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LETTERS

PUBLIC SECTOR

RESEARCH IMPROVES CIVIL SERVANTS

RESearch is the engine that drives the public sector to generate new knowledge and approaches. Apart from providing the public sector with the opportunity to re-engineer work processes and structures, it also encourages the creation of creative and innovative ideas at all levels. In this regard, the competitiveness of the public sector can be intensified through high-impact research.

Research offers a comparative advantage for the public sector to remain relevant and sustainable because it is able to formulate and implement pragmatic policies. Research equips civil servants with skills and expertise to exploit new knowledge and opportunities, while accelerating the momentum of government agencies.

Noting that research is instrumental in the formulation and implementation of policies, the public sector is uniquely positioned to promote acculturation of research to ensure that policies are sustainable and well received by the people. Consequently, the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies based on research need to be expanded in the public sector.

As we step into an era of uncertainty, the ability to conduct research comprises competencies or attributes that are highly sought-after in the public sector, apart from strategic thinking and strong leadership skills. Therefore, public sectors that demonstrate a high level of ability to formulate evidence-based policies will have a positive impact on the people, as well as resolve national issues and problems.

Public sectors that take cognisance of research as an integral element in the policy-making process include information that can distinguish between good and great policies. With this in mind, the National Institute of Public Administration (Nipia), in collaboration with the Human Capital Development Division of the Public Service Department (PSD), has organised the Research Colloquium.

The colloquium provides a platform for civil servants who have completed their post-graduate studies under the government's training scholarship to share their research findings. The annual programme, held since 2017, reflects the importance of research in the public sector.

PSD recognises that research con-



The goal of research is to help the public sector find solutions to the problems of the nation. PIA PIC

tributes to national development. The ability of civil servants in conducting research will not only create an impact in the policy-making process but also bring about spillover effects that improve productivity and quality of public service delivery.

To remain competitive, the public sector must create value out of the research. The emergence of great organisations is no longer measured by the findings or discoveries through research. In fact, a great organisation is one that challenges the status quo and refutes conven-

tional methods through research in which the findings can be shared and applied across sectors and industries.

To take the public sector to greater heights and to elevate the sector as a global player and game-changer, government agencies can take the lead in public sector research.

Efforts to boost the quality of public sector research and empower civil servants to conduct high-impact research can be leveraged by sharing of expertise and experience, as well as collaboration between the agencies. Indeed, research can offer new alternatives, strategies and technol-

gies to increase participation and strengthen interagency cooperation.

Accordingly, the annual Research Colloquium has paved the way for Nipia to become a focal point in compiling research findings from a variety of disciplines, where recommendations and solutions to problems or issues can be used to improve public service delivery.

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