**Rationale for Civil Services Survey 13th Sept 2015**

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Pakistan’s democratic transition has increased the responsibility of the civilian administration to deliver. This context lends a much needed urgency to civil services reforms.

Interestingly, the list of civil services reform initiatives[[1]](#footnote-1) in Pakistan all share one thing: the absence of the civil servants’ voice that they set out to reform. Pakistan’s history bears witness to the fact that crude notions of top down reforms resulted in a continuation of bureaucratic dysfunction. Sustainable reform efforts invariably have to involve the subjects of reform and scientifically investigate and understand what they perceive to be the main constraints on performance and effective public service delivery. A reform philosophy that attributes the problem of inefficient public service delivery to that of a break-down of values and a crisis of altruism is reductionist. Such reform programmes ignore or fail to investigate the structural causes behind a bureaucracy that fails to deliver.

The challenges of the twenty first century civil administration demand a more incentive based approach to reforms. Conducting a civil service survey and eliciting perceptions and motivations for public service delivery can be a step in that direction. Designed correctly, such an exercise will provide an invaluable insight to reform the executive arm of the government, thus strengthening the democratic process further.

Similar exercises are a norm in not just the developed world but also in countries like India and Romania. The Canadian government carries out a Public Service Employee Survey which is a census of 180,000 public servants. Federal Human Capital Survey is an online survey of 417,128 employees carried out by the US government. Similar to these are the UK’s Senior Civil Servants Survey, the Australian State of the Service Employee Survey, the Civil Services Barometer of the Romanian government and the Indian government’s Civil Services Survey of 2010. These survey results provided valuable insight into the challenges these countries face in ensuring the government had an effective civilian workforce.

In the context of Pakistan it will be a vital empirical exercise to get civil servants’ views on: dimensions of job satisfaction, motivations for public service delivery, constraints on improving citizen access to government services, gender relations, performance management, personal productivity, learning, development and leadership. It will aid any incremental civil service reform agenda in the future. In addition, this rich data can also readily lend itself to any kind of statistical analysis to facilitate future administrative policy making. Institutionalizing such a survey provides an opportunity to carry out such surveys and ensure evidence based reforms in the technical and provincial cadres as well, thereby, further strengthening public service delivery.

It will help in understanding what might be some of the factors in the work environment that civil servants themselves view as motivating effective service delivery and will possibly uncover some low cost methods to bolster civil service confidence to deliver services effectively. Institutionalizing such an exercise will go a long way to strengthen not just the bureaucracy itself but through it the civilian governments they serve.

1. For historical reform initiative reports cf. Rowland Egger Report (1953), Bernard L. Gladieux Report (1955),Paul L. Beckett (1957), Cornelius Report of 1962 and Fulton Commission Report (1968), 1973 Civil Service Reforms, Anwar ul Haq Commission Report (1978-79), Fakhar Imam Report (1999), 2001- 02 Local Government Ordinance (LGO) and Ishrat Hussain Report (2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)