

5. PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT REFORMS

- 5.1 Public Sector Management Reforms (PSMR) are deliberate change efforts by Government to improve its capacity to efficiently and effectively execute policies. The reform initiatives also aim at strengthening capacity to perform Government functions, necessary for sustainable economic and social development through the creation of a performance culture focussing on quality, cost and access. It is, therefore, expected to raise quality of public services delivered to citizens.
- 5.2 Global changes coupled with technological advancement are impacting on the environment, calling for better governance through effective service delivery. To this end, PSMR is not only important, but inevitable for achieving effective results.
- 5.3 In addressing issues of PSMR, particular attention is paid to economic, social, political and technological considerations with focus on improvements in outcomes to transform the Public Sector.

Past Recommendations

- 5.4 In our previous PRB Reports, with a view to meeting challenges, the Bureau recommended that strategies be developed, among others, to provide the necessary legislation which would clarify the role and responsibilities of Ministers as distinct from those of Supervising Officers; move from multilayered structures to flatter ones; ensure that organisations are manned by persons of the right calibre; provide for training and development; link pay and incentive to performance and results; introduce the concept of multi-skilling in certain areas; and revisit existing policies needed to allow the introduction of new patterns of work. We also recommended that Ministries, Departments and Organisations (MDOs) should strengthen confidence in their organisations and create the right environmental conditions to earn citizens' trust; facilitate knowledge acquisition through the application of Information Technology; make arrangements for the provision of **uninterrupted Counter Services**; and establish mechanisms to sustain and evaluate reform initiatives.
- 5.5 The most widely reforms initiatives adopted so far are: Programme Based Budgeting, cost containment, e-government, strategic planning, public/private partnerships, contracting out, structural streamlining, rightsizing, process improvement, skills development, increasing citizen involvement in policy and management, regulatory reform, and decentralization, amongst others, and these, while upholding the core values of integrity, impartiality, honesty and objectivity.
- 5.6 Public Sector Reform Initiatives have a bearing across the whole Public Sector and are headed by the Public Sector Management Reforms Committee (PSMRC). The PSMRC is chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the

Civil Service. Its composition also includes other senior public officers and representatives of Staff Associations.

5.7 The responsibilities of the PSMRC are to:

- (a) spearhead reform strategies for the modernisation of the Public Sector with emphasis on the use of new technologies and optimum utilisation of human resources through sound employment relations and social dialogue;
- (b) establish mechanisms to sustain and evaluate reform initiatives, both through internal assessments and through feedback from customers;
- (c) rationalise and streamline activities within and among Public Sector Organisations with a view to improving quality of services and ensuring greater accountability and transparency;
- (d) adopt and monitor measures aimed at strengthening capacity for responsive and results-oriented public management so as to efficiently and effectively meet national and global challenges;
- (e) promote ethical standards and public service values as embodied in the “Code of Ethics for Public Officers”;
- (f) nurture an attitude of service excellence in meeting the needs of the public with high standards of quality, courtesy and responsiveness;
- (g) foster an environment which induces and welcomes continuous change for greater efficiency and effectiveness;
- (h) advise Government on issues of public importance e.g. institutional machinery to improve public trust or the types of desirable competencies that members of Recruiting Bodies or Board Directors need to possess; and
- (i) advise Ministries/Departments to drive the Civil Service towards increased levels of accountability, cost efficiency and responsiveness to meet the expectations of citizens.

5.8 The importance of the high level PSMRC is primordial. Equally important is the role of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and the various Reforms Committees set up at Ministries/Departments/Organisations’ level. **These should be maintained and we recommend accordingly.**

5.9 We are, in the wake of this review exercise, proposing levers for reforms to take place and which would over time drive Public Sector employees towards more appropriate behaviour and increase effectiveness of service delivery in Public Sector Organisations. We are giving due support to reviewing operations, processes and procedures in the service, wherever it is deemed appropriate; to redesigning public services around users; to the concept of delayering, merging of grades, providing polyvalent grades and reviewing schemes of service, among others. We are also providing for such facilities, development

opportunities, conditions and benefits that would improve staff competence and enhance desired employee behaviour for efficient and effective service.

5.10 The reforms initiatives which are discussed in greater details in the relevant chapters, are highlighted hereunder:

Civil Service Reforms

5.11 The salient features of Civil Service Reforms include:

- Endowment of Public Service Human Resource Management Reforms as a critical component of the agenda on reforms in order to achieve greater efficiency.
- Recruitment and Retention of people of the right calibre through contract employment and alternative modes of employment to ensure proper manning of the Public Sector.
- Establishment of **a true performance management regime** and culture to enhance Government's ability to deliver on its commitments and **foster an environment which induces and welcomes continuous change for greater efficiency and effectiveness.**
- Introduction of a **Performance Related Incentive Scheme** to compensate differently on the basis of outcomes **as evidenced by the Performance Appraisal Report.**
- Provision of the necessary logistics and backup to expedite E-Government and change work practices.
- Simplification of procedures for the prescription of schemes of service.

Concept of Citizen Charters

5.12 The Citizen Charter is based on the premise that the Citizen is supreme. As Public Sector Organisations are run with public funds, they are subject to close scrutiny and have to be accountable. From that perspective, many organisations display the list of services they provide, the manner in which these services may be tapped and they also specify the standard for these services. To further strengthen good governance practices in the Public Sector, we are making appropriate recommendations.

Recommendation 1

5.13 **We recommend that all Public Sector Organizations should:**

- (i) develop and publish their respective Citizen Charter;**
- (ii) inform people how their services can be tapped; and**
- (iii) establish a mechanism to obtain feedback/complaints from members of the public concerning the services provided and suggestions for improvement.**

- 5.14 We also recommend that Head of organizations should ensure that suggestions as well as complaints are processed in an attempt to enhance service delivery.**

Mystery Shopping

- 5.15 The concept of “Mystery Shopping”, introduced in the past Report, provides information on the operations of organizations, in relation to customer-service related functions, including staff behaviour. In fact, this is particularly prompted by grievances received. It enables the identification of weaknesses as well as good practices.
- 5.16 Mystery Shoppers act as customers, observe all the operations running in the organisation and thereafter, submit a comprehensive report to Management for decision taking and eventual actions. This concept provides the advantage of observation and collection of information in a very subtle manner. As it is considered that this practice is still relevant today, we propose to maintain this provision.

Recommendation 2

- 5.17 We recommend that the MCSAR should continue to implement the “Mystery Shopping” in selected organisations and encourage other organisations to emulate this reform initiative.**

Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS)

- 5.18 The MCSAR is presently driving the project of Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS). Following its implementation, this project is expected to relieve officers of the Human Resource Management cadre from cumbersome manual transactions and to be involved in strategic tasks.
- 5.19 The project involves access to procedures regarding HR functions so that tasks are attended to expediently, and in a standardised manner. Additionally, this requires officers of the HR cadre to make regular use of IT tool in the performance of their duties. For the success of this project, all Ministries/ Department have the duty to provide the relevant support. We are, therefore, making appropriate recommendation to enable the HRMIS achieve its objectives.

Recommendation 3

- 5.20 We recommend that:**
- (i) all Ministries/Departments provide the necessary support to the MCSAR for the proper implementation of the HRMIS; and**
 - (ii) appropriate training be dispensed to officers at all levels who would be required to use the system, to better equip them to deliver efficiently and effectively.**

Review of Organisation Structures

- 5.21 While reviewing organisation structures, grades have been created solely on the basis of functional requirements. Where there are excessive overlapping of duties between two grades and there exists minimal supervision of one grade over the other, we have merged those grades in line with our policy of flatter structures.
- 5.22 We urge organisations to avoid proliferation of levels that may be a hindrance to the smooth delivery of service.

Training and Development

- 5.23 Performance gaps identified on the basis of performance appraisal should be the base line for providing training. In addition, organisations should identify such training that would be vital for the performance of their core functions. At Chapter 9 we have enunciated a series of measures on training and development.
- 5.24 In the context of Reforms, it is considered that training at all levels is an essential component in equipping the employee with necessary skills and competencies. Head of Organisations should, therefore, ensure that, to the extent possible, the provisions made at Chapter 9 be fully implemented.

Consolidation of Schemes of Service

- 5.25 It has been found that many schemes of service in the Public Sector tend to group duties in a very narrow and specific field. Consequently, any change in that sector invariably leads to certain changes in the schedule of duties. Amendment to the schemes of service takes quite some time as the process is lengthy.
- 5.26 The consolidation of schemes of service by the MCSAR is underway. It has been argued that the schedule of duties should cover broader areas, based on same level of skills and competencies.
- 5.27 At Chapter 10 of this volume, we have recommended that the MCSAR: (i) reviews the process for prescribing schemes of service within a period of not more than four months (ii) consolidates schemes of service for posts requiring same level of skills and competencies in consultation with stakeholders/ Responsible Officers of Ministries/Departments.
- 5.28 Further to this measure, we consider that while prescribing schemes of service, consideration should be given to, cover the broader aspects of the job requiring the same level of qualification and competencies so that, any minor change in the schedule of duties would not require an amendment to the schemes of service.

Recommendation 4

- 5.29 We recommend that henceforth, the MCSAR should ensure that duties specified in the schemes of service cover broad aspects such that minor changes in schedule of duties do not trigger an amendment to the schemes of service, taking into consideration that these duties require same level of skills and competencies.**

Recruitment

- 5.30 Efficient and effective service delivery depends on the processes through which the service is delivered and on the staff involved in such delivery. Improvement thereof, therefore, depends on the processes as well as the staff.
- 5.31 In the last Report, we provided for a grade of Industrial/Occupation Psychologist on the establishment of the Public Disciplined Forces Service Commission (PDFSC) to enable it to supplement the selection process by evolving some form of personality/psychometric tests to select candidates with the appropriate profile.
- 5.32 As it is considered that the use of these tests will facilitate the selection of candidates having the required competencies and attitude, we are laying emphasis on same. The PSRSC should, in consultation with the PDFSC and MCSAR, come up with proposals to review the selection process to enable the PDFSC recruit candidates who, not only possess the required qualification, but also have the appropriate mindset.

Use of Modern Technology

- 5.33 Information and Communication Technology singly has the greatest potential of elevating the processes to new levels. It facilitates efficient storing and retrieval of data, instantaneous transmission of information, processing information and data faster than manual system, speeding up transactions and taking decisions (informed) expeditiously and judiciously thus increasing transparency and enforcing accountability.
- 5.34 The use of IT across the Public Sector has the objective of modernising the system for improved service delivery. Many MDOs have recognised the increasing importance of electronic systems and have adopted many E-Government initiatives.
- 5.35 Under the relevant Chapter we have made recommendations for:**
- (i) the increased usage of the IT tool in the day-to-day running of the organisation;**
 - (ii) training to be provided to staff at all levels;**
 - (iii) computerisation and automation of work processes.**

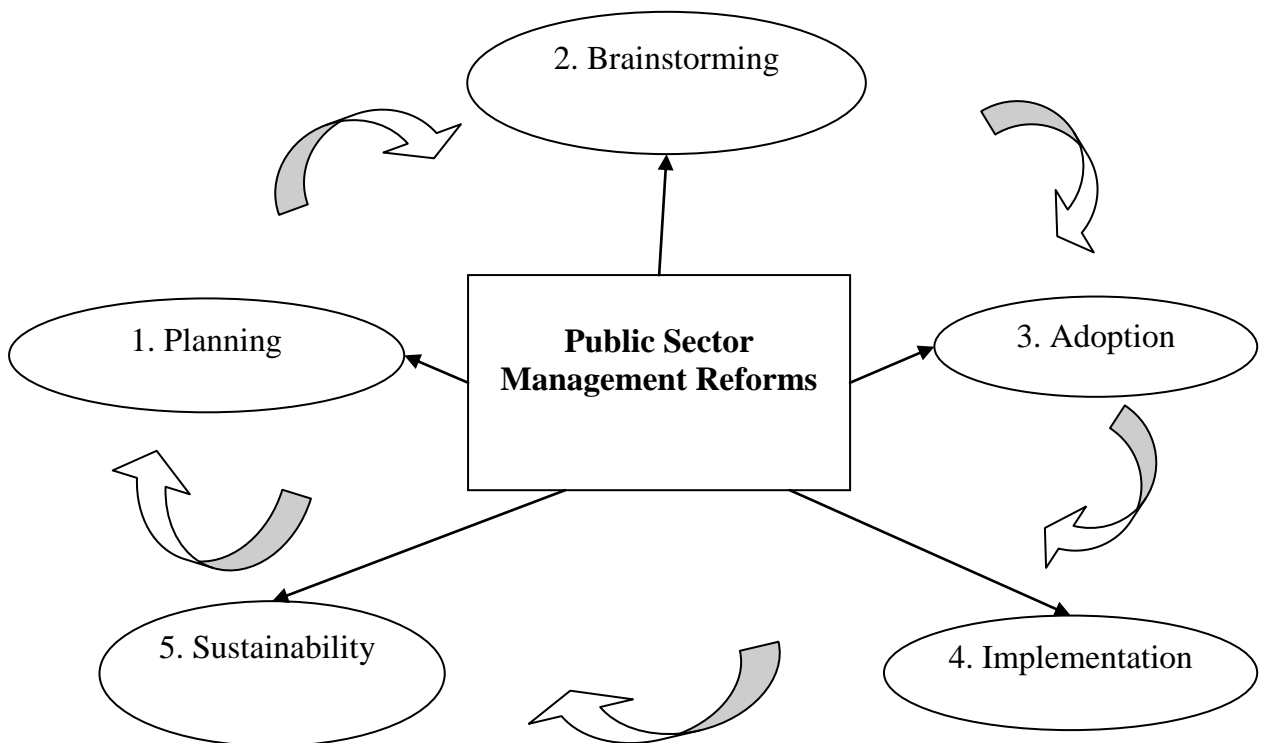
5.36 We have also made provision for a designate position of Head ICT to lead e-Govt projects and initiatives in Ministries/Departments/Organsiations.

Recommendation 5

5.37 We recommend that Ministries/Departments/Organisations should provide the necessary support to the Head ICT in respect of e-Govt initiatives.

5.38 Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to the reform program and there should be a sense of ownership of the reform process. Such ownership will greatly enhance the likelihood of success of the support being provided by the development partners.

5.39 Reform initiatives should be pursued till the end so as to reap the benefits thereof. We are herewith reproducing the general guidelines adopted in OECD countries.



5.40 The “reform cycle” comprises the planning, brainstorming, adoption, implementation, and sustainability phases which do not necessarily or always unfold in a sequential pattern.

5.41 In the ‘planning phase’ the main stakeholders identify the problem, design the policy and build the reform agenda. Once designed, there should generally be an inclusive and comprehensive ‘brainstorming’ debate among stakeholders of reform initiatives. The socio-economic context and the organisation of the reform agenda are the key elements in the “adoption phase”. Once the policy is

adopted, it should be executed and implemented in the “implementation phase”, and evaluation of reforms should in general improve the “sustainability” of policies.

Conclusion

5.42 We have taken into consideration (i) the concept of citizen centric administration in Ministries/Departments/Organisations; (ii) that procedures to tap services are simplified to improve efficiency; and (iii) that mechanisms such as citizens charters are used as a means of improving performance and accountability in MDOs in framing many of the recommendations in this Report. We hope that these will give certain pointers towards making that vision a reality.
