

Charter of power

Nasir Iqbal

Pakistan's path towards development and the consolidation of democratic institutions has been impeded by various challenges such as policy inconsistencies, weak governance and power struggles. To address these issues, there is a growing consensus that a new approach is required — one that goes beyond mere political or economic charters. Enter the charter of power, a framework aimed at striking a balance among different centres of influence within the nation.

The Charter of Democracy (CoD) has long been advocated to ensure consistent and smooth democratic processes, establishing a stable political

environment, upholding rule of law, protecting human rights and fostering democratic institutions. However, without a balanced distribution of power and clear guidelines for power-sharing, implementing the CoD may encounter obstacles.

Recently, discussions have centred around a charter of economy that can uplift the nation's economic prospects. However, economic stability and progress are closely intertwined with political stability.

Without a power balance and a stable political environment, effective economic policies and long-term planning may prove challenging.

One critical factor hindering progress is the influence of a certain central authority which holds significant power within the nation. To foster a more balanced and mature political environment, it is imperative to redefine power dynamics and establish a framework that ensures a fair distribution of

authority.

The concept of a charter of power aims to address this issue precisely. By defining boundaries, responsibilities and red lines for all entities involved — be it political forces, central institutions or other influential bodies — a charter of power can create an equitable power-sharing arrangement. Such a framework would foster stability, encourage democratic growth and enable effective contributions from all stakeholders towards Pakistan's development.

Implementing a charter of power requires a collective effort and consensus among political parties, policymakers and central institutions. It demands an open and transparent dialogue to develop a shared understanding and commitment to democratic principles, good governance, and national progress, free from any undue influence

and upholding rule of law.

By adopting a charter of power, Pakistan can pave the way for a balanced distribution of authority, enhancing the accountability of all centres of power. This will strengthen democratic institutions and allow the nation to focus on critical development priorities. A balanced power framework will provide a conducive environment for economic growth, attract investments, and foster social stability.

In this proposed framework, the central authority's role would be redefined, ensuring its influence remains within appropriate boundaries. This would create more space for political forces to operate freely and fulfil their democratic responsibilities. Additionally, this charter of power would encourage the central authority to actively support democratic processes, governance reforms, and institution-building, fostering an environment conducive to

sustained development.

It is crucial to understand that implementing a charter of power does not replace democratic governance but strengthens democratic institutions by fostering a more balanced power structure. The goal is to prevent any single entity from dominating the political landscape and ensure responsible and transparent power-sharing among all stakeholders.

Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture in its journey towards sustainable development and the strengthening of democratic institutions. The charter of power presents a unique opportunity to redefine power dynamics, establish a balanced framework, and foster democratic growth. By clearly defining boundaries and responsibilities, all centres of influence can actively contribute to Pakistan's progress.

It is imperative for political forces, policymakers,

and central institutions to engage in an open dialogue and forge a path towards a brighter future, one rooted in democratic principles, good governance and equitable development.

Collective efforts and a shared commitment to the charter of power are essential for Pakistan to overcome its challenges, nurture democracy, and create a prosperous and inclusive society for all citizens. This charter, along with the CoD and a charter of economy, holds the key to unlocking the nation's potential and establishing a balanced framework for sustainable development.

The first step towards this transformative journey is to extend a sincere and inclusive invitation to all stakeholders, emphasizing the need to prioritize collective interests over individual agendas.

By rallying political parties, the central authority, civil society organizations, and other relevant actors,

Pakistan can forge a united front that is dedicated to dialogue, cooperation, and compromise. This collective effort will play a pivotal role in overcoming power struggles, fostering stability, and paving the way for a prosperous and harmonious future.

Through the unity and collaboration of all stakeholders, Pakistan can build a stronger, more resilient nation that upholds the principles of democracy, good governance, and equitable development. It is through this collective endeavour that Pakistan will shape a brighter future and fulfil its true potential.

The writer is associate professor at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

Email: dr.iqbaln@gmail.com