

Q: Our Bureaucracy is perceived to be the extension of 'Royal Civil Services' (Steel Frame of British Empire). Do you agree with this notion? Give reasons in either case. Also briefly discuss the reforms in bureaucracy of Pakistan.

1. Introduction:

Bureaucracy is the backbone of a country's administration. In Pakistan, the civil service is often seen as a continuation of British-era administrative system, known as 'Steel Frame of British Empire'. The perception exists because many structures, traditions, and working systems styles of the bureaucracy remain similar to colonial times. However, there have been efforts to reform the system to make it more responsive to public needs.

a. Overview of Steel Frame of

British Empire:

The 'Steel frame of British Empire' refers to highly organized and powerful civil service system established by the British government to their colonies, including the Indian subcontinent. It was designed to maintain strict administrative control, enforce laws, and ensure the smooth functioning of the empire. While effective, it was elitist and served British interests rather than the local population. Many of its structures persisted in post-colonial like Pakistan and India.

3. Pakistan's Bureaucracy as an Extension of British Civil Services:

Pakistan's bureaucracy is influenced by the British civil service system. This is because:

1) Structure and Hierarchy:

The civil service still follows a rigid, top-down approach with powerful bureaucrats making key decisions.

2) Examination and Selection

Process:

The recruitment process, including competitive exams (CSP), is based on British model.

3) Rules and Procedures:

Many laws, administrative codes, and bureaucratic procedures are still rooted in colonial-era governance.

4) Power and Authority:

Bureaucrats continue to wield significant power, often acting independently of political leadership, similar to the British period.

5) Public Service Approach

The system is still more focused on control and administration rather than citizen welfare and service delivery.

However, some argue that the bureaucracy has evolved and is no longer just an extension of the British system.

1) Local Adaptations:

Overtime, policies and procedures have been modified to suit Pakistan's specific needs.

2) Democratic Influence:

Unlike British rule, today's civil servants operate under an elected government.

3) Reforms and Modernization:

Efforts have been made

4. Reforms in Pakistan's Bureaucracy

Over the years, different governments have introduced reforms to improve

efficiency and accountability. Some key reforms include:

1) Administrative Reforms (1973):

Introduced by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, these reforms aimed to reduce the dominance of elite bureaucrats and improve merit-based promotions.

2) Devolution Plan (2001):

Under Pervez Musharraf, local government systems were introduced to transfer power to district administrations.

3) Civil Service Reforms (2019-present):

Efforts have been made to digitize records, improve performance evaluation, and enhance transparency.

4) Public Sector Efficiency:

Steps have been made taken to make government departments more

people friendly and accountable.

5) Right to Information (RTI):

laws have been enacted to ensure public access to government records, promoting accountability and reducing bureaucratic society.

6) E-Governance Initiatives:

Digital platforms and online services have been introduced to reduce paperwork, improve transparency and speed up administrative processes.

5. Conclusion:

Pakistan's bureaucracy has strong historical roots in the British civil service system. While it still retains many colonial-era traits, reforms have been introduced to make it more modern and effective. However, further improvements can make it better.

