

**Research Article**

Capacity building of public officials: Challenges of public organizations in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The sensitivity and importance of public sector organizations in general or the civil service in particular is high, particularly in democratic political environments. Their responsiveness and accountability towards the masses is one of the key requirements in terms of effective and efficient service delivery by all wings of the government. Apart from other factors, the existence of capacity and capacity building plays a vital role in determining success or failure of any public official. For that matter, this study focuses on one aspect of effective service delivery i.e. capacity building of public officials and challenges faced in this regard. A qualitative research strategy has been followed where 33 officers of senior/managerial cadre were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Purposive sampling strategy was used to select the participants of study. The rich data collected were analyzed using a thematic analysis technique. Themes emerging from the data revealed that serious capacity building issues and challenges exist in Pakistan's public sector owing to several reasons, some of them include lack of structured and service oriented modern programs, lack of the fit between performance and pay, absence of accountability mechanisms and red-tapism involved in Pakistan's bureaucracy. For that matter, it is the need of the hour that aforementioned factors must be taken into account and the needful shall be done by making changes in the civil service structure through reforms.

Keywords: *Public Sector Management; Capacity Building; Governance*

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing importance and need for effective policy making and implementation in the field of public administration in developed and developing countries alike for delivery of public services (Kalassen et al; 2017). However; the requisite capacity to effectively formulate and execute public policies remains a daunting challenge for most institutions. Therefore; policy makers and executive need to address the key issues of 'capacity building' as it has been observed that those countries who do not deal with the capacity building issues might confront serious consequences in face of dysfunction of the state institutions (Ku & Yuen; 2011; Sembiah et al.; 2018). Pakistan is no exception to this reality. A lot of public institutions are not functioning the way they should be and one of the key reasons is the issues with public officials' capacities (Parveen et al.; 2021). Therefore; the purpose of this research is to determine the extent of capacity building in public

institutions of Pakistan and to investigate the issues and challenges related to capacity building in the public sector.

Capacity building is a very broad concept. There has been a number of definitions and characteristics of 'capacity building'. The fundamental challenge with this concept is that there has been no consensus in the definition of capacity building (Kaplan; 2000). However; for the sake of this study; authors have used the most cited definition i.e. "*continuous enhancement of capabilities*" that does not focus on current capabilities only but also develop future competencies (Banyan; 2015; Honadle; 1981; Kaplan; 2000; Milen; 2001; Stringer; 2013). Conceptual definition of 'capacity building' in the dictionary of public administration is as follows;

"Capacity building ... includes among its major objectives the strengthening of the capability of chief administrative officers; department and agency heads; and program managers in general purpose government to plan; implement manage or evaluate policies; strategies or programs designed to impact on social conditions in the community" (Shafritz; 1986; p.79).

Since the beginning of the debate of capacity building of public sector to strengthen the performance level of public officials and minimizing the burden of government spending used on grasping expensive expatriate technical assistance; it has been observed that those countries that have developed institutional and human resource capacities in public sector over time have shown significant improvements whereas those countries who could not pay attention to development of capacities have met with serious failures (Barasa et al.; 2017; Goncharuk et al.; 2021). Moreover; it has also been observed that developing countries could not retain the capacity building activities in public sector due to inefficiency of public machinery and fiscal limitations (UNDP; 1993a). There have been a number of factors that play role in the failure of capacity building in public sector officials ranging from economic conditions as discussed above; poor leadership; social disruptions and personal benefits (UNDP; 1993b). In dealing with these challenges; developing countries focus more on training of the public sector institutions to develop capacity building of human resource in order to deal with contemporary challenges in the field of public administration (Noya et al.; 2009; Facer; 2021) and increases the knowledge of the officials' to escalate their well-being (Abbasi et al.; 2021; Brunetto et al.; 2020).

As far as capacity building of public sector in Pakistan is concerned; Pakistan's public sector has experienced significant decline in the capacity (Miraj & Wang; 2019; Kazi & Chandani; 2021). Looking at this; Government of Pakistan (GOP) identified that if Pakistan has to match with the pace of developed world in case of poverty reduction; escalation of employment opportunities; better economic growth; increase competition in the private sector of global market; then it is mandatory to come up with radical improvements in the bureaucratic structure of the country in terms of capacity building. In response to this; capacity related civil service reforms at provincial and federal level were analyzed by the World Bank in 2011 that suggested various factors in terms of capacity building of public officials including professional training program; national school of public policy; Federal

Public Service Commission (FPSC) and economic policy and management with total funds of US \$ 85 million.

1.1. SIGNIFICANCE

Public sector is very crucial for the development of any state. It is assumed that those countries where bureaucracy is well equipped with required skill set will ensure better functionality of the state. On the contrary; those states whose civil service has issues with capacity building such as lack of proper training to meet the standard criteria are likely to experience service delivery issues. Pakistan; being a developing country; has also been affected from this issue and has observed decline in the performance of public sector due to lack of proper capacity building of public officials. There have been several studies by international agencies on reforms of civil service in Pakistan; however; efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector is still far from better. This study can be very crucial in determining the issues related to capacity building of public officials and in dealing with identified challenges in order to improve capacity of public institutions.

It has been observed that in Pakistan many public institutions are struggling for survival including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA); Pakistan Railways; Pakistan Steel mill; Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and other state institutions and one of the chief reasons of this poor functionality is capacity building issues of public officials along with poor governance in state institutions (Kugleman & Hussain; 2018). Most of the public sector institutions are going in deficit over the years and there seems to be no way out in near future. Therefore; this study can be of dire importance in providing the key parameters to policy makers related to capacity building of public officials of Pakistan. On base of aforementioned discussion; following are the objectives of the study; (i) to determine the level of capacity building in public organizations of Pakistan; (ii) to investigate the challenges associated with capacity building in public organizations of Pakistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Capacity building is not a novel concept and multiple definitions are present in literature (Light; 2004); however a consensus is not available. Detailed examination of capacity building by Paul (1995) has defined capacity building as the sub unit of institutional management. Instead of handling what is available already in an organization; the purpose of capacity building is to improve the things. There are various definitions of capacity building in literature but instead of creating a complex and single definition of this phenomenon; it is a good option to create a hierarchy of needs of capacity building. There can be various components of capacity building that needs to be strengthened. These components can be performance; personal; supervisory; workload; facility; role; structural capacity and so on (Potter & Brough; 2004).

Zubair et al. (2020) studied the experience of capacity building in the context of Pakistan and explained how serious capacity issues exist in different public sector organizations. Authors further stated that there are issues in terms of human resource capacity as well as

institutional capacity; which can be addressed by promotion of training and development activities at both levels.

Role of capacity builders is very important in building capacities and a successful capacity builder is the one who do not limit his thinking to inside the bottle only for creating and transferring novel ideas and application of knowledge (Weber & Khademian; 2008). Capacity building is not an easy and simple task as it appears to be for some people; it needs a paragon change in procedures from top-down to bottom-up. But sometimes changes of small scale and programs of development at very minor and local level positively affect people's wellbeing. Capacity building is connected somehow to developmental initiatives at individual and organizational level. As the environmental program of the United Nations laid importance on the matter of both individual and organizational change in sustainable development programs; it would mean a change in state; civil society as well as private sector. It will improve the mechanisms that foster the cooperation within a society. Here the importance of capacity building can be seen as a catalyst and a fuel for procedures relating to change. Sustainability in capacity building needs substantial institutions at local level like leadership; ownership and inclusion (Rola-Rubzen & Burgess; 2016). Collaborative capacity building and all the commitments associated with it work with a mind-set. Drawn from this is that concept of mindset is very important and holds an influence on innovation; problem analysis skills; and global competitiveness and ultimately on the capacity building actors and the ones whose capacities is being built (Spinwall & Cain; 1997; McGrath & MacMillan; 2000).

Moving to the dimensions of capacity building; Chaskin (2001) points out six dimensions of capacity building including core characteristics of capacity building; level of the capacity building; particular function of the capacity building; strategies to promote capacity; conditioning impact that facilitate for the capacity building and lastly the outcomes of capacity building. Christopher and Richard (2004) explore the areas of capacity building in the form of performance capacity; personal capacity; workload capacity; supervisory capacity; facility capacity; support service capacity; system capacity; structural capacity; and role capacity. Dhondt (2018) refers that the capacity building is not a simple context or perspective of intended set of capabilities at individual; group; organizational; and societal levels

Howaldt *et al.*; (2016) highlighted that the capacity building is a way to line up generic capabilities in relation with the task through learning and adaptation. Gonzalez and Martins (2014) are of the view that capacity building process requires energy; commitment and ownership. Stock and Zacharias (2013) point out that the nature of capacity building must be simple and flexible; coherent; motivated; rigorous; and implementable; replicable; and incentive compatible. Andersson and Stewar (2015) express that the areas of capacity building must be those that are vital in providing solutions to our problems and they also strengthen the capacities to address the future goal achievements.

Barnett (2007) finds that the change in a system simply demands change at individual or personal level in accordance with their roles in bringing change in the system for the reasons of better performance; for the enhancement of quality of products or services; and

for the improvement of management or administrative enclosures. Jay (2013) explores that self-reflectiveness and self-awareness are the two components which are important in the capacity building process. If these components are properly managed in the procedural stages of capacity building; then this effort of capacity building ensures the individual to review his or her role in the organization and evaluate the greater insinuations of his or her accomplishments instead of only considering instant operations or issues. But the features of self-reflectiveness and self-awareness make them able to notice carefully desired changes in the light of challenges and that never shows resistance to experiments and willingly learns from mistakes.

Castaneda and Cuellar (2018) have explored that the capacity building is a continuous process of cyclic nature which promotes obviously continuous learning; and experimentation based on construction and reconstruction of experiences at individual as well as collective level. For this reason innovations and interventions go side by side and emerge as professional growth in terms of skill and knowledge sustainability both at personal level and organizational level as well. So variety of schemes; methods and programs are delineated while keeping in view the areas; dimensions and indicators of capacity building. But the thing which is key in this concept is learning with practical implications.

West *et al.* (2014) point out the dimensions of capacity building in a broader perspective such as collaboration; collations; partnerships; the segment of inter-agency relationship and meaningful development of inter-jurisdictional relationships are important features which need to be addressed in the alignment of the challenges and issues that are pinned with the cultural; social; political; local; regional; economical; and global factors. Chen and Hatzakis (2008) are of the view that at large the capacity building is treated as a tool for fixing problems and for this rationale stance is required in doing so. The actual case of capacity building refers to the growth and development of skills; attitudes; behaviors; thinking; ownership; and ambidexterity at individual and organizational level. So there requires a comprehensive understanding of the deficiencies in respect of challenges.

Peter Morgan (1997) point out that Pakistan has developed “The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)” in Islamabad with the assistance of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1994 as a step taken in the light of National Conservation Strategy (NCS) in 1992 for the capacity development purposes. Soon after the departure of CIDA the matter of sustainability has raised so many questions due to the prevailing situations of political; social; and economical hazards from time to time. CIDA during the assistance identify a number of capacity building indicators such as performance; efficiency; responsibility; collective effort and collaboration; and addresses them in a systematically by raising the points.

Capacity building is not just limited to the enhancement of individual expertise and capabilities. The individuals who are up-skilled they require an apt milieu that holds for them both the chances and incitements for application of all they learnt. Studies such as (Alearts; 1999 and McKinsey; 2007) agree on the point that capacity building needs an

analytical approach to be understood with all its dimensions and challenges associated with it; not only at individual level but also at organizational and institutional level.

All the challenges associated with capacity building are interlinked in a way that if there is an issue in one aspect that may hinder another aspect; likewise if one area is enhanced or strengthened it may positively influence the other as well and may help in developing that area too. Capacity building is a continuous process that may count in a learning pattern; then its evaluation and its reconciliation with passage of time. In addition to it the external forces like that of market and environment have a strong impact over capacity building; (Doz & Hamel; 1998). Sociocultural learning theory can provide base in understanding capacity building and issues associated with it. It states that capacity building activities; processes and its application are intervened by the factors prevailing in culture; environment and history; so it is not just an individual phenomenon as it has interventions from outside environment as well (Marsh & Farrel; 2015). For nonprofit organizations; in the area of public administration; Yim-Teo (2002) highlighted that the socio-cultural factors are involved in organizational development. The findings from study demonstrate that the socio-cultural aspects hold greater importance in environments in which learning is less apparent and developmental issues exist. Moreover; sociocultural factors are specific to the context (DeBoer & Chevrollier; 2010); can vary greatly from region to region and project to project; and may change considerably over time. Hence; sociocultural learning theory in the context of developing countries like Pakistan can be of great importance where multiple issue related to capacity building persist.

3. METHODOLOGY

Researchers have used a qualitative research strategy keeping the research objectives in focus for this study. The reason for using qualitative research strategy is that the study aims at getting first hand; rich and in-depth data from public officials in relation to capacity building and know their side of the story. Moreover; the focus of this research reflects the exploratory nature as this type of research basically opens up the area and finds the new horizons related to the targeted field (Stebbins; 2001). Precisely; researchers aim to explore the current situation and challenges associated with capacity building of public officials in Pakistan.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed for collection of primary data from the subjects of study. Face validity of the guide was ensured by taking into account the expert opinions of subject specialists in this domain. Moreover; the population for this study is the employees from the public sector from Grade 17 and above as valid data can be collected from managerial cadres whereas sample has been drawn from the population till the saturation of the data i.e. 33 public officials from various public domains and it has been argued that even relatively small sample with few cases can yield big insights if the sample has been selected theoretically and cases have been selected purposely (Silverman; 2014). According to this technique; researchers draw the sample on the basis of some predefined purpose and select those cases that have some sort of expertise about the subject under scrutiny. Out of 33 participants; 26 were males and 7 were females. Grade 17; 18; 19 and 20 participants' distribution was as of 9; 16; 5 and 3 respectively. Participants were contacted

by visiting the relevant offices using data available on respective official government websites. Lastly, for the purpose of this study; in order to conduct a thematic analysis; Nvivo 10 has been used. Axial coding was done to develop the themes to give them the relevant meaning for sake of this study after transcribing the interviews.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Under thematic analysis; different nodes have been merged in categories and several categories have been accumulated into a single theme. This way researchers have identified four themes with several categories using framework; mind map and cloud figures.

Table 1. Themes Description

Theme	Sub-themes	Description
Public Sector Performance	Current Performance Level	This theme highlights the current performance trends in public sector by shedding light on the performance gap in this sector.
	Procedural Matters	
	Operational Matters	
Significance of Capacity Building	Competence and Character	This theme refers to the idea of Capacity Building and its importance in the context of performance of public officials.
	Technology Perspective	
	Institutes for CB	
Current Capacity Building Practices	Organizational Development	This theme highlights the current capacity building practices prevalent in the public sector and it discusses their effectiveness
	Foreign Training	
	Training	
	Effectiveness	
Capacity Building Challenges	Training issues	This theme revolves around the issues and challenges that exist in the public sector with reference to capacity building
	Operational challenges	
	Procedural issues	
	Public service motivation	

4.1. PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

Current performance level is questionable as majority of public officials were of the view that performance is not up to mark. Reasons of poor performance are the lack of initiatives and more opportunities for corrupt practices. According to one of the public officials; *“The progress of most of the people regarding performance of the duty is hopeless”*. Public officials know that they are having a secure job and no one can terminate them easily. No official said that performance is satisfactory.

Procedural matters are also discussed under this theme. Several officials were of the view that procedures are very slow and static which is the prime reason of slow service delivery mechanism. One has to follow the ready-made procedures because records are public records and has to be cautious and careful before taking any decision. One of the chief reasons of delayed procedures are *“ridiculous rules and regulations”*. According to one of the officials;

“Employees are working the same way that they were working since ages”. Other official said;

“Rules and regulations are present but very slow to implement; take the recent case of National Accountability Bureau (NAB); even we try to do our work but we

cannot do it due to un-surety of interpretation of rules. You might have seen even NAB has arrested key persons from our organizations; and that has basically lead to chaos in whole organization".

As far as *Operational* matters are concerned; few public officials stated that training facilities are not adequate at operational level. Several officials raised the issue of lack of accountability and were of the view that this issue has been the major hindrance in performance of public officials. As one of the officials said that

"Operational barriers and documentations are affecting the performance of employees. There is a need to get out of the Form Alif (A); Baay (B) and Jeem (C)".

Researchers have developed *Human Resource* category separately as several public officials were of the view that hiring methods are not appropriate which is causing the problem in delivering. Moreover; few of the officials raise the issue of automation as well and were of the view that automation has been part of organizations now but human resources seems not to be well equipped which hinders their performance and in a result. Also; one official argued that even there is no culture of providing job descriptions to the employees. As one of the officials pointed out that

"The foremost reason of poor performance is issue in hiring methods as recruitment tests have validity issues and this is the case in civil services and provincial services as well".

Almost all of the respondents were on same page regarding the existence of difference between expected and actual performance. The chief reason for this has been identified as that though evaluation reports are available; they do not translate to the performance of officials; rather individuals concerns are reflected in the evaluations and also the lack of initiatives taken by public officials is one of the reasons of the gap. Moreover; one of the respondents said that this gap is created when career planning lacks in public institutions and posting tenure is uncertain and irrelevant. This does happen when only performance is just to follow the orders of your immediate boss.

4.2. CURRENT CAPACITY BUILDING PRACTICES

Majority of the public officials were of the view that there are currently no capacity building programs are in progress rather few training programs are being held without much focus on contents. Few of the public officials also said that capacity building is not the organization's priority. Even though there have been attempts in few organizations to build capacities but that went in vain. According to one of the respondents on asking question about CB practices; *"None! I am here from last 9 years; started my career here; I have not seen anything like this ever in my career"*. One of the officials also stated that there has been no capacity assessment tool available to gauge the effectiveness of CB programs.

Currently, *Organizational Development* is also one of the current debates of capacity building. According to one of the officials; organizations whose system is not up to date; they continue with what is going on whereas organizations having Research &

Development culture look for the future needs associated with CB. However; purpose of CB should be more of holistic than individual.

Moving on to the *Foreign Trainings* (FT) Category; as per one of the public officials; opportunities to have an exposure of foreign countries systems are limited to few groups. It was further supported by another participant; who was of the view that

"It has happened in the recent past that mostly lucrative postings and foreign assignments/trainings are given to officers from the famously known District Management Group"

Moreover; most of fully funded foreign trainings are offered by foreign donors. However; FT performance is still under observation and one of the respondents argued that there is no need to adopt each and every practice that is used by developed countries; instead there should be some local solutions present for the local problems rather just blindly following like the cookie-cutter approach.

Moving on; *Technology* deals with the advancements been made under the pressure of globalization and digitalization. As per majority of the respondents; globalization and technological advancements have put pressures to update CB. For instance; as per of the participants;

"Recently new software has been installed in our organization and due trainings have been provided to the relevant officials. Similarly; many times international donor agencies provide funds for technology and capacity building and development related initiatives".

However; this factor is gone wasted as well if we look into the previous quoted example of SAP. Moreover; top management takes training as expense rather than investment; as is the case with many traditional organizations.

Effectiveness of the current CB programs and practices is also discussed. Several officials were of the opinion that measures taken for updating CB programs are quite ineffective. One of the officials even said; *"....that some employees go abroad for training for leisure only and nominations for trainings at times are made on personal recommendations which basically gives an indication that we are still in stone-age era and world has gone far away"*. However; just one respondent said that some measures taken for improving CB are effective; but results are yet to come.

4.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF CAPACITY BUILDING⁶

Majority of public officials agreed with the importance of CB in public sector and were of the view that there is a great need to introduce the practices that can help for CB. One of the public officials argued that all employees need to be at par with modern day challenges; thus it is of grave significance. One respondent quoted that *"Without CB; a job is like a body without brain..."* that basically highlights the significance of CB.

One must note that all type of service deliveries is directly proportionate to “competence” & “character”. However; few of the respondents discussed that CB is not well tuned with the current challenges been faced by the public organizations; a senior officer added

“...and even over the last year; you can imagine that it is a miracle that our systems survived through the pandemic with such little room due to redtape and lack of investment in actual CBs.”⁶

Institutes for CB are also discussed in this theme. There are different institutes present for delivering CB programs. As per one official; finance and accounts staff is having different institutes for training. For officers' cadre; there is separate college in Islamabad and there is an academy in Faisalabad for engineers. However; public institutions need overhauling under a detailed and planned program. Moreover; CB will give public a taste of excellence and strength at institutional level. As per *technology* perspective of CB; technological advancements have put pressure on individuals to update CB. One official also argued that efficiency can be increased by adopting the technology. However; major part of a person's skills is polished and shaped up while being on job and it is necessary to equip them with state of the art soft as well as technical skills.

4.4. CAPACITY BUILDING CHALLENGES

As far as *Capacity Building Challenges* are concerned; it is further consists of several categories and nodes.

Training issues have been identified as one of the challenges. Majority of the public officials were of the view that training facilities in public sector organizations are inadequate and in very poor condition and several public officials pointed out that nominations for trainings are made on personal recommendations. Moreover; lower cadre employees are mostly ignored in trainings and even the trainers are mostly the untrained ones. Lack of follow-up after training is also missing in public organizations. Also; training institutes' capacity seems to be missing. Lastly; one of the public officials said that;

“No concept of training through short courses from local or foreign institutions”

Operational challenges are also identified. Almost all of the public officials pointed out that budget for CB are either very limited or close to none. This basically shows the top management attitude towards CB. Moreover; operational barriers and documentations are affecting the performance of employees as well. Next category is related to *personnel issues*. Most of the public officials said that there are poor evaluations systems present at the moment and appraisals are done on the basis of seniority rather than performance base. Even employees do not have job descriptions available for their job and salary structures in public sector are less than good. Lastly; one of the public officials argued that CB programs are not aligned with career progression and relevancy.

As far as *procedural* challenges are concerned; several public officials said that procedures in public sector are very slow and reason behind this is rules and regulations that make these procedures slow which eventually leads to slow service delivery mechanisms. *Lack of managerial support* is also the biggest hurdle in capacity building as it maligns the

strategic perspective of public sector organizations towards CB as few of the public officials mentioned that CB is taken as expense rather than investment. This is basically due to the poor and out dated governance systems present at the moment. As far as *behavioral* category is concerned; one of the public officials said that;

“It is imperative to say that to do anything; we need to have will. I feel that absence of will is the major issue in implementation of capacity building programs. Top management has no focus at all on capacity building programs or that not even on the priority list”

On the contrary; this issue lies with the public officials as well; as they do not even give importance to trainings and CB programs and try to avoid these programs. *Public service motivation* is also identified as one of the major challenges in CB programs. According to the public officials; people are aware that they are having the secure job and no one can terminate them easily. The concept of “Paki Nokri (Permanent Job)” is the basic aim for the people to join government sector. Moreover; it’s not a fact that people join government sector with the passion of “Khidmat-e-Khalq” (serving the masses) rather people join government services so that they may earn maximum benefits with minimum labor.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is observed from the findings that current situation of capacity building programs is not healthy and have lot of potential to work on. Even automation has been done in many areas however; the capacity of human resource is inadequate. This has been observed in developmental sectors as well where limited HR capacity has challenged the capacity building framework (Ryan; 2012). Specifically; effectiveness of public officials is under-utilized and needs to have special attention. Moreover; in the light of sociocultural learning theory the study elaborates that learning is impairable from the relationship of individuals with their social and cultural aspects. Sociocultural learning theory refocuses its attention on learning and categorizes it as an essential component of social process situated within institutional; cultural and historical aspects of organizations (Knapp; 2008). In lieu of this; sociocultural learning theory aims to identify the social and cultural factors which restrict the performance of public officials. This study has also identified various factors associated with the questionable performance related to capacity building of public officials in Pakistan.

Public sector performance has been a question mark ever since. Lack of initiatives has been one of the mainstream reasons behind the poor performance. Moreover; procedural and operational matters have also been very slow and flawed at times under public sector organizations. Although; public officials have the justification of slow procedures due to the intervention of agencies like NAB as discussed earlier. It has been observed that there is huge difference between the expected performance and the actual performance of public officials. This is due to the many factors involving lack of proper appraisals; training opportunities and lack of Training Need Assessment (TNA) and career progression techniques (Nikandrou; 2008; Broadbridge; 1998). Moreover; recruitment methods in public

sector are found to be weak and that can basically hurt the 'right person for the right job' phenomenon.

It is also observed that there is limited number of capacity assessment tools available in the public sector organizations due to which the capacity effectiveness of public officials cannot be gauged. Moreover, element of organizational development is also missing to some extent as the developmental plans are not more of holistic nature which actually leads to the ineffective nature of capacity building practices. Furthermore; currently there have been very limited capacity building programs being followed in public sector due to the high budget constraints. Even when budget has been allocated in some organizations; mostly that budget goes unutilized which badly affects the effectiveness of capacity building programs (Harrington et al.; 2009). It is also highlighted in findings that capacity building is not the priority of the public sector; though trainings are conducted in several organizations; lack of focus on training contents is observed in many of the training programs. Effectiveness of capacity building programs is a big question mark due to lack of focus on the training contents.

Almost all of the public officials argued that capacity building is very important for public officials and much attention should be given to this area. Technological advancements are currently progressing rapidly in this contemporary era; and capacity building programs should also be provided to tackle with these challenges (Welsh et al.; 2003). Moreover; one should look to the other side of the coin as well that is the readiness level of public officials regarding capacity building as it is observed in the findings that readiness is a big problem as well; it can be due to the lack of knowledge regarding the long-term perks and benefits of capacity building; this is the reason officials get reluctant to adapt any change (Weiner; 2009). Moreover; as capacity building begins with salary of public officials therefore; less salary leads to deliberate delay in adapting with changing environmental conditions (Okudolo & Meko; 2020). It must be noted that the level of citizens' knowledge regarding good governance has been increased over the years and capacity building is key for efficiency as people demand good governance.

As far as challenges associated with capacity building are concerned; the significant challenges are lack of budget; poor trainings; poor evaluation system; inadequate salary structure; slow procedures; political interference and nepotism; lack of readiness of employees including the will; commitment and poor accountability system. These identified challenges are the key issues of almost all of the public sector organizations in Pakistan. The key reason behind these issues is the lack of top management support related to capacity building in the form of budget constraint and poor training contents (Khan; 2011). This poor vision is also translated to the middle management cadre and low level cadre eventually hurts the performance of public officials. It is concluded that there are certainly many challenges associated with capacity building in the public sector and the current situation is not that good; however; if capacity building becomes the vision and mission of the government in general and top management of the organization in specific; then tables can turn and current situation can be changed but that needs will and commitment by all the relevant stakeholders.

Based on the findings and discussion; it is concluded that capacity building of public officials is of dire need of an hour in Pakistan where economy is at struggling phase from several decades. However; current situation of public officials in terms of capacity building is a big question mark as there seems to be no proper training mechanisms placed in organizational settings. Moreover; the biggest challenge is to make officials ready to adapt with the change as this is globalized world and technological advancements have taken over all over the world; but officials seem to be reluctant in adapting with the new technology.

Appraisal systems have also not been developed properly; rather there is a concept of seniority prevailing in every public organization in Pakistan. Hence; it is concluded that the current situation of capacity building seems to be horrendous and there is still a long way to go to achieve the desire level of capacity building of public officials. Furthermore; the final theme that needed attention is very much contextual with reference to Pakistan; the idea of PSM needs to be incorporated for the sake of better performance and responsiveness of the public sector and its connectivity with the citizens' at large (Zubair et al.; 2021). Lastly; challenges associated with capacity building are gigantic and if not addressed properly; may lead to further chaotic situation in public sector.

5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study; it is recommended that there should be a proper TNA before initiating the trainings as it is happening currently in public sector that trainings are not conducted for the up-gradation of the officials rather conducted to meet the allocated budgets if any. Moreover; it is the need of the hour to have strong performance based appraisal systems to gauge the performance of the public officials and this should be tied with the promotions of public officials instead of seniority. Also; public sector should take the advantage from technology and work on e-governance mechanisms that can upgrade the capacities of public officials and can held accountable to non-performing officials effectively. Also; foreign exposure for public officials should be mandatory for grades 18 and above in order to get advance job related skills and expertise in terms of short courses for better management of their sectors; as they are more likely to rise to policy making cadres in the near future.

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