leading source for original, independent data on the rule of law. The WJP's Rule of Law Index (RLI) 2020 reflects that Pakistan secured 0.39 score and placed the country on 120th position in the world ranking. Whereas in 2019 Pakistan's ranking was 117 and its total score was 0.39. In 2019 the World Justice Project's Rule of Law report included 126 countries in its report however, it added two new countries in its 2020 report.

In the South Asia region, Pakistan is only ahead of Afghanistan in the regional ranking. In the category of lower middle-income countries, Pakistan has been placed on 25th position out of 30. According to the report, Pakistan's position has significantly dropped down in three major factors which includes Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption and Open Government. Pakistan's ranking in the Constraints on Government power factor has been recorded on 79th place in 2020 whereas; in 2019 Pakistan was on 74th position in the global ranking. Similarly, in the Absence of Corruption factor Pakistan is now ranked on 116th position as compared to its 112th position in 2019. It faced a major decline in the ranking of Open Government factor where it is now placed on 91st position in 2020 as compared to 83rd position in 2019.

But the report further shows that Pakistan has improved or retained its ranking and scores in some factors including Regulatory Enforcement and Civil Justice. The World Justice Project's report highlights that more countries declined in overall rule of law performance for the third year in a row, continuing a negative slide towards weakening and stagnating rule of law. The majority of countries showing deteriorating rule of law in the 2020 Index also declined in the previous year, demonstrating a persistent downward trend. This was particularly pronounced in Constraints on Government Powers. The decline were widespread and seen in all corners of the world. In every region, a majority of countries slipped backward or remained unchanged in their overall rule of law performance since the 2019 WJP Rule of Law Index.

It is important to note here that the survey for World Justice Project's Rule of Law 2020 report, was conducted by Gallup Pakistan in 2019. According to the report, the coverage of the survey was national as the representatives were from across the country. The methodology of the survey was face to face interviews and the sample size for the

survey was 1000. Below is the comparison of factor scores and factor rankings of Pakistan for 2020 and 2019

Overall ranking of Pakistan

In 2020, Pakistan overall scores were recorded at 0.39 whereas it was placed on 120th position in the list of 128 countries. In 2019, Pakistan's overall ranking was 117 and its total scores were 0.39.

The Constraints on Government Powers measures the extent to which those who govern are bound by law. It comprises the means, both constitutional and institutional, by which the powers of the government and its officials and agents are limited and held accountable under the law. It also includes non-governmental checks on the government's power, such as a free and independent press. Pakistan has been ranked on 79th position with 0.49 scores in the factor ranking of Constraints on Government Powers for the year 2020. The country's position in 2019 was on 74th place with 0.52 factor scores in 2019.

The Absence of Corruption considers three forms of corruption: bribery, improper influence by public or private interests, and misappropriation of public funds or other resources. They were examined with respect to government officers in the executive branch, the judiciary, the military, police, and the legislature. Pakistan slipped by four positions down to 116th place with 0.31 score in the factor ranking the absence of corruption in 2020. Whereas, it was placed on 112th place with 0.32 scores in 2019.

The Open Government measures the openness of government by sharing information, empowering people with tools to hold the government accountable, and fosters citizen participation in public policy deliberations. This measures whether basic laws and information on legal rights are publicized and evaluates the quality of information published by the government.

Pakistan has faced a major decline in the Open Government factor as it has been placed on 91st position with 0.43 score in 2020. In 2019, Pakistan's ranking in the same factor was 83 whereas it scored 0.45.

The Fundamental Rights: Since it would be impossible for the Index to assess adherence to the full range of rights, this factor focuses on a relatively modest menu of rights that are firmly established under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are most closely related to rule of law concerns. Pakistan's factor ranking in the Fundamental Rights for the year 2020 is 115 with 0.38 scores. In 2019, the country's ranking was 114 and the factor score was same 0.38.

Order and Security measures how well a society ensures the security of persons and property. It is also a precondition for the realization of the rights and freedoms that the rule of law seeks to advance. In 2019, Pakistan was ranked on 124th position in the factor ranking of Order and Security. Whereas in 2020 Pakistan has been ranked on 126th place. Only Nigeria and Afghanistan are behind Pakistan in the ranking of Order and Security.

Regulatory Enforcement measures the extent to which regulations are fairly and effectively implemented and enforced. Regulations, both legal and administrative, structure behaviors within and outside of the government. This factor does not assess which activities a government chooses to regulate, nor does it consider how much regulation of a particular activity is appropriate. Rather, it examines how regulations are implemented and enforced.

Pakistan has improved its ranking in the Regulatory Enforcement factor and was placed on 115th position with 0.39 scores in 2020: The country was placed on 116th number in the ranking in year 2019.

The Civil Justice measures whether ordinary people can resolve their grievances peacefully and effectively through the civil justice system. It measures whether civil justice systems are accessible and affordable as well as free of discrimination, corruption, and improper influence by public officials. It examines whether court proceedings are conducted without unreasonable delays and whether decisions are enforced effectively. It also measures the accessibility, impartiality, and effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Pakistan has retained its 118th position in the factor ranking of civil justice for 2020. The country was placed in the same position in 2019 too.

The Criminal Justice constitutes the conventional mechanism to redress grievances and bring action against individuals for offenses against society. An assessment of the delivery of criminal justice should take into consideration the entire system, including the police, lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and prison officers.

Pakistan has slipped six-position down to 98th place in the factor ranking of criminal justice for the year 2020: The country was ranked on 92nd position in 2019. Although the factor scores for both the years remained the same.