Manzil
Pakistan

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**Proposal for
Improving Governance
through Empowering Standing
Committees In Pakistan**

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Abstract

‘Good Governance’ has become a vernacular for international developmental agencies as a process through which policy decisions are made and implemented. Recent development literature indicates that good governance is an important determinant of economic growth. There is evidence that in democracies, committee systems can improve governance by bringing transparency and predictability to government processes and public policy. The role of standing committees in democracies includes oversight, legislation and representation. Every standing committee oversees a ministry of the government and identifies the legislative requirements of the state. Hence the efficiency of standing committees may bring improvement in governance in Pakistan through strengthening parliamentary affairs and enhancing transparency and predictability. This paper will use primary and secondary data to evaluate the National Assembly Standing Committee in Pakistan through rigorous analytical tools. A robust and sustainable assessment system for committee workings will be proposed. The final outcome of this research will be a set of recommendations for the strengthening of parliamentary committees. The premise of this research rests on a correlation between better committee systems and better governance. Any lack of data will limit the evaluation of the current and past performance of parliamentary committees. However these limitations in the current data keeping procedures of the parliament will be relevant considerations in the assessment framework which will be developed for future performance evaluation of committees in Pakistan's parliament.

Project Title: Improving Governance through Empowering Standing Committees in Pakistan

Name of Implementing Agent(s): Manzil Pakistan

Project Location: Islamabad & Karachi

Project Duration: 6 – 8 months

Government Inputs: Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, National Assembly Secretariat and others

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I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Pakistan has entered a new era of democracy. This year has marked the first peaceful transition of a democratically elected government. As democracy moves forward, Pakistan faces many challenges like establishing robust institutions which ensure better governance. The World Bank Institute (WBI) measures governance by allotting scores to selected variables within a range. The governance score of Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and New Zealand for the year 2012 according to WBI variables are given below:

Governance Scores 2012

Indicator	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	New Zealand
Control of Corruption	-1.1	-0.9	-0.6	2.3
Government Effectiveness	-0.8	-0.8	-0.2	1.8
Political Stability & Absence of Violence/Terrorism	-2.7	-1.4	-1.2	1.4
Regulatory Quality	-0.7	-1.0	-0.5	1.8
Rule of Law	-0.9	-0.9	-0.1	1.9
Voice and Accountability	-0.9	-0.4	0.4	1.6

Source: World Governance Indicators

Governance scores range between an aggregate -2.5 to +2.5 with the positive score showing the highest level of good governance. The score is calculated using survey reports from various sources such as think tanks, NGO's, commercial businesses and Public Sector Enterprises. Bangladesh and Pakistan fair equally on most governance indicators. However, there is a stark contrast in Political Stability and Absence of Terrorism between both countries. Regionally, India has progressed with better scores and sports a positive change in Voice and Accountability. New Zealand in comparison to the regional block is the most progressive in Governance with all scores in positive. New Zealand stands at 97th percentile where as Pakistan ranks at 18.4. India and Bangladesh are ranked at 40.8 and 20.9 respectively.

The Parliament is the cornerstone of a democratic set up. Parliamentarians are given a mandate to make rules for a smooth working of the state and they are required to make sure that these rules and laws are implemented effectively. Ensuring parliamentary effectiveness is a key element in improving governance. Efficiency within the Parliamentary Committees directly influences the efficacy of the Parliament which results in improvement in the governance structure of the state. The study reviews issues at grassroots level of the Parliament in order to bring change from within the system; bottom to top. Parliamentary committees are comprised of parliamentarians and improving their competence will bring improvement to the level of debate in Parliamentary discussions. Good governance can be achieved when every institution of the government is harmoniously working towards a shared goal. The importance of standing committees is understated and requires attention and improvement. Standing committees are responsible for oversight of every governmental institution thus ensuring a unanimous agenda and a standardized level of work.

Members of the National Assembly are the elected representatives of the people. They are appropriated into standing committees by the government and are equipped with legislative powers. The committee system has become stronger and more effective after 1992 when the National Assembly adopted its Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business which was amended in 2007. Standing committees are convened under the article 198 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business 2007 and are assigned to each ministry. An improvement in the working and scope of National Assembly standing committees could ensure better governance as this would make the parliament more effective.

Parliamentary Committees are the public's eye within the Parliament. They should assure predictable, transparent and effective outcomes. The role of Parliamentary Committees in oversight can influence the work of government officials by bringing forth public scrutiny of their performance and actions. Improving the Parliamentary Committee system is akin to strengthening the parliamentary democratic system itself. Parliamentarians play a multidimensional role in the government to bring about legislative, social and economic changes. Due to their extensive responsibility, it is of utmost importance that parliamentarians are provided exceptional assistance to enhance their performance. The Government of Pakistan realized the significance of the parliamentary body which led to the establishment of Pakistan

Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) under a unanimous Act of Parliament in December 2008. Subsequently, PIPS developed an organization structure and set its' mandate to foster excellence in parliamentary services. The activities which PIPS engages in, as defined by the Act include promoting research, conducting training, providing information to all parliamentary members and assisting standing committees.

Manzil Pakistan will focus on the relevance of standing committees in the parliamentary set up in this report. A research team will work with PIPS and the National Assembly Secretariat to review data on the standing committee in order to gauge and assess the functioning of the standing committee so as to obtain in-depth and detailed information of the National Assembly Standing Committees.

Current Status

The governance structure in Pakistan through the legislative body has taken on a new narrative and now requires standardized processes to continue on its current path. The new government formed Parliamentary Committees on 21st August 2013; 5 non-ministerial committees, 28 Standing Committees for various ministries and one Special Committee on Kashmir Affairs. Standing committees are to be convened no more than 30 days after the election of Leader of the house, as stated by Article 200 of Rules and Procedure and Conduct of Business 2007. Under clause (3) of Article 66 of the Constitution of Pakistan committees have powers vested in civil court to enforce presentation of documents and appearance of any person before the committee. Each standing committee is comprised of not more than 20 members and headed by a chairman. Each standing committee is assigned to a ministry and reports directly to the Speaker of the National Assembly. They can direct the minister via recommendations and suggest pertinent legislation. Standing committees can form sub-committees to address any specific issue. They examine bills and regulate ministries as part of oversight in matters of expenditure, administration and public petitions. Standing committees are not legally obliged to issue any annual report regarding their activities. However, reports upon bills referred by the National Assembly or the Speaker of the House must be submitted within 30 days; when a time period has not been specified.

A Preliminary Research on Parliamentary Committees conducted by Manzil reviewed the constitutional framework of the committees and the performance of the committees in the

democratic tenures so far, as evident from available public information. The report also studied some cases of corruption surrounding public sector enterprises where committees exhibited delayed scrutiny and enforced some corrective measures to safeguard national interest. This study also looked at committee systems in other democratic systems and established relevant references. This broad study based on only available secondary data firmly posed a need for a detailed investigation of committee systems in Pakistan and for the development of more robust structure for better procedures as well as rigorous assessment framework. This report forms the foundations for this study.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Summary

In Pakistan the Parliament has been unable to perform effectively due to political instability. The previous government has been the first to complete its democratic tenure. Due to the transient nature of the parliament, standing committees suffer from institutional weaknesses. This is evident in the performance of standing committees in their last tenure. The contribution made by standing committees has been lacking and number of unchecked cases of misappropriation and delayed response by the parliament in affairs of public enterprises and ministries are many. The role of standing committees is to govern the ministries' workings and identifying required legislation. Thus committees contribute to good governance through bringing checks and balances, efficiency, accountability and transparency in government affairs. In the last tenure, the National Assembly passed 119 bills out of which 93 turned into Acts of Parliament. However, legislative activity need not be indicative of an active parliament. It could very well be indicative of an uninterested or an agenda dominated parliament which misrepresents important concerns of the people. There has been lack of leadership in many standing committees and their role was minimal in the legislative activity which may have ensued. Amongst the 32 National Assembly Standing Committees of 2008 - 2013, few generated reports on their activities. Hence there is not sufficient evidence to endorse committee activity.

In order to construct a comprehensive measurement standard for committee activity and performance, numerous models of assessment have been analyzed which have been implemented in countries such as India, New Zealand, Ukraine and the United Kingdom amongst a few.

Publications from PIPS, USAID and various other organizations have also been perused to add varying perspectives and approaches to improving the Parliamentary set up. Standing committees have become important centers of power in democracy around the world, serving as a main focal point for legislative processes and oversight activities in parliaments.

This project aims to improve the efficacy of the committee system in fulfilling their role in parliament. Enhancing the quality of legislation, oversight and recommendations through standing committees can contribute to better governance in Pakistan.

The project will analyze the workings of standing committees and develop a framework to assess their performance in order to achieve an understanding of committee contribution to parliamentary democracy in Pakistan and provide recommendations to empower them so as to improve governance; the project will undertake the following objectives:

III.   EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE PROJECT & METHODOLOGY

The project aims to produce the following reports:

1.   Structure & Functions of Standing Committees
2.   A review of National Assembly Standing Committees 2008 – 2013
3.   Standing Committee Members; Incentives & Challenges
4.   Governance Matters: Assessing the Effectiveness of Standing Committees and their contribution to Good Governance
5.   Recommendations for the Improvement of National Assembly Standing Committees

The reports will be delivered at intervals during the collection and analysis of data during the project. The project will research the above objectives using a structured methodology. The research follows Descriptive and Co relational Research Design. The Descriptive Design of the research will study effectiveness of committees and propose improvements in the design of committee functions. This design is based on the hypothesis that committee effectiveness and good governance in Parliamentary procedures and policy making are correlated. Hence the study is centered around designing an improved effective committee system in Pakistan based on an accepted correlation hypothesis. A theoretical framework that is proposed in the project is based on a thorough literature review of theoretical models developed to study parliament's relation

with Good Governance and as a part of parliament, committee's effectiveness. We propose to innovate existing frameworks subject to the constraints of the Pakistani political system and policies in place. A cross sectional study approach will be utilized to draw accurate comparisons and construct a relevant theoretical framework for assessing the effectiveness of the committee system. The study will create a framework which illustrates how committees can improve governance. As it is stated in the objectives, committees mainly have two functions, identifying required legislation and oversight of ministries which also includes overseeing public sector enterprises. A quantitative analysis of their effectiveness in both legislation and oversight will be conducted using mathematical tools.

The previous Standing Committee tenure will be assessed by gathering data regarding the recommendations passed by each standing committee and the legislations derived from those recommendations via data gathered from PIPS and media clippings. Using PIPS as a databank, recommendations and reports of various standing committees will be scrutinized alongside legislations that were passed as Acts. We will directly engage with experts and researchers at PIPS at their facility in Islamabad for the duration of the study if necessary. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be derived to create a statistical and in-depth analysis of the most active standing committee and the implementation of recommendation proposed by committees. The role of PIPS in facilitating this flow of information and debriefing of committee members will also be appraised to understand the involvement of the organization in the parliamentary member training. The new committee members which have been constituted will be assessed as to where they stand with regard to their job descriptions and role in their respective committees.

Data collection for primary research will include both interviews and structured questionnaires for committee members to gauge and assess their participation and level of engagement in legislative and oversight function. Due to a vast parliamentary body and time constraints, a random sample of standing committee members will be prepared which will be used to generalize results. The sample will be prepared by random selection of a number of committee members from each committee. In order to be representative, member sample will include an equal number of pro-government and opposition members. We will also interact with experts and academics related to the field of governance via questionnaires and interviews to enhance the quality of the study conducted. Questionnaires will consist of closed ended questions for

effective compilation. Interviews will serve as a follow up to questionnaires that have been received. To avoid a high degree of non-response, interviews will be held in-person. The research follows an inductive approach; the study builds upon the existence of standing committees to present their relevance and importance in the parliamentary structure of governance. The scope of this research is confined to the previous tenure of standing committees starting 2008 – 2013 and the current tenure till its present operations.

IV.   PROJECT IMPLMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

The research will span 6 to 8 months (tentative), implemented over 4 stages. The research time will vary according to the data collection procedures and the role of PIPS and the National Assembly Secretariat in facilitation. The research team will collect data in Islamabad; the entire project will be conducted in both Islamabad and Karachi. The 4 stages of research study will be structured as the following:

Stage 1:

We base our research on secondary data collected from the archives of PIPS databank. Members of our team will sit in PIPS offices and survey data regarding standing committees; previous records, functions, legal standing, recommendations, workshops etc. A list of stakeholders and experts will be prepared to facilitate peer-review on all research collections and findings. Interactions with stakeholders, experts and members for compilation of modus operandi and identifications of gaps in the structure will also be carried out.

As part of our theoretical work, our Research leads will analyze the information obtained from PIPS. They will also assist in the compilation of performance assessment of previous Standing Committees. Since the study requires a development of yardsticks for a *theoretical* framework, the quantitative and qualitative ingredient of such a framework will be identified by this stage based on available information. Assessment measures for standing committee effectiveness will also be constructed using tools once the observations are done.

Stage 2:

A study and assessment of the services provided by PIPS to support the parliamentarians in their work will be carried out. This study will evaluate the usefulness of functions like documentation

carried out and workshops conducted by PIPS. The frequency, content and follow up of training sessions held for parliamentarians will also be gauged. The study will particularly assess the worth and relevance of material available in the library to help the parliamentarians conduct the business of legislation and oversight.

In order to gather current data from all the stakeholders the study will rely on primary research methods. The parliamentarians and PIPS officials will be the targets of this research. We propose to carry out a series of interviews with both closed and open ended questions will be structured according to objective needs. The parliamentarians will be assessed for their participation and knowledge regarding the committee system and their answers will be compared to stakeholder expectations. Any ongoing workshops for standing committees will be observed if possible and a participant observation session conducted for meetings between standing committee members/PIPS and MPs. Workshop reports and feedbacks may be utilized in case no workshop is available for participation during the duration of the study. With the above information an analysis of current standing committee performance will be carried out to add as a comparison to previous committee set up.

A framework for the assessment of standing committees will be constructed using yardsticks and models of assessing effectiveness. The effectiveness of standing committees in legislation and oversight will also be measured through the tools stated in the objective. Available information will be plugged into the existing tools and used to draw results for the study. E.g. the records of meetings, attendance and recommendations will be plugged into the Deliberation to Legislation Ratio to conclude whether legislations are deliberated over by MPs before being passed hence guaranteeing quality legislation. A compilation of MP responses will be used to construct *job descriptions* for MPs based on their duties and understanding of the committee system.

Stage 3:

Since there is no clear job description for MPs, the next stage will tackle that area. We will interact with experts and PIPS to assess standing committee duties for legislation and oversight which are their two core functions. These interactions will also help us apply the tools for legislation and oversight apart from constructing a job description. To make this research more valid, a member observation will be carried out to assess involvement in legislation and

oversight towards PSEs and Ministries. An insight into a few members from randomly selected committees will help us generalize findings to a certain extent.

The constructed frameworks for legislative effectiveness and oversight assessment will be implemented to draw conclusions upon the validity of the test. The testing tools outlined in the report will be carried out against available data. If there is no available data, the tools may be revamped to conform to our data needs. We will require close interactions with members and the PIPS to conduct these tests in a reliable and valid manner.

Stage 4:

The study will lastly involve tracking involvement of PIPS and the progress of standing committees in impacting governance over period of study (6 months). The fact that good governance is the result of effective standing committees will be borne out by the study in the last phase of this research. By compiling all primary, secondary and test result data we will draw conclusions about standing committees influence effective governance in the country. An improvement agenda for standing committees can be constructed by recording improvements or discrepancies and tallying research objectives.

Compiling all data and generating recommendations for improving functions of standing committees and PIPS. Recommendations are to be more sustainable and compliant with the legal and realistic framework of Pakistani politics. A theoretical assessment of the importance of standing committees in influencing governance and policy making coupled with various self assessment measures and sustainable development goals can tailor the study to be both rewarding and effective.

A. Project Activities and Work Plan

Objective	Activity	Methodology
A. Analysis of the structure and functions of standing committees	Survey to gather information from PIPS and National Assembly Secretariat regarding Structure and Functions of NA Standing Committees Develop Comprehensive structure of Standing Committees Overview of facilities and staff appointed to Committee members Generate report on the Modus Operandi for the Committee system	Construct survey to gather data from PIPS that will be utilized in the course of the research. The survey shall target questions raised in the hypothesis. Identify sample frame for committee members and use random sampling measures to determine the number of participants. Sample should include equal number of opposition and pro-government members. Each committee should have equal representation in sample for reliable & valid research outcomes.
B. Performance Review of NA Standing Committees 2008 – 2013	Peruse data collected from survey regarding activities of last standing committees Plug all data into tabular form for better analysis. Apply existing framework analysis to collected data based on indicators	Using questionnaires, interviews and survey data collected, gather information on previous standing committee tenure. Apply data to existing framework to compare with system with other countries and assess performance levels.
C. Development of the theoretical framework for good governance and committee effectiveness Legislative Dimension >> Legislation to Deliberation Ratio >> Interaction Index >> Skewing Propensity Analysis	Accumulate and create comprehensive framework listing indicators from different sources Use survey of PIPS data to benchmark amount of deliberation and meetings over bills. Calculate ratio against number of legislations headed by the committee. Record Member interactions with interest groups/experts/academics. Outline agendas of all interaction groups stated in earlier data collected	Peruse all existing frameworks to develop a comprehensive framework suitable to Pakistani parliamentary structure. Ascertain the most effective committee from all after perusal of data. Collect information via PIPS/ National Assembly Secretariat regarding legislation and meetings held by committees. Contact sample committee members via questionnaires/interviews to assess interactions and groups that facilitate legislation. Use secondary sources and personal contacting of groups to determine ideology of group and establishing links of any interest motive for facilitating legislation in committees.

Oversight >> PSE Risk Decision Matrix	Collect data on oversight conducted by committees in the form of recommendations, investigations etc. Develop case study of single PSE to construct a risk analysis based on Enterprise Risk Models.	Select a PSE (KSEC, PIA) as case study and collect all data using questionnaires to related managers and ministries. Establish link of committee and PSE and construct risk analysis matrix for PSE and generate report for better PSE oversight.
>> Executive Oversight Framework	Develop oversight framework using indicators collected by BaSICS and CIGOL models. Plug in information regarding oversight by committees into framework for analysis.	Plug in collected data into BaSICS and CIGOL model of oversight measurement to construct framework for oversight.
>> Measuring Oversight	Quantitative measurement of oversight using factors outlined in Oversight measurement tool.	Construct a quantitative oversight measurement analysis using quantitative factors of oversight tools outlined in report and establish recommendations on introducing oversight effectiveness.
D. Review of institutional arrangements for standing committees members	Generate report on the usage of facilities by members. Assess role of PIPS and other parliamentary aides for committee effectiveness. Compare resources and motivations offered to committee members as opposed to international standards.	Conduct focus group interviews/observations and use questionnaires where necessary for assessing challenges faced by committee members. Gather suggestions and outlook of members. Personally assess usage of facilities by members to gauge the resources provided to members for committee effectiveness. Compare facilities to international standards and generate report highlighting the recommendations put forth by committee members themselves.

B. Challenges to the Project

The research project faces time limitations and mobility constraints which will be addressed by dividing the research between Karachi and Islamabad. Researchers will continue to work with PIPS even after the end of the project to ensure a sustainable goal achievement. Since the project utilizes secondary data for numerous outcomes, the project may face non availability of data from PIPS and the National Assembly Secretariat. Though the team will cover data gaps through primary research, any unavailable data will be outlined as a future data collection objective. The

research team intends to highlight the data that should be collected if it is currently unavailable so the project objectives can be replicated with improved results in the future. The research team is also aware of the level of high non response by using questionnaires as a data collection tool. To mitigate the former, a series of follow up interviews will be personally conducted to gather information necessary.

VI. PROJECT REFERENCES

The research proposal has taken information and ideas from numerous reports and academic papers on governance, Parliament and the committee system. The main ones are cited below for reference:

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Research Leads/ Interns

The following people have contributed to the preliminary report and to this proposal. The study will employ their services and also bring in experts from Pakistan and abroad. Some of these contributors will also intern at PIPS or the National Assembly Secretariat.

Mutee-Ul Rehman

Mutee is a researcher, currently working as a research analyst at an international NGO on a USAID funded project. With a degree in economics, he has specialties in governance, food security, qualitative and quantitative research; training and capacity building; report writing and project management.

Nadeem Zaidi

Nadeem holds an MBA from Greenwich University, Karachi and is currently part of the Academic Foundation at The Foundation Public School. He previously held the post of Head of A-Levels at the Beacon House School System.

Research Associates

Sarrah Millwala

Sarrah has completed her Bachelor's of Science in Social Sciences from SZABIST with a major in International Relations. A strong advocate for Human Rights & Law, she has worked with organizations such as the UNDP and Amnesty International.

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Muzammal is researcher and M. Phil Scholar at Applied Economics Research Centre Karachi with a special focus on governance and social/development sector. With a degree in Economics, he has experience of research on Governance and Energy Sector.

Mentor

Naheed Memon

Naheed is the CEO of Manzil Pakistan and a visiting faculty at IBA. She holds an MSc in Economics from Birkbeck College, London and an MBA from Imperial College London.