

EDITORIAL

Greetings from PIDE P&R. It marks a year when Covid-19 hit the world at its worst, almost forcing the world to shut down. All went silent and the normal had to change; the world had to adapt to the new normal that no bounds are rigid enough and no rules are inflexible. It reminded us that the only constant in the world is change. Change helps societies advance. Reform is the way to manage change.

The current issue focuses on the most talked reform in the country - the Civil Service Reform (CSR). The time is about right to bring out this issue as the CSS exams will be conducted in the middle of the month. This prestigious exam selects the bureaucratic elite of the country. The CSS has become stagnant overtime; it has failed to adapt the changing demands of time. Its centralized character and social distancing are relics of the colonial past. Even piecemeal efforts at reform have failed the test of implementation. Competencies have eroded and professional training does not meet the requirements of increasingly complex decision making. Political interference and arbitrary inductions have taken their own toll. Failure to devolve power and authority to the local level has adversely affected public service delivery.

Based on inhouse and invited research, PIDE has consistently raised its voice about the absolute essentiality of CSR in its webinars. This issue of P&R puts together the efforts PIDE has made on civil service reforms in particular, and reforms in some other institutions of governance. We are lucky to have a specially contributed piece by Dr. Ishrat Hussain, the author of the set of reforms announced recently. An interview, held before the announcement, touches on a broader set of issues. As first installment of reform, the measures taken are welcome. Mostly, these measures improve procedures, rules, open doors to groups other than DMG and revamp training and skill formation. It should be hoped that future reform will lead to changing the structure of the civil services. A number of the critical elements of the desired structural change are outlined in the other contributions in this issue.

Happy Reading!