

Interview

Dr. Ishrat Hussain

There is extreme centralization. Federal, provincial, and local level services are merged at this stage.

In the current system, there are two issues: one is that the Constitution under Article 240 provides three types of civil services: All Pakistan, federal, and provincial civil service. The provincial civil service is 4 times larger than the federal civil service. Second, under the shared positions of All Pakistan services, more than 1700 were reserved for Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) officers. Out of these, 650 posts have been taken away from PAS and allocated to the members of the provincial civil services. It has also been decided to induct Provincial Civil Service officers into the Pakistan Administrative Service through the FPSC. Thus, the dominance of the All Pakistan Services would be diluted to some extent. If the interpretation of Article 240 in the constitution of Pakistan is clarified by the Supreme Court and it orders that All Pakistan Services should be abolished, the PAS and Police Service of Pakistan would become Federal cadres with no representation at the provincial level. . In my personal view this would not be a forward looking step as we need intimate knowledge of local and provincial problems for decision making at the Federal level. There should also be a new cadre i.e. District Service in addition to the provincial service because most of the interaction between the common citizen and the Government takes place at the local level.



Will the National Executive Service (NES) end up in an imbalanced federation?

The NES will abolish the monopoly and quota of PAS (former DMG /CSP). How would NES work? After reaching grade 19 any officer of the Federal or Provincial Government will have to compete to enter the NES by appearing at a test and interview conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission. NES will open up the doors for both generalists and specialists. There will be specialization within NES organized in four groups: one will be the economic group, second technical group, third, social development group, and the fourth will be the general management group. Officers belonging to each group would rotate in those Ministries, and also get promotions within the groups. This approach would ensure equality of opportunity for every one and curb demotivation and demoralization among those who do not belong to any cadre and also the provincial servants who cannot rise to the top positions.

Centralized government, how much centralization is needed, given the consequences and outcomes?

The government is moving away from centralization. Strong, empowered and fully resourced Local governments are going to be established under the new laws at least in KP and Punjab. This system would have directly elected mayors and chairmen of the tehsil councils. These bodies would have the powers and resources to appoint their own staff. They can bring it in from either the private sector,

federal government, or the provincial government. This step would empower the lower tier of government where there is interaction between citizens and the government. Health, education, sanitation, water supply, and similar would all fall within the purview of the local governments. Provincial governments have 3 million appointees of their own. I think there should be more qualified and well trained staff at the District level rather than at the provincial headquarters.

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Is the DCs and Commissioner system going to be abolished?

Under the new local government structure, there is no move to abolish the DCs and Commissioner. They would be responsible for general administration, law and order, security, land records and revenue, natural disaster management etc. However, the DCs and Commissioner would have limited authority under the new local government laws in KP and Punjab. The elected mayors and Chairmen would have more powers and resources at their disposal.

Yet, the present laws in Sindh and Balochistan are still outdated and the control of the provincial government is quite pervasive.

How long would it take to take-off? How can we ensure transparency in the system? How can we ensure decent compensation? Why does the NES have a quota system?

The concept and mechanics of NES is still at a discussion and consultation stage and has not yet been finalized or approved. FPSC would conduct the exam of NES to ensure transparency, and NES has no quota system. Some of the reform implementation has started already. For example, revamping of training component has already started and the performance contracts that would usher in a new Performance Evaluation system have been signed by the 25 ministers and the prime minister. As far as compensation is concerned, we are waiting for the compensation study and the Pay and Pension Commission report to introduce a decent salary structure

What would be the rules of the game for promotions?

The new promotion rules have been notified and were followed by the Central Selection Boards in their last sessions. The revised weightage system is 40% on Performance reports, 30 % on Training outcomes and 30% on the collective assessment of the Selection Board members. Only those having outstanding and excellent performance, competence and integrity would be promoted and seniority would no longer be the main criterion. The Islamabad High Court has endorsed these rules and upheld the promotions made under the new rules.

How to handle the disgruntlement between civil society and civil service?

Under new Efficiency and Conduct rules, these malpractices will be under control. PM Portal has so far received more than 3 million complaints against various government departments and officers. These complaints are monitored for redressal and the officers who fail to satisfy the citizens are taken to task. I would encourage civil society to make use of this Portal if they have any grievances against any Government department or officer.



Why are there various tribes?

There are two models: British model for induction into cadres and occupational groups and the US model for position based induction. Under new laws, the performance evaluation mechanisms are changing. The disparity of representation between the generalist and specialist will be abolished. It will end the tribes and monopoly of generalists would inshallah come to an end, although generalists would most probably fit in quite well in most leadership positions as they have diverse experience, broad based experience and the skills to synthesize divergent viewpoints and come up with a coherent solution.

Why can't we involve universities, professors, and educational institutes in civil servant training?

For training, educational institutes will not be used, but resource persons from universities will be asked to teach at the training institutes. The current training courses are being split into two - four to five weeks at the National Institutes of Management (NIM) for general management and soft skills training and the remaining five weeks of training in their specialized field. University professors who have done research or case studies on public policy issues and the problems of practical nature would be invited to present their cases and research findings at these training courses. I would urge the academics to involve themselves in paying attention and finding solutions to the multifarious problems facing Pakistan.

HAQUE SURVEY

Nadeem Haque @nadeemhaque · Oct 5

If we want civil service reform we must get rid of service groups with guaranteed position including the dominance of the PAS



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