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Modernizing Governance: Challenges and Solutions in Pakistan's Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions

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DNA

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EW News

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Pakistan Observer Editorial

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Business Recorder Editorial

https://www.brecorder.com/news/40323422

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS

Over 50pc of federal decisions delayed due to excessive bureaucracy: PIDE

Report comprehensively addresses challenges, provides actionable solutions; highlights inefficiencies in inter-divisional consultation; proposes several reforms aligned with global benchmarks

By Mehtab Haider

ISLAMABAD: More than 50% of all federal decisions are delayed due to excessive bureaucracy, a fresh report by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), an affiliate think tank of the Planning Commission, has revealed.

A new report titled 'Modernizing Governance: Challenges and Solutions in Pakistan's Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions,' authored by Dr. Nadeemul Haque, Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Prof. Nadeem Ahmed Khan, Dr. Khurram Elahi Khan, and Prof. Hassan Rasool, has been released by the PIDE, highlighting key inefficiencies within Pakistan's government framework.

This report comprehensively addresses the challenges and provides actionable solutions aimed at improving governance and modernizing the country's administrative structures, using best practices from global governance models.

The report reveals that while Pakistan's Rules of Business 1973 and Secretariat Instructions are the backbone of federal governance, they have not sufficiently evolved to meet modern administrative needs. For instance, over 80% of federal processes still rely on outdated, manual systems, significantly delaying decision-making and policy implementation.

Centralized approval mechanisms alone account for up to 60% of these delays, creating bottlenecks across ministries. Furthermore, the report shows that more than 50% of all federal decisions are delayed due to excessive bureaucracy, with less than 10% of officials held accountable for inefficiencies.

The report also highlights inefficiencies in inter-divisional consultation, noting that over 70% of inter-ministerial communications face delays due to centralized control and ineffective processes. These challenges have resulted in a slow and unresponsive governance system that lacks the accountability necessary for effective administration.

In response, the report proposes several reforms aligned with global benchmarks, showing that countries modernizing their public administration have seen efficiency increases of up to 40%. These recommendations include streamlining government systems, with the potential to reduce delays by 50-60%, and organizational restructuring, which could shorten decision-making times by up to 30%.

The report also advocates enforcing accountability measures, with penalties for noncompliance potentially improving operational efficiency by at least 20%. Additionally, adopting New Public Management (NPM) and Post-NPM models could align Pakistan's governance practices with international standards, achieving governance improvements similar to countries that have seen a 40-50% increase in performance after reforms.

The urgency for reform is clear. Without modernization, Pakistan risks continued inefficiencies and a lack of accountability that

Over 50pc

hinder economic development and erode public trust. The Modernizing Governance: Challenges and Solutions in Pakistan's Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions report provides a comprehensive roadmap for reform, aiming to align Pakistan's governance system with international standards for responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

This report aims to inform government stakeholders, policymakers and the public about the critical need for governance reforms in Pakistan's Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions to foster a more accountable and efficient public administration system.

PIDE proposes modernization of overhauling governance system

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Overhauling bureaucracy

IN its latest report titled "Modernizing Governance – Challenges and Solutions in Pakistan's Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions", the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has highlighted key inefficiencies within the country's government framework. Among other things, it says more than 50% of all federal decisions are delayed due to excessive bureaucracy, with less than 10% of officials held accountable for inefficiencies. The report reveals that while Pakistan's Rules of Business 1973 and Secretariat Instructions are the backbone of federal governance, they have not sufficiently evolved to meet modern administrative needs. For instance, over 80% of federal processes still rely on outdated, manual systems, significantly delaying decision-making and policy implementation.

Bureaucracy plays a crucial role as it is responsible for putting government policies into action by applying general policies to specific cases. In Pakistan too, the bureaucracy contributed significantly to socio-economic progress of the country by way of planning, implementation and enforcement. There were times when some of the brilliant bureaucrats came out with innovative ideas to help address crippling issues like poverty, backwardness, ignorance and unemployment. However, with the passage of time, both quality and output of our bureaucracy degraded significantly due to a combination of factors like serious flaws in the induction system, corruption, political interference and lack of sustained vigilance and accountability. History bears testimony to the fact that the successive governments in Pakistan came out with countless policies and programmes with potential to change the destiny of the people but intended results could not be achieved mainly because of bureaucratic hurdles and inability of the bureaucracy to adapt itself to the changing times, procedures and technologies. The red-tape has become proverbial in Pakistan and as a result the country suffered hugely in terms of multiplied cost of almost all projects and programmes besides loss of opportunities for people of Pakistan to benefit from such initiatives in a timely manner. In this backdrop, the PIDE deserves credit for coming out with a comprehensive report, which addresses the challenges and provides actionable solutions aimed at improving governance and modernizing the country's administrative structures, using best practices from global governance models. In fact, the PIDE, which is an affiliate think-tank of the Ministry of Planning and Development, has been rendering excellent services, providing valuable input for proper planning and reform of the governmental structure and systems. It is, however, a sorry state of affairs that, as usual, such reports produced by competent professionals gather dust in offices of planners and decision-makers, who are in the habit of forming this or that committee and commission on different subjects just to play with the galleries. Otherwise, a lot of change and improvement can be made by merely putting into action recommendations of the PIDE on different issues. We hope the latest report of the Institute will not face the same fate and relevant planners and policy-makers make it a priority to consider the recommendations and implement them as these are aligned with the overall strategy of the Government to carry out structural reforms. This is the most appropriate time to rationalize the size of the bureaucracy as has been suggested by the PIDE at a time when structural reforms are being carried out by way of abolition of vacancies, merger of institutions and ministries/division or their transfer to provinces, under the spirit of the 18th amendment in the Constitution, which required devolution that remains half implemented. This is because the report provides a comprehensive roadmap for reform, aiming to align Pakistan's governance system with international standards for responsiveness, transparency and accountability. It proposes several reforms aligned with global benchmarks, showing that countries modernizing their public administration have seen efficiency increases of up to 40%. These recommendations include streamlining government systems, with the potential to reduce delays by 50-60%, and organizational restructuring, which could shorten decision-making times by up to 30%.

PIDE highlights Pak governance Bottlenecks, proposes blueprint

Over 80% of federal processes still rely on outdated, manual systems, significantly delaying decision-making and policy implementation

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

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PIDE Highlights Pakistan's Governance Bottlenecks and Proposes Modernization Blueprint

City Desk

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