

Advocacy for Sustainable Policy and Implementation Reforms, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Aspire-KP)

Introduction

The "Advocacy for Sustainable Policy and Implementation Reforms - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" (Aspire-KP) is an autonomous, non-profit research and advocacy platform comprising public service professionals dedicated to the non-partisan review and assessment of public policy.

Rationale

Aspire-KP believes that Pakistan is facing significant challenges, including instability, institutional breakdown, extremism, law-and-order issues, resource pressure, and rising poverty. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is particularly affected, experiencing public order disruptions, loss of human lives, and economic setbacks. The merger of tribal areas in 2018 has further complicated governance and service delivery responsibilities for the KP government. There is an urgent need for informed, objective input to address these challenges and guide policy formulation.

Mission

Aspire-KP aims to harness intellectual capital, administrative experience, and judicial acumen in KP to provide meaningful input for decision-making and influence policy formulation. Through applied research, we will offer policy options and implementable plans for better governance, public service delivery, and critical social sectors.

Our goal is to ensure that policies, especially on sensitive and complex subjects, are informed by those directly impacted.

Strategic Leadership

The Executive Board, comprising members from academia, public service, technocrats, and entrepreneurs, provides strategic direction and approves the overall strategy and annual work plan. The Board is chaired by Mohammad Shehzad Arbab, a seasoned public service professional with extensive experience in governance and tribal area reforms. His strategic assignments include his posting as Additional Chief Secretary FATA and Chief Executive FATA Development Authority. In 2013-14, he served as Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Prior to this assignment, he served as Chief Secretary AJK for almost three years. At the federal level, he headed three Divisions: Commerce, Economic Affairs, and States and Frontier Regions. The highlights of his career include far-reaching governance reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and AJK and his contribution to the Reforms Committee for the integration of the tribal area. He authored the report recommending the merger of the tribal areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In 2018, he was appointed as Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Establishment, where he spearheaded "Performance Agreements" with the Ministries to set targets, secure commitments, determine timelines, and establish a robust review mechanism for timely implementation of special initiatives.

Operational Arrangements

For operational purposes, a three-member Working Committee of the Board steers operations and provides strategic direction to the Executive Director, a paid employee of the organization. The Working Committee is chaired by Mr. Habibullah Khan Khattak, who has had an illustrious career in Civil Service.

Activities

Aspire-KP engages in a wide range of activities to achieve its objectives and promote effective policy-making. These activities include:

- 1. Research and Analysis:** Conducting applied research on policy formulation and the impact of implementation.
- 2. Engagement and Advocacy:** Hosting conferences, seminars, focus group discussions, lectures, and roundtables on contemporary issues, including governance, youth empowerment, sustainable development.

3. **Documentation and Dissemination:** Documenting outcomes of activities in policy briefs, analysis reports, and publications. Proposing policy options and implementable plans to policymakers, members of Parliament and Provincial Assembly, local government representatives, media, academic institutions, political parties, and other stakeholders.

4. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Working in collaboration with governments, autonomous organizations, philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, Standing Committees of Parliament and Provincial Assembly, local governments, civil society, national and international organizations to:

- a) Influence policy formulation and implementation objectively.
- b) Promote proactive approaches for effective legislation.
- c) Transform attitudes and behaviors regarding critical governance issues.
- d) Build capacity among academia, practitioners, and policymakers to create, access, and apply knowledge through research.