

HIGHER BUREAUCRACY IN PAKISTAN: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF PRAISE AND BLAME

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Abstract

The higher bureaucracy of Pakistan has been subject of praise and blame since the creation of the country, and continues to be so. It is argued here that failings on the part of the higher bureaucracy must be seen against the behavior of Chief Executives in the country, whether such executives were styled governor-general/ president or prime minister and whether such offices were managed by politicians, military persons or members of the bureaucracy itself. A major characteristic of legal/constitutional instruments of rule in the country has been that of centralization of power. The paper analyses the interaction between the higher bureaucracy and the chief executive period-wise, illustrating that bureaucracy behaved in accordance with the style of chief executives. For example, during Quaid-i-Azam-Liaquat period, higher bureaucracy felt secure and acquitted itself honestly. During Ghulam Muhammad-Iskander Mirza period, it showed selfishness and tremendous negligence in public affairs. Under Ayub Khan, materialist attitude led to corruption on larger scale than before. During Bhutto period and later, most of its members lost the sense of values, with adverse moral consequences in the social and political spheres.

Key Words: Chief Executive, Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), Colonial Heritage, History of Pakistan

Introduction

The higher bureaucracy that Pakistan inherited from the British was, in the early days, named as Pakistan Administrative Service, soon rechristened as Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP).¹ As higher bureaucracy, its members were involved both in formulating policies at the Central Secretariat level and implementing those policies at the three levels of government, namely, the (local) district level, the provincial level and the central level.²

Over time, the CSP became controversial for its snobbery in relation to other technical services, very vital to the process of socio-economic development; luxurious lifestyle of a number of its members and accumulation

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of charge of using excessive, arbitrary powers against political leaders when such were not at the helm of affairs.³

Statement of the Problem

The service has had share of both praise and blame. The praise consists in the way it handled the traumatic situation created by the hastily decided partition of British India into two countries, namely, India and Pakistan⁴. Pakistan suffered difficult circumstances owing to a number of factors. First, Pakistan happened to have two wings, one on the eastern side of India and other on her western side, with some 1700 kms of distance in between the two. The territory in between was Indian territory, the country that was deadly against the idea of a new country being born out of partition of herself. Pakistan, therefore, had a genetic problem of national security. Moreover, there occurred a transfer of population in both wings, Muslim migrating from the nearby Indian territories to join their co-religionists in the East Bengal and West Punjab areas of Pakistan. The migrations involved millions of uprooted and looted people and they had to be rehabilitated. Moreover, the CSP cadre worked hard and successfully established government offices and promoted normalcy in public affairs. Overtime, enthusiasm decreased and the cadre came to be accused of deterioration, leading the nation to degeneration.

Line of Argument

This study argues that performance of Pakistan's Administrative Service was affected by two major factors, namely the training and ethos that members of the Service imbibed from the colonial rule and, more importantly, the quality of leadership provided by politicians at the helm of affairs from time to time. The training and ethos of colonial time has continued long after the creation of Pakistan, perpetuating a measure of aloofness from the public as well as sense of superiority against other services. Exhibiting such attitudes, the higher bureaucracy came to be considered a hurdle in promoting dynamic development of the people.

However, failings on the part of the higher bureaucracy must be seen against the behaviour of Chief Executives in the country whether such executives were styled governor-general/ president or prime minister and whether such offices were managed by politicians, military person or members of the bureaucracy itself. Such incumbencies affected the way the higher

bureaucracy performed. A major characteristic of legal/constitutional instruments of rule in the country has been one of centralization of power. This was the characteristic of the provisional constitution which was a revised version of Government of India Act 1935. In all the indigenous constitutions – 1956, 1962, and 1973 – power remained with the centre and such centralized power was exercised in personalized manner, both under civil governments as well under Martial Law setups. In the words of Kochanek, “The post-Partition Pakistani political system has tended to be highly centralized and personalized of its particular legal and constitutional form. Government in Pakistan has become associated with individual personalities...”⁵ Bureaucracy, both higher and lower, has been and, is a permanent institution in the political system and, above all, has to function as part and parcel of the executive branch. As such, the personality and style of governance of the Chief Executive tends to have decisive influence on the functioning and performance of bureaucracy, particularly the group (s) that plays vital role in policy development and to an extent in field administration.

This paper analyses higher bureaucracy in Pakistan in its interaction with the central executive/chief executive of Pakistan. Study of such interaction hopes to bring out in proper perspective the praise and blame often attributed to the higher bureaucracy. The study focuses on two aspects, namely the colonial heritage of Pakistan’s higher bureaucracy, and the rules of successive chief executives. The heritage factor contributed to confidence, assertiveness and sense of guardianship among members of the CSP. Most of the chief executives personalized the governmental power and tended to use the civil service for their own purpose. Such interaction materially impacted the society as a whole. Both aspects are studied in the following pages.

Colonial Heritage of Pakistan Higher Bureaucracy

By 1790, the British in India had brought considerable Indian territories under their control and began to think of governing Indian territories through trained civilian functionaries. The idea was to appoint young men who, it was believed, “would be molded by the responsibilities of the service and who would give most of their lives to it.”⁶ During his governor-generalship, Wellesley (1798-1805) advocated early molding of the habits of life, manners and moral of the young envisaged Plato’s model of guardians.⁷ All such views came to be

comprehensively combined in T.B. Macaulay's minutes on education in India on February 2, 1835:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees of fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great masses of the population.⁸

Macaulay defended with vigour the proposition that the civil servants in India required the same education as the professional man in England. Competitive examination required for entrance in the Indian Service, continued to be based on generalist humanistic education.⁹

By 1858, the British established their empire in India. This empire was basically held together by the Central Civil Services, the most important of which was the Indian Civil Service¹⁰. Members of this service controlled policy formulation at the Provincial and Central Secretariats and administration at the district level. Some of the important portfolios in the Governor-General's Council were also held by members of the Indian Civil Service. It may also be noted that Governorships of some of the Provinces, and particularly those which constituted West Pakistan later, (and now Pakistan), were held by the members of this service. The bureaucracy was impersonal and recruited by and large on merit basis, but it also performed certain political functions: the District Magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner not only represented the Central and Provincial Governments in the district he also gave voice to the interests of his particular district, maintaining law and order and collecting and revenue. In performing these functions, he had to employ political skills arbitrate in local disputes and while doing this maintain a balance between various castes and tribes in the district. He was to make sure that his district by and large was law-abiding and loyal to the British Government. His political and administrative skills consisted of a judicious combination of force and persuasion.¹¹

Apart from maintaining law and order, the Deputy Commissioner controlled and/or supervised a host of economic and social activities in the district. Departments like Public Health, Education, Agriculture, and Irrigation all worked under his supervision. In matters like remission of land revenue, granting of agricultural loans, or building of schools, the people in the

countryside depended almost entirely upon the goodwill and leadership of the Deputy Commissioner. This seriously undermined the role of the politician for the latter could neither put forward vigorously the interests of his constituents, nor was much patronage available to him at the district level. In no other Provinces of British India did this system strike such deep roots as it did in the Provinces of the Punjab and what is now called Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa in Pakistan.¹²

Early Formation of the Pakistan Administrative Service

The first formation of Pakistan Administrative Service occurred as successor of Indian Civil Service which ceased to exist with the partition of India in 1947 into two dominions, one of which was called Pakistan. The development of Indian Civil Service has been studied by several authors.¹³ What is of interest here is that by 1947 a number of Indians, both Muslims and Hindus, had been inducted into ICS by the process of 'Indianisation' i.e. the British policy to induct increased number of Indians because of pressure and demands from Indian leadership to effect such increase.¹⁴

Pakistan central government and provincial governments after discussions and mutual adjustments came to a decision to adopt a central system of administration, the central cabinet being provided a linkage with provincial government through the office of the secretary general to the Government of Pakistan¹⁵. Based on such decisions, a resolution to establish Civil Service of Pakistan was passed in November, 1950 and seniority list was published in 1951.¹⁶

At the point of partition, according to one researcher, the number of ICS-IPS officers in India was 1157 out of which 101 were Muslims. Out of these, 95 joined Pakistan to which were added ICS-IPS British officers who happened to be serving in areas that came to be Pakistan, plus 12 others (mainly war service candidates). The total came to be 157. Out of this total, 15 officers already belonged to judicial branch and 6 were given diplomatic assignments. As such, 136 officers initially formed the Pakistan Administrative Service.¹⁷

The Civil Service of Pakistan started with a strength of 126 persons.¹⁸ So constituted, the higher bureaucracy of Pakistan inherited certain prominent features from its successor, the Indian Civil Service usually characterized as the 'steel frame' of the British imperial government in the Sub-continent. At the time of its formation, the CSP was small in size – 126 members in the cadre. It

filled top positions in the provincial and central secretariats where decision making was concentrated. It also manned the key posts on all levels of administration – the district, province and the centre. Its terms of service were enviable in comparison with other services/cadres, e.g. the Police Service of Pakistan, Pakistan Audit of Accounts, Central Engineering Service, etc. Its members enjoyed constitutional cover as to service security, and promotions were regular. Filial loyalties or political vociferations were not supposed to affect their official conduct and their clear responsibility to administrative superiors. In rural areas, the officer enjoyed wide discretionary powers. Members of the higher bureaucracy had come to possess orientation to British Western virtues, life style and notions of the good in colonial setting. “They were recruited at an early age when they were still malleable enough to acquire new values and loyalties. The selection process and the entire training program were organized to separate the young men from their native roots.”¹⁹

Relationship between the Chief Executive and the Higher Bureaucracy

The relationship between the chief executive and the higher bureaucracy tended to be diverse depending upon the demands of the chief executive, capricious and whimsical or otherwise. It also depends, from the side of the bureaucracy, on the judgment as to when to put up resistance and when to become subservient. Over time, individual members of the services cultivated personal contact with the chief executive both for self-gratification and for the good of the group. Quite often, such behaviour worked out to the detriment of the society. In the following pages the relationship between chief executive and the higher bureaucracy is discussed under several periods in country’s history.

The Quaid-i-Azam and Liaqat Ali Khan Period (1947-1951)

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah believed in rule of law. In his case, the rule of law meant what was present for the time being, i.e. a provisional constitution based on the Government of India Act 1935, the legal system inherited from the British and the political institutions described by Sayeed as the vice-regal system²⁰. Based on his experience, he was circumspect about the behaviour of politicians thought to be usually selfish and lacking public spirit. As early as 1948, Quaid-e-Azam advised public servants to be responsive to the

needs of the public at large, not becoming subservient to the wishes of the politicians. He spoke:

The administration must be impartial. You must not be influenced by any political pressure, by any political party or any individual politician. If you want to raise the prestige and the greatness of Pakistan, you must not fall victim to any pressure but do your duty as the servants of the people and the state, fearlessly, honestly and according to the dictates of your conscience.²¹

Having the British pattern of politics in view, he further added:

Governments come and go but you stay on. Therefore you should have no hand in supporting this political party or that political party, this political leader or that political leader. This is not your business ... Do not allow politicians to interfere in your official duties, or succumb to their political pressure, because it leads to nothing but corruption, bribery and nepotism, a horrible disease, a disservice to Pakistan.²²

Such independence provided an unequalled opportunity for the bureaucracy to prove its mettle. Communal riots rent the countryside; millions of refugees were standing at the city gates. The small group of bureaucrats who had chosen Pakistan provided the leadership and met this challenge. They established a framework of administration and helped to restore a measure of public order²³. One researcher publishing his book on Pakistan's public affairs in 1970 thus described the pivotal role of the erstwhile civil service of Pakistan in the initial years: "It is not an undue exaggeration to say that the dedication and esprit de corps of the public services enabled Pakistan to survive the first chaotic months of post-partition confusion".²⁴

After the death of the Quaid in September 1948, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan assumed all the executive powers that the governor-general had earlier exercised. He built up a strong relationship with the CSP officers, many of whom like him hailed from the Muslim minority provinces of India. It could be argued that the senior bureaucrats advising the prime minister relied on their experience as to how the central government should shape its relationship with the provinces. They favoured a strong centre, subjecting the provinces in a variety of ways.²⁵

From 1948 until Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination in 1951, both the Governor-General and the Prime Minister posts were filled by career politicians rather

than former bureaucrats. With the understanding of the prime minister, “the civil servants effectively controlled the entire administration in the provinces and the politicians there were kept in power subject to their willingness to obey Central Government directives”.²⁶

During the period of these two towering personalities bureaucracy was generally under the political leadership and was very active and effective in advising the government on social and economic policies. Being under able and certainly patriotic leadership during the early period of the country’s existence, members of the higher civil service fully exerted themselves in the works meant to secure the national interest.

However, there were temptations for illicit earnings and some individuals succumbed to them. Independence and Partition in 1947 generated pressure of their own. Non-Muslims who fled Pakistan for India left a lot of evacuee property. Also, there were millions of Muslim refugees streaming into Pakistan. The wayward disposal of the evacuee property particularly “led to the first serious rumblings that corruption was taking place within the higher bureaucracy”.²⁷

Also, the government’s regulatory and development policies since 1947 “brought the bureaucratic elite and the corporate or business elite into sustained contact. Civil servants’ proximity to the rapidly rising entrepreneurs had altered socialization parameters and led the former to try and imitate the life styles of the latter”.²⁸ The other noticeable trend contributive to corruptibility of CSP officers related to rural landed gentry. Continuing the ICS tradition, the CSP established close ties with the large landlords who had much in common with the elite civil service. “The landlord was normally on good terms with the district officer in his area [usually a CSP officer]. Such understanding worked to mutual advantage of both.”²⁹

Ghulam Mohammad and Iskander Mirza Period

After Liaquat Ali Khan’s death, Ghulam Mohammad became the Governor-General of Pakistan. He was a product of the Indian Civil Service and took up the leadership of the civil service without any delay, both out of conviction and for reasons of expediency.³⁰ Ghulam Mohammad was extremely skilful in building a coalition of senior civil servants and military officers and this was the pattern that was to dominate the palace intrigues in Pakistan till 1958. Initially,

Ghulam Mohammad used Iskander Mirza, a former officer of the Indian Political Service, now a member of the CSP and working as defence secretary to establish a relationship with Army Chief General Ayub Khan. Once this rapport was fully established, General Ayub became a dominant force in the drawing room politics of Pakistan.³¹

Ghulam Muhammad violated the conventions of the parliamentary system of government by dismissing the Nazimuddin cabinet in 1953, even though Nazimuddin held the confidence of a majority in the legislature³². Another instance of Ghulam Mohammad's autocratic power was his dissolution of the Constituent Assembly at a time when it was on the verge of presenting the constitution. He dismissed the Muslim League cabinet of Mohammed Ali Bogra and invited him to form a new cabinet, known as the 'Cabinet of Talents'.³³

Bureaucracy quite flourished under the protective umbrella of Iskander Mirza. At partition Mirza helped to divide the personnel and assets of the British India Army that were to become a part of the Pakistan Army. He then served for almost seven years as Pakistan's first Secretary of Defense. In 1954, Mirza was appointed Governor of Pakistan's eastern province, and held the portfolios of the Interior Ministry and of the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions in the Central Government. Mirza became Governor - General of Pakistan in 1955, and the following year, after the adoption of the 1956 Constitution, the Constituent Assembly unanimously elected him to be the first President of Pakistan.³⁴

One advantage of Mirza's benevolent attitude towards the CSP was that it was able to forge a link with the Pakistan army. Warm relationship developed between General Ayub and Aziz Ahmed by the middle of 1950s. The CSP and the army both felt that for the moment at least, it was in their mutual interest to work and act together to ensure that the politicians did not, in Mirza's words, make a mess of things. During that period, the relationship was tilted in favour of the CSP which felt confident enough to summon the army in times of crises, without worrying too much about the danger of it overstaying.

Mirza played role in perpetuating the bureaucracy's attitude of self-righteous, self-importance and claim of upholding public interest. In addressing a meeting of the Civil Service of Pakistan Association in 1957, President Mirza

identified himself as a member of the group: "As one of you, I find it very refreshing to talk to you." Later in his talk, he stated:

To be a civil servant is both a privilege and an arduous responsibility. The great Indian Civil Service which, with the passage of time, became surrounded by a fabulous halo of efficiency, resources and heroism was to a large extent staffed by men who faced exile and physical distress in the pursuit of their imperial ideal. Today our ideal is far nobler than that of the pre-independence civil service and we must bring to its pursuit the sacrifice of personal vanities and a noble disdain of petty fears and cheap favours.³⁵

Expounding the political philosophy of the regime established after martial law of 1958, Iskander Mirza declared:

The people wanted an honest government and they would get it. They would also get law and order, and prompt justice. There was no point in having the fine British administrative system with good traditions that Pakistan had inherited unless it was run in the British way. A district officer or magistrate must be given full powers to deal with any situation. Politicians could make policy, but they must not interfere.³⁶

The CSP's confidence that the President would protect their interests was manifested in the President's choice to appoint Chaudhri Mohammad Ali as his first Prime Minister, assigning him the Defense portfolio as well. Chaudhry hailed from of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service. He played a pivotal role in setting up the new Pakistan administration. He was given the special title of Secretary-General, which marked him as the top-ranking civil servant. When Ghulam Mohammad became Governor-General in 1951, Chaudhri succeeded him as the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs.³⁷

During Chaudhri Muhammad Ali's prime ministry, prestige of higher bureaucracy increased with certain individuals becoming very prominent. Aziz Ahmed, the cabinet secretary and his brother Ghulam Ahmed the interior secretary, were literally running the show.³⁸ This is evident from a statement by Sir Eric Franklin, Secretary Cabinet Division in 1957:

The notion that the Ahmed brothers, Aziz and Ghulam, were gaining undue influence with the Prime minister seemed to gather strength with each week that passed., the PM's dependence on these two officers was not conducive to sound administration ..., it was not long before I was able to gauge the accuracy of this particular complaint against the PM.

Aziz Ahmed desired his brother-in-law, Muizuddin Ahmed, an IPS of the batch 1934, to be appointed as commissioner of Quetta. The Establishment Division resisted since the incumbent had been on the post for only six months. The prime minister was, however, not willing to annoy Aziz Ahmed and the posting went through.

Ghulam Muhammad as governor-general and Iskandar Mirza, both as governor-general and as president, caused irreparable damage to steady evolution of country's stable political institutions and healthy constitutional conventions. Mirza's mechanizations resulted in the fall of Chaudhry Muhammad Ali's ministry. The next Prime Minister, Hussain Shaheed Suharwardy, was made to resign. His request to summon National Assembly in order to judge whether he still enjoyed the confidence of the assembly was callously turned down. Instead, he was called upon to resign by 11'o clock the next day. Within next four months, Mirza appointed two prime ministers, one in October 1957 and the other in December 1957.³⁹

Political intrigues, and opportunism practised by Mirza led the country from crisis to crisis. The politics pursued in these years was "thoroughly inimical to social change and national consolidation."⁴⁰ Under these circumstances, even genuine believers in democracy and the rule of law found it difficult to defend a constitutional system which was rapidly impairing the *moral fibre* of the nation.

Ayub Khan and the Higher Bureaucracy

The system under the arbitrary rule of Mirza did come to a close in October 1958. The promulgation of Martial Law by Mirza got converted into a takeover by Ayub Khan⁴¹, with jubilation from a number of intellectuals and other concerned groups. In the military's view the bureaucracy had maintained a social distance from the masses, whereas the 'demands of an independent society' required the 'growing involvements of the government in many new spheres of social life'.⁴² Ayub initially endeavoured to bring down the bureaucracy from their invincible position by purging it, removing corrupt senior officers and ordering them to declare their assets or suffer fines, confiscation of property and imprisonment.⁴³ Such measures effectively brought the higher bureaucracy under control. They could not resist the coercive power, and assumed a secondary role, flatteringly promising that under honest and inspiring leadership, the Civil Service was fully competent to deliver the good.⁴⁴

The leadership of the Service fully realized the gravity of the change and the necessity of exercising prudence and tenacity. It was also not ready to forgo all their power and prestige, and they expended due time and energy to stave off the onslaughts of antagonistic groups and interest. For example, they successfully fought against a proposal by Justice Cornelius commission that the CSP cadre be abolished and bureaucracy be unified under a Pakistan Administrating Service with seven scales and each scale involving 3 to 4 steps. The CSP protested strongly and made known to the military leadership that such reforms would result in 'psychological upheaval' and for 'many years to come the country and the administration would be busy settling problems introduced by these drastic changes and the drive for development would lose momentum and be neglected'.⁴⁵ They pointed out to the military leadership that the existing system had stood the test of time, not only during the British regime but also during the tumultuous and important years since Independence. They forcefully suggested that the setup be permitted to continue with such changes as experience had shown necessary'.⁴⁶

Eventually, the CSP managed to convince Ayub Khan that the structural changes envisaged by the Pay and Services Commission Report would be detrimental to the new regime's development programs. The report was duly shelved and, in 1964. Ayub stated that national development was his first priority and, as such, nothing should be done which "might involve the risk of disrupting the administrative fabric The government has, therefore, come to the conclusion that while no radical changes should be made in the existing structure, all the public services should be enabled to make their best possible contribution to the service of the nation in their respective spheres."⁴⁷ The higher bureaucracy thus salvaged their position in the Ayub Khan regime.

According to Gorvine, the higher bureaucracy remained intact and no administrative reorganization dared attack its privileged position.⁴⁸ CSP officers manned position in the major training institutions. The Civil Service Academy, despite many pressures to open it to recruits from all the Central Superior Services, remained a training institution exclusively for the CSP cadre. Indeed, no changes were made in its training program. On the other hand, Ayub Khan's increased emphasis on development providing incentives, support and a business friendly policy framework was not accompanied by comparable improvements in the machinery for accountability of the Civil Service. The

Government's emphasis on developmental activity created chances for more hazards. The issuance of licenses, vouchers and incentives to businessmen became sources of corruption at the officer level. Similarly, the local government reforms, created Basic Democracies, and, the bureaucracy manipulating local politics to meet the legitimacy requirements of the Ayub Khan regime, was using unaudited development funding as an instrument of political patronage.⁴⁹ Corruption grew both at the higher and the lower levels of bureaucracy.

At the higher level, the growth of corruption was to do with opportunity and greed. At the lower level, it was opportunity and need as prices were increasing and society was becoming more materialistic and consumerist, partly on account of the government's own policy prioritizing economic development⁵⁰.

In an overall assessment of Ayub Khan period, Siddiqui writes:

Professionalism, competence, and honesty, which were the hallmark of the British system, started giving way to cronyism, pliability, and dishonesty – both intellectual and financial. This was more true in the case of senior officers, who would go to any length to please their superiors in order to remain near the seat of power.⁵¹

The Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Era

Bhutto's believed that the bureaucracy was a class by itself neutrality on its part was a myth, for it had always been more concerned with its own welfare than that of those whom it claimed to serve. Bhutto believed that piecemeal reforms would not change the bureaucratic apparatus; only after radical reform could the system be made more responsive to the needs of the masses. He believed that party in power was to control bureaucracy. The bureaucrats should not be so powerful as to be able to dictate to the politicians.⁵²

Three new acts were introduced: These were the Civil Service Act 1973, the Service Tribunals Act 1973 and the Federal Service Commission Act 1973. Through the use of these acts new rules and regulations were issued by the Establishment Division in the name of the president. These acts helped to concentrate power in Bhutto's hands, especially with regard to controlling the bureaucracy through appointments, dismissals, retirements, recruitment and

promotions. The Civil Services Act 1973 ensured that civil servants could hold office only at the pleasure of the president.⁵³

Despite the reform, the bureaucracy largely remained non-cooperative and inefficient. Having lost their former power and prestige, they showed little enthusiasm for Bhutto's programmes nor did they submit any creative schemes themselves (as they had done for the Ayub regime). The emergence of the party as a powerful instrument in the state made the bureaucracy withdraw into the background where they merely followed the government's directives. In a country with a scarcity of skills and expertise, such an attitude amounted to sabotage Bhutto's programmes. The bureaucracy were not a spent force for they remained busy with their personal rather than national interests. They were known to tout for illicit gain and in some cases became CIA agents to sell information from countries like China.⁵⁴

Bhutto's disdain for the civil service's CSP cadre was reflected in the summary dismissal of 1,300 officers soon after he assumed power. The dismissal was followed by drastic reforms that led to the abolition of the CSP cadre, introduction of All Pakistan Unified Grades (APUG), removal of the constitutional guarantee of security of employment, etc. Bhutto brought new appointees through lateral entry, which largely proved counterproductive. "The industries, banks, insurance companies, and educational institutions he nationalized required professionals to operate and manage them but this was impossible in a setting in which complete subservience to ministers from his political party was the prevailing ethos".⁵⁵

General Zia ul Haq: 1977-1988

There was a partial reversal of this strategy with the arrival of General Zia ul Haq, in 1977, but the former CSP now had to play the role of a junior partner to the army which now was the source of patronage.⁵⁶

General Zia ul Haq's chief advisor on all matters relating to administration was General Khalid Mahmud Arif and his opinion about the bureaucracy was not too flattering. In one of his books, he writes:⁵⁷

In Pakistan's post-independence history, the bureaucracy has established itself as a permanent pillar of power. It has faced purges. Attempts to trim it, like those in a rose creeper, have helped the bureaucratic system to blossom with greater vigour and vitality. The bureaucrats have concentrated real power

under their own control and have mastered the art of survival. They excel in waiving the rules, regulations and officialdom around new incoming ministers. A minister who follows the rules rigidly becomes a prey of the bureaucracy and loses his freedom of action. If he violates them, the system exposes him. After having spread the net, the bureaucrats relax and watch the fun.

General Zia, however, tried a balancing act by taking into his inner circle three senior CSP officers, namely Secretary General Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Interior Secretary Roedad Khan, and Establishment Secretary Ijlal Haider Zaidi.

One of the important things the new regime had to attempt was to legitimize its assumption of power through discrediting the policies of its predecessor. Bhutto's administrative reforms were characterized as politically-motivated and a blatant attempt at control of the bureaucracy.⁵⁸

The new government abolished the lateral recruitment programme, reappointed several CSP officers who had been dismissed by Bhutto, dismissed many officers (primarily through early retirement) who had been appointed during Bhutto's regime, and re-positioned former CSP officers at critical points within the bureaucracy.⁵⁹

In the initial period, the martial law administrators and their deputies along with the martial law courts were deeply involved in running the country. The armed forces, keen to preserve their reputation, felt that close involvement in running the civilian administration was having pernicious effects on them. Rumours and reports were rife about some martial law officers engaging in malpractices and corruption. "Zia ul Haq appointed a top civil servant, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, as finance minister with a much larger canvas of responsibilities. He was de facto head of the civil administration." He held a strong view that "the commanding heights of the economy should remain with the public sector," and thus the role of the civil services.⁶⁰

Benazir-Nawaz Sharif Governments: Bureaucrats Accomplices

The year 1988 saw the return of political governments led, alternately, by Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif. During the decade of 1988-99 the two crafted their own lobbies among former CSP officers purely for promoting their own interests. A change in regime meant a wholesale transformation of the administrative set up. Neither political party was prepared to recognise the fact

that bureaucrats had their own compulsions and were confronted with thorny and complex situations. While a politician could go before the media and proclaim that there was no final word in politics, leverage was not available to a civil servant. Both Prime Ministers lured certain bureaucrats, favoured them and used them for corrupt practices.⁶¹

Benazir and Nawaz Sharif furthered the tradition of replacing all the previous incumbents of top posts in the executive branch at the federal and provincial governments by loyalists. In the two terms, Benazir Bhutto (1993-97) and Nawaz Sharif (1997-99), used the institutions of governance and civil servants to dispense favours and patronage. A situation of uncertainty created for members of higher bureaucracy owing to the ambitions of the two leader bears an extended quotation from a recent writer on the subject:

The politicization of the civil services was openly encouraged by them and, for the first time, allegiance to the political party in power was the principal consideration for key appointments, perks, and privileges. With each change of government each elected leader replaced those appointed by their opponents and brought in a new set of appointees to key positions and heads of institutions loyal to them. The partisan use of state patronage and corruption thus became entrenched during this period, and the incentive structure for career progression was unquestioning acquiescence with the wishes of the ruling dispensation, right or wrong, legal or illegal. The initiative for the formulation of policies, analysis of costs and benefits of policies, and advice to the cabinet, which had always been the prerogative of the bureaucrats, was ungrudgingly ceded to politicians who were not qualified or had the time to examine them critically.

Musharraf: Bureaucracy as Junior and Subservient Partner

The period under General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) saw the civil bureaucracy relegated to the role of a junior and subservient partner of the military. A number of army officers were inducted into the civilian sector disregarding the rules and regulations. Virtually, it was a free for all. Some connection to the chief executive was the only requirement for induction into the upper echelons of the federal and provincial governments.

In his scheme of Devolution of Power (worked out by Lt. Gen Tanvir Hussain), the civil bureaucracy was expected to play second fiddle to the army leadership. The effectiveness of the old CSP (abolished by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973, the junior most members of which retired in 2008) was further

undermined by appointing to key posts persons from hitherto regarded lowly rated groups, e.g. the Office Management Group (OMG) whence establishment secretary was appointed. From Pakistan Audit and Account Service (PAAS) by allocating key positions like Finance Secretary and the Auditor General of Pakistan. Military officers were appointed as heads of institutions concerned with the training of members of the higher bureaucracy.⁶²

In such a situation, the civil service was reduced to a dithering mass of nervous individuals, constantly trying to forge relationships with senior military officers.”⁶³ Pervez Musharraf’s attempts to prolong his rule ended in a fiasco – a great loss to Pakistan as a society created on the basis of vision to represent a model of a society at peace with itself.⁶⁴

Through a National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), Musharraf allowed Sharifs and Bhuttos to resume their kleptomaniac operations in the country. After Benazir’s assassination around the end of 2007, her husband, Zardari and son took the political field and formed government at the centre, during 2008-2013. The Sharifs won the Punjab province in 2008 and both central and Punjab province in 2013 elections and following paragraphs are devoted to their role in the demoralisation of bureaucracy.

Sharif’s Subversion of Administration 2008-2017

Amir, later a member of the National Assembly from Chakwal on Nawaz Sharif’s ticket, once wrote about the tone of the pre-1999 administration headed by his mentor Nawaz Shaif. He said

The Sharif’s notions of government were intensely private: which is to say, have your own man at every key post. They began with the Commissioners and the DIGs, the dregs of both services pandering to their whims and enriching themselves in the process.⁶⁵

In April 2008, younger brother, Shahbaz Sharif, brought in a junior officer as chief secretary and initiated surgery from the top. During the early days of his party’s government in the Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif put a surrogate chief minister because he himself was facing a court case. He later assumed chief minister ship after managing clearance. According to a former CSP officer turned historian has presented a vivid picture of how the chief minister manipulated the members of the civil services:

A former chief secretary prepared lists of loyalists who were to be rewarded and those who were to be 'sorted out'. Loyalty was again at a premium. The inescapable conclusion that one comes to is that politicians as a class are not 'comfortable' with neutral civil servants. They want loyalists – competence be damned!⁶⁶

Nawaz Sharif became Chief executive third time in 2013. He continued to commit irregularities in conducting public affairs of the country. This was particularly so in promotion cases of higher bureaucracy, favouring the pliable ones and relegating the un-yielding ones. The Supreme Court had to cancel promotions by the selection board headed by the Prime Minister for not following the prescribed procedure. The prime minister as the chief executive of the country is constitutionally required to take all major decisions in Cabinet meetings. Nawaz Sharif took decisions himself not caring for the Cabinet till Supreme Court told the Government that this was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court had to intercede numerous times to direct Government under Nawaz Sharif to correct its path. The Government against its wishes had to be forced into the conduct of the Local Government elections and the Census. Nawaz Sharif did not hesitate to undertake subversion. His removal from government happened after he was proceeded against for multiple charges in the famous Panama leaks case and convicted in 2017 by the Supreme Court.

Conclusion

Pakistan's higher bureaucracy inherited colonial features such as small size; filling top positions in the provincial and central secretariats where decisions making was concentrated; manning the key posts on all levels of administration – the district, province and the centre. It enjoyed better terms of service than many other services, and exercised constitutional cover as to service security and regular promotions. In rural areas, its members enjoyed vast discretionary powers. The most important characteristic of concern to society as a whole was that it had come to possess orientation to British Western values, life style and notions of the good while serving in colonial setting.

The relationship between the chief executive of the country and the higher bureaucracy tended to be diverse depending on the demands of the chief executive and measure of venality among members of the bureaucracy. Members of the higher bureaucracy exerted themselves quite vigorously under patriotic and honest leadership, e.g. like that of Quaid-i-Azam and Liaqat Ali Khan. Under Ghulam Muhammad and Iskander Mirza, the bureaucracy began

to play wayward. It began to indulge in corruption using its official points of contact with landed elite and trader industrialists.

Under Ayub Khan, such opportunities were greatly expanded owing to lot of emphasis on economic development backed by international funding. In the presence of opportunity, the bureaucracy gave vent to greed. Not withstanding certain purges, the bureaucracy was able to stave off assaults proposed to eliminate its exclusivist functioning. A successful assault on the higher bureaucracy did come in 1973 under Bhutto. His intentions, however, was to use bureaucracy for his own power politics purposes. This created ill will among members of the bureaucracy, leading to securing of personal interests. Pinnacle of such behaviour reached during 1988-99 during two stints of each Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif when pursuit of self-interest came to condemn the antisocial behavior of a chief executive. Many members of the bureaucracy, indeed, became accomplices in weakening the moral fibre of the society.

Proposed Reforms

Discussion in the previous pages shows that attempts at reform of the civil service were always opposed by the higher bureaucracy. During Ayub Khan's period, for example, the civil service succeeded in convincing the chief executive that reforms suggested by the Cornelius report of 1959 would fundamentally change the character of the civil service and would adversely affect the economic development programme of the country. The next major reform took place under Z.A. Bhutto. The reform measures were based largely on the Cornelius report, but the intention was to use the civil service for political purposes of the regime. With such intentions, a policy of divide and rule was followed and that split the service into those who venally followed the government, those who became passive and those who opposed and were eventually eliminated. The Reforms under General Musharraf were comprehensive that envisaged devolving power to representatives at the local level and bureaucracy to work under such representatives. The reforms were opposed both by the bureaucracy and the political forces against Musharraf regime. Such opposition and General Musharraf's ambition to become President of the country, led to compromises and eventual retraction on reforms and devolution of power agenda.

Reforms needed in relation to civil service are, at least, two –fold: Reforms at the structural level and reforms at the attitudinal level. The two are largely related. Structurally, almost all of the government’s decision-making positions are held by a small group of ‘generalist’ bureaucrats. They usually lack professional qualifications highly needed in the government’s vital functions related to financial, energy, environment and other professional fields. These are the professional cadres in the government but, given the fact that ultimate bureaucratic authority is enjoyed by the generalists, the professional cadres have to work under the generalists. Members of the professional cadres have less opportunities for progression in their service career. Also, generalists enjoy high positions both in policy secretariats and field administration. Such structure contributes to attitudinal problems on the part of generalists who, traditionally, lack in responsiveness to the public and its problems. More recent structural reforms have been recommended by a committee appointed by the government formed as a result of the 2018 elections. Some features of the newest report have been revealed wherein professionals seem to have been given fair share in the policymaking positions.

This study, after tracing the history of the higher bureaucracy, recommends that structural reforms be based on the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan effected in 2010. The 18th Amendment has recognized local government as a vital third tier of government. Since such recognition, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has been active in pushing the governments, both national and provincial, in instituting and working the local self government in a proper way. This study recommends that the third tier, the local government, should be constituted mainly on the lines of Musharraf model of 2000 and the reformed Local Government Act of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province. Such a local government should have its own system of Local Government Service. Development projects should be decentralized to Union Council and Neighborhood levels. Devolution of power to grassroots level is more likely to attain efficient and accountable service delivery, reduce transaction costs and, above all, act as nursery for provincial and national leadership.

Endnotes

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- ⁶ Ralaph Braibanti, "The Civil Service of Pakistan: A Theoretical Analysis" in Jameelur Rehman Khan, *The Collected Papers of Ralph Braibnti*(Islamabad: Pakistan Public Administration Research Centre O&M Division, 1987)
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- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Charles H Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1987). 114-15.
- ¹⁵ The first secretary-general was ChaudhriMohemed Ali. With his elevation as Finance Minister in 1951 the post became dormant.
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- ¹⁸ Chaudry, "Political Administrators" Appendices I-V.
- ¹⁹ Karl Von Vorys, *Political Development in Pakistan* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965):
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- ²³ Vorys, "Political Development in Pakistan" 111.
- ²⁴ Richard S. Wheeler, *The Politics of Pakistan: A Constitutional Quest* (Ithaga and London: Cornell University Press, 1970):131.
- ²⁵ Chaudry, "Political Administrators:"38.
- ²⁶ Henry Frank Goodnow, *The Civil Service of Pakistan: Bureaucracy in a New Nation* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1964): 69. See Also

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- ²⁷ Qudra tUllah Shahab, *Shahabnama* (Lahore: Sang-i-Mil Publications, 1987): 623-637.
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- ²⁹ Chaudry, “*Political Administrators*,” 42.
- ³⁰ Mustafa Chowdhury, *Pakistan – Its Politics and Bureaucracy* (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1988).
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- ³² M. Rafique Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan: 1947-1958. 2nd Ed.* (National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1986)
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- ⁵³ Ibid, 77.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Ishrat Hussain, *Governing the Ungovernable: Institutional Reforms for Democratic Governance* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2018): 42-43.
- ⁵⁶ Chaudry, "Political Administrators," xx.
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- ⁵⁹ For instance former CSP officers replaced non-CSP officers as Secretary, Establishment Division; Secretary, Cabinet Division; Principal, Pakistan Administrative Staff College; and Director General, Civil Services Academy.
- ⁶⁰ Hussain, "Governing the Ungovernable" 45-46.
- ⁶¹ Chaudry, "Political Administrators," xx.
- ⁶² Hussain, "Governing the Ungovernable" 50-51.
- ⁶³ Chaudry, "Political Administrators" xxi.
- ⁶⁴ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Address at 25th Session of All India Muslim League December 29-30, 1930 at Allahabad (U.P.), Especially his view on the unity of man's material and spiritual life.
- ⁶⁵ "Islamabad Diary". *Dawn* April 20, 2001
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