

STRUCTURE OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM IN PAKISTAN

Nadeem ul Haque & Naseem Faraz



The Need for a Wide Debate

- PIDE series on institutional reform are important to generate a national debate on this important notion of getting the government right.
- Several questions are the center of the discussions such as, who makes policy? What civil service is doing? Is regulation, managing PSEs and education, etc. the job of civil servants? Who owns the city? Why do there have civil service tribes, where are the professionals?
- Civil service reforms are a central subject for development in Pakistan. Unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding of civil service. Institutions are important for economic development & growth. Reforms are not only changing names of things, but the connections are important. We have to connect with the actual public sector, organizations & institutions. We need to connect with matters, edifice of civil service and the notion of reforms.



- There is no disagreement to have the civil service reforms. Looking back, since the 1950s we have had large recommendation reports and commissions to reform the federal civil service?
- But no commission has been formed to implement the reform recommendations. Reports have shelf life. Last report was done nearly a decade ago. To keep the civil service right, a major need is to move forward for implementation strategies.
- Question arises, how can we bring clarity and move forward to improve the civil service structure? One should admit that there is a connection between reports recommendations and implementation strategies.
- The reform agenda must understand what we need now. Do we need good governance? Are we looking for better public service delivery? If we really want to move forward with the reform agenda, we need to have some kind of governance charter, on which all stakeholders can agree. There must be consensus of the provincial and federal governments.
- Further, currently several forums are working on civil service reforms including the donor agencies. We must have the homegrown reforms agenda that must understand the underground realities.
- We need to have a very effective implementation strategy, governance charter, where we can move forward. Reforming civil service does not necessarily

improve the whole society merely reforming the civil service. For that purpose, you need to improve the working conditions and political culture of politicians.

- Lastly, successful reforms can be expected only if we implement fresh recommendations at the entry level. Those will be joining first time they will be most willing to take whatever the TORs set. There will be no resistance in accepting the new rules and regulations



What should be the Role of Government?

- An important question asked, what should be the role of the government in the society. First, the government should not be in the running of Government owned enterprises.
- Second, what the government should pay for, and should do. For example, security, justice, etc. because you need them.
- Third, what the government should finance, but should not do. The best example is the provision of education or the education system. A responsible state should make it sure that everyone must get education. But delivering education should not be the government's purpose.

- Fourth, it should be known fact that which level of government? An effective service delivery like social and economic services. Under these conditions, the government should do strategic direction, standard setting, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation but nothing beyond that.
- Fifth, where should the policy be made? In the absence of a donor, policy is made by the secretary at provincial level. Provincial level power to PAM instead of secretaries.
- Sixth, need for unbundling through the dedicated autonomous bodies. This would include the recruiting people directly from the market by the body or organization.

Career Streams and Career Path

- There are too many designated layers which look after the same purpose. Simply through looking at business prophecies for certain business, the civil service layers should be reduced.
- The technical skills, professionalism and experts are needed in current civil service. The professional skills, competition, open up the competition, and no career path should be guaranteed as it is happening in the current structure.

- The Unified Pay Scales are unfair. Despite having different levels of skills officers of the same grade receive the same salary, the skills are not paid off. You cannot induct good talent under this system. The compensation should be linked to skill and professionalism.
- The compensation structure should be rationalized and capable of reducing the inequality. This can be addressed by monetizing them.
- The policy is made at the level of civil services. Has anyone done research on this aspect?
- Has the government ever thought about research for any policy making?

Policy Making

“Who makes policy” remains a confusion in our thinking. Currently, civil servants think policy is made by the politicians. In reality most of our policy originates in donor conditionality. We must have the homegrown reform agenda that must understand the underground realities.

Haque Survey

