

## REFORMING PAKISTAN'S BUREAUCRACY: ENHANCING GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY, AND PROFESSIONALISM FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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### ABSTRACT

This research study investigates the intricate dynamics of governance, institutional quality, and professionalism within Pakistan's bureaucratic framework, shedding light on the challenges impeding effective public administration and proposing strategic avenues for reform. Adopting a multidimensional analytical approach, the study examines how governance practices, institutional quality, and bureaucratic professionalism intersect and impact each other. The analysis employs a comprehensive review of current literature, empirical data, and expert perspectives to uncover the key flaws afflicting Pakistan's bureaucratic structure. The findings show that political involvement, widespread corruption, and inadequate institutional structures greatly reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration. These elements, in turn, influence the overall quality of governance and institutional capacity. In response, the research calls for a comprehensive reform agenda to improve governance, institutional quality, and bureaucratic professionalism. Reforming recruitment processes, putting in place capacity-building efforts, and establishing strong accountability mechanisms are among the key recommendations. Specific ideas include depoliticizing bureaucratic appointments, establishing merit-based promotion systems, and implementing targeted training programs to promote a professional and ethical culture. The research concludes by calling for a systematic and sustained approach to reform, emphasizing the need for a responsive, accountable bureaucracy capable of meeting the evolving needs of Pakistan's diverse and dynamic society. By addressing these critical issues and embracing the proposed recommendations, this study aims to contribute meaningfully to the broader discourse on governance and institutional development in developing countries, with implications for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners.

### INTRODUCTION

Effective governance and high institutional quality are pivotal for the sustainable development and stability of any state (Akram, 2020). In Pakistan, the interplay between governance, institutional quality, and bureaucratic professionalism presents a complex landscape, marked by both significant challenges and opportunities for reform. The effectiveness of public administration is crucial for managing resources, delivering services, and upholding the rule of law. However, the Pakistani bureaucracy faces systemic issues that undermine its efficiency and credibility. Governance, as a process and outcome, directly influences the capacity of public institutions to manage resources

and deliver services effectively. In Pakistan, the bureaucracy's governance crisis manifests in inefficiencies, lack of accountability, and a general erosion of public trust. This crisis is often attributed to institutional dysfunctions, such as inadequate structures, weak regulatory frameworks, and insufficient professional standards. Institutional quality, a key determinant of governance, encompasses the robustness of institutional frameworks, the clarity of operational procedures, and the overall effectiveness of institutional performance. Assessing and enhancing institutional quality in Pakistan's bureaucracy requires a nuanced understanding of its current

deficiencies and the development of targeted strategies for improvement (Ramzan et al., 2023). Bureaucratic professionalism, which includes the adherence to ethical standards, competence, and the ability to adapt to changing environments, is fundamental for effective governance. Evaluating the degree of professionalism within Pakistan's bureaucracy involves examining both structural and cultural factors that influence bureaucratic behavior and performance. This research paper aims to systematically assess these interconnected dimensions—governance, institutional quality, and bureaucratic professionalism—in Pakistan. By addressing the prevailing challenges and proposing strategic solutions, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on public administration reform. Through a rigorous analysis of current practices and institutional dynamics, this paper intends to offer actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and professionalism of Pakistan's bureaucratic institutions.

Iqbal, M., & Ahmad, E. (2006) claim that Pakistan's civil service has mainly followed the British model since its beginning, with a rank-based system that favors generalists over specialists and offers lifetime employment to incumbents. Despite these established norms, the civil service is under increasing pressure to professionalize due to both internal dynamics and external influences. The system, which has both federal and provincial components, pays its members substantially more than the per capita income of the average Pakistani. However, this remuneration still falls behind that of private sector managers and multinational employees in the country. The success of Pakistan's civil service is inextricably connected to the quality of its governance system. Effective governance is viewed as a critical component for promoting civil service reforms (CSR). This paper investigates the critical role of governance in supporting CSR by focusing on the structural and procedural aspects of governance that influence public service efficiency and reform initiatives. Key questions covered include: What are the various forms of governance? What constitutes good governance and CSR? How does governance relate to CSR? And what are the key components of successful CSR? Addressing these questions sheds light on the intricate link between governance procedures and public service reform. Understanding this

interaction is critical for devising successful measures to improve the civil service, which is critical to Pakistan's economic growth and development. This assessment emphasizes the importance of addressing the institutional underpinnings of governance concerns in order to accomplish significant and sustainable transformation in the civil service sector.

Pakistan aims to become a developed, industrialized, equitable, and rich country within the next 20-25 years. The plan calls for rapid and sustainable development, despite limited resources, by harnessing knowledge-based inputs. The plan for this transformation entails making intelligent and efficient use of the country's inherent and developed competitive advantages. In order to succeed, Pakistan must actively participate in the global economy by trading goods, labor, capital, technology (Akram et al., 2021; 2022), and services, which will have far-reaching consequences for the country's future administration. The 21st century is characterized by a knowledge-based economy that faces unprecedented difficulties. With 180 countries competing for market share in the ever-expanding global economy, only those who can adapt to changing demand patterns, supply networks, and technological breakthroughs can survive (Ma et al., 2024). Pakistan must compete with these countries to be successful.

To effectively compete in the globalized market through structural economic reforms, Pakistan must have stable, competent, and responsive institutions to carry out these changes. However, the current situation is difficult since these reforms may result in displacement and dislocation, which can be mitigated by robust and effective institutions capable of absorbing the shocks of change. Prioritizing the development of such organizations is critical, especially in the public sector, where bureaucracy is prevalent. Evaluating and changing bureaucracy has become crucial to achieving long-term goals and meeting the problems of the twenty-first century. Development economists contend that competent government is not only necessary to address market failings, but it may also be sufficient to produce economic progress. Existing research on governance in developed and developing nations demonstrates that a competent bureaucracy and the ability to collect taxes are critical components of

modernization (Zakria, 2020). China's rapid rise to global economic superpower status in just 40 years can be attributed in large part to its merit-based bureaucracy and focused leadership. Political appointments for mayors, governors, and Politburo members are mostly based on performance.

This paper specifically examines the Executive branch of the State and does not probe into the Parliament or judiciary. The aim is to evaluate if the government's structures, processes, and human resource policies and practices are capable of meeting new demands or require modification. It is important to note that this paper only looks at one aspect of the governance system and a broader analysis of the interplay between the State, Market, and Society is necessary.

### **Problem statement**

Pakistan ranks 37.5th globally in terms of overall governance (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2022). Public discourse, policy discussions, and academic studies frequently criticize the bureaucracy, citing it as a major source of the country's bad governance. Despite several attempts to reform the bureaucracy and improve governance, these initiatives have had little results. This viewpoint, however, may oversimplify a more complex situation. To produce effective reform proposals that serve the public interest, we must go deeper into the debate through thorough study on governance, institutional quality, and bureaucratic professionalism.

### **Research Questions**

In light of the problem statement, this study aims to explore several critical questions regarding the bureaucracy in Pakistan. First, it examines the key governance challenges faced by the bureaucracy and seeks to identify strategies for resolving these issues. Second, it discusses how the institutional quality of Pakistan's bureaucracy can be efficiently measured and improved. Finally, the study investigates the level of professionalism inside the bureaucracy and proposes techniques for assessing and improving this element. These issues, taken together, seek to provide a thorough assessment of Pakistan's bureaucratic governance crisis and viable reform paths.

### **Significance and Scope of Study**

The research topic "Governance, Institutional Quality, and Professionalism in Pakistani Bureaucracy: Challenges and Way Forward" is

significant because it is relevant to Pakistan's development and progress. The bureaucratic system is an essential component of governance and plays a critical role in the smooth operation of the state. However, Pakistan's bureaucratic structure has encountered various obstacles, including political involvement, corruption, a lack of accountability, and insufficient training and education (Akram et al., 2022; Akram & Yang, 2021). This research topic can help find strategies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Pakistan's bureaucracy by examining the problems and concerns connected to governance, institutional quality, and professionalism. This, in turn, can help to promote good governance, improve institutional quality, and build a culture of professionalism and meritocracy within Pakistan. This research topic is extensive in scope, covering many facets of Pakistan's bureaucratic structure. It describes the bureaucratic system's history, organization, and functions, as well as the challenges and issues that it faces. The topic also discusses how these challenges affect the overall efficacy and efficiency of the bureaucratic system, as well as proposals for enhancing governance, institutional quality, and professionalism in the bureaucracy of Pakistan. The scope of this research topic thus provides a thorough grasp of Pakistan's bureaucratic structure and its potential for improvement.

### **Literature Review**

According to Khan (2017), Pakistan's bureaucratic structure lacks meritocracy and professionalism, with political involvement and nepotism dominating the recruiting and selection process. This creates a bureaucratic culture that is resistant to change, lacks accountability, and fails to provide effective governance. Similarly, Ahmed and Mahmood (2020) discuss the issues of Pakistan's bureaucratic structure, such as corruption, a lack of openness and accountability, and insufficient training and education. They propose that these issues can be solved by fostering a culture of professionalism and meritocracy, decreasing political meddling, and strengthening accountability systems.

Shahzad and Naseem (2021) also investigate the issues of Pakistan's bureaucratic structure, with a focus on the effects of political intervention on bureaucratic performance. They contend that

political meddling reduces bureaucratic autonomy, impairs meritocracy, and fosters a culture of corruption and patronage. In terms of recommendations, Abbas and Arshad (2019) propose that improving the recruitment and selection process for bureaucrats, providing better training and education opportunities, and promoting a culture of professionalism and meritocracy can help address the challenges confronting Pakistan's bureaucratic system. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2018) advocate eliminating political influence, enhancing accountability procedures, and developing a meritocratic and professional culture in order to improve the efficacy and efficiency of Pakistan's bureaucratic systems.

Noor et al., (2022) examine the complex relationship between governance and corruption in emerging nations, focusing on the issues confronting Pakistan's public sector, particularly in terms of institutional dynamics. The author contends that there is an inverse link between governance quality and corruption, implying that as corruption increases, governance deteriorates. This phenomena is especially common in transitional cultures, as corruption frequently gets strongly ingrained in institutional culture rather than broader society culture. The study uses the rational choice neo-institutional theory of political science and the agency theory of economics to explain the conduct of public agents in corrupt settings. The author also contends that agents are rational actors who aim to maximize their benefits, frequently bending or breaking rules in order to do so unless restricted by strong institutional structures. The study underlines the necessity of institutional reorganization, based on Weberian bureaucratic concepts, in combating corruption and improving government. This approach is exemplified by the opposing behaviors of civil officials in Pakistan's general bureaucracy, where corruption is common, and the Motorway Police, which maintains a comparatively high level of integrity despite functioning in the same socioeconomic milieu.

This study also gives information on the perceptions of corruption within Pakistan's civil service, contrasting them with those held by the general public and overseas experts. The study found that views of corruption are stable across demographics, yet there is a significant relationship

between an agent's age and experience and their impression of corruption. Furthermore, the study identifies critical elements that contribute to corruption, such as insufficient financial remuneration, ineffective accountability procedures, and discretionary authority. By comparing these findings to the procedures of the Motorway Police, Noor believes that better wages, leadership, and accountability are crucial in eliminating corruption. The study delves deeper into the historical evolution of corruption in South Asia, focusing on Pakistan, and makes practical policy recommendations. Noor argues for promoting social responsibility, combating petty corruption, regulating public perceptions of corruption, prioritizing anti-corruption measures, and making optimal use of honest human resources. The report emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach that includes structural reforms and cultural adjustments to effectively combat corruption in Pakistan's bureaucracy.

In the academic discussion about governance According to Kamal, M. (2020), good governance is acknowledged as both a critical process and a desired goal for participatory democracy to work well. Over the last three decades, the notion has received a lot of attention in political science, where it is employed as a crucial criterion to assess how efficiently and effectively public institutions manage resources and run public affairs. The present research strongly supports the idea that excellent governance is essential for attaining sustainable development. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank, commonly mention poor governance as a major contributor to third-world countries' underdevelopment. Pakistan, a federation with multiple ethno-linguistic identities, has had chronic governance issues since becoming an independent state. According to the literature, the failure and dysfunctionality of public institutions are important hurdles to achieving good governance in Pakistan. These institutional flaws not only impede the governance process, but also worsen the country's larger developmental issues. By critically assessing Pakistan's governance difficulties, this analysis emphasizes the need of institutional reform in overcoming these barriers and ensuring sustainable growth within the country.

Adnan, M., & Fatima, B. (2018) claim that Pakistan's governance has had ongoing issues from

its creation in 1947. The political environment is dominated by powerful actors who influence the state's trajectory based on their own interests. These forces have had a considerable impact on Pakistan's struggle to build and sustain democratic administration, as well as its efforts to assure internal security and present a stable image on a global scale. The most pressing issue affecting Pakistan today is terrorism, which has harmed the country's international reputation while also complicating internal decision-making processes and interstate ties. The literature on governance in Pakistan emphasizes the importance of well-planned and effective governance techniques in achieving the country's political and socioeconomic development goals. However, Pakistan's governance system is riddled with complications and shortcomings, particularly in the political, economic, and social domains. These governance concerns are evident in the country's continued struggles with political insecurity, poor leadership, and socioeconomic challenges. The article emphasizes the significance of political, economic, and social reforms to address Pakistan's current inadequacies. The conversation also emphasizes the role of provincial leaders in defining the country's political environment, with many putting their own goals over the common good. As a result, Pakistan's government remains poor, plagued by insecurity and other political inadequacies.

The literature suggests that achieving good governance in Pakistan requires a comprehensive approach that addresses structural difficulties within its political, economic, and social institutions. This would entail not only modernizing current institutions, but also ensuring that governance is consistent with the overarching aims of stability and growth. Overall, the literature study reveals that Pakistan's bureaucratic system confronts substantial challenges in terms of governance, institutional quality, and professionalism. However, there is widespread agreement that these issues can be solved by fostering a culture of professionalism and meritocracy, decreasing political involvement, increasing accountability systems, and expanding bureaucratic training and education opportunities.

#### **Research Methodology**

The research paper predominantly employs a descriptive analysis approach, utilizing secondary

data obtained from a variety of sources including books, newspaper articles, websites of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and online reports.

#### **Section 1: Governance Crisis of the Bureaucracy in Pakistan**

Pakistan has been dealing with a governance problem for quite some time, which has had a negative impact on the country's economic and social development. The bureaucracy, as a vital institution of governance, has also suffered from the crisis. This section will provide an outline of the governance crisis in Pakistan's bureaucracy and discuss the challenges. The governance issue in Pakistan's bureaucracy is caused by a lack of accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and participation. The rule of law and human rights are also not effectively respected, and meritocracy is not given enough weight. Autonomy and collaboration are also weak, limiting the bureaucracy's effectiveness. Human resource policy and management have been assessed after the 1973 reforms and discovered to have various flaws. The loss of the constitutional guarantee for job security and salary compression resulted in a drop in the quality of new recruitment. This resulted in the degradation of civil institutions as well as a reduction in government delivery and capacity. Reforms are required to increase the efficiency and prestige of bureaucracy, including recruitment techniques, career advancement, training, and performance evaluation. The organization of public servants is significantly distorted, with Grades 1-16 accounting for the majority of the annual wage expense while raising concerns about their utility, efficiency, and productivity. E-Government and Business Process Engineering would further cut the number of civil officials. A clear policy on attrition and non-replacement is required, as are pay packages and the inclusion of technical specialists in decision-making procedures. Business processes and rules must be modernized, and the use of current IT tools should be expanded. Internal accountability systems have weakened, making honest civil servants afraid and perpetuating a culture of inaction.

It is proposed that the complete value chain, including induction and recruitment, training, performance evaluation, career advancement and

promotion, remuneration and benefits, retirement, and internal responsibility, be strengthened. It is critical to underline that all of the value chain components are interconnected and must be enhanced concurrently to create a virtuous cycle. Simply boosting pay and salary without enhancing the performance review system would be ineffective. Similarly, an unappealing pay structure would make it harder to attract talented employees. If promotions are not based on competence, knowledge development, and work performance, mediocrity will persist. To fulfill future needs, we must highlight an individual's abilities and performance while eliminating the current seniority-based strategy.

### **1.1 Induction and Recruitment**

The existing recruiting procedure for Pakistan's Civil Services is considered inadequate since it is based on standardized civil service exams that do not effectively equip the majority of applicants to meet the specialized criteria of their various occupational groups. The recruitment process is divided into two stages: (a) entry-level induction at Grade 17 for 12 occupational groups (Cadres) via a competitive Central Superior Services (CSS) examination held annually or Provincial Civil Services examinations, and (b) ad-hoc selection at Grade 17-21 for Ex-Cadre and non-Cadre vacancies as they arise. CSS exam candidates are generalists who advance to the majority of managerial positions in various sectors, whereas Ex-Cadre and Non-Cadre officers are specialists in fields such as teaching, health, engineering, accounting, information technology (Chen & Ramzan, 2024), economics, science, and agricultural research, and are recruited by the Federal Public Service Commission and the respective Provincial Public Service Commission. There are few opportunities to get specialized, subject-specific expertise in the current hiring process, which attempts to draw in youthful people and give a broad career path. In spite of the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) and Provincial Public Service Commissions' introduction of structured rules, candidates who appear for the Civil Services exam are still required to take subject combinations that may not be related to their preferred occupational groups. Exam results, examiner reports, and candidate profiles are analyzed, and the results indicate that many

applicants have difficulty passing the exam, with those from a few top universities performing better. Furthermore, a sizable percentage of applicants withdraw from consideration, as only half of those who register actually take the test. Although the difficulties encountered by Civil Services aspirants are indicative of a wider learning crisis in Pakistan's educational system, it is advised to maximize the advantages of the Competitive Examination while working within the current limitations.

Since the marks for the social sciences and sciences are different, giving candidates with more experience in the pure sciences an advantage, the CSS exam may implement percentile scores to ensure equitable opportunity. The provincial quota for the least developed areas may be determined by educational background rather than just place of residence, with a specific dispensation requiring the completion of two degrees and twelve years of study in the area of residence. Candidates for the CSS exam should aim to be no older than 28 years old, as younger officers are more open to idealism in public service and grooming. It is suggested that the age relaxation policy for government employees be removed in order to guarantee equitable employment opportunities.

Psychological support and counseling should be offered on campus, and pre-service training should involve frequent psychological evaluations conducted by qualified professionals rather than academics. To have a deeper awareness of the socio-cultural milieu, officers must possess appropriate field experience in addition to proficiency in one local language. It is strongly advised to create novel approaches to enhance service delivery that have a long-lasting effect and that are connected to performance metrics. Officers need tenure security so they can concentrate on their work without worrying about being replaced unexpectedly or about outside influences interfering.

While OMG officers must serve two terms in two major Ministries in different sectors within the Federal Government, PAS and PSP officers may work for periods of time in Federal and Provincial Secretariats to obtain expertise at the policy level. The Central Services of Pakistan, with distinct cadres for professionals like engineers, doctors, etc., may take the role of the Central Superior Services. Each cadre would have well-defined

Service Rules that detailed cadre positions at every level, career trajectories, the ladder of promotions, and qualifying requirements.

The type of experience obtained, the competence acquired, the training institutes' appraisal reports, and the dossier of performance evaluation reports would all be taken into consideration for future placement and postings. Foreign training facilities and posts ought to be staffed via an open, competitive process. The criteria for codifying promotion policy should include prior experience records, Training Institute appraisal reports, ratings from performance reviews, and selection board marks. All officials in Grades 19 and 21 of the Federal Secretariat should be eligible to apply for competitive internal employment vacancies, which will be filled through that procedure. To choose technical specialists from the commercial sector, academia, overseas Pakistanis, etc., the FPSC and Provincial Public Service Commissions should announce job openings for Technical Advisers.

In the initial decades following independence, the current system of superior civil services, which draws young men and women through an open competitive examination and requires them to serve the government for 30 to 35 years, had functioned fairly successfully. The difficulties facing public service in the twenty-first century have grown more intricate. The best talent at the time of entry is no longer drawn to the Superior Services at the same time.

As a result, this concept of guaranteed career path based on an entrance exam at a young age is no longer relevant or viable. Therefore, a new hybrid paradigm is suggested as the way ahead, one that fosters, encourages, and draws upon subject knowledge and expertise while combining it with broad-based experience, leadership qualities, and the capacity to integrate many viewpoints and policy inputs.

Three challenges face the top echelons of the bureaucracy. First off, despite spending decades in the service, the recruited cohorts lack the fundamental specialized skills needed to serve the government in a variety of professions. This exclusive group of officers rises to hold important policy-making positions, but occasionally the quality of their work suffers from their lack of domain expertise. Second, there is a discrepancy between the officers' abilities and the responsibilities given to them. Officers' prior

training and job experience are rarely taken into consideration when making decisions on placement, posting, and promotion. This results in the under-utilization or improper allocation of an officer's talents and experience in a certain field. A third challenge is the frequent and unplanned rotation of generalists across a wide range of fields, from Religious Affairs to Finance, without providing them with sufficient time and opportunity to acquire competence in any specific area of policy-making.

The Senior Public Service (SPS) concept is one that has been implemented by numerous nations worldwide. Various nations, such as Singapore, Japan, South Korea, and Britain, have unique senior public services models that differ from one another in terms of the level of transparency provided. Around the world, there are systems that are position- and career-based. In career-based systems, senior officers are hired into an elite permanent bureaucracy and gradually elevated to the SPS. Recruitment from outside the government or from municipal and provincial administrations is frequently not permitted under this 264 system. On the other hand, a position-based system is generally regarded as more inclusive since it permits hiring from within the elite bureaucracy while simultaneously opening positions to other government employees at various levels and to qualified candidates from the private sector.

### **1.2 Training**

There is a growing consensus that public administration is becoming worse, with questions being raised about the qualifications, abilities, and conduct of public employees. There is a growing consensus that public administration is becoming worse, with questions being raised about the qualifications, abilities, and conduct of public employees. It has been expressed that this is an issue both inside and outside the bureaucracy. Building capacity within the bureaucracy is directly related to training officers both during their post-induction training and as they advance in their careers. Together with on-the-job training and supervisor mentoring, training programs for civil officials must become a crucial part of building the abilities needed to carry out their duties. Both job performance and training accomplishments are necessary for career growth and promotion. Given the importance of training, it is therefore vital to

examine the current system, pinpoint its shortcomings, and suggest modifications for the future.

Government employees who work in specialized fields like engineering, science, agriculture, public health, education, and economics find that their skill sets deteriorate over time as a result of a lack of refresher courses or systematic training to stay up to date with the most recent advancements in their fields (Ramzan & Alahmadi, 2024). Because of this, the government is forced to either rely on donors or hire pricey consultants to plan, organize, and carry out development programs. Post-induction, mid-career, and ongoing professional development programs for former Cadre and non-Cadre officers must be set up in order to address this problem. Their training results and performance while working should also be connected to their professional advancement.

Most officers in the Federal and Provincial Governments work in a variety of fields, including engineering, accounting, economics, medicine, education, agriculture, science, and financial analysis. Regular in-service training in their particular fields should be provided to these officers (Li & Akram, 2023; Nawaz et al., 2020). Promotion to the next grade should require passing the required courses and earning certification in them. It may be necessary for established institutions, like an engineering academy, to create and implement professional in-service training, but in other situations, existing institutions may be required to construct these training programs.

Most people think that the training modules that are now offered are too general to give officers the skills they need for their next job or career path. The fundamental goal of early training should be to impart subject knowledge. Behavioral competencies and managerial skills, particularly soft skills, should also receive some emphasis. These three abilities are given varying amounts of weight as officers go up the career ladder, with Grade 21/22 levels placing more weight on leadership competencies. The social and interpersonal abilities of trainees are frequently not sufficiently improved by the present curriculum. Furthermore, the training programs are uniform and use a one-size-fits-all approach, which makes it difficult to make adjustments in areas where each officer's needs are unique.

The government currently faces a number of training-related challenges, such as: the courses offered are too general and fail to address the specialized work that civil servants are assigned in their respective jobs; the courses do not encourage specialization in various policy subfields, which is crucial given the changing nature of government; and the current training system is disproportionately biased towards mid-career and senior civil servants, and falls short when it comes to training lower-ranked employees, who make up the majority of government staff nationwide and frequently serve as the public-government interface.

### **1.3 Performance Management and Promotion**

The existing performance management system has been deemed inadequate, because of its high degree of subjectivity, making it challenging to give a thorough, measurable, and impartial evaluation of individual performance. Since most evaluation reports tended to be biased upward, most officers' annual confidential report evaluations were either excellent or very good. It was not possible for this approach to discern between people who performed well and those who were mediocre or below average. Additionally, annual raises were given to all employees without distinction based on performance, which discouraged workers from putting in their best effort and working hard.

One major problem with the existing system is that those who enlist in the government between the ages of 25 and 28 are not required to further their education or training. Professional development is not correlated with the skills or behavior demonstrated in their work. Officers are not encouraged to specialize or gain knowledge in any of the government ministry or department clusters by the posting and placement procedures. As a result, an officer might be assigned to the Secretary for Industries and Production one day, the Secretary for Religious Affairs the next, and the Secretary for Health the third.

Although some highly intelligent people want to learn and succeed in the workplace, this method of creating policies is dangerous and chaotic. A shortfall in value for money and insufficient returns to the exchequer result from the absence of technical knowledge to examine and assess complex plans, projects, and concession agreements worth billions of rupees coming from



connected departments and autonomous organizations. Despite certain exceptions, it has been noted that in certain technical ministries, a small number of highly skilled personnel wield considerable power, and the minister and secretary rely unduly on them.

The following are the criteria that an officer must meet to be considered for promotion:

- Minimum length of active service for promotion to higher grades.
- Clear disciplinary record.
- Required Performance Evaluation Report (PER) threshold.
- Successful completion of training course.

The existing Promotion Policy has not been able to provide civil personnel with any motivation. Promotion decisions have been challenged in superior courts due to the difficulty of implementing in a transparent and uniform manner due to the lack of objective metrics to measure performance. Government lawyers face challenges to their supersession as a result of the numerous writ petitions filed by civil servants. The following problems must be resolved for the promotion strategy to be a more useful tool for career planning and performance management:

The Promotion Policy does not evaluate integrity, which is required in the PER form. The reports from intelligence services are relied upon in the lack of an impartial assessment technique. Since the officer is not informed of the accusations made against them or given the chance to address them, this practice is unfair. Officers contesting decisions made against them frequently results in legal issues.

The current Promotion Policy requires civil servants to complete mandatory training at NSPP, NDU, or NIM for promotion to posts in BS scales 19, 20 & 21. Even while performance in these trainings now carries more weight, training still has to be a means of gaining certain abilities and leadership traits that will enable officers to carry out their tasks at a higher degree of responsibility. Specialized training should be made available to both former cadre officers and non-cadet officers. Although a variety of experiences is regarded as one of the requirements for advancement to the next grade, there are no rules governing an officer's professional profile. The lack of relevant or varied experience that was necessary for promotions has

resulted in the replacement of many officers. Since the career planning process in the Establishment Division and Services Departments in the provinces is inadequate and unable to guarantee that a civil servant obtains a variety of professional experience over the course of their career, it seems that this is an unfair basis.

While merit is acknowledged as the foundation for advancement to higher positions, the current policy only lays out the qualifying requirements, which is insufficient on its own, and does not provide a clear explanation of the other aspects and considerations affecting selection on merit. There are significant problems with the current Annual Confidential Report (ACR) quantification method and the level that must be met in order to be considered for promotion.

The reportees are scrambling to get their evaluating officers to give them the qualifying marks for attaining the needed threshold because of the significant weight placed on meeting the ACR criterion for promotion purposes. Some immediate supervisors use the extremely subjective, irrelevant, and non-measurable qualities of the PER system to compel their subordinates to be obedient and docile. The promotion policy is no longer a useful instrument for career development because of the problems with the PER system and the excessive weight that has been placed on it.

- Reform commissions have repeatedly noted a number of fundamental problems that impact civil servants at every stage of their careers. These problems include, but are not limited to: outmoded hiring practices, politicization, corruption, demoralization, a lack of pertinent experience and knowledge, ambiguous job descriptions, and subjective assessments. The following suggestions have been made in order to guarantee equitable promotion based on merit and openness:
- Replace the current system with an objective, quantifiable, and verifiable Performance Management System (PMS).
- There should be non-selection positions up to grade 18, and promotions should be based on seniority as well as performance, fitness, and integrity. Promotions must to be contingent on the competencies and performance demonstrated in the most recent training assessments and performance evaluation

reports. Postings with a grade of 19 or higher ought to be selection posts.

- While leadership qualities should be prioritized for advancement from Grade 21 to 22, behavioral and operational competence should be the main focus for promotion from Grade 19 to 20.
- Recent assignments and performance evaluation reports from the previous two grades should be used to assess prior performance.
- Officer career planning should be handled by the Establishment Division and administrative heads of other Services/Groups; each officer's professional and organizational objectives should be taken into consideration while defining their career path.
- Intelligence agency reports about an officer's integrity should only be considered if the officer is given a chance to respond to the allegations.
- Increase the size of the Central Selection Board and include senior officers with a range of experiences and backgrounds to counteract personal prejudices and promote open communication. This will improve the Board's performance. Based on their combined experience, training evaluations, and track record of success, the board members should reach a decision. Only the decision should be included in the minutes, and the Board's debate should remain private. The Provincial Selection Boards ought to implement similar changes as well.
- The aforementioned standards should also apply to civil officials in specialized cadres, such as physicians, educators, researchers, professors, and holders of solely technical positions, when it comes to promotions to positions with administrative duties. For positions comprising just professional and technical responsibilities, two promotion streams should be taken into account: structural promotions in response to openings and professional promotions based on quality and accomplishments in professional activities.

Establishing a reward system that identifies high performers and eliminates those who fall short of expectations is essential to manage civil servant

performance. Regrettably, there aren't any comparable processes in Pakistan's public sector, where it's assumed that working for the government until sixty is a given. In addition to demotivating strong performers, failing to fire inefficient personnel hurts current staff members' chances of getting promoted. Despite the fact that the 1973 Civil Servant Act permits officials to be forced into retirement after 20 years of service, this provision has never been implemented because there are no applicable regulations. To address this issue, the Establishment Division has recently introduced the Directory Retirement Rules.

#### **1.4 Pay, Compensation and Benefits**

One essential link in the integrated human resource value chain is the government's benefits and compensation package. The best talent from universities and other higher education institutions, however, has been difficult for the Civil Services to recruit, retain, and inspire since the 1973 reforms because of a thrown off balance between job security and salary. Civil Servants' morale and motivation have suffered as a result of unified pay systems, which lump people with radically different duties and responsibilities in the same grade. It is not feasible to raise the pay of professionals with superior training, expertise, and experience because doing so will arbitrarily raise the pay of everyone in that grade.

The vast majority (90%) of government employees are classified as support workers and work in Grades 1 through 16. They receive more money than their colleagues in the private sector, accounting for 80–85% of the entire wage and allowance budget. On the other hand, officers in Grades 17–22 make up only 15%–25% of the overall salary, and their take-home income is significantly less than that of their counterparts in the private sector. Inequalities in pay between government departments and agencies lead to discontent and heartburn, which in turn reduces overall productivity. For example, some employees may earn twice as much as others in the same grade. Furthermore, only 15% of officers benefit from government housing that is subsidized, whilst 85% receive an allowance for house rent. The nation's public finances are under peril from the exploding bomb that is the ever-expanding pension bill. In addition to increasing life expectancy, the pay-as-you-go program, which presently provides

individuals and survivor family members with substantial and liberal payments, is proving to be a significant financial burden on the public coffers. Pension reform will eventually surpass overall income collection if it is not started right away. Previous reform agendas have focused on the salary and perks of civil servants, but it is generally acknowledged that in the long run, the advantages of a living wage outweigh the disadvantages. A 2006 study by Faiz Bilquees was one of the attempts in the past to rationalize salaries and compensation for civil officers. The study concluded that work capacity and motivation were negatively impacted by the growing pay disparity between government and private sector employees. The Pay and Pension Committee 2004 also discovered that public sector earnings were significantly lower when comparing workers in similar private sector positions to those in the public sector.

The National Commission on Government Reforms recommended differentiated approaches to enhance salaries for civil servants, as well as to address the wage gap for senior level civil servants. In order to remedy inadequate remuneration, MP scales, special allowances, and project allowances were used; however, it is still necessary to guarantee equal opportunity and openness in the selection processes for all applicants. Raising remuneration has the potential to decrease corruption, boost productivity and efficiency, and cut down on wasteful government spending. The NCGR suggested changing the pay scale for civil servants by adding more regular and special relief allowances, implementing systemic and parametric pension reforms, enhancing the ability to manage human resources, implementing pay for performance, and indexing pensions to preserve purchasing power. They also suggested tying housing allowances to house ownership and instituting health insurance for public servants.

### **1.5 Government Procedures and Processes**

A number of significant problems are currently plaguing the government, such as: (i) protracted delays in work processing; (ii) an excessive concentration of authority; and (iii) communication breakdowns within ministries.

Automating business operations is the best approach to improve productivity in Pakistan's public sector. In truth, there are numerous

examples where the application of cutting-edge information technologies (IT) has revolutionized the way services are provided and significantly increased productivity (Akram & Abdelrady, 2023; Abdelrady & Akram, 2022). In Pakistan's public sector, automation of business operations has led to the rise of pioneers such as SECP, FBR, and NADRA. The Performance Management and Reforms Unit in Peshawar and the Punjab Information Technology Board have also led IT initiatives that have greatly enhanced the performance of numerous sectors within the provincial governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The difficulties Pakistan is facing in implementing e-governance reforms are covered by Kazmi (2010).

The delegation of authority both within and between divisions and departments is necessary to improve the way the public sector operates. In this regard, the Institutional Reforms Cell (IRC) was instrumental in putting numerous reforms into action. The Public Financial Management Act of 2019, which gave all Principal Accounting Officers (PAOs) considerable financial authority, was the first substantial reform. The Chief Financial and Accounts Officer (CFAO) offices took the role of the Financial Adviser organizations, and in order to delegate pre-audit responsibilities, the Accountant General of Pakistan Revenue suboffices were formed in 12 Ministries and Divisions. The demand heads were updated to resolve problems with Technical Supplementary Grants, and the most recent financial budget for 2021–2022 was allotted under these new heads to provide the PAOs more authority. Additionally, changes were made to expedite the hiring of contract employees and consultants as well as the approval procedure for new PSDP schemes. A thorough analysis of these reforms is given in this volume.

Lastly, to streamline operations and interdepartmental consultations following proposals need consideration:

- The top administrative layer must provide strong support for e-governance reforms to be implemented successfully, and the highest levels of political leadership must be fully committed. (Malik and others, 2016)
- The Prime Minister should be the direct reporter of the Chief Information Technology

Officer (CITO) appointed by the National Information Technology Board (NITB).

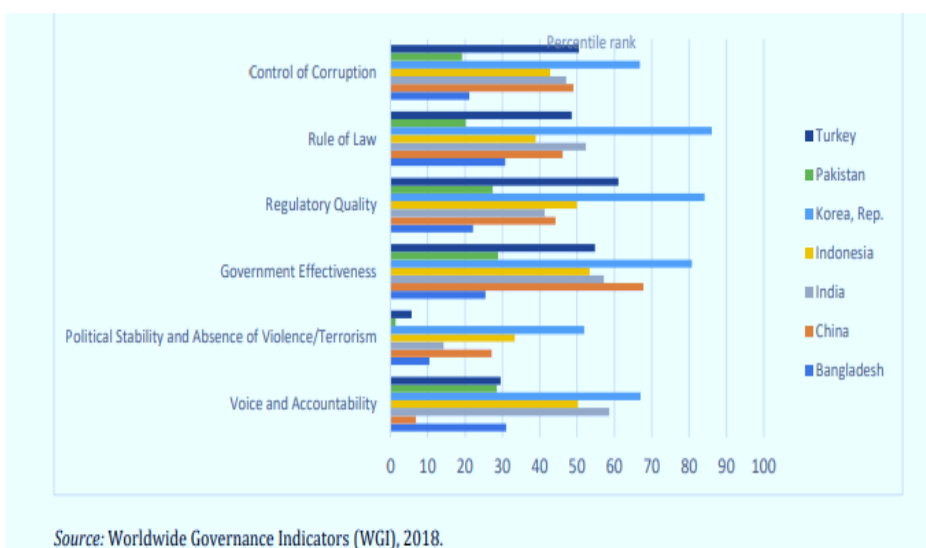
- For NITB to operate effectively, it should be granted independent authority and a sufficient budget.
- A permanent E-Office directorate should be established within NITB to maintain and support e-office software.
- All Cabinet committee operations ought to be fully automated, just like the Cabinet itself.
- All summaries for the Prime Minister and the Cabinet should be automated in the same manner as Cabinet meetings.
- A comprehensive file tracking system should be developed to monitor and expedite interdivisional file movement.
- IT Boards ought to own internal software development capabilities to fulfill government requirements, akin to PMRU and PITB.
- The Citizen Portal application should be linked effectively to the performance management and evaluations of all officers.
- A new Government Area Network (GAN) devoted to secure G2G communications should be established by the NTC.
- IT professionals should have access to a pay scale that is in line with market rates by creating an IT cadre.
- To manage and analyze data specific to citizens, a high-level national database

authority should be established. This authority should have complete interconnection to all current databases, such as those maintained by the NADRA, Passport, FBR, FIA, Police, and so on. Improving national security and widening the tax base need the creation of such a database.

### Section 2: Institutional Quality and Professionalism of the Bureaucracy in Pakistan

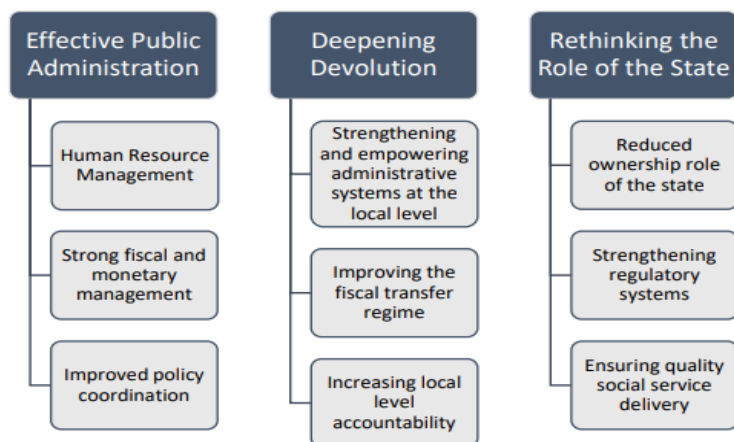
The institutional quality of Pakistan's bureaucracy has been a longstanding issue that has hindered the country's economic and social development. This section seeks to give a general overview of the institutional quality issues the bureaucracy is facing and to investigate potential remedies.

It is now commonly understood that institutional strength is essential to a nation's social and economic development, as Figure A illustrates. Institutions that are fair, transparent, responsible, and participatory are necessary to protect property rights and avoid policy gridlock. Institutions that lack these attributes may find it more difficult for a nation to maximize both its economic and human development. Studies by Rodrik, Subramanian, and Trebbi (2004) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) demonstrate the important role that strong and functional institutions play in promoting transformative economic growth.



To get Pakistan ready to become a high-income nation, a new way of thinking about public service must be established. It will be necessary to change civil servant conduct, organizational culture, trade

tools, and government employees' objectives in order to achieve this. Three methods can be used to do this, as indicated below:



**Source: World Bank Policy Note on Pakistan @ 100 Governance and Institutions, March 2019**

Making significant changes to the public administration system to increase its effectiveness and efficiency is the first strategy. The second strategy focuses on deepening devolution by fortifying the fiscal and administrative frameworks that sustain devolved activities. Reassessing the state's capacity to assist the market and improve service delivery is the third strategy. The specifics of these three paths are covered in the paragraphs that follow.

**2.1 Strengthening Human Resource Management (HRM)**

Pakistan wants to become a high-income economy, and to do so, the HRM system needs to change to meet the demands of a 21st-century contemporary public service. The entire HRM framework—including hiring, onboarding, in-service training, career progression, pay structures, performance reviews, and accountability frameworks—must be transformed. The HRM system can only properly serve the demands of a civil service that is changing quickly with these modifications.

**2.2 Reskilling the Civil Service through Targeted Training**

Redesigning training programs will be required in order to offer tailored improvements to the technical skills of different civil service work

streams and cadres. To address the difficulties of performance and service delivery in the public sector, there needs to be a push for more professionalism, innovation, and skill in making evidence-based and strategic decisions at all levels of the bureaucracy—federal, provincial, and municipal. Positive reinforcement and suitable incentives should be used to promote collaboration and eradicate rivalry amongst services. It will also be necessary to create competitive exams for grade 21–22 positions in all services.

**2.3 Training and Capacity-building Approaches Rethinking**

In order to equip public servants for the impending economic shift, it will be imperative to reevaluate the strategies for in-service training and capacity-building initiatives. Supporting specialist training centers inside the federal civil service is one way to improve public administration and training. To enhance technical knowledge and abilities, these institutions should provide domain-specific training guided by certified instructors and demand-driven training programs. Certain courses may become required to be completed in order to be promoted, and in order to motivate employees, training ought to be connected to quick professional advancement. Training should mainly target government officials at grade levels BS 16

and below in order to target the lower-capacity workers. The emphasis should be on technical skills, such as the use of technology in management and decision-making, and on-the-job training should play a major role in continuous learning.

#### **2.4 Expanding the Use of Technology**

Transform Pakistan Policy by the government has made it possible to increase the use of technology in public administration, giving employees the chance to work better and interact with the public more successfully. Pakistani provinces' recent experiences may offer a helpful paradigm for incorporating digital technologies like AI and machine learning into public sector administration. This would entail utilizing ICT to improve service delivery and boost public sector management effectiveness. In addition to investing in new technologies to improve accounting, performance management, outcome measurement, and citizen communication across the service delivery value chain, technology might also be used to improve data collecting and curation of citizen behavior and requirements.

The cornerstone of every effective e-governance initiative is procedures and norms, as highlighted by the Government's Vision 2025. It is imperative to address concerns of sustainability, interactivity, and standardization of e-governance activities in order to update governance structures and procedures using technology. With the government's ratification of the Digital Transform Pakistan Policy, there is a chance to promote the widespread adoption of technology to modernize Pakistan's public administration processes.

#### **2.5 Modernizing PFM**

An efficient public financial management (PFM) system is necessary to allocate resources effectively. To properly allocate resources, a public finance management (PFM) system must be in place. Establishing a legislative framework with precise standards is the first step in making sure that public resources are collected and used effectively. Information and communication technology (ICT) should be used in this framework as well to boost productivity and value for the money, particularly in PFM and procurement. The government should think about using e-procurement technologies, which might be made easier by the National Financial Management

System, in order to improve public procurement efficiency, predictability, and openness. To ensure effective coordination and promote long-term procurement reform, each of the PPRAs should take a more proactive leadership position in procurement.

Transparency, competitiveness, and transaction costs would all be increased by harmonizing federal and provincial procurement laws and processes, as well as future-proofing the legal system to encourage technology innovation. The procurement function's economy, efficiency, and oversight will all be enhanced by the use of e-procurement technologies including e-Procurement, FMIS, open data, and big data. Without these systems, it will be difficult to find and manage strategic buying opportunities. A web-based procurement management information system has been launched by the Punjabi Agriculture Department. If successful, this system can be imitated by other procuring agencies, and provincial PPRAs can compile the data to provide an annual report. It is anticipated that Pakistan's GDP-to-procurement ratio will be 19.8%, and reforming the procurement sector has the potential to significantly boost growth.

#### **2.6 Devolution of Finances and Functions**

Certain sectors require quick to medium-term attention in order to accomplish efficient devolution of functions and financing. One critical component is balancing the powers and authority of the federal and provincial administrations. It is critical to creatively create and agree on political agenda-setting, macroeconomic policy-making, and execution duties, aligning them with the appropriate level of government, and providing necessary budgetary support. In this sense, the federal government must carry out its obligation to ensure equitable development and balanced growth for the benefit of all residents and regions.

#### **2.7 Strengthening Capacity of Provincial Employees**

It is crucial to reconsider the processes within the public sector and the capabilities of civil servants across all levels. These processes must be aligned with the distinct duties and responsibilities of different levels and divisions of government. Civil servants must seek direction from democratically elected political leaders in order to develop

strategic agendas and formulate policies, while also carrying out their constitutional obligations of proposing policy options and guaranteeing the seamless and high-quality execution of political visions and manifestos. Furthermore, it is critical to preserve the constitutional protection of government servant tenure and working conditions, as outlined in the 1956 and 1962 Constitutions. Furthermore, district and provincial cadre services should be established to oversee the careers of employees in provinces and districts. This necessitates revamping the civil service at all levels of the federal, provincial, and municipal administrations.

### **2.8 Strengthening the PFCs**

To enhance local-level autonomy, it is important to strengthen the Provincial Finance Commissions (PFCs) and define their relationship with Local Governments (LGs). The PFCs must give LGs control over finances, resource allocation, and revenue collection. To attain this goal, devolution must be strengthened by establishing a framework for transferring funds from the top (provincial government) and improving LGs' ability to create revenue locally. It is also critical to coordinate efforts at all levels of government in areas such as taxation, regulatory environment, and agreement on national standards. LGs should be empowered to act as the principal service delivery agents. The new PFCs must ensure that budgetary resources are transferred equally, beyond the provincial level, to impoverished and marginalized communities under their control. As a result, it is critical to update the PFC Awards in all provinces, using new criteria based on the most recent national population census and expanding to include other pertinent factors such as poverty. Poverty data should be updated on a regular basis, at least every two years, to reflect fluctuations and changes over time.

### **2.9 Local-level Accountability**

Enhancing local accountability can help to reinforce the social compact by allowing residents to participate and express themselves. One way to accomplish this is to provide training to locally elected officials to improve their understanding of government functions. Existing provincial training institutes can be streamlined, with training methods and curricula upgraded. Furthermore, opportunities

for local-level deliberation should be established to promote community-based democracy through consultation, deliberation, and decision-making. Feedback techniques could be used to do this.

Furthermore, the government should endeavor to build a legal framework for fiscal responsibility that links all levels of government to macroeconomic stability targets and eliminates executive rights to modify taxes and duties arbitrarily. In addition, minimum service delivery criteria should be adopted at the local level, as well as output-based finance, to ensure results monitoring, compliance with minimum standards, and performance-based accountability to citizens.

### **2.10 Fiscal Transfer System**

It is essential to update the NFC Award system to reflect the evolving development requirements of the provinces and population demographics. The design of any decentralized system, such as tax and revenue assignments, expenditure, and the transfer of functions and tax instruments, hinges on the reform process's stated objectives. As Pakistan has already agreed on the decentralization vision outlined in the 18th Amendment, the next step is to establish clear and mutually accepted principles for sharing responsibilities and reconsider how funding arrangements through tax devolution, grants, and subnational revenue collection can address these shared responsibilities. Such a process would also define how joint responsibilities will be financed between provincial and federal levels to ensure that macroeconomic stability is not compromised by decentralization. Achieving this will necessitate revising the current NFC Award system and creating a plan for assigning functional responsibilities to implement The stated goals of the reform process determine the design of any decentralized system, such as tax and revenue allocations, expenditure, and the transfer of functions and tax instruments. Pakistan has already agreed to the decentralization vision outlined in the 18th Amendment; the next step is to establish clear and mutually acceptable principles for sharing responsibilities, as well as to reconsider how funding arrangements through tax devolution, grants, and subnational revenue collection can address these shared responsibilities. Such a procedure would also establish how joint obligations will be funded at the provincial and

federal levels, ensuring that decentralization does not jeopardize macroeconomic stability. To accomplish this, the current NFC Award system will need to be revised, as well as a plan for assigning functional duties to adopt decentralization.

### **2.11 Legal Framework for Government Ownership**

The state, as the owner and shareholder of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), requires a clear, modern, and cohesive legislative and regulatory framework. To do this, a State-owned Enterprises Act, or a comparable law, is required, which outlines an ownership policy for SOEs and defines criteria for subsidizing and providing financial support to them. A more centralized institutional architecture is also required to ensure consistent policy implementation when managing SOE portfolios. The entity in charge of the SOE portfolio should be required to make commercially sound judgments in order to optimize portfolio value and return-on-equity for the government. To lower fiscal costs, SOEs must be corporatized and required to develop business plans. Restructuring can assist lower fiscal expenses if newly constituted boards and management are successful, and if corporatization places the firms under the same law (the Companies Ordinance) and regulator (SECP).

### **2.12 Establish an Entity to Manage SOEs**

One critical step toward implementing a portfolio approach to state-owned enterprise (SOE) ownership is establishing a central entity to oversee the SOE portfolio. This entity could be a current or new ministry, a government agency, or, in the centralized model, a holding company. The entity's mandate should include monitoring and reporting on the financial performance of individual SOEs and the SOE portfolio as a whole, monitoring fiscal risks connected with SOEs' explicit and implicit liabilities, and ensuring SOEs follow applicable laws and regulations. In addition, the entity could engage with line departments to create a performance framework for SOEs. This framework should include financial and operational performance metrics, which could be implemented by annual performance agreements or Memoranda of Understanding signed by the government and management of SOEs, among other measures.

### **2.13 Appoint Independent Management Boards for SOEs**

To achieve effective management of state-owned enterprises, the government must distinguish between its roles as owner, policymaker, regulator, and coordinator. This requires the government to refrain from interfering with SOEs' day-to-day operations and instead allow them to run autonomously by establishing professional boards and holding them accountable through a competent performance monitoring and assessment mechanism. Board appointments and monitoring are critical components of ownership monitoring. As the owner, the government must report to Parliament and nominate talented directors based on their competence, using a skills-based appointment procedure that emphasizes independent directors. Any appointment based on patronage or representation will lower the board's knowledge. The nomination process for the boards should be clear, systematic, and well-defined. Once selected, the boards should be allowed to work autonomously.

### **2.14 Strengthened Market Institutions for Private Sector Participation**

To create a favorable environment, the government must enforce compliance with policies that promote openness and the rule of law. This will involve the enforcement of property laws and contractual rights, the prevention of corruption, and the creation of an appropriate regulatory framework. A strong legal framework will also improve the capacity of potential private providers to compete fairly for procurement contracts. Furthermore, improving the business environment would necessitate improving bureaucratic quality to assure the availability of administrative capacity to prepare, negotiate, and manage contracts in an unbiased and corruption-free way. It is crucial to ensure that such contracts operate in the public interest while upholding impartiality and avoiding conflicts of interest or regulatory capture. Over the long term, a well-designed consultation initiative may be created with the private sector that aligns with a strong PPP policy. However, the Government should maintain its supervisory role to ensure that the private sector fulfills its societal obligations.



### **2.15 Improving Social Service Delivery**

Improved service delivery is critical for increasing public trust in the government. This will necessitate increasing funding for health and education, as well as ensuring that resources are dispersed equally to hard-to-reach communities. To improve performance, the government might put in place a service delivery performance monitoring system that sets targets for managers and providers to meet. The successful use of technology for service delivery in the provinces serves as an excellent model for expanding the use of ICT throughout the public sector. To do this, federal servants should be encouraged to adopt new service delivery methods. To augment public sector financing for service delivery, creative partnerships with the private sector, such as PPPs, outsourcing, and contracting, will be required to produce high-quality and efficient results. To assure the quality of services offered by the private sector, clear boundaries must be established for their engagement, as well as a solid regulatory structure for quality assurance. To improve service delivery, a new remuneration package might be developed for key personnel, with compensation related to performance in service delivery.

### **2.16 Developing Service Delivery Standards**

To address Pakistan's human development difficulties, minimum service delivery criteria for important sectors must be established, while keeping in mind the wide diversity in development outcomes across provinces. Such criteria would be more acceptable if they were jointly established and agreed upon by the provinces and the federal government, as is done in Australia. Imposing service standards unilaterally has frequently proven impossible or costly. To establish these standards, Pakistan could form sectoral intergovernmental councils under the auspices of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), ensuring coordination among policy formulation, budgetary, and implementation processes while also allowing for flexibility to reflect differences in devolution across sectors, as Germany has done.

Once the service delivery standards have been established, a technocratic authority should oversee development progress and confirm conformity with the service delivery standards. Monitoring performance against agreed-upon targets, such as Human Development Indicator

goals, can serve as an incentive, even if transfers to provinces are not directly connected, as is the case in Australia. This can promote healthy competition among provinces. A non-political committee made up of technical specialists could be appropriate for this purpose. This council would assess human development outcomes in respect to agreed-upon goals and make biannual monitoring reports available to the public, such as through parliamentary proceedings.

### **2.17 Performance Monitoring Data**

Reliable data are critical for ensuring service delivery requirements are met and for making long-term changes. To do this, critical data requirements such as fiscal transfers from the center to the provinces, provincial fiscal and economic statistics, and information on service delivery effectiveness must be easily accessible. Access to such data enables monitoring, benchmarking, and estimating service delivery costs. It also allows citizens to hold service providers, local and provincial governments responsible. To improve the data environment for service delivery statistics, Pakistan's Bureaus of Statistics and provincial bureaus of statistics must be upgraded. This can be accomplished by broadening its mandate to include data collecting on provincial budgetary, economic, and service delivery performance, as well as raising staffing levels. Strengthening these departments' capacities and guaranteeing their cooperation throughout the data-generation process ensures that statistics are collected using a consistent methodology and that the results are presented in a uniform format.

### **2.18 Information-sharing and Grievance Redressal**

Information sharing, transparency, and the resolution of grievances can all help to improve social responsibility. When communities and residents have access to more information, they can demand better results. Transparency in government processes, budget distribution, and real expenditure enables citizens and the government to make more informed judgments. Strengthening the process for grievance redressal is likewise critical, as is creating legal, economic, and political space for individuals to express their desires and grievances. Several steps might be implemented to promote openness and accountability, including the

development of federal Right to Information legislation that would force mandatory publication of certain types of government information. Another alternative is to require the public to get information about the performance of important service delivery areas such as education and health, as well as ways to hold bad performance accountable (Ramzan et al., 2023). Fiscal transparency could be improved by allowing for the timely disclosure of budget information, such as quarterly budget execution reports, annual financial statements, and data on public debt and contingent liabilities resulting from sovereign guarantees. External audit reports from the AGP, as well as audited financial statements from SOEs, might be made public to increase fiscal transparency.

### **2.19 Quality Assurance and Monitoring**

Private schools are not regulated and have the freedom to govern themselves. The current regulations do not designate a specific area for the development of private schools or the conditions for their distribution. As a result, schools' locations are determined by their fees and infrastructure. Nguyen and Raju (2014) discovered that, while regulations exist, they are not enforced. These regulations cover registration, curriculum, academic standards, school year/days, recordkeeping/reporting, tuition and fees, teacher employment terms (including pay), teacher qualifications, and the availability and quality of facilities.

There are numerous issues associated with service delivery, and addressing them requires a holistic approach. The government must establish a robust legal and regulatory framework that permits the private sector to operate, and individuals must be provided with information and avenues for voicing their concerns. The involvement of the private sector is critical, but it must be regulated and managed to ensure excellent service delivery. Regardless of who provides the service, community monitoring and participation can improve service delivery.

Institutional improvements are required, as is the state's competence to regulate and assure quality assurance. Institutional capacity building is critical at the federal, provincial, and district levels, particularly in financial management. Creating own-source revenue, as well as better

administration and coordination of external resources, is also necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan has declared a willingness to embark on a new path of development, as evidenced by strategy papers such as Vision 2025. However, it is still unclear how the public sector might help assist this shift. Past attempts to restructure Pakistan's public sector and civil services have had mixed results, with more failures than achievements. This has been the case since the Bhutto regime's administrative changes in 1973 and the Musharraf regime's constitutional modifications in 2001, which mainstreamed devolution. Several recurring themes impede public sector reform attempts, including sustaining the status quo, emphasizing group or cadre interests above common goals, a lack of public discussion about reform directions, and a lack of political will to sustain long-term improvements. The difficult civil service reform agenda has before thwarted well-planned efforts. Any future attempts to revitalize the public sector and reform the civil service must proceed with caution in order to avoid the recurring impediments that have been the standard in Pakistan's public sector reforms. Another factor impeding public sector reform attempts in Pakistan is the fundamental inadequacies of institutions and society as a whole. (Khan, A.2022). These weaknesses make it difficult for Pakistani institutions to facilitate the kind of transformation needed to replace the existing ethos with one that promotes growth. Furthermore, the widespread sense of insecurity among individuals and organizations exacerbates the fear of change, impeding reform attempts. Institutional inertia is a fundamental impediment to energizing public sector governance solutions, and overcoming it has shown to be a difficult undertaking when introducing new and innovative solutions to complicated governance problems in Pakistan. Furthermore, confusing, misguided, and ambiguous priorities for a future vision have hampered previous reform initiatives. To ensure successful changes that create opportunities for transformation, a whole-of-government strategy is required to reassure key stakeholders, including the bureaucracy, of the benefits of such reforms.

Citizens in Pakistan are getting more aware and motivated as they watch other countries' rapid

progress toward growth and development. The growing middle class, fueled by fast urbanization and a young population, creates greater opportunity for citizen organizations to organize and demand better service delivery. In recent years, Pakistani citizens have developed a very active and aware civil society. This civil society has encouraged ongoing discourse regarding Pakistan's long-overdue public sector and service delivery reforms, and has played an important role in lobbying for them. The presence of a confident media is another critical component in boosting citizen voice for long-term reforms and transformative prosperity in Pakistan. Pakistan's public sector reform efforts can benefit from private and corporate sector involvement. In fact, Pakistan's private sector has proved its potential and readiness to play an important role in advancing the country's growth and development in the coming years. Entrusting policy development and regulatory chores to the government allows Pakistan's private sector and enterprises to take on a significant role in improving service delivery and boosting entrepreneurship. They can accomplish this by combining private and corporate resources and driving a revolutionary agenda.

### **Recommendations**

1. Gradual implementation of E-Government is recommended, with a phased approach. While the technological solutions, hardware, and software applications are relatively straightforward, the most challenging aspect is the cultural shift required for training and changes in attitudes and practices. It is crucial that E-Government is driven by business needs rather than as a purely technical solution. By replacing outdated manual file systems, E-Government can introduce transparency, accountability, and efficiency to government processes.
2. The Government's responsibility is to create a conducive atmosphere for private enterprises to engage in the manufacturing, distribution, and trade of goods and services, without directly involving itself in these operations.
3. There is a growing consensus that decentralization and devolving power, authority, and resources to lower levels of government can lead to better resource allocation and more efficient utilization. This

approach can also promote a more equitable distribution of basic public goods and services.

4. All government laws, rules, regulations, circulars, and guidelines should be made available to the general public free of cost in a user-friendly manner on official websites, as well as in electronic and print forms at public places. The goal should be to minimize physical interaction between the public and government offices, and to provide maximum services online with transparency in the application of rules and procedures.
5. Federal government departments and bodies dealing with public matters should develop service standards with timelines for each type of service, widely disseminate them, and post them on their respective websites. Financial transactions involving services such as permits, taxes, and fees should be preferably done through online or digital payment mode.
6. Rules of business for the Federal, Provincial, and District governments should be revised to make them simple and comprehensible, and to empower the Secretaries/Heads of Departments to make decisions without multiple references, clearances, and back-and-forth movement of files. Post-audit of the decisions taken should be used to ensure accountability rather than prior clearances.
7. Delegation of financial, administrative, procurement, and human resource management powers should be revisited to ensure they are adequate and appropriate for each level of government.
8. Powers commensurate with the authority should be delegated at each tier of the hierarchy.
9. All rules in force, including the Estacode, Financial Rules, Accounting and Audit Rules, and Fundamental Rules, should be systematically reviewed and revised to align them with modern management practices.
10. As part of the reform initiative, the HR policies of civil servants' entire value chain, including induction and training policies, performance management, promotions, and career planning, pay and compensation, and discipline & accountability, should be evaluated.
11. Open and transparent merit-based recruitment should be implemented at all levels and grades

of public services, as per the Regional Representation guidelines stated in the constitution.

12. Performance-based promotions and career progression for all public sector employees should be based on mandatory training at induction, mid-career, and senior management levels.
13. All employees should have equal opportunities for career advancement without any preferences or reservations for any specific class.
14. Superior Services concept should be replaced by equality among all cadres and non-cadres of public servants.
15. All civil servants should be provided with a living wage and a compensation package, including decent retirement benefits.
16. Strict observance of security of tenure of office should be followed for a specified period.
17. Regular Civil Services cadre should be established at All Pakistan, Federal, Provincial, and District levels to co-exist with contractual appointments

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