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Civil Service Reforms in Pakistan

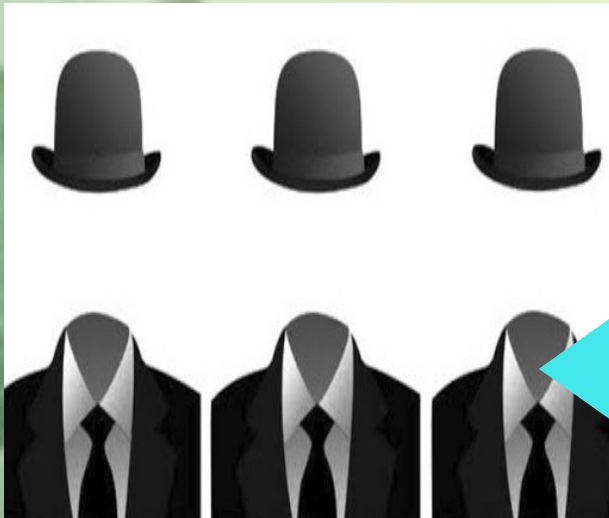
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Civil Service Reforms



02

Structure of the Civil Services



The Need for a Wide Debate

- Research over the last 5 decades across many countries has points to the state of institutions being the most important determinant of economic progress and development. Critically success depends on ensuring good systems for government policy development, M&E and management of community, cities and organizations. Several Nobel's have been awarded for this research.
- PIDE series on institutional reform are important to generate a national debate on this important notion of getting the government right.
- The discussion on any such institution should therefore not be seen as a critique. Instead this should be a regular subject of public policy research in all our universities.
- Civil service is a key organization for any age, any country, any organization and therefore a key determinant of the country's success in everything including recordkeeping, security, policy, M&E and economic development.
- 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.

The Debate is not Intended to Vilify

- When we discuss civil service, it is to review the workings of an institution and not against any one group. Every state organization is trying its best and often doing food work under difficult circumstances. So is the civil service.
- However, every state institution, especially the civil service must be kept under constant review and probably in a state of reform to improve key systems and processes which underpin national productivity.

Efforts but little Reforms

- Largely people felt that we have been too slow in reforming our inherited colonial institutions. Reform while it is a continuous and slow process has not really taken root in Pakistan.
- Micro Civil service reforms were there as some assignments were given by the Government of Punjab for specific purposes. NCOC and public companies are representative of shorter version of reforms. NCOC worked well and is appreciated.
- In Pakistan, previous efforts done were meant for a certain cause. Executive problems were dealt and were taken as national reforms. In fact, they were tweaks only not the civil reforms. Similarly, urgency of what is needed e.g. tax efforts and fixing FBR should not be considered as civil reforms.

The Role of the Civil Service

- The role of the civil service needs clarification. Largely people felt that the civil service has become an instrument for maintaining the status quo for whichever faction is in power.
- The role of the civil service should be to manage the social contract and public goods while facilitating transactions and their record-keeping.
- Civil service is also a broad term which includes most people employed by the government including police, judges, professionals, education employees etc. UPS has applied similar rules to all.

Decentralization, Autonomization, Professionalization

- The main issue that everyone talked of is the extreme centralization of the way our current civil service structure is structured. The federal civil service at the pinnacle of which is PAS controls almost all areas of governance—cities, educational institutions, regulatory agencies and many other areas of governance. The PAS acts as a central pyramid at the heart of the executive.
- Received wisdom of the operation of the executive suggests that there should be a clear separation between policy development and M&E, regulation, and implementation.
- Efficiency requires that effective service delivery be closer to the people. Thus, more local government is required but remains elusive.
- Similarly, efficiency requires that regulatory and delivery agencies (universities, hospitals etc.) should be independent and professionally staffed.

- Above all, ministries are for M&E and policy development. They should stop running PSEs, attached departments, implementing policy taking transactional decisions and regulating markets
- At a minimum we need clear separation between the federal provincial and local civil services not the current pyramidal structure that exists.

Policymaking, Record Keeping and M&E

- “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.
- Democracy through elections and consultations develops a general will which have to be translated into legislation and policy. The bureaucracy has to do the work of policy development for the cabinet decision. It should not be merely using donor work.
- M&E of the economy was done by the civil service even in the colonial days and it is lying in the India office library. Record-keeping of the civil service in those days served as M&E and is still used by research. Have we given up M&E?

Regulation

Regulation is a professional research and M&E job and should be totally outside the purview of the ministries for it to work effectively.

Perks, Privileges, Power

- Perks privileges and power need to be rationalized as they are non-transport and distracting from the goal of public service.
- Bureaucrats and politicians may not support each other but the reality is they cannot survive without each other.

Reform Efforts

- Too much tweaking leaving the old colonial system of centralization and confusion in place. Reform is seen only as improving performance and some processes leaving key issues alone.
- Reform is always envisaged to keep the pace too slow, blaming it on politics. But it seems it is more a matter of politics within government service than political will.
- There is limited research on the civil service and the public sector make no data available for such research.
- Sustenance of colonial superstructure which creates incentives that aligns interests of various aspects of the state of judiciary and provincial civil service or military or part or parcel of that. Any exit from the system, politicians or technocrats become allays of the existing system to sustain the stethoscope and to prevent reform. Everyone talking about reforms is an allay. No occupational group is bad. Our civil service is an absolute asset.
- Reforms should not be group specific. Making people friendly reform is important where there is improved service delivery and increased transparency. Reforms are not giving undefined powers to bureaucracy.

Stakeholders

Civil servants are a mirror image of society at large. Important stakeholder is the civil servant himself. Karachi and Lahore are like mini states and still run by DC. They need good governance. State has to change now. Lateral entry was not supported.

Clarity and Time Line for Reform Agendas

- Purpose of civil service reform must be clear. If the reform agenda is for the monopoly of one group, then it has no sense and purpose. Reform must target development and growth in the economy through service delivery.
- Reform is a slow process and cannot be achieved in one or five year. It may take a longer period. The question is how much more time we will take to bring suitable reforms?

Recruitment and Mobility

- Why should recruitment be a once in lifetime event with a guaranteed career?
- Should there be lateral entry
- Should there be more mobility into and out of the civil service?
- Previously reforms were partially implemented. Were studies problematic? Were institutions not fair?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9IBHq8O-08&feature=emb_logo



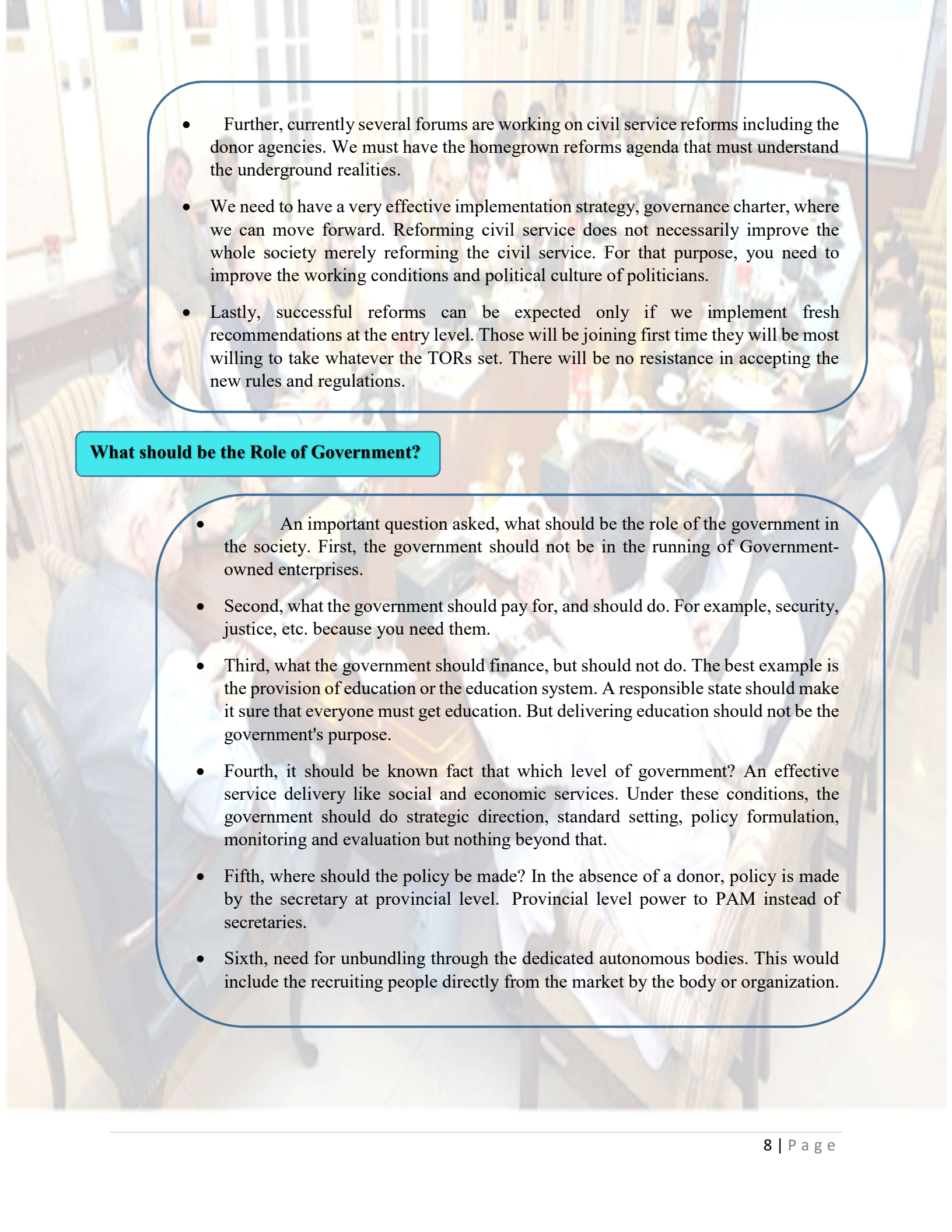
02 Structure of Civil Service Reforms

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.

Reform Commissions but Little Implementations

- 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.

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- 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.

Prepared by



Nadeem ul Haque
VC, PIDE



Naseem Faraz
Research Economist, PIDE

Design and Edited by Hafsa Hina



www.pide.org.pk



webinars@pide.org.pk



92-51-9248051



92-51-9428065