



PILDAT Legislative Capability-building Programme

**Legislative Capability-Building
Needs Assessment Session**

December 04, 2002
Lahore

Session Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Acknowledgement
- Background
- Executive Summary
- The Session
- The Discussion
- Conclusion
- Participants List

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency – PILDAT wishes to acknowledge the support provided by the *United Nations Development Programme – UNDP* for holding the NEEDS ASSESSMENT SESSION as a part of the PILAT-UNDP Legislative Capability building Pilot Project. PILDAT specially acknowledges the wholehearted support and enthusiasm of the UNDP team that includes Mr. Farhan Sabih, Head Gender and Governance Unit; Ms. Jessica Graf, Junior Professional Officer; Ms. Rabia Khattak, Programme Officer and Dr. Socorro Reyes, Senior Gender Advisor, UNDP.

PILDAT owes special thanks to the *Government of Pakistan* and its *Economic Affairs Division* for its approval of the UNDP support for PILDAT Legislative Capability building Pilot Project. PILDAT specifically acknowledges the support of Dr. Waqar Masood, Secretary EAD, Mr. Nayyar Agha, Additional Secretary EAD and Ms. Neelofur Hafeez, Section Officer, EAD. Thanks are also due to the *Secretariats of Senate, National Assembly* and the *Provincial Assemblies* for their guidance and support for the programme.

The Needs Assessment Session owes its success to the time and thoughts of the distinguished participants that comprised current legislators, veteran legislators, civil society organisations, Government departments and Secretariats of the Legislatures, Intellectuals and Media.

PILDAT also gratefully acknowledges the written input by Ms. Jessica Graf (UNDP), Ms. Jackie Charlton (DFID) and Mr. S. M. Zafar provided ahead of the Session.

We also wish to thank all those individuals who provided us their input by responding to the Needs Assessment Questionnaire sent to them by PILDAT.

BACKGROUND

A modern state is propped on three pillars namely The Legislature, The Executive and The Judiciary, Although, legislature being a sovereign body created through the free will of people assumes a central position in the state, it has remained the weakest out of these three pillars. Unlike the Executive and the Judiciary, no structured system of grooming the legislators, enhancing their skills, expertise and potentials has been developed till now to fully orient them with the changing needs of national and international arena. In order to facilitate the legislators to perform their functions of Legislation, Representation and Oversight in a befitting manner and to interact with their counterparts in the executive and the judiciary at an equal footing a programme to enhance the skills, expertise and capacity of the legislators has been designed by PILDAT, a non-partisan, citizens initiative committed to the cause of strengthening democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Need Assessment session was held at Hotel Avari, Lahore on Wednesday, December 4, 2002 by Pakistan Institute of legislative Development and Transparency - PILDAT. The session was a part of PILDAT-UNDP Legislative Capability-building Pilot Project, which has been designed with a focus to engage the newly elected parliamentarians in the exercise of capacity building and further enhancing their potentials and skills as the members of the most important institution of the state: the Parliament. The session provided a platform for the exchange of fruitful ideas, suggestions and facilitated a dialogue on major legislative challenges among various stakeholders. It involved former and newly elected parliamentarians, civil society leadership, legislative staff from various legislatures secretariats, experts, political analysts, intellectuals and politicians. During the session, participants developed an extensive list of recommendations addressing specific targets for the organisation, and reached general consensus on several fundamental principles, including how to attract parliamentarians in this process of capacity building to enhance their potentials as true representatives of the people.

THE SESSION

The Need Assessment Session was a major step in initiating the Legislative Capacity-building Pilot Project. The session was well represented by all stakeholders. A total of 36 participants attended the session which included 10 current legislators, 2 former and veteran legislators, 10 officials from the Government of Pakistan and Secretariats of the Legislatures, 11 civil society leaders and 3 experts and intellectuals.

The Need Assessment Session focused on the discussion based on the Needs Assessment Questionnaire circulated earlier to all the participants. The participants were invited to offer suggestions mainly on the following subjects:

1. Is there a need for Legislative Capability-building for Legislators, Civil Society and Legislative Staff?
2. What exactly are the needs which should be addressed in the Legislative Capability-building programme? (For example, the topics of Capability-building workshops)
3. What is the best way to fulfil these needs? (i.e. Methodology and Tools)
4. How to attract the target groups especially the legislators to the events aimed at capability building?
5. What are other miscellaneous issues associated with the Legislative Capability-building Programme?

All participants were invited to share their views in a bullet-point format within the allotted time. Before inviting the participant's views, a presentation was made on behalf of PILDAT, which included background of the Legislative Capability-building programme, the Pilot Project, PILDAT and the objectives and the format of the Needs Assessment Session.

THE DISCUSSION

Is there a need for a Legislative Capability-building Programme?

The participants were unanimous in confirming that there was a definite and pressing need for an effective and urgent Legislative Capability-building Programme. The Participants complimented PILDAT and UNDP for the initiative. The participants strongly agreed that the need for such a programme existed which could enhance the skills and expertise of the elected parliamentarians, legislative staff and civil society organisations to ensure an effective leadership and true representation of people to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

What exactly are the needs and what are the specific areas in which target groups (i.e. Legislators, Legislative Staff and Civil Society Organizations) need skill enhancement?

The session produced a broad range of specific recommendations for the needs for the Legislative Capacity-building programme. Although all the participants did not reach a consensus, however the majority supported some suggestions. Occasionally there were differences on details, but agreement on the general principle.

a. Proficiency in English Language:

Since English is the language of legislation, a lack of proficiency in English language has been a major drawback to the parliamentarians in the past, so proficiency in English needs to be a key area to be worked on.

b. Enhancing Understanding of the Legislative Jargon:

Besides the improvement in the English language skills, understanding of the specific language, jargon and terminology used in legislative documents also needs to be improved.

c. Enhancing ability to strengthen the political parties:

The legislators mainly come from political parties and they need help in developing abilities to strengthen their respective parties and their part structures.

d. Enhancing ability to develop meaningful manifestoes and programmes:

The legislators also need the skills to develop meaningful programmes and manifestoes of their respective political parties.

e. Developing skills to draft and present bills:

The legislators need skills to prepare and present bills in the areas where existing legislation needs improvement.

f. Enhancing Communication skills and tools in general:

In many cases the communication skills of the legislators also need to be enhanced.

g. Developing an appetite and ability to use Research and Resource Material:

Currently legislators seldom seek or use research and resource material. They should be sensitised to use these tools and material to improve their performance.

h. Improving the quality of debate in the parliament:

One of the important needs of legislators is to improve the quality of their part in debates in the legislatures. They should be assisted to achieve this goal.

i. Improving the understanding of Legislative Process:

Legislators and Civil Society need to be made aware of the details of the procedure of legislation and at what points and how can they make a difference.

j. Women Legislators elected on the reserved seats:

There is a need to discuss how women legislators elected on reserved seats can be beneficial to the society at large. This is vital in the context that they do not have specific constituencies like those who are elected on general seats. Will there be development funds allocated to them?

k. Understanding about the role and significance of the Opposition:

The understanding about the important role which the opposition plays in a democracy should be effectively promoted among the legislators in general in order to better appreciate and respect this role and use it with responsibility.

l. Legislative Agenda and priorities setting:

Legislators and others need to be trained in setting their and their parties' legislative agenda and priorities and their continuous review in the light of the changing scenario.

m. Understanding of Policy-making and policy analysis:

Legislators should have a basic idea of what policies and policy inputs are. How policymaking takes place and how to assess the already made policies in the country.

n. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs):

The legislators also need to be exposed to the effective usage of ICTs for making more efficient and effective usage of their time and energy.

o. Understanding of Basic Procedures, etc.:

The Legislators should be assisted in understanding the basic and formal parliamentary procedures, rules and regulations early on. The Government should have used the time available before the first session and the gap between the first and the second session to conduct orientation of the legislators.

p. Cultivating habit to read:

There is a need to cultivate the habit among legislators to read the documents provided for the debate and get prepared. Speed Reading Courses may be helpful.

- q. Sensitising Legislators to the improvement of existing legislation:**
The legislators should be sensitized to the reforms needed in various legislations many of whom are more than hundred years old.
- r. Understanding of Committee System:**
Legislators and Civil Society needs to be trained on effective utilisation of the Committee System of legislatures. The parliamentary Staff also needs to be trained to extend effective support to the committees.
- s. Role of Legislators in the Development Plans in their Constituencies:**
The Legislators should be made aware of their roles in the process of development within their constituencies especially under the Devolution Plan currently enforced and which is already causing tension between the legislators and the local governments. Their voters consider their legislators the development agents. How this role can be reconciled with their role as a legislator?
- t. Budget Review, Oversight, Lobbying:**
The legislators' ability to review budget, to lobby and for the Oversight functions also needs to be enhanced.
- u. Enhancing Legislators' understanding of their role in Poverty Alleviation Programmes:**
Poverty alleviation programmes constitute one of the most important programmes of the government in a country like Pakistan. The legislator's role is crucial in such programmes and their understanding of their role should be enhanced. Stress was also laid on issue-based training and skills enhancement of legislators so that they spearhead the drive for major development issues including poverty alleviation.
- v. Promoting Dialogue between Legislators and Civil Society:**
A meaningful dialogue between various civil society organisations and legislators should be initiated and maintained so that legislators have a better appreciation of the significance and role of the civil society and in turn the legislators come to know of civil society issues.
- w. Overview of Constitution and the amendment procedure:**
The legislators should be given a detailed overview of the constitution and the procedure for amendments.
- x. Awareness of Environmental and Globalisation issues:**
Since world is now a global village, legislators' understanding and awareness of issues which effect the globe should also be enhanced such as the issues of environmental protection, globalisation, World Trade Organization regime etc.
- y. Comparative Study of Legislatures in different countries:**
In order to broaden the horizon of legislators, they should be made aware of the practices and procedures and strong and weak points of legislatures in other countries.

z. Awareness on Consumer issues and need for consumer protection legislation:

Legislators should also be made aware of the consumer issues and the need for consumer protection legislation.

aa. Need to develop Legislative Literature and Manuals in Urdu:

Since a great majority of legislators feels more comfortable in Urdu language' there is a need to develop Legislative literature in Urdu.

bb. Legislators' role in ensuring Transparency and Accountability in all operations:

Legislators' understanding of their role in ensuring accountability and Transparency in the operations of the executive and even within the legislature should be enhanced.

cc. Promoting Gender Sensitivity and Gender-fair legislation:

Arrangements aimed at promoting gender sensitivity among legislators should be made. In addition the need for gender-fair legislation should also be highlighted.

dd. Strengthen Research infrastructure at the legislatures:

It was repeatedly emphasized that the research facilities and personnel be urgently improved in various legislatures. The need for employing PhD's as research staff at the legislatures like in the.

ee. Improving Legislators' understanding of the Organisational Structure of the State:

A large number of legislators are not even clear about how various organs and institutions of the state relate to each other and how state structure is defined. Events aimed at enhancing this understanding should also be organized.

ff. Improving understanding about the working of the Executive:

The legislators' debate and performance will improve if they are well aware of the working of the Executive. Sessions should be organized to brief legislators about the working of the Executive.

gg. Developing a structured curriculum for Legislators Training:

The need was felt for a structured but flexible curriculum of Legislators training consisting of a number of courses of which legislators may choose from according to their individual interest and need.

hh. Issues specific to women:

The legislators, both men and women, need to be sensitized to the issues which are specific to women to underscore the urgency of combating discrimination on the basis of gender.

How can these needs be fulfilled? (Methodology and Tools)

- a. Arranging workshops/Seminars can help in improving skills of the legislators
- b. Brain storming sessions are needed to invite suggestions and discussions on Issues of vital importance.
- c. Arranging dialogue between the legislators and various cause-oriented groups will also aid the process.
- d. Orientations workshops are needed
- e. Developing Web portals for Legislators
- f. Training of Legislators in ICTs
- g. Providing up-to-date research & resource materials to the parliamentarians can enhance their capacity.
- h. More personalised support to legislators is needed.
- i. Provide assistance in improving quality of English language in legislators.
- j. Networking with various political institutions
- k. Regional Networking to benefit from the experiences of other countries.

How to attract the target groups especially the legislators to the events aimed at capability building?

- a. Make a correct assessment of the needs of the target group and then demonstrate that you can adequately fulfill these needs through your programme.
- b. Focus on the new legislators who need the capability building and are enthusiastic about their responsibilities.
- c. Highlight the usefulness of the programme to the target groups.
- d. Select a small but interested group of legislators in the initial programmes who can then spread the word around to their colleagues. The selection of the right kind of legislators in the beginning is of critical importance. Initially select those legislators in the target group who understand the need of capacity building and they would eventually attract more legislators.
- e. Arrange for the publicity of the events especially in the electronic media to attract participants.
- f. Make initial programmes free of charge.
- g. Try to involve party leaders and assembly speakers who can influence legislators.
- h. The programme should be a sustained effort and not an on-again-off-again type of work.
- i. Provide assistance to legislators in terms of briefing them on current national and international issues.
- j. Start with modest and realistic targets of attracting a rather small number.
- k. The topics of discussion should not be academic; they should be relevant to legislators' day-to-day activities.
- l. Assure legislators that participating in the programme will mean greater empowerment.
- m. Provide high quality of contents through some of the best trainers.
- n. Ensure the legislators that the organization is a well -wisher and want to promote the concept of sustainable democracy in the country.

- o. Invite former, experienced legislators to guide, explain and discuss their views as a part of the training sessions.
- p. To ensure that the organisation is working for their benefit and seminars and workshops will be conducted to cater their needs.

Miscellaneous Comments made at the Session associated with the Legislative Capability-building Programme.

- a. Political parties may be strengthened (by way of training their master trainers) to help them train their legislators.
- b. Students of political science or young graduates in Political Science or other related disciplines should be provided an opportunity to attach with legislators as interns. This will give experience to young aspiring legislators and provide much-needed research support to legislators.
- c. The feasibility of involving Civil Services Academies, Administrative Staff Colleges and National Institute of Public Administration in the capability building of legislators may be examined. The representatives of the Civil Services Academy and Administrative Staff College offered collaboration to PILDAT and UNDP in this regard.
- d. The Government of Pakistan should establish a proper Academy for the training of Legislators which should be comparable in quality to the best training facilities in the country for the executive.
- e. The Government of Pakistan should itself allocate budget for Legislatures training rather than leaving this work entirely to donor agencies.
- f. Focus should be on the development of the institutions rather than the individuals.
- g. More brainstorming is needed for more precise needs assessment.
- h. The Ministry of Women Development has successfully carried out the training (Mentoring, Nurturing) of women Councilors and Nazims throughout Pakistan. The representative of the Ministry of Women Development had graciously offered PILDAT to examine the manuals and other documentation developed for this purpose to learn from the experience.
- i. Director of the British Council Lahore graciously offered the British Council facilities and experience in teaching English to Legislators.
- j. Mr. Fakhr Imam, a former Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan termed Legislators in Pakistan “the most disadvantaged and handicapped” section due to the lack of any serious capability-building effort in the past.
- k. Dr. Socorro Reyes, the senior gender advisor to UNDP and the Founder/Chairman of the Centre for Legislative Development (CLD) in the Philippines, synthesized the discussion towards the end. She explained various aspects of Legislative Development and role of various stakeholders in the process.

Questions relating to Logistics

The participants also gave their suggestions regarding the duration of the proposed Workshops, Venue, Mixing of MNAs, MPAs, Civil Society Organisations and Legislative Staff in a training workshop etc. A summary of the views is given below:

- A majority of the people believed that workshops should be of 2-day duration
- It was suggested that PILDAT should first focus on the capability building of the MNAs, followed by the Senators and the MPAs. However, if some workshop or conference titles are such that involve all three, they should be invited to participate together. Similarly Civil Society Organisation and legislative staff should also be included into workshops and sessions according to the topics.
- The participants believed that the Legislative Capability building Sessions/workshops should be organised in Islamabad followed by Lahore, Karachi Quetta and Peshawar in the same order.

CONCLUSION

The Needs Assessment Session concluded that there is a pressing need for the legislative development in Pakistan as the legislators remain the most disadvantaged and handicapped group despite their empowerment through the constitution. There was a general agreement amongst participants that the skills enhancement and capability building sessions for the legislators should commence forthwith. The capability building sessions should not only cover areas such as legislative rules and procedures and specific functions of the legislators, but also focus on general skills building of the legislators such as language and communication skills, public relationing, lobbying and fundraising etc.

It was also emphasised in the session that legislators' capability should be enhanced on specific issues and topics related to development such as poverty alleviation, gender balance, education etc that should enable the legislators to spearhead the drive for the development of their homeland. Focus, it was concluded, should also be placed on making legislators aware of their global surroundings through sessions on global issues and how they affect the country. It was felt that a permanent structure for legislative skills enhancement in the shape of an academy or resource centre should be created to take care of the needs of legislators and equip them for the discharge of their duties.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CURRENT AND VETERAN LEGISLATORS

(ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

1. **Mr. Daniyal Aziz (MNA)**
Pakistan Muslim League (QA)
2. **Ms. Doniya Aziz (MNA)**
Pakistan Muslim League (QA)
3. **Mr. Fakhar Imam**
Former Federal Minister
4. **Mr. Farid Paracha (MNA)**
Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)
5. **Mr. Javed Jabbar**
Former Federal Minister
6. **Ms. Kashmala Tariq (MNA)**
Pakistan Muslim League (QA)
7. **Mr. Pervez Malik (MNA)**
Pakistan Muslim League (N)
8. **Mrs. Riffat Javed Khan (MNA)**
Pakistan Muslim League (QA)
9. **Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi (MNA)**
Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)
10. **Mr. Shah Mehmood Qureshi (MNA)**
Pakistan Peoples Party (Parliamentarians)
11. **Mr. Syed Ahsan Ullah Waqas (MPA)**
Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)
12. **Mr. Syed Safwanullah (MNA)**
Muttahidda Qaumi Movement (MQM)

OFFICIALS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN & SECRETARIATS OF LEGISLATURES

13. **Mr. Akhtar Hayat**
Member Directing Staff (Governance)
Pakistan Administrative Staff College
14. **Mr. Amjad Pervez**

Deputy Secretary Senate

15. **Mr. Nawazul Haq**
Director Research
National Institute of Public Administration - NIPA
16. **Ms. Neelofer S. Hafeez**
Section Officer
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs
17. **Ms. Saira Bano Kazim**
Staff Officer to
Director General Civil Services Academy
18. **Dr. Syed Abulhassan Najmi**
Secretary
Provincial Assemble Of The Punjab
19. **Mr. Sohail Safdar**
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Women Development
Social Welfare and Special Education
20. **Mr. Tariq Junaid**
Research Officer
Senate of Pakistan

CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS

21. **Mr. Abdul Qadir**
Programme Officer
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
22. **Dr. Akhtar Ali**
Executive Director
Movement for Sustainable Social Autonomy & Gender Equity
23. **Mr. Arshad Bhatti**
Director (Governance)
The British Council
24. **Ms. Farah Perveiz Saleh**
Executive Director
Citizen Commission for Human Development
25. **Mr. Gunter Lehrke**
Resident Representative
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
26. **Dr. Iftikhar Elahi**
Director
The British Council
27. **Mr. Khalid Sherdil**
Associate
Leads Pakistan

28. **Mr. M. P. Gangwani**
President
The Institution of Engineers Pakistan
29. **Mr. Mujib Ur Rehman Shami**
President
CPNE
30. **Ms. Rashida Dohad**
Senior Programme Advisor
The Asia Foundation
31. **Mr. Salman Hamayun**
Director
Consumer Rights Commission Of Pakistan
32. **Dr. Zafar Mirza**
Executive Coordinator
The Network For Consumer Protection

EXPERTS AND INTELLECTUALS

33. **Mr. Asif Qazi**
Deputy Director Foreign Affairs
MMA
34. **Ms. Amy Tacho**
Political-Economic Officer
US Consulate General
35. **Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi**
Political & Defence Analyst
36. **Dr. Socorro Reyes**
Senior Gender Adviser, UNDP