# CS indemnity and accountability

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A very handsome civil servant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sultan Hayat, who died a few months ago, once told me that he initially joined the Pakistan Navy and was posted as ADCG of the then President Chaudhry Fazal Elahi on deputation. Former Prime Minister Z.A Bhutto once saw him in the Presidency and admired his beautiful personality as a young officer. Later after a short interview, Bhutto sought his permission to induct him in the Foreign Service. Mr Bhutto told him that he wanted to promote Pakistan’s positive image abroad through civil servants working at the Foreign Office (FO); and he was of the opinion that an officer like him working with the FO may present a soft image of the country. Bhutto’s insistence exhibits how a country can build on its image and prestige abroad with brilliant and presentable civil servants.

Civil service has always been a highly respected profession in Pakistan. It’s known for portraying its rigorous intellect, leadership qualities, general knowledge, and more. But becoming a civil servant and working in the service is easier said than done. From studying for the CSS examinations intensely and acing them, to clearing interviews and tests, becoming a full-fledged servant is no small task or achievement. They earn handsome salaries and get perks and privileges.

[Sharjeel century helps Sindh knock Southern Punjab out of National T20](https://nation.com.pk/09-Oct-2021/sharjeel-s-century-helps-sindh-knock-southern-punjab-out-of-national-t20)

Many civil servants in Pakistan are known to work under the umbrella of bureaucratic operations and government secretariats, a paramount task of the utmost importance when engaging in policy and decision making. Many of them are assigned to maintain the rule of law and economic stability in Pakistan. Thus, their role is seen as a tool of implementation for government policy. But with political instability, terrorism, countless wars across disputed and undisputed borders of Pakistan over the years, and other unforeseeable catastrophes such as military coups and natural disasters, the impact of public policy-making has hit Pakistan’s GDP. The lack of public policymaking and persuasion have literally undermined the democratic state’s role to bring about vital socio-economic change as policies do not seem people centric.

Policymaking is also a substantial part of foreign policy. The objective of foreign policy is to promote national interests on an international platform. This includes key issues such as independence, sovereignty and military warfare. But due to rapid globalisation and transnational activities, many states would place sheer importance towards economic welfare. Yet, the issue of national interests itself can only be tackled by a country if all its citizens work together on a common issue, and resolve it. Such citizens, if deterred or coerced into deliberately turning a blind eye towards such issues, will backfire the nation’s key standing in such international standings. Such coercion or duress can be derived from the politicisation of government officials, corruption and other fraudulent acts acting internally within the system itself. Foreign policy is arguably one of the most demanding fields of civil bureaucracy in any state. One wrong decision and the current and future generations will all bear the consequences. Thus, it is essential to ensure that this high-risk game isn’t lost by our country.

[Balochistan Corps Commander visits earthquake affected areas of Harnai](https://nation.com.pk/08-Oct-2021/balochistan-corps-commander-visits-earthquake-affected-areas-of-harnai)

Arguably, the biggest defence towards civil servants is in the form of indemnity. According to Article 237 of the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Parliament may make laws of indemnity for any person in the service of the Federal Government or a Provincial Government.

Further, under S.23A of the Civil Servants Act 1973 (Act No. LXXI of 1973), “No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against a civil servant for anything done in his official capacity which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules, instructions or directions made or issued thereunder.” The same has been defined in S.22A of the Punjab Civil Servants Act 1974, and S.23A of The KPK Civil Servants Act 1973 respectively.

Thus, the concept of indemnity may prevent civil servants from experiencing reluctance, doubt, and uncertainty in the line of their duty. This will give them a breather that would allow them to peacefully work on their required duties without any form of fear.