



School of Governance
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Policy Brief

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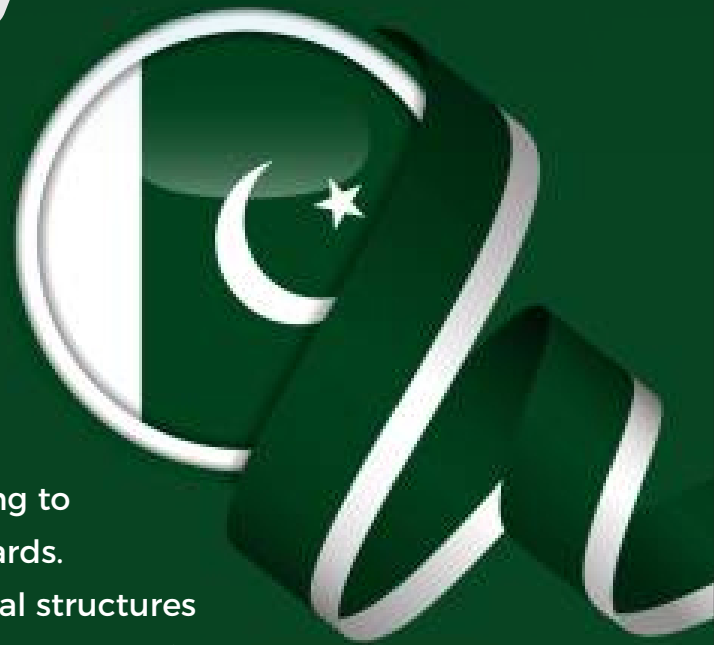
Restructuring Bureaucracy in Pakistan

Key Messages and Recommendations

Problem: Since independence Pakistan is striving to improve its socio-political and economic standards.

We have competent civil service and institutional structures but still we have credibility crisis. The bureaucracy of Pakistan needs holistic reforms by engaging all the stakeholders of public policy.

- Recommendation 1: We need to operationalize the local government system to voice our public values.
- Recommendation 2: We need to define KPIs – Key performance indicators to respond our policy goals in an effective and efficient way.
- Recommendation 3: We need both institutional and societal reforms (whole-of-society-approach).
- Recommendation 4: We need to engage the specialists and generalists both for our public policy deliverables in an equitable manner.
- Recommendation 5: We need to break colonial mind-set and to encourage innovation and sustainability in the public affairs.



Introduction

To improve and sustain the cooperative and competitive federalism doctrine in Pakistan, public leaders are looking for innovative solutions to our public policy challenges. The historical background reflects a VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous frameworks of governance at the provincial and federal levels. In this policy dialogue, the keynote speakers put light on the topics of the performance of institutions, state reforms and the inclusion of public policy stakeholders.



“Instead of restructuring the bureaucracy of Pakistan, we need to restructure our governance paradigms, that ends on bureaucracy.”

There is a dire need to practice the philosophy of politico-administration dichotomy and separation of powers for state holism. We need to revisit and redefine the roles of the executive, legislature and judiciary. The alignment of organs of state with the policy formulation and implementation, stamped by the constitution of Pakistan will work in the favour of public affairs. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic apparatus of Pakistan lacks a governance system. Even the training for civil servants is the same as in the 1950s and has hardly changed. The symbiotic relationships between institutions and channels of coordination are highly weak. Our political and administrative leadership always looks for 'change' but no one talks or pursues 'sustainability'. We need to sustain our systems and developments. Instead of restructuring the bureaucracy of Pakistan, we need to restructure our governance paradigms, which end in bureaucracy.

We need to remind ourselves of the two crucial functions of bureaucratic diaspora, first it is responsible for assisting the policymakers and the second is to have a fair share in implementing those public policies. The major flaw in our system is the elimination of local government. We deliberately neglected this significant platform for the public to voice their rights and as an outcome, the public service delivery has been compromised. The role of bureaucracy should be localized. Similarly, the political dispensation should prioritize fundamental change and that change should lead to the systematic evaluation of where the fault lies. The inability of bureaucracy has lost its relevance to 21st-century challenges. Our political parties have no expertise to run the system.

Governing the ungovernable appeals to a whole-of-society approach. We need extensive reforms collectively at societal, political, military, religious and judicial levels. Institutions should be neutral and depoliticized and have defined roles. The inclusion of our youth and re-orientation of the right framework in society is a must now. We are building narratives in society without any evidence. Depending on the countries' realities, aspects such as excessively hierarchical structures, inadequate planning, weak institutions, a lack of social cohesion and perverse incentives are some of the main challenges preventing meaningful participation. The existence of incentives to engage (government) and to be engaged (non-government) shows that there is room for the negotiation of strategies to adopt and develop an approach in which multi-stakeholder groups work collaboratively. To conclude, we have attempted different reforms in different regimes and also applied multiple models of governance but now it is time to act, respond and deliver to the policy recipients – the public. We have good human resources but we need the alacrity of public leaders to play their individual parts in their own capacity.

Conclusion and Way Forward for Public Leaders

■ Recommendation 1: Operationalisation of Local Government system - Important tier for public policy deliverable(s)

Scholars and public leaders maintained public value can be recognized and sustained by local government. The global agenda of sustainable development goals (SDGs) also prioritized their targets at the community level because public engagement is the foremost ingredient of policy development. To restructure the bureaucracy of Pakistan, we need to introduce and implement local government and give equal opportunity to policy stakeholders. Today's local administrators have a vital role in maintaining an active social fabric that will ensure a balance between the dangers of excessive central government and the irresistible fragmentation of individuals. Local governments that have real power can more effectively address local interests/subjects as well as exercise a check on operations at higher levels of authority.

■ Recommendation 2: KPIs - Key performance indicators

For effective and efficient management of public affairs, the KPIs - Key performance indicators should be mandated. The promotions should not be based merely on seniority basis. It should be monitored by the Key performance indicators. Choosing the appropriate actions will connect with the desired policy goals. KPIs help reduce uncertainty by providing a basis for determining which decisions will lead you in the right direction. KPIs are a useful tool for creating a high-performing culture. We need to suggest and direct our public sector organizations in the right way exclusively based on rational performance measurement mechanisms.

■ Recommendation 3: Element of inclusion - whole-of-society-approach

The challenge for policymakers and social scientists is to find ways to practice the concept of social inclusion and diffuse this strategic tool toward a "society for all." A multi-stakeholder approach where actors participate in a meaningful way is needed to achieve effective implementation. At the same time, the government's commitment to leaving no one behind involves providing opportunities and access for everyone to participate in decision-making processes and in the formulation of policies and programs that affect their lives.

■ Recommendation 4: Engagement of the specialists and generalist's workforce

The civil service needs a mixed blend of a workforce consisting of both generalists and specialists. The federal and local subjects should be handled equally by them. It has been proposed by the reformists many times that the administrative context of Pakistan is demanding holistic efforts to engage the workforce in a strategic manner. We need a hybrid model in which we collaboratively work with specialists to give purpose-oriented inputs and generalists as well for our policy subjects.

■ Recommendation 5: Negation of colonial mindset

We need to break the colonial mindset and restructure the true essence of bureaucracy by including the recent developments from both theory and practice. The element of innovation and sustainability is highly recommended by scholars. We must also put an end to this miserable colonial-style sahab and afsar culture at the government. Government officials are paid by the taxpayers' money and hence the equation must change between the two groups. The colonial-style master-slave relation is redundant and must be changed. The elitist doctrine embedded in our system should be replaced with New Public Governance, in which decentralization, e-governance and civic participation should be promoted.

The bureaucracy is the backbone of the success of any country. Politicians are only seasonal, but bureaucrats will stick for a tenure of 30-35 years. Therefore, we must, at the earliest, decolonize our bureaucracy from the colonial mindset, and make it performance-based and accountable, so it not only delivers but also becomes a vehicle of innovation and civic initiatives.

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From L to R: Dr Aisha Azhar (Director, SGS), Dr Asif Raza (Rector UMT), Lt Gen (R) Javed Hasan (Acting President UMT), Prof Rahat-ul-Ain (Professor SGS), Dr Ishrat Hussain (Ex-Governor State Bank of Pakistan), and Fawad Hassan Fawad (Former Civil Servant).