



Webinar Report

Webinar on Civil Service Reforms and Change Management for Effective Service Delivery: Lessons from Pakistan and South Africa.

On October 27, 2022 the Executive Development Institute hosted a Webinar on ‘**Civil Service Reforms and Change Management for Effective Service Delivery: Lessons from Pakistan and South Africa**’ in collaboration with the National School of Government, South Africa.

Speakers:

- i. Dr. Ishrat Husain – Former Adviser to the Prime Minister for Institutional Reforms, Former Governor State Bank of Pakistan.
- ii. Prof. Pali Lehola – Director of Economic Modelling Academy (EMA).

Moderators:

- i. Mr. Busani Ngcaweni – Principal, National School of Government (NSG), South Africa
- ii. Mr. Ahmad Nazir Warraich – Dean, Executive Development Institute, NSPP

The Webinar was hosted with lectures of learned Speakers who have led civil service reform in Pakistan and South Africa respectively. Dr. Ishrat Hussain detailed the trajectory of civil service reform in Pakistan and Professor Pali Lehola spoke on the experience of South Africa. This was a new initiative of international collaboration of the Rector NSPP, Dr. Ijaz Munir with the principal NSG, Mr. Busani Ngcaweni.

Dr. Ishrat Hussain spoke on the need for reforms in the context of the present demand of civil service and its unique governance structure. He linked the internal and external environment of civil service while delineating the role of a civil servant. He stated that according to studies including public opinion polls regarding the performance of the government, there is a growing gap between the expectations of citizens and the capability of state institutions to deliver. In this context, South Africa and Pakistan both face the same predicament.

In order to be effective, there is need for a strong and effective government rather than a large expansive government which remains, weak and indecisive. The notion of an all-encompassing ubiquitous government has become cumbersome fraught with overlapping and competing interests and can be often inefficient if not unresponsive to the emerging needs of the public.

The Speaker said that the manner of service is another matter of concern as it largely remains antiquated. The interaction with citizens continues to take place mostly through low-

paid, ill-equipped, poorly educated, functionaries such as the *Patwari*, *Thanedar* and sub-divisional officer who enjoy enormous discretionary powers and are therefore susceptible to corruption, inefficiency and poor governance. It is structurally a bottom-heavy structure where unskilled and semi-skilled employees occupy 95% of the strength of the Federal and Provincial governments and 85 % of the total salary bill. This has been a major factor in poor compensation and benefits allocated to the managerial and technical experts working for the Government. It is therefore a structure that results in demotivation and despondency among a larger number of civil servants which is in turn translated into poor service delivery, inaction and apathy towards clients and often a mindset resisting change in the process.

Bureaucratic performance is affected by a system built for such performance but when such a system is outdated with rules and procedures and when the hierarchy lacks coherence, the sense of chaos is imminently eminent. Added to it, if there is inadequacy of proper automation or an ineffective incentive system which fails to appreciate outstanding civil servants there is disorder.

Mr. Hussein suggested some way-forward strategies.

- A new hybrid model is required that nurtures, promotes, and draws upon the expertise and domain knowledge of civil servants and combines it with broad-based experience, leadership traits and the ability to synthesize different perspectives and policy inputs. Indeed, leadership traits are not exclusively located within any one group but can be found across the groups.
- A system similar to the Senior Executive Service that is successfully working in a number of countries is to be introduced for high-level policy positions. It is proposed that a National Executive Service (NES) without any reservations for any cadre or group open to all eligible and qualified candidates should be instituted in Pakistan without any entitlements or reservations for any cadre or service group.
- Recruitment would be made by the Federal Public Service Commission on the basis of merit through a competitive process. All senior policy-making positions would be filled by the members of the NES who would be given security of tenure and enter into annual performance agreements. NES would be divided into four clusters (a) General Management (b) Economic sectors (c) Social sectors and (d) Technical sectors. Career progression would take place within each of the specialized clusters.
- Security of tenure holds paramount importance to allow civil servants to perform well without fear of political pressure and early transfers.

Professor Pali Lehola outlined the historical context of South Africa as a post-apartheid state where there has been a rise of neo-liberal practices and privatization. As such, the idea of small governments first emerged at time of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Speaker emphasized that civil service is premised on the service of people and for the execution, reconstruction and development of programmes that meet basic needs of people.

The development of human resource, building of economy, democratizing of State and society and implementing RDP (Research and Development Programmes) remains a persistent concern for civil service and any reform associated with it. During the last three decades, it was

really difficult to implement reforms as South Africa was seeped in problem of corruptions and challenges of transition from a pre to post-apartheid period which entailed redesigning of policies and renewal of required expertise.

At times, governments make efforts to resolve issues but face adversarial situation due to the complex interplay of government, capital and labor. This is on account of the self-interest maximization model. If labor maximizes wages, then capital maximizes labor, which is a capital utility. Similarly, if government maximizes taxes, then capital maximizes tax loopholes. In the same manner, if government maximizes popular support, then society maximizes utility, and if capital maximizes profit, then society maximizes utility. In modern times, these gaps, which present little solutions should be resolved with the help of novel instruments that can navigate such complex situations. RDP is one such essential tool in such scenarios to fix the issue.

Despite improvement in the system, there is a growing concern for review of policies since 2018 as the progress made is no longer making further headway. The economy and growth on the social economic transformation agenda and employment situation is undergoing crisis. For this, government should revise plans and set the directions of action according to projected plans and goals. There exists a disconnect between plan and direction. Now a new initiative has been made to prepare a commission report comprising such recommendations to seek to set the directions in the way of goals.

Prof. Pali Lehola suggested some of way-forward strategies as follows:

- Design of policies holds pivotal importance to translate targeted outcomes into reality in order to mobilize national agenda. The quantification of policies is imperative to set an agenda according to scenarios to achieve targeted results.
- Professionalism in civil service can be achieved with continuous capacity building to prepare them to embrace change and serve with professional attitude.
- South Africa has established Economic Modeling Academy, where past data is analyzed for making future models. Such approach can be helpful to make all kinds of plans in government.

The Webinar was followed by a robust Question and Answer session and concluded by a Vote of Thanks given by the Rector, NSPP Dr. Ijaz Munir.