

**No. 1-1/2018-APM (IR&A)**  
**Government of Pakistan**  
**Advisor to the Prime Minister on IRA**  
**Prime Minister's Office**  
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**WORKING PAPER (1)**  
**FOR**  
**THE TASK FORCE ON CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS**

The Cabinet has decided to establish a Task Force on Civil Service Reforms (TFCSR) with the terms of reference given in annex. The Prime Minister has also approved the creation of an Institutional Reforms Cell in the Prime Minister's Office under the Adviser on Institutional Reforms. The Task Force consists of a mix of retired Civil servants, academics, serving civil servants and eminent citizens interested in this issue. The overarching theme them for the Task Force as reflected in the commitment made by the Prime Minister to the nation is: how to improve the delivery of public goods and service to the ordinary citizens particularly the poor and the vulnerable groups without let and hindrance. The main objective before the TFCSR therefore is how to bring about reform in the structure, composition, procedure and processes and human resources policies of the Civil Services that align with this overarching them.

2. The last comprehensive report on the Civil Service Reforms was prepared by the National Commission on Government Reforms (NCGR) and submitted to the Prime Minister in April 2008. For two years, the Commission made field visits, held stakeholder consultations, commissioned studies, organized focus groups, received had presentation from the Ministries/departments and benefitted from expert advice. A consensus was reached on the main recommendations which can be seen in Chapters 3, 6 and 8 of the Report. Most of the NCGR recommendations were aimed at meeting this objective and particular attention was paid to few basic services – Education, Health, Polic and Revenue. Access to these public services is critical to the well being of a citizen. No action was taken by successive governments in implementing these recommendations. It is pertinent to mention that the NCGR remained in existence until recently when the Cabinet decided to abolish it in August 2018 and transfer its budgetary allocation to the Institutional Reform Cell. The emphasis now is more in developing an action plan

for implementation of reforms rather than on carrying out further diagnostic studies and regurgitating the same issues over and over again.

3. A Pay and Pension Commission was formed in 2009 which also made recommendations to attract, retain, and motivate talented young men and women into the ranks of the public sector for effective governance. In this report it was suggested that (i) civil service pay should be linked to comparable private jobs, (ii) Education, health, law and order and the administration of justice should be delinked from Basic Pay scales (iii) Pay must be linked to both performance and inflation (iv) Promotion should be based on performance and training outcomes (v) A new objective performance management system should be introduced in place of the current ACRs.

4. The matter of Civil Service Reforms was revived in 2013 when the government expanded the role of the Ministry of Planning and Development to include reforms and renamed it as the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform (MPDR). The Ministry was mandated to initiate the work on Civil Service Reforms. A presentation was made to the Prime Minister by the Minister MPDR on 12<sup>TH</sup> February 2015 which, inter-alia, included the following issues:-

- (i) Reforms in Performance Evaluation system.
- (ii) Promotions of Civil servants.
- (iii) Introducing better incentive for the Civil Servants –Position & Performance Board allowances.
- (iv) Reforms in Training Regime for the Civil Servants.

5. No major decisions were taken on any of the above issues except that the marks for training in promotion policy were raised from 15 to 35. All other issues remain unsettled. A project for Civil Services Reforms was approved by the Central Development Working Party in 2013 with a total cost of Rs.962 million. UNDP was approached for financial and technical assistance and the project cost was revised upwards to Rs.1166 million with UNDP providing Rs.700 million. The project included the following components:-

- (i) Capacity Building of School of Public Policy.
- (ii) Training Needs Assessment.
- (iii) Governance Forums.

- (iv) National and Provincial consultative Workshop.
- (v) Citizens Perception Survey.
- (vi) Delivery Unity in the P.M. Secretariat and Dashboard.
- (vii) Performance Contract agreements with 11 Ministries.
- (viii) Revision in the rules of Business.
- (ix) Review of Performance Evaluation.
- (x) Review of Promotion Policy.
- (xi) Survey of Redundant Organizations.

6. Some of the above components are on-going and others such as Performance Contract agreement have been completed for 11 ministries and have to be followed up. A presentation will be arranged on the current status of the project by the Focal person in the MPDR and the UNDP.

7. The Task force is requested to adopt a work plan for the future with the responsibilities assigned to the members. A suggested approach is:-

- a) Review update and discuss the work done so far by the NCGR, Pay and Pension Commission MPDR and research studies done outside the government and prepare preliminary findings.
- b) Hold consultative workshops with all the main stakeholders and focus groups with experts, eminent citizens presenting the preliminary findings and seek their inputs.
- c) Place the findings on the website and solicit comments from the public at large.
- d) Revise the preliminary findings on the basis of the inputs and feedback received.
- e) Draft the final report for submission to the Cabinet.

8. An alternative approach is to finalize recommendations on specific topics such as Security of tenure, Selection process of high level positions and seek the approval of the Cabinet in a sequential manner rather than wait for the entire report to be finalized and submitted to the Cabinet.

## **Attachment I: Input from Dr. Nadeem ul Haq.**

**September 8, 2018**

**To: Ishrat Husain, Chairman, Task Force for Civil Service Reform**

**From: Nadeem Ul Haque**

*Let me begin by appreciating the Khan government for setting up this task force and the chairman Ishrat Husain for leading it. As we all know this subject is long overdue with a number of commissions and reports with little progress in making the required change in governance. I hope that this task force will succeed.*

*It is indeed the best chance we have had in years as PM Imran Khan genuinely wants to improve governance.*

*Let us begin by recognizing that the executive runs through the civil service and is at the heart of governance. This is exactly why one of the big reforms of the 19th century that unleashed the west's development potential was the organization of a professional civil service. How the civil service is organized is also very important. After, the mandarins of China were the first organized civil service in the world but eventually led China down the conservative path of impoverishment.*

*The configuration of the civil service for a new society in a new century should be of serious interest to all. Consequently, this reform should not be done in back rooms. Moreover, the bureaucracy--the patient that needs healing—should not be the major designer of this reform. Nor should donors, a large ineffective bureaucracy themselves be allowed into the process. Finally, international consultants who thrive on copy paste should also be left out. Let the society and their representatives work hard and think this one through.*

*Unable to join you in the first meeting, I am sending my views in written form here.*

### **Points of process:**

- 1. Needless to say, Mr. Chairman you are going to tell us what this Task force is intended to do, how it should work, what is expected from and what follow-up is being planned. In other words, how do we get from here to reform and not just a report.*
- 2. As it is constituted, too many people are complaining that there is a larger number of civil servants and that too from the PAS than there are outside members of the committee. **Other service groups are complaining on their 'exclusion.'** Perhaps the chairman can tell us what was the thinking behind this design? And how will we prevent the view of one group among the CSS from dominating this task force's deliberations?  
*I would like to recall the monetization of cars—a reform that went horribly wrong because of agency issues in the design of reform.**

*(Small footnote, I am still curious: What is the difference between task force and commission? And why is this a task force?)*

3. *This committee is part time and presumably all members have limited time to give. **What resources do we have for doing research for the Task force? Will we be able to commission studies? Will we be able to get expert presentations where we can find any?***
  - a. *In this context, the TOR refers to reports of past commissions on civil service reform. While those be made available to us? Will someone analyze them and present us with a comparison and an analysis so that we don't have to rely on our cursory examinations?*
  - b. *Similarly, should we review some experiences of reform in other countries? 3 that come to mind are UK (our parent country), New Zealand, Singapore (2 colonies with successful reform. Would we have to read up and research these individually or will someone help us with this?*
  - c. *I would like to also add, if we are going to get studies done, we should not rely on donors because of our inability to control quality.*
4. *How will we handle the writing of the report? Will we write the report, or will it be written for us by the secretariat? My view is that the report should be written by us perhaps in a drafting committee of volunteers. Too often committees end up taking a cursory look at the recommendations of reports that some official has written.*
5. *How will the minutes of our deliberations be recorded? Will we only record actions or decisions taken or the views of members? Will members have the right to review and correct the minutes? Finally, after the report is released, will the minutes be released with a lag. I feel it is important to do so as then members will have a certain sense of responsibility in expressing their views knowing that they will be publicly committed to their ideas.*

### **Principles of reform:**

*I would like to place before the task force the following principles which we should accept as an outline of the system of the future. We must have a set of ideals such as this in front of us and develop a plan to move towards those ideals. I hope can discuss these and hammer out a consensus. I have no doubt in our discussion and investigation these will evolve.*

1. **Role of government: In my view we must begin by envisaging the nature of governance in the coming era.**
  - 1.1. *Demands of the system going forward are going to be 4-fold:*
    - 1.1.1. *Public service delivery, law and order and property rights will mostly be managed at the local level or among certain agencies specifically designed at the federal or provincial level. Examples would be railways, Wapda etc.*
    - 1.1.2. *Policy and developing large infrastructure (public goods) will be the main responsibility at the federal and a larger part of the work at the provincial level but somewhat lesser part of the work at the local level.*
    - 1.1.3. *Monitoring evaluation and policy harmonization for a just and equitable society which will be the main responsibility at the federal level and to some extent at the provincial level.*
    - 1.1.4. *In parallel there are going to be a plethora of agencies for regulation, security, provision of health and education as well as infrastructure and other public services. These agencies should be totally independent through monitored at some level of government.*

*In designing the reform, we must keep in mind the tasks and functions that we expect the various civil services to perform. The task force should consider something like this and fine tune it. Currently we think that the same tasks are performed everywhere and hence use one colonial service to do all, a mistake that has cost us dearly.*

2. ***Decentralization must be key to the reform going forward:*** *Frustrations are arising from us confusing all these functions under the rubric of administration. The British civil service that we have was an administrative service designed to function mainly for control and extraction. This service has been stretched for the last few decades to meet growing demands of technical governance for development, managing complex tasks like financial management, managing cities, healthcare, education, market development and regulation as well as providing for infrastructure needs of a growing society through developing cross cutting mega projects and deep policy interventions. The old civil system has no way of including the new technical skills that are being acquired by some. This is leading to huge frustration among technically skilled people such as doctors, economists, lawyers, energy and water specialists, project managers among others. Lack of professional management at key places has also produced huge losses for the economy. We all know of the losses in the energy sector of over Rs. 3 trillion in the last 11 years. Add to this the losses in the gas sector, the PSEs, railway and the commodity sector we probably lose as much as we spend on defense every year. Perhaps the committee should try at quantifying this figure for motivating the reform. What does all this mean?*

2.1. *We should stop trying to maintain the edifice of a centralized civil service in the country.*

2.1.1. ***For this, the starting point should be the abolition of the Unified Pay Scales (UPS).***

*Civil service should not be viewed as a monolith comprising of all government employees. Currently Unified Pay Scales (UPS) which are a hangover of the socialist, planning days seek to place all services on an artificial relative scale so that doctors and professors are considered inferior to administrators. This seriously impedes professional development and should be discontinued. Government agencies should be allowed to establish their own pay scales within their budgets according to the market for professionalism in the country!*

2.1.2. ***The colonial system of the civil service that we have inherited is extremely centralizing.*** *Currently, the federal government controls all levels of government. A federal civil servant after recruitment heads up local government from which he moves up to senior levels of the provincial service to eventually running federal departments. government.*

2.1.2.1. *Following best practice in the administration, each level of government— federal, provincial and local-- must be independent. The provinces and cities should have their own employees and there is no reason that they should be paid less or regarded as inferior to the federal government. This is also the need of devolution. **Any movement from one level to another should not be a transfer but a resignation and a new application.***

2.1.2.2. *The current approach where the civils servant at a younger age is a local government employee. At mid-career leads the provisional government and finally at the end of a career is a federal employee. This is excessive centralization and has several side effects like ensuring city governments and all their employees remain below grade 19 and all provisional employees remain below grade 20 while grade 22s mostly are in Islamabad. For true local autonomy cities provinces and federal government should all be competing for the same human resource and hence must be free to bid. **An important principle to accept then would be local provincial and federal governments must be separated.***

2.1.2.3. *Similarly, agencies of government such as regulatory agencies, universities and others should be totally independent of the ministries and levels of government. Sure, they can and should be audited and monitored but not graded*

in a pecking order reporting to secretaries and kept in junior grades for purposes of control.

2.1.2.4. ***In essence we are talking of 3 independent services---federal, provincial and local. None of these report to each other or are beholden to anyone. In addition, there will be a several separate recruitment and human resource regimes for specialized agencies, universities etc (This is happening patchily especially in PSEs.)***

***This task force will therefore plan the breakup of UPS and the federal civil service from other groups and talk only of changes at the federal level, letting the others do their own reengineering.***

3. ***Current Rules of Business designate the secretary as a Principal Accounting Officer (POA) of entire monoliths of government, divisions ministries as well as attached departments. The result is an excessive centralization that impedes productivity. In the current system governance is literally in the hands of 5 secretaries, Principle Secretary, Finance Secretary, Cabinet secretary, Finance, and Planning. Governance is built on decentralized mission-oriented agencies and departments with clear resources and accountability. There is no reason to give these secretaries so much power with hardly any accountability. Let each agency head and functional head be recognized as a POA and be given adequate power and resources with very clear lines of accountability and audit rules to deliver public service.***
  - 3.1. ***Examples:*** *At the planning commission, secretary has continually used the power of PAO to try to keep the commission from working as a commission by requiring all members to report to the secretary. Members are always denied resources for their work. Secretaries have always interfered in autonomous agencies such as PSEs and universities to the detriment of their financial performance.*
  - 3.2. *This will also mean revising the rules of the budget. Currently FS can stop financial flows and garner huge power over other ministries and agencies to the detriment of efficiency and governance. **If we are to do this seriously budgeting as a control device will need to be examined and we must have something to say on the budget process.***
4. ***Merit once in a life.*** *After passing one competitive reform, lifetime predetermined careers where promotions are guaranteed at known intervals. **Current entitlement mentality of civil servants has to end.** Merit rather than entitlement should be initiated so that performance is rewarded.*
5. ***Merit requires competition and openness.*** *Clearly, we have to work on creating a competitive market for skills within the public sector. Currently, the civil service system is clearly not designed to promote skill development or accommodate professionals. An important task would be to work on how we can make a system that accommodates all skills and create both internal competition as well as competes for skills externally.*
6. ***For developing a competitive civil service that competes for skills, it is critical to change the Human Resource Management system in the civil service.***
  - 6.1. ***The established practice of “public service should not be paid well” needs serious review.*** *Public service positions are too important to be shortchanged. Public servants should be paid well in keeping with the heavy responsibilities they carry. All serious reforming countries have done that. Market based salaries should be given while appointments and promotions should be on merit and external competition.*
  - 6.2. ***Civil servants should be paid well in (and only in) cash on competitive terms with the private sector.*** *We should remember that the colonial empire paid them handsomely and got good returns. Lee Kuan Yu’s early reform was to pay civil service well.*

- 6.3. **Let not forget the invisible forms of payment when we are talking of increasing their salaries.** Right now, the bulk of payment to senior government officials is in perks (free center housing, fleet of cars for personal use, number of servants and hangers-on, utility bills, board memberships, subsidized clubs, arbitrary gifts of land). **The way things stand, a bureaucrat is cash poor but perk rich.** And Perks are tax-free.
- 6.4. Perks must be abolished if the incentives of civil servants are to be aligned with needs of public service delivery and professionalism. Some well-known drawbacks need to be reviewed.
- 6.4.1. **They are invisible forms of payment that depend on discretion of the powers that be and hence can be sued to buy allegiance.** This is one important way in which the civil service can be politicized. The faithful will get better houses more plots etc.
- 6.4.2. **Perks cost the government a lot.** Houses that are given to government officials are very expensive built in city centers and blocking city development. Maintenance of cars and houses can be big expenses and offer large opportunities for corruption. As is well known from economic research the expense of the perks is much larger than the benefit given to the employee. Cash payment of a much smaller amount could make the employee much better off and the government could save money.
- 6.4.3. **Perks have become a symbol of power.** VIP mentality springs from them. Officials live in government given luxury segregated from people and get treated differently because of perks.
- 6.4.4. **Officials do not understand the lack of public services given that official perks put them in a VIP cocoon.** In their government colonies, they experience less shortages than in neighborhoods. Their fleet of official cars protect them from public transport and the necessity of owning and servicing their own vehicle. Their houses in government neighborhoods never lack utility and other shortages. They don't have to buy home security in these secure gated estates. In other words, they have a very privileged life style that is totally separated from local reality.
- 6.4.5. **Perks are not uniformly available and have to be rationed.** In the rationing process coalitions form and favors are exchanged. These grouping accumulate power and act as coalitions within official circles. Eventually systems of governance are weakened as such coalitions exert pressure for their own benefits.

The current payment method is dysfunctional, induces corruption and adversely affects productivity.

**All perks should be abolished.**

**Salaries should be all in cash based on market comparators and indexed.**

7. Benefits should include no more than indexed, fair valued pensions and health care.
- 7.1. Pension and healthcare benefits should be extended but on modern lines. **Both systems should be properly funded by contributions by officials and the government.** The funds raised should be properly managed by professional money managers and invested for later payouts. Benefits should be defined, and their proper use should be monitored.
- 7.2. **Pensions should be portable and/or cashable at various stages of a career and not merely at the end of their career.** This will allow careers to be better planned and not force people to hang on even when they have lost interest.
- 7.3. **Health care should be better detailed to define the liability of the fund and to let the user know the limits to which they will be helped.** Audited procedures must be in place to prevent abuse that is frequently reported. Government funding of care in foreign hospitals should be discontinued altogether.

8. **Not all civil service jobs should be protected from external competition.** *The preferred scenario would be to open out recruitment to external competition! If that is not acceptable, all senior appointments (Secretary and Additional Secretary) should be based on worldwide competition. Public sector senior appointments affect so much; the best people should be sought for them.*
9. **Transfers should be recognized as a control device and should be discontinued.** *Frequent transfers are not helping productivity and should be questioned in Parliament. Like the rest of the world, appointments should be given tenure with new appointments being obtained through a competitive not a command process. The Chairman can tell us there are no transfers in the Fund and Bank.*
  - 9.1. **Mobility is desired in all civil services.** *For that there should be rules and committees and an internal market can be developed. The Fund and the Bank offer as do many other agencies examples of how this work. Like in many parts of the world, each position is announced and competed for and each officer knows he can't remain in a position for more than 3 years. If she can't find a job within the system, she can look elsewhere.*
  - 9.2. **Mobility should be viewed as desirable not just within the system but also externally. A flow between the public and private sector for required cross fertilization should be encouraged.**
    - 9.2.1. **Rules for leaving service early like in the army should be put in place.**
10. **Civil service independence must be guaranteed by law.** *This can only be done if all law ensures that all key decisions about the running of the service (recruitment, promotions, transfers, pay and pensions) are protected from any interference. Of course, all these things happen under legal guidelines but that is all. MNAs and ministers should not be able to control civil service appointments at any level.*
11. **There will obviously be a discussion on the structure of the civil service.** *I think we should only talk of the federal civil service. Leave the provinces and the local government to determine their own structures. No reason to have uniformity in structures. Let local innovation play.*
12. **In reviewing structure as well as business process, we should consider, what we expect of governance as laid out in point 1 above.** *In my view, the job of the federal civil service should not be administration or public service delivery or even developing infrastructure. It will be involved in 2 main functions.*
  - 12.1. **Policy development**
  - 12.2. **Monitoring and evaluation**

*If so, Processes and rules of business should be reviewed to ensure that government becomes a learning, investigating and thinking government using technology, developing data, information and analysis and innovative in policy determination and public service delivery. Such a bureaucracy would be continuously reform itself adapting to a rapidly changing world.*

*In the past the bureaucracy was a learning researching bureaucracy. This used to be the case (see India Office in England) when famous district Gazetteers as well as other reports are kept.*

*We must make the bureaucracy a learning thinking place again. There must be clear research departments in every ministry and agency working on issues of policy preparation and reform and budget proposals. At the same time, all departments must be held responsible for regular reports on various issues from data to sector reviews to performance reports.*

*No meeting at any level must be held only on PowerPoints. Policy notes or situation reports must be mandatory for these. Reports or minutes of such meetings must be made available unless there are top secret items.*

*3 levels of reporting at the federal level must be mandatory in each ministry.*

- 12.3. Sector plans and reports identifying targets and giving performance reports on a quarterly or annual basis.
- 12.4. Reports on key data in the sector on a regular interval depending on availability. But at least once a quarter.
- 12.5. White papers on upcoming policy developments. And policy notifications when changes happen.
- If we agree with this the federal bureaucracy is much more an active research and M&A variety. It procedures and staffing must therefore be designed with this in mind.

13. **Training program of government should be reviewed** to facilitate a modern professional bureaucracy and move beyond the current approach to develop a generalist, league of gentlemen. The current approach is about a century old and must be updated. Training academies currently are designed to park serving and retired officials and participants consider it either a burden or a party. No serious training takes place.

13.1. Would it not be better to let the universities in Pakistan get some of this business? Let the civil service interact with them as well as give some universities business. This will also release valuable real estate that is being wasted in name of training. It will also stop the competition for choice postings in Lahore.

13.2. At a minimum, let us remove the training academies out of big cities and put them in small town Pakistan which would be good for their development as well as humanizing for the civil servants.

14. **Office filing and procedures must now be based on technology.** The colonial filing system with hand-written illegible notes in the margin and those files with tie-strings must now go. As much as possible, filing and correspondence should be electronic. Similarly use of video and email would eliminate a lot of useless meetings and speed up work.

15. **Recruitment:** Few ideas now. But it must be flexible to allow recruitment at all levels and not just at 'under thirty.'

### **Further steps**

In my view the work of this committee must involve a fair amount of consultation. But consultation should not be mere PowerPoint presentations prepared by a select few. As I said earlier, there is a fair amount of comment on social media that only PAS are members of the Task Force.

**Suggestion 1:** Can we have a weekend retreat where we ask all service groups to make their presentations and preferably give us written suggestions but with analyses. Since there are 11 groups, this will require a weekend.

1. I would further suggest that the committee make its presentation on their analysis along with the key principles they will use moving forward. It could be a great time for engagement and mutual learning.

**Suggestion 2:** In Karachi there are HRM firms who are advising on corporate pay structures using benchmark surveys. You should get some guidance from them either in written form or by calling them to engage with the task force. They might be able to help us with

1. Abolishing UPS
2. Establishing new HRM including new compensation system
3. Structure and management

4. *Rules of Business*
5. *Training*

**Suggestion 3:** *If there is a secretariat, it should engage in the following.*

1. *Summarize previous commissions' (most recent 3 or 4) recommendation on this subject.*
2. *Summarize UK, New Zealand and Singapore reforms for us.*

**Suggestion 4:** *Just like the TF must listen to all service groups, the TF must also listen to autonomous agencies like regulatory bodies, education and health agencies to understand their concerns. What is the best way to do this?*

**Suggestion 5:** *On the use of technology*

1. *we must ask ITU Punjab and Ignite Islamabad to give us a report or a presentation.*
2. *At the same time, we should ask the army for a report on what they have done as they seem to have adopted a paperless office.*

**Suggestion 6:** *Establishment and cabinet division should tell us*

1. *of the rules of business, their origins and history and what would be a process for changing them.*
2. *The rules and processes for policymaking*
3. *The requirements from ministries*
4. *The rules for cabinet summaries and procedures for cabinet discussion.*
5. *Record keeping and the role of civil service.*
6. *Their views of constraints and difficulties as well as reform*

**Suggestion 7:** *The law ministry should give us the legal basis of the civil service and its workings with some historical perspective and ideas for reform.*

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*I would be grateful if this could be considered as my contribution to your first meeting. It could be read out or circulated.*

*I do hope this will be entered in the records of the Task force.*

*Unlike our erstwhile EAC members, I do not think it is worthwhile engaging on skype on such an important subject. Hence, I am making this written presentation and will not disturb the flow of the meeting by asking for a special treatment of skype inclusion.*

*Looking forward to a minute of the meeting.*

*I hope this note will generate some discussion.*

## *Attachment 2 – Input from Mr. Ijaz Quershi*

*A number of important points to be raised by me could not be fully articulated and reflected in the minutes due to the shortage of time as my intervention came at the end and chairman had to leave. These, in my view, are crucial and need to be reiterated.*

- a) to realign TORs with the direction of Prime Minister articulated in his address to the bureaucracy.*
  - b) The exercise as per present TORs would be lengthy and has serious ramifications on merit, province – federation relations, and national cohesion apart from fiscal, legal and constitutional issues likely to be raised and hotly contested thus opening a Pandora’s Box.*
- 1. General dissatisfaction with public service is understandable. The challenge and the resolve of present government is to improve public service delivery.*
  - 2. Correct diagnosis is key to our success. We need an objective analysis why the net effects of our reform / restructuring has been so damaging all along. Examples of, FBR, TDAP, unbundling of WAPDA to name a few at huge costs. Latest initiative of the Planning Division with above one billion rupees project cost has resulted in a few studies in the last four years and with no tangible achievement. Almost at par with “Saaf Pani project” in Punjab. I was made a member of the task force by the Planning Commission, but after attending the first meeting, where I had raised points which I thought were critical, but were not attended to, so I left and subsequently many others gave up in due course.*
  - 3. The present effort has led to a lot of disquiet among services. All are looking for more perks and quota of senior positions, with clear disregard for public service and how to improve it. The senior bureaucracy is already shaken by the aggressive role of media, courts and suffer from politicization and polarization.*
  - 4. While a reasonable pay package to attract the best is fully endorsed, the present budget conditions provide us little scope in the short run.*
  - 5. The most important and fundamental factors are merit and accountability. While the rules and systems are there and have worked well in the past, when we adhered to those, but now circumvention is become the order of the day in recent decades.*
  - 6. A number of flawed assumptions are driving us to the restructuring exercise, the validity of these are not fully evident, in my view.*
  - 7. I would therefore recommend that we do not undertake a long drawn exercise which may further damage institutions as was done in the past. We can truly serve public interest and the present government if we attend to the most important and critical areas and find solutions through consensus.*