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State Capacity and Public Service Delivery in Developing Countries: The Case of Pakistan

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Abstract:
The effectiveness of state capacity is crucial for the delivery of public services, particularly in developing countries where governance challenges such as corruption, inefficient bureaucracies, and political instability hinder progress. This paper examines the role of state capacity in public service delivery in developing nations, focusing on Pakistan as a case study. By analyzing the interplay between state institutions, governance quality, and the provision of public services in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, this article aims to provide insights into the structural challenges and potential reforms needed to improve public service delivery. The study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including case studies from Pakistan, to assess the capacity of state institutions and their effectiveness in serving the public.

Keywords:
State capacity, public service delivery, governance, developing countries, Pakistan, corruption, public sector reform, service efficiency

Introduction:

State capacity refers to the ability of governments to implement policies effectively and provide essential public services to their citizens. In developing countries, the challenges of weak governance, corruption, and institutional inefficiency often undermine state capacity, leading to inadequate service delivery in critical sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This article explores the state capacity of Pakistan, a country with unique governance challenges, and examines how these issues affect public service delivery. By comparing different sectors, this paper highlights areas for improvement and proposes actionable solutions for enhancing the effectiveness of state institutions.

The Concept of State Capacity

State capacity refers to the ability of a government to effectively implement policies, maintain order, and deliver public services to its citizens. It is a critical aspect of governance that enables a state to function efficiently and address the needs of its population. The theoretical underpinnings of state capacity are rooted in political science and public administration. It

encompasses a range of dimensions, including the administrative and institutional strength of the state, its ability to control violence, its capacity to collect revenue, and its competence in formulating and executing policies.

Historically, the concept of state capacity evolved as governments sought to assert authority over larger territories and complex societies. In early modern states, capacity was often measured by the state's ability to wage war, maintain internal order, and collect taxes. Over time, the scope of state capacity broadened to include more diverse aspects of governance, such as healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and economic management. This evolution reflects the growing expectations of citizens for states to provide public goods and services that enhance quality of life.

The concept of state capacity is distinct from state legitimacy, although they are closely related. State legitimacy refers to the general acceptance of the state's authority and the belief that its rule is justified. While state legitimacy is based on the perception of fairness, justice, and the rule of law, state capacity focuses on the practical ability of the state to implement policies and deliver services. A state may have high capacity but lack legitimacy, leading to discontent and resistance among the population. Conversely, a state with strong legitimacy but low capacity may struggle to meet citizens' demands and may face challenges in maintaining its authority.

In developing countries like Pakistan, state capacity is often undermined by factors such as corruption, weak institutions, political instability, and insufficient resources. Strengthening state capacity is crucial for improving public service delivery and fostering long-term sustainable development.

Governance Challenges in Developing Countries

Governance in developing countries often faces numerous challenges that impede the effective functioning of the state and hinder development. These challenges range from corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency to political instability and weak rule of law, all of which undermine the state's ability to provide essential services and maintain social order. In countries like Pakistan, these challenges are magnified by systemic issues that limit the government's capacity to deliver public goods and services.

Corruption and Bureaucratic Inefficiency

Corruption is one of the most severe governance challenges in many developing countries. It occurs when public officials misuse their power for personal gain, diverting public funds meant for development projects or service delivery. In Pakistan, corruption permeates various levels of government, from local administrative units to high-ranking political offices. Public officials often demand bribes for services that should be provided free of charge, such as health and education services. For example, the procurement of medical supplies and equipment is often marred by corrupt practices, leading to substandard materials being used in hospitals, which affects the quality of care.

Bureaucratic inefficiency exacerbates this problem. In Pakistan, public sector institutions are often slow-moving and disjointed, plagued by outdated processes, lack of skilled personnel, and poor coordination between departments. This inefficiency leads to delayed projects and policies that fail to address urgent issues in sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. A glaring example of bureaucratic inefficiency is the slow rollout of the health insurance program under the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which was intended to improve access to healthcare for the impoverished population. Delays in implementation and mismanagement led to many eligible families not receiving the benefits, despite government efforts.

The Impact of Political Instability and Weak Rule of Law

Political instability and weak rule of law are interlinked governance challenges that plague developing countries. In many cases, political instability in developing nations is a result of

shifting power dynamics, frequent changes in leadership, and insufficient political consensus. Pakistan has witnessed periods of military rule, political infighting, and frequent changes in government, which disrupt the continuity of policies and governance reforms. The political instability in the country creates an environment where long-term planning and implementation of development projects are continually delayed. This instability also contributes to a lack of investor confidence, as economic policies shift with every change in government, leading to stagnation and underdevelopment.

The weak rule of law compounds these challenges. A legal system that is unable to enforce laws consistently or impartially results in widespread impunity. In Pakistan, the judiciary, despite some reforms, still struggles with delays in court cases, a backlog of unresolved cases, and a perception of corruption within the legal system. For instance, cases of land disputes, corruption, and human rights violations often go unresolved due to political interference, a slow judicial process, or lack of resources within the legal system. This weak rule of law undermines public confidence in state institutions and hampers efforts to promote justice, economic growth, and social stability.

Case Studies from Pakistan's Governance Challenges

Corruption in the Public Health System:

Pakistan's public health system has long struggled with corruption, which significantly impacts service delivery. For example, funds allocated for health services are often diverted by corrupt officials, and hospital management frequently fails to ensure transparency in procurement and staffing. The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), which regulates medical education and standards, has faced criticism for being ineffective in monitoring medical practices, allowing unqualified individuals to practice and compromising patient safety. Moreover, the healthcare system's reliance on private sector contractors for medicine procurement has led to inflated prices and substandard drugs being provided to patients, especially in rural areas.

Bureaucratic Inefficiency in the Education Sector:

The education system in Pakistan is heavily affected by bureaucratic inefficiency. Government-run schools are often understaffed and lack basic facilities such as adequate classrooms and teaching materials. Despite a significant portion of the national budget being allocated to education, many public schools fail to meet even the most basic standards of education. Bureaucratic inefficiency leads to delays in teacher appointments, improper distribution of educational resources, and failure to address the shortage of schools in remote regions. This inefficiency is a significant barrier to improving literacy rates and educational outcomes, particularly in underserved rural areas.

Political Instability and its Impact on Development Projects:

Political instability in Pakistan has led to the abandonment or delay of numerous development projects. For example, the completion of the Lahore Orange Line Metro project was delayed due to legal challenges, political opposition, and disagreements between local and federal governments. Such political wrangling has not only delayed important infrastructure development but has also drained public resources through mismanagement and inefficiency. Political instability has also affected the timely execution of key projects under international financing, such as the development of energy and water management infrastructure, which are critical to Pakistan's long-term development.

Weak Rule of Law and Property Rights:

The weak rule of law in Pakistan affects property rights, leading to land disputes and encroachments, particularly in urban areas. Powerful landowners and political figures often manipulate the legal system to evict poor families from their land, resulting in protracted legal

battles for the marginalized. In many cases, the lack of effective enforcement of land reforms and the failure to address encroachments on public land undermine the legal protection of citizens' property rights. The judiciary's slow response to these cases further exacerbates the issue, leaving individuals vulnerable to exploitation and increasing inequality.

These case studies highlight how corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, political instability, and weak rule of law significantly undermine governance and hinder effective service delivery in Pakistan. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms in political, legal, and institutional structures to create a more transparent, efficient, and stable system that can effectively serve the public.

Public Service Delivery in Pakistan: A Sectoral Overview

Public service delivery in Pakistan, like in many developing countries, faces substantial challenges, particularly in the sectors of education, healthcare, and infrastructure. These sectors are crucial to the well-being of citizens and the country's overall development. However, systemic failures, inefficiencies, and inadequate resource allocation have hindered Pakistan's ability to provide essential services to its population, particularly those in rural and marginalized areas. A closer examination of these sectors reveals the complexity and depth of the governance challenges faced by the country.

Education: Access, Quality, and Systemic Failures

Pakistan's education system is plagued by issues of access, quality, and systemic failures that prevent a significant portion of the population from receiving adequate education. The country has made some strides in increasing enrollment rates, particularly at the primary level, but challenges remain in both rural and urban areas.

Access to Education: While there has been progress in expanding access to education, particularly in urban areas, rural areas continue to suffer from inadequate educational infrastructure. Many remote areas lack schools, and those that exist often lack basic facilities like electricity, running water, and proper classrooms. As a result, children in rural areas are forced to either travel long distances to the nearest school or remain out of school altogether.

Quality of Education: The quality of education provided in Pakistan's public schools is highly variable. Many schools suffer from overcrowded classrooms, outdated curricula, and poorly trained teachers. While private schools in urban areas often offer better quality education, public schools in rural and lower-income areas remain substandard. Additionally, the teaching methods used in many public schools are outdated, and the lack of investment in teacher training means that educators are not equipped to deliver modern, effective instruction. The result is a low learning outcome, with many students unable to meet national education standards, despite increasing enrollment rates.

Systemic Failures: The education sector suffers from systemic issues, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption in the allocation of resources, and political interference. For example, ghost schools—schools that exist only on paper—are a persistent problem, with allocated funds being misappropriated by local administrators. This is compounded by the failure to implement reforms that would improve the quality of education, such as better teacher recruitment processes, a review of outdated curricula, and a focus on technical and vocational training for youth.

Healthcare: The Struggle to Provide Universal Health Coverage

Pakistan's healthcare system, while improving in some areas, still faces significant challenges in providing universal health coverage and delivering quality healthcare services to its citizens.

Access to Healthcare: One of the primary issues facing Pakistan's healthcare system is limited access to quality healthcare, particularly in rural areas. The disparity in healthcare access between urban and rural areas is stark, with rural populations often lacking nearby healthcare

facilities. Although Pakistan has a large network of healthcare facilities, these are concentrated in urban centers, and rural areas often have inadequate medical infrastructure. Additionally, many health

with public hospitals often overcrowded and underfunded. Patients in public hospitals face long wait times and limited access to specialized care, as doctors and nurses are often facilities in rural areas suffer from shortages of medical staff, outdated equipment, and a lack of essential medicines.

Quality of Healthcare Services: The quality of healthcare services in Pakistan is inconsistent, overburdened. Private healthcare providers, while offering better quality services, are out of reach for the majority of Pakistan's population due to high costs. The disparity between private and public healthcare highlights the ongoing issues in Pakistan's healthcare system, where access to quality care is often dependent on income or location.

The Struggle for Universal Health Coverage: Despite some efforts to expand health insurance and improve access to healthcare services (such as the Sehat Sahulat Program), Pakistan still lacks a comprehensive national healthcare system. The majority of Pakistanis remain uninsured, and out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures are a significant burden on low-income families. Pakistan's healthcare system also struggles with the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) crisis, such as diabetes, heart disease, and mental health disorders, which require long-term management and specialized care. The government has been slow to implement policies that address these growing health challenges, and healthcare reforms have often been stymied by inadequate funding, political instability, and bureaucratic inefficiency.

Infrastructure: Challenges in Rural and Urban Development

Pakistan's infrastructure sector, which includes transport, water, sanitation, and energy, is another area that faces serious challenges, particularly in terms of equity and development across rural and urban regions.

Urban Infrastructure: Urban areas in Pakistan, particularly cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, face challenges in managing rapid urbanization. The growing population in these cities has led to overcrowding, poor housing conditions, traffic congestion, and inadequate public transportation systems. Despite significant investment in large-scale infrastructure projects (such as roads and bridges), the rapid pace of urbanization has outstripped the capacity of urban planners and policymakers to keep up with demand. The lack of an integrated urban development strategy and poor governance in urban planning have led to inefficient land use, a lack of affordable housing, and worsening traffic problems.

Rural Infrastructure: Rural areas, on the other hand, face even more dire challenges in terms of infrastructure development. The lack of proper roads, sanitation facilities, and access to clean water remains a major problem for rural Pakistan. In many rural areas, poor infrastructure prevents people from accessing essential services such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. The failure to connect rural areas with urban centers through reliable transportation and communications infrastructure further deepens the rural-urban divide. This disparity contributes to higher levels of poverty and lower development outcomes in rural regions.

Energy and Water Infrastructure: Pakistan also faces significant challenges in energy and water infrastructure. The country experiences frequent power shortages, with many areas enduring daily electricity outages. Despite efforts to expand energy generation capacity, the energy infrastructure remains underdeveloped, and Pakistan's reliance on imported energy sources (such as oil and gas) continues to strain the economy. Similarly, water scarcity is becoming an increasingly pressing issue, particularly in provinces like Sindh and Balochistan,

where outdated irrigation systems and poor management of water resources have led to reduced agricultural productivity and increased competition for water.

Public service delivery in Pakistan faces significant challenges across key sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The systemic failures in these sectors—ranging from poor access and quality of services to inefficient governance and infrastructure—are largely driven by deep-rooted issues such as corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and political instability. Addressing these challenges will require comprehensive reforms that focus on improving governance, ensuring equitable resource distribution, and investing in long-term infrastructure development to ensure that all citizens, regardless of location or income, have access to essential services.

Factors Influencing State Capacity in Pakistan

State capacity in Pakistan is influenced by a complex interplay of internal and external factors. While the state's ability to implement policies, provide services, and maintain law and order is largely determined by its political institutions, governance structures, and available resources, the effectiveness of these systems is often shaped by the quality of leadership, the strength of institutions, and external influences. In Pakistan, the following key factors play a crucial role in shaping the state's capacity:

Political Will and Leadership

Political will and leadership are perhaps the most significant determinants of state capacity in any country, and Pakistan is no exception. Strong leadership is essential for driving reforms, mobilizing resources, and ensuring effective governance. In Pakistan, the effectiveness of state institutions often fluctuates depending on the political will of the ruling parties and the stability of leadership.

Leadership Stability and Reform Implementation: Political leaders in Pakistan have often been seen as either too focused on short-term political gains or unable to push through comprehensive reforms due to political instability. Changes in government, frequent political transitions, and alternating power between military and civilian regimes have resulted in inconsistent policies and a lack of long-term vision. For instance, in the health and education sectors, even when reforms are proposed, the lack of continuity and commitment from successive governments often undermines their implementation. Political leaders must prioritize state-building initiatives, invest in state institutions, and commit to long-term reforms to improve governance.

The Role of Political Parties and Electoral Cycles: Pakistan's political landscape is deeply polarized, and political parties often focus on electoral cycles rather than focusing on building state capacity. This short-term thinking, exacerbated by party-based loyalty, impedes the growth of state institutions and the implementation of effective governance. A commitment to national development goals rather than narrow political objectives would be crucial in enhancing state capacity.

Institutional Quality and Bureaucratic Efficiency

The quality of state institutions and the efficiency of the bureaucracy are fundamental components of state capacity. In Pakistan, institutional weaknesses and bureaucratic inefficiency have contributed to governance challenges, preventing the state from effectively delivering public services.

Weak Institutional Frameworks: Many of Pakistan's institutions, especially in areas like education, healthcare, and law enforcement, are undermined by structural weaknesses. For example, the education system suffers from poor coordination between the federal and provincial governments, leading to fragmented policy implementation and inadequate resource allocation. Similarly, Pakistan's police and justice systems are burdened with

inefficiencies, corruption, and political interference, reducing their effectiveness in maintaining order and enforcing the rule of law.

Bureaucratic Inefficiency: The bureaucracy in Pakistan is often criticized for being slow, underfunded, and lacking accountability. This inefficiency is reflected in the delayed execution of development projects, inadequate public service delivery, and ineffective use of public resources. Additionally, the entrenched practice of patronage politics, where political connections often determine hiring and promotion decisions in government institutions, further erodes the quality of public service. Bureaucratic inefficiency results in a lack of timely policy implementation and hampers the overall effectiveness of the state in managing key sectors.

Reform and Capacity Building Needs: Strengthening institutions and improving bureaucratic efficiency requires comprehensive civil service reform, including merit-based hiring and promotions, professional training for public servants, and the establishment of performance benchmarks to hold government officials accountable. Enhancing institutional capacity will be crucial for Pakistan's long-term development.

External Aid, Economic Conditions, and Global Influence

Pakistan’s state capacity is also significantly influenced by external factors, including international aid, global economic conditions, and geopolitical considerations. While foreign aid has played a vital role in supporting development projects in Pakistan, it has also had mixed effects on state capacity.

Foreign Aid Dependence: Pakistan is heavily reliant on external financial assistance from international organizations, such as the World Bank, IMF, and bilateral donors. While this aid has been crucial for funding development projects and stabilizing the economy, it also creates challenges for state capacity. Reliance on aid can lead to a lack of self-sufficiency, as external donors often set conditions that influence domestic policy decisions. Furthermore, aid-driven projects sometimes lack long-term sustainability and can exacerbate corruption, as funds may be mismanaged or diverted by local officials. In addition, the fluctuating nature of foreign aid—based on geopolitical shifts and donor priorities—can destabilize long-term planning and development goals in Pakistan.

Economic Conditions and State Capacity: Pakistan’s economic conditions have a direct impact on state capacity. The country faces persistent economic challenges, including high levels of public debt, inflation, unemployment, and a large informal economy. These economic conditions limit the state’s ability to generate revenue, leading to a dependence on external aid and loans. In times of economic crisis, the state often struggles to meet the basic needs of its citizens, further weakening its capacity to provide essential public services.

Geopolitical Influence: Pakistan’s geopolitical position in South Asia, and its relationships with neighboring countries such as India and Afghanistan, as well as its strategic partnerships with global powers like the United States and China, also influence its state capacity. Geopolitical considerations often shape the state’s policy priorities, particularly in defense and foreign affairs, but can divert resources away from domestic development needs. For example, military spending has consistently been a priority, sometimes at the expense of investments in social infrastructure like health, education, and rural development.

Globalization and Economic Integration: Global economic trends, such as market integration and foreign investment, have the potential to improve Pakistan’s state capacity by stimulating economic growth and creating job opportunities. However, global pressures can also contribute to economic vulnerability, particularly in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, which are highly dependent on international demand and commodity prices.

For Pakistan to enhance its state capacity, it must strike a balance between participating in the global economy and ensuring that domestic needs are prioritized.

The state capacity of Pakistan is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, including political leadership, institutional quality, and external economic conditions. Strengthening state capacity will require political leaders to demonstrate consistent will to implement reforms and build efficient state institutions. Improving the bureaucracy, increasing accountability, and reducing corruption are crucial steps in ensuring that Pakistan's state institutions are capable of meeting the needs of its population. Furthermore, addressing the challenges posed by foreign aid dependence and leveraging global economic opportunities will be essential in enabling Pakistan to achieve sustainable development and improve its governance structures.

Policy Recommendations for Enhancing State Capacity and Service Delivery

To address the persistent challenges faced by Pakistan in terms of state capacity and public service delivery, comprehensive policy reforms are essential. These reforms should focus on strengthening institutions, improving the efficiency of public sector services, and fostering greater community involvement. The following recommendations provide a roadmap for improving governance and ensuring that state institutions can effectively serve the needs of the population.

Institutional Reforms and Anti-Corruption Measures

One of the most critical steps to enhancing state capacity in Pakistan is the implementation of broad institutional reforms aimed at improving governance and reducing corruption. Corruption not only diverts public resources but also undermines the efficiency and credibility of public institutions. Institutional reforms should focus on creating robust systems of accountability and transparency, which can effectively deter corrupt practices.

Strengthening Oversight Mechanisms: Effective oversight bodies, such as independent anti-corruption commissions and audit institutions, should be empowered with the authority to investigate and hold public officials accountable for misconduct. These bodies must be given sufficient resources and independence from political influence to operate effectively. Additionally, the introduction of mechanisms like digital audits and public reporting can help ensure transparency in the allocation and utilization of public funds.

Civil Service Reforms: Reforms in the civil service sector are essential for reducing inefficiencies and addressing corruption within government institutions. A merit-based recruitment and promotion system, based on qualifications and performance, should replace the current patronage system. Civil servants should also undergo continuous professional development to improve their skills and adapt to changing governance needs.

Strengthening Judicial Independence: For anti-corruption efforts to be successful, Pakistan's judiciary must be strengthened to ensure that cases involving corruption and governance violations are handled impartially and efficiently. Judicial reforms aimed at reducing case backlogs, enhancing the speed of legal proceedings, and ensuring judicial independence from political influence are essential steps in restoring public trust in the legal system.

Improving Public Sector Efficiency and Accountability

Improving the efficiency and accountability of public sector institutions is crucial for ensuring that state capacity is enhanced and public services are delivered effectively. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, such as slow decision-making processes and poor service delivery, have hindered Pakistan's development in key sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The following measures can help improve public sector efficiency:

Performance-Based Budgeting: Public sector institutions should adopt performance-based budgeting, where budget allocations are linked to the actual performance of departments and agencies. This would incentivize government bodies to prioritize efficient and results-oriented service delivery, ensuring that public funds are spent effectively.

Digitization of Public Services: The digitization of public service processes can significantly improve efficiency and reduce corruption. Online portals for government services, such as business registrations, healthcare service applications, and educational admissions, can make processes more transparent and accessible. By adopting e-governance systems, Pakistan can reduce bureaucratic delays, minimize human intervention in decision-making, and improve service delivery across the public sector.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of public programs and projects. Government agencies should track progress against pre-established indicators, ensuring that public policies are achieving the intended outcomes. Regular public reporting on the results of such evaluations will enhance accountability and public trust in government institutions.

Incentivizing Accountability through Whistleblower Protection: Protecting whistleblowers who report corruption or inefficiencies within public institutions can be an effective way to reduce malpractice. Establishing safe, anonymous channels for whistleblowing, backed by legal protection for those who report wrongdoing, will encourage citizens and government employees to act as watchdogs.

Strengthening the Role of Civil Society and Community Engagement

Civil society and community engagement are essential for building a more responsive and accountable government. Involving citizens in decision-making processes and allowing them to monitor the delivery of public services not only strengthens state capacity but also promotes social trust and cohesion.

Community-Led Monitoring and Participatory Governance: The government should encourage greater community involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of public services. Citizen feedback mechanisms, such as town hall meetings, community surveys, and citizen report cards, can be used to identify service delivery gaps and encourage local participation in the policy-making process. When communities are involved in the governance process, public services are more likely to reflect the needs and priorities of the population.

Empowering Local Governance: Strengthening local governance institutions is key to improving service delivery at the grassroots level. Local government bodies should be given more autonomy and resources to manage public services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation. Decentralization of power will ensure that decisions are more responsive to the needs of local communities and will encourage accountability in service provision.

Fostering Collaboration between Government and Civil Society: The government should build partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enhance the capacity of public institutions. These partnerships can be especially beneficial in sectors such as health and education, where CSOs can play a role in providing services, conducting research, and advocating for policy changes. By working together, the government and civil society can improve the efficiency, reach, and quality of public service delivery.

Promoting Civic Education and Awareness: Civic education programs aimed at informing citizens about their rights, responsibilities, and avenues for engaging with the government can increase participation in the political process and empower citizens to demand better

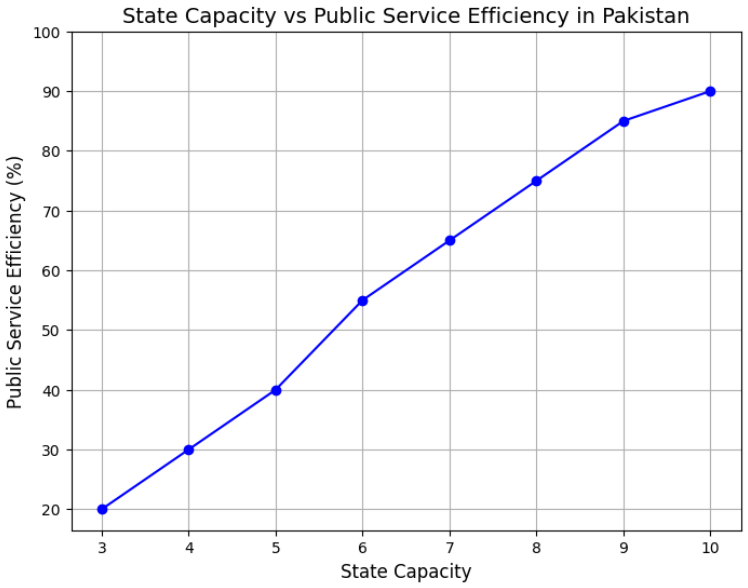
services. A well-informed citizenry is more likely to hold the government accountable and advocate for improvements in public service delivery.

Enhancing state capacity and improving public service delivery in Pakistan require a multifaceted approach that focuses on institutional reforms, improving public sector efficiency, and fostering greater community engagement. By strengthening anti-corruption measures, improving bureaucratic performance, and creating a more transparent and accountable governance system, Pakistan can build the foundation for more effective service delivery. Additionally, empowering civil society and local communities to play an active role in governance will ensure that the state remains responsive to the needs of its citizens and can build lasting trust in public institutions. Through these comprehensive reforms, Pakistan can enhance its state capacity and ensure that public services are more accessible, equitable, and effective.

Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad is a public sector professional and researcher with extensive expertise in governance, public service delivery, and the integration of emerging technologies into institutional processes. He currently serves as the Director General (DG) of the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA), Lahore, Pakistan. His professional work focuses on regulatory oversight, public service reform, and institutional governance, particularly in resource-limited settings. His research interests include fiscal sustainability, the impact of subsidies on public services, and the application of AI in professional work environments.

Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad actively contributes to academic research on public governance, human–AI collaboration, and sustainable service delivery models. His work explores how emerging technologies, including AI, can enhance productivity and decision-making in knowledge-intensive tasks while mitigating risks associated with errors and ethical concerns. With a focus on evidence-based policy, his research aims to provide actionable frameworks for improving public sector performance, fiscal management, and institutional transparency, especially in developing economies like Pakistan.

Ahmed and Sohail (2021) reviewed existing research on sustainable global supply chain management, focusing on studies published from 2010 to 2020. Their systematic review examined different research approaches, industries, geographical settings, theoretical perspectives, respondent groups, and sustainability dimensions. The study indicated that sustainable global supply chain management is a developing field that offers numerous opportunities for future research and further practical exploration.



Summary:
This article examines the critical link between state capacity and public service delivery in developing countries, focusing on Pakistan as a case study. By analyzing the challenges in governance and public service provision, it demonstrates how inefficiencies and weaknesses in state institutions contribute to poor service outcomes. The paper offers a set of policy recommendations aimed at improving governance and service delivery, including strengthening institutional frameworks, improving political stability, and combating corruption. It underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to reform that addresses both structural challenges and the political will to implement change.

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