

# Parliament of Pakistan



## Launch of Parliamentary Studies Programme

Monday, February 9, 2015 at PIPS, Islamabad

### **Preamble**

The founding fathers of Pakistan envisioned a federal parliamentary democracy, which has gradually nurtured into a strong tradition and remains the bedrock of our State that aims to ensure emancipation of our entire people. However, it is direly felt that there is an imperative need in our country to produce qualified personnel appropriately equipped with relevant knowledge and expertise to serve the Parliament and legislators effectively and efficiently.

The Honourable Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq envisioned that launching of Parliamentary Degree Courses as well as including the discipline, in existing social sciences and law degrees, will go a long way in consolidation of democratic tradition in Pakistan especially among the youth. It will also help the country to gradually build an indigenous human resource pool, which is well-equipped with technical expertise is assessing and drafting legislation; understanding parliamentary rules; functions and working of committees, techniques of oversight; budget analysis and preparation of parliamentary researches. This will gradually diminish country's present dependency on international donors and consultants for parliamentary support and Pakistan will be self-sufficient in having an indigenous community of parliamentary experts.

### **Academic Programme on Parliamentary Studies and Role of Universities**

The Parliament of Pakistan and its entire leadership recognizes the key role of universities and academic institutions in fostering the initiative of introducing degree and academic programmes in parliamentary studies, which can cater to the above mentioned needs on sustainable basis. The proposed programmes may have different modules to meet short-term as well as long term needs of training and skill-development ranging from an 8 week certificate course, a semester-long diploma course and a four years BS in Politics and Parliamentary Studies as well as a two-years Masters degree in Parliamentary Studies to be offered in due course. The Parliament has received an over-whelming response from numerous national universities who have expressed their strong desire to start the parliamentary studies programmes.

### **Translating vision into Reality**

Ms Marrirum Aurangzeb, MNA, led the Project Management Unit in the National Assembly, to study academic programmes offered by universities in model democracies like UK and South Africa to design the proposed degree programmes. Meanwhile a detailed working paper was developed by PMU and Mr Aziz Nishtar, a renowned Legal Expert at the Improving Parliamentary Performance Project, EU, to commence meaningful brainstorming with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and interested universities. In July 2014, the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), the Parliament's own exclusive first of its kind research and training facility, also prepared a comprehensive draft degree structure of a four years BS in Political Science and Parliamentary Studies that was also endorsed by universities.

### **Parliamentary Studies' Degree Programmes**

A core working group held detailed deliberations throughout December 2014 and January 2015 to formulate concrete recommendations, in which it is proposed that recognized universities, academic institutions and PIPS will launch numerous Parliamentary Studies Programmes in 2015-16, which are mentioned as below:

No	Programme/Degree Title	Duration/credit hours	Target Audience
1.	Certificate course in Parliamentary Studies	8 weeks	Interested Members of the Parliament (MPs), officers and officials at the Parliament, lawyers, media-men, academia and members of civil society
2.	Post Graduate Diploma in Parliamentary Studies	4 month (one semester/ 18 cr hours)	MPs, officers and officials at the Parliament, media men, members of civil society; computer literacy and Bachelor's degree holders will be preferred
3.	BS in Politics and Parliamentary Studies	4 years (8 semesters/135 cr hr)	FA/FSc passed students
4.	MA in Parliamentary Studies	2 years (4 semesters)	University students with completed BA/BSc

It was also proposed that Elective courses in parliamentary studies will be introduced in the existing degree programmes of political science and law while the Higher Education Commission (HEC), wherever required, will facilitate necessary additions in curriculum by convening earliest meetings of its respective National Curriculum Committees in which representatives from the Parliament and Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) will be invited to present the said courses. In addition Degree structure of various social science disciplines will be deliberated by HEC panel of experts from various universities, Parliament and PIPS to formulate from time to time revised curriculum for proposed degrees.

### **Accomplishing Quaid's Pluralistic Parliamentary Democracy**

It goes without saying that the initiative to launch Parliamentary Studies Degree Programmes with the dawn of the new year 2015 will InshAllah prove to be a watershed towards fulfillment of a long-standing dream of the Pakistani nation to establish and consolidate a pluralistic parliamentary democratic state in the country. It will indeed provide the impetus towards a more robust, effective and efficient Parliament, which accomplishes the aspirations of an all-inclusive emancipation as envisioned by the Quaid- e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for every member of the Pakistani society.