

## Transforming Public Administration: From Masters to Civil Servants

### Outline

#### 1. Introduction

Very good effort

**Thesis statement:** The main objective of public administration is to serve the public. Unfortunately, public administrators have turned into masters rather than civil servants. But, public administrators can be transformed by adopting public-centric approach and improving service delivery.

#### 2. Decoding Public Administration and masters mentality of public servants

#### 3. Why civil servants have become masters?

- Power concentration in the hands of civil servants
- Lack of proper check and balance
- Superiority complex - source of masters mentality

#### 4. Ways to transform public administration: From Masters to Civil Servants

- Ensure Transparency principle
- Adoption of the unbiased accountability system
- Train public servants in social environment



- d) Align civil servants promotion with service delivery
- e) Using Artificial intelligence in transforming public administration
- f) Cut down: Civil servants perks and privileges
- g) Ensure Accountability in Public Administration
- h) Specialized of cases related to public administration
- i) Introduce Performance based budgeting
- j) Empower public to raise voice against Civil servants' misconduct
- k) Maintain rule of law
- l) Introduce Gender neutral public administration setup
- m) Promote ethical conduct in civil servants
- n. Conclusion

"The main duty of the civil servants is to serve the public". Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah has well-articulated the basic objective of public administrators. It serves as the base of public service delivery and ensures the good governance. Unfortunately, public administration



set-up is devoid of this principle. Civil servants have forgotten the saying of Quaid-e-Azam and have become masters rather than public service deliverers. It has mitigated the confidence of public in their civil servants. Concentration of power and lack of proper check and balance system has rendered the civil servants as masters. Along with it, superiority complex in civil servants has further deviated them from their real aim. But, public administration can be transformed by introducing the principles of transparency and accountability in its set-up. Moreover, there is a dire need to train public servants in normal social setting. Furthermore, the promotion of civil servants needs to be aligned with their service delivery. Along with



its public administration can be transformed by introducing artificial intelligence and reducing the perks and privileges of civil servants. There is also a need of ensuring public administration and politics dichotomy, establishing special courts for handling cases related to public servants and introducing performance based appraisals for public departments. Moreover, civil servants can be changed from masters by empowering public to raise votes against the misconduct of civil servants, upholding rule of law and introducing gender neutral public administration set-up. As, the main objective of public administration is to serve the public. Unfortunately, public administrations have turned into masters. But, public administration can be transformed by adopting public centric approach and



Improving public service delivery.

Public administration is a concept that deals with serving the public. It is developed to fulfill the basic needs of people, run the government machinery by supporting through the implementation of public policies developed by politicians in the parliament. Public administrators are meant to address the grievances of the rank and file and develop mutual trust with them. Civil servants are actually the public servants but they do not endorse the reality. They portray themselves as masters instead of civil servants. Due to this masters' mentality, they consider themselves superior to the public and treat rank and file derogately and inhumanely. It is the dark face of the public administrators which



cannot be ignored. It is the major hindrance in the way of effective and efficient service delivery.

One of the major reasons of turning civil servants into masters is the concentration of power. Civil servants enjoy the excessive power in their hands, which empower them to rule on the public rather than serving the public and they compromise on their performance for fulfilling their own vested interests. They use their power to benefit themselves and their relatives instead of the public. It is often said that public administrators linger on the implementation of public policies, if their own interests are compromised and it is one of the major factors for the poor performance of



Civil servants and the deteriorated plight of the public development. Hence, power concentration is the root cause of turning public servants into public masters.

Along with the concentration of power, lack of proper check and balance system in the public administration has also made them masters. Due to the absence of adequate check and balance system, civil servants feel free to do whatever they want to do, it makes them tension free and paves their way for serving their own interests.

They can easily manipulate public policies, <sup>and</sup> misutilize the funds allocated for public welfare by the government, along with taking illicit money from the public to do their works. According to the



PIDE, Pakistan's one of the biggest think tanks, has shown in its report that the lack of adequate check and balance system hinders service delivery of public servants and in turn impedes economic development of Pakistan. So, absence of accountability cause public servants to rule <sup>the</sup> public.

Along with its superiority complex is also a major factor that leads to the compromise of the effectiveness of civil servants. Superiority complex is the offshot of the perks and privileges which the public servants enjoy, due to these facilities they consider themselves as elite and donot want to develop bond with the inferior public. They consider public inferior to themselves because they think that they are



competent, intelligent, that's why they are allocated as civil servants while other people lack such competence and intelligence. World system theory can be applied here, like civil servants consider themselves superior like core countries and treat as well as manipulate public as periphery countries. This superiority complex have made public servants masters.

Although public servants have forgotten their real duty but by ensuring the principle of transparency, situation can be improved. Transparency in the affairs of public administration is a key to improve the performance of civil servants as they know that their each and every step and act is being monitored and



whatever they will do, it will be made public. So, they will try to improve their service delivery instead of improving their own state. Information Act 2017, is a key step taken by Pakistan to ensure transparency in the affairs of the public administration. More steps like this can help to transform the public administration and make the civil servants as public servants.

As transparency is essential, like wise, ensuring accountability is also important for transforming public servants. Without accountability, no check and balance system can be maintained on the working of civil servants, which make them as misers of power and manipulators of the interests of public.



Accountability system in public administration ensures that public servants work in their domain, serve public without involving in corrupt practices and give up the form of malpractices that hinder public service delivery. Bribe taking in exchange of performing work is the most common form of corruption found in public sector. Whistle blowing <sup>Protection</sup> act in Pakistan is a right step to uphold the accountability in Pakistan to improve public servants performance.

Moreover, civil servants must be trained in social settings for developing bond with public. In the most of developing countries they are trained in artificial settings like in public service training academies where they don't remain in



contact with public, so they remain unaware of the needs, pains and grievances of the people and it also develops the sense of superiority in them. They start thinking them as masters of public and don't get involve in the public matters but when they are trained in the social settings, they develop the sense of understanding of the problems of public, so when they take their charge, they will definitely become public centric. Hence, training of civil servants in social settings is crucial to develop pro-public perception in them.

Along with training in public settings, their promotion need to be aligned with the performance criteria. In most of the countries like



in Pakistan, public servants are promoted in higher grades on the basis of seniority which compromises their performance and merit culture and gives them a leverage to perform according to their own will instead of focusing on improving their performance. They feel contented despite <sup>of their</sup> poor performance due to the assurance of promoting and excelling on the basis of seniority principle. In USA and many European countries, performance based promotion system is being pursued. So, by adopting performance based promotion, their performance can be improved.

Moreover, by using artificial intelligence in the domain of public, their service delivery can be improved. World is progressing in the



field of artificial intelligence which has both pros and cons, it can be applied in the field of public administration to improve and strengthen the accountability system of public servants. In Pakistan, electronic attendance machines are introduced in public offices to ensure the presence of public servants in their offices. Although, it is a good step, but government should improve this system by introducing three to four time attendances during a day of a public servant in order to curb half day leave of public servants. Because many incidents are reported that public servants do attendance in morning and then spend remaining day in their private chores and come to office at closing time to again do attendance. So, artificial intelligence must be utilized in this regard.



Moreover, there is a dire need of withdrawing the perks and ~~privileges~~ of public servants. They enjoy these facilities during the whole service tenure along with the handsome amount of salaries which goes on increasing ~~to~~ with their grade. <sup>due to</sup> These facilities, they start considering themselves elites and don't pay attention on the miseries and sufferings of the public which develops hatred in the heart of public for the civil servants. In case of Pakistan, civil servants enjoy a lot of perks and ~~privileges~~, they enjoy the facilities of free housing, transportation and free electricity units etc. In the wake of these facilities, they feel themselves as the masters of public.



Along with reducing perks and privileges, there is a need to ensure public administration and politics dichotomy. It is an important factor because due to affiliation with political leaders, people get recruited in government sphere, which violates the merit culture and deepens the public sentiment against civil servants. Moreover, public servants also use the power of their political connection to get transfer in their convenient areas. Along with it, they also get promotion due to the political affiliation. According to a survey conducted from youth in Pakistan, the sad reality was revealed that youth consider political interference in public domain a major threat to meritocracy. Civil servants need to be made -a-political.



Furthermore, there is a need to establish separate courts for dealing the cases related to public administration. It will speed up the process of justice delivery and resolving the cases, it makes Civil servants fearful to perform well because if they involve in any sort of corrupt or malpractice, they will not remain free from the clutches of judicial system. It will enable them to perform in their domain with honesty and integrity and address the grievances of public. In Pakistan, special courts for terrorism cases has been established. Likewise, special courts for public domain matters need to be established to ensure timely justice and make civil servants as public servants not their masters.



due to fear of trial.

Furthermore, performance based budgeting must be introduced for public departments.

Due to lack of this system, civil servants do not use and spend allocated funds for the welfare of public and do corruption for increasing wealth. Because of the assurance of availability of funds in next fiscal year regardless of the measurement of performance of departments. When performance based budgeting is introduced, it will make civil servants accountable and they will utilize funds in designated areas to improve the overall performance of their departments and acquire funds in the next fiscal year which could be reduced in case of poor performance. So, performance



based budgeting is a key to improve service of civil servants as being pursued in USA.

Along with performance based budgeting, there is a need to empower public for raising voices against the misconduct of civil servants. When public is empowered, civil servants hegemony can be rooted out. They know that in case of any misconduct, irresponsible and humiliating attitude and neglect of public issues, public can raise their voice, it makes them more prudent in every decision of public domain. Federal Ombudsman institution in Pakistan, takes the complaints of public, process them and evaluate their truthfulness and they take actions



against the civil servants on the basis of solid ground. Another best example is the Traders Community in Azad Kashmir, that effectively raise their voice against civil servants. So, public empowerment can reduce the power of civil servants.

Moreover, maintaining rule of law is also pivotal to transform public administration. Public servants use their power before law enforcement agencies and get escape from their catches in case of malpractices. Upholding rule of law can undermine the <sup>undue</sup> power of public servants to get special treatment from law enforcement agencies. It is an undeniable truth that no nation can succeed without treating all its



residents equally before law.  
In Pakistan, if any family member of civil servant does any crime and gets arrested, just on one case of civil servant he easily get released. It shows the dismal situation of rule of law in Pakistan and it has made civil servant masters instead of public servant. So, rule of laws must be upheld to transform public administration.

Along with its gender neutral public administration set-up must be introduced women are subjugated by men in the patriarchal society not only in private domains but also in public domains they initially face challenges in securing government job but when they get it,



they face glass ceiling. Due to less representation of women as civil servants, the grievances of common women remain unaddressed by the male dominated public administration set-up. They face discrimination as well as sexual harassments when they visit public offices for their work.

According to the **Aurat Foundation** women in Pakistan face hesitation to take their matters in public offices due to fear of harassments. So, gender neutral public administration must be set up to root out hegemony of male civil servants over the women in public.

Moreover, ethical training can also play a pivotal role in turning civil servants from masters



to public servants. Most of the civil servants despite being highly educated, lack the ethical way of conduct, so they treat public like insects and deal with them in disrespectful way which hurts the self-respect of the rank and file. So, ethical training is necessary for civil servants not only at the beginning of the career as civil servant but also during the service time period in order to make them ethical and respectful towards public.

To exemplify it, no one can deny the truth that public servants have become deviated from their right path. They have become the masters of public due to the power concentration



lack of accountability and considering public inferior. Although it is a time taking process to transform the public administration by adopting public centric approach it can be done appropriately. For this purpose, transparency, accountability, rule of law, aligning their promotion and perks and privileges with their performances their role can be modified. Moreover, by introducing artificial intelligence in public domain, empowering public and adopting gender neutral administrative set-up, <sup>Well done</sup> public servants can be turned from masters to the public servants.