PUBLIC POLICY MAKING UNDER GOVERNANCE PARADIGM: IMPLICATIONS FOR BUREAUCRACY

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Abstract

Good governance hinges on how effectively bureaucracy can accomplish the public policy intents. A competent bureaucracy is thus critical for realizing the wants of the people and their political institutions. Governments everywhere including Pakistan are facing significant challenges for adopting and implementing 'good' public policies. Concurrently, bureaucracies are now threatened by the competition from the private and 'third' sector for the policy delivery and advice. Adding to the perplexity and intractability of policy problems are the fiscal constriction, globalization, awareness about human rights and the growing political fragmentation. The contemporary 'Steel Frame' is hence confronted with inimitable environmental challenges questioning its competency and dexterity. This paper examines the bureaucratic milieu through an institutional framework in the changing mechanisms of public service delivery; dissecting and restricting to its implications for bureaucracy, to draw lessons for governments in Pakistan and elsewhere. It cautions that viability of bureaucratic reforms depends on a vibrant civil society, institutionalized morals, academic think tanks and a legitimate democratic government. Reforms in Pakistan must be contingent upon public administration and societal traditions, leading to governance that is a more cooperative than that is practiced by our bureaucracy.

Key Words: Bureaucracy, Globalization, Governance, Fragmentation, Administration

Introduction

A professionally competent bureaucracy is critical for attaining policy outcomes consistent with democratic preferences. It provides organizational agility to respond to governing environments[1] and to address the needs of people and their political institutions.[2] Meanwhile since the beginning of new millennium, capability of governments to respond to the growing complexity of public policy problems has been threatened by philosophical neglect and relegation of the role of the bureaucracy in public policy sphere. Bureaucracy however has a vital role in linking the enactment of policies with their prescribed goals. It is a conduit between political executives and the government departments.[3] Political executives have to rely on bureaucrats for

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their proffered policies. Finally, good governance itself depends on how effectively bureaucracy can execute the objectives of (political) principals.[4]

Unskilled public servants may not be competent to effectively implement public policies.[5] Bureaucratic competency has an association with their promotion potential,[6] the institutional desire for superior policy information,[7] and a favorable reputation within occupational fields. [8] Senior bureaucrats' expertise is crucial for bridging politics-administration gap because of their power and position. The governments, therefore, have to urge bureaucracy to acquire and maintain the desired levels of their expertise. Lack of capacity and skills is a demotivator for bureaucracy and may shirk to achieve its objectives.[9]

Governments everywhere including Pakistan are facing significant challenges adopting and implementing 'good' public policies. Similarly, bureaucracies are threatened by the competition from the private sector for the policy advice. Bureaucracy is no doubt looked upon as a necessary evil that increases costs and distorts outputs.[10] But, it is also seen as a resource of public policy innovation and implementation. Adding to this perplexity the fiscal constriction, politico-economic globalization and internationalisation, intractability of policy problems, rising awareness about human rights and above all the growing political and partisan fragmentation.[11] All this makes its role strenuous. The contemporary 'Steel Frame' is hence confronted with unique environmental challenges for crafting policies for good governance. The governance dynamics necessitate a regular reassessment and analysis of their role and capacity to perform those roles. The bureaucratic dexterity for the administration of public policies has, therefore, become critical in the contemporary rubric of governance.

Objective and the Framework

Governance relies on the institutional design of bureaucracy, legislature and the judiciary, each being a policy actor in its province. Bureaucracy provides continuity to the policies because the legislatures and policy makers change at regular intervals. Elitist, rationalist and institutional theories have deliberated bureaucratic role in organizations and the policy field. Organizations are ubiquitous indispensable institutions in government and it is within those that complexity of governance is handled. Public policy too eventually has its loci in the organizations which are composed of bureaucracy; its norms, values,

relationships, power structures and procedures.[12] All this necessitates focus on the character and skills of the institution of public bureaucracy. This paper hence adopts an institutional framework for appraising the role of bureaucracy to meet the challenges posed by the contemporary paradigm of 'Governance'. Its objective is to examine the need of bureaucratic dexterity and skills that are critical to meet their role in public policy sphere. As they become competent and professional, they will tend to be assertive for exercising their expertise.[13]

The Approach

The transformation of practices in the classical government has come through adoption of new instruments for achieving policy goals. Many of these instruments were adopted from private sector under the banner of New Public Management (NPM). Simultaneously, adjustments were incorporated from the insights offered by the paradigm of 'Governance' which emphasizes a different conception of private and public sectors. Governance has different meanings in the academic literature but the centrality of its message is that government is neither the sole authority nor it enjoys the traditional autonomy in public policy domain.[14] It has now been pried open by multiple civil society actors. Although these relationships are not new, the 'governance' gives them explicit recognition and space in public policy sphere. This paper approaches its objective by examining the role of bureaucracy thorough such changing mechanisms of public service delivery. It begins from the classical government and traces it down to the contemporary 'governance' paradigm; focusing, dissecting and restricting to the implications for bureaucracy. This is intended to draw out conclusions and recommendations for adoption by governments in Pakistan and elsewhere.

The Classic Government

The traditional bureaucracy grew up in the industrial world as the best means of career focused, neutral and competent public servants for public policy delivery.[15] It epitomized classical Weberian / Wilsonian system conceiving autonomous public organizations. Bureaucracy's link with people was not through their personal connections and networks, but only through the politicians. Governing of public organizations was rule-based rather than markets based. Pakistan inherited such a system comprising a capable public service which was generally merit based and honest. Government relied on the

institutional recruitment, reward and punishment of public servants. It emphasized political insulation and disparaged the role of bureaucracy in the politics and its political control. It was an embodiment of colonial politics and was criticized for its inefficiency and absence of a humane touch. It was a period of classical bureaucracy with its universal characteristics, such as:

a.   Entrenched in Wilsonian dichotomy, it emphasized the role of the independent, professional but a 'cipher' bureaucrat merely as an implementing agent. Elections or selection of political executives embodied vision and the means of selection of a policy. Bureaucracy was only expected to give advice to the real policy makers. Bureaucratic insulation from public accountability was implicit and inherent in top down government.[16]

b.   Democracy was to occur in the legislatures. Idea of public/social choice was irrelevant for making the policy decisions. Public was relevant, if at all, only at the time of elections. Limited people could participate in policymaking, as government was impregnable. Those who participated, did so as junior partners whose suggestions might not be heeded. The bureaucracy was to be kept depoliticized and governed by powerful political executives.

c.   Government was autonomous. When it decides to provide a service, it would acquire the capacity to plan, organize, develop and administer the policy to achieve the desired goals. It was omnipotent and independent of support from society.

d.   Government was administered and controlled by hierarchy and authority. Top bureaucrat on the pyramid was independent and competent to control his organization.

e.   Accountability of bureaucracy flowed upwards finally to the ministers and legislature. This too provided the sole connection of bureaucracy with the society.

f.   Bureaucracy had to follow standardized procedures through which it was to treat all people uniformly with equality and fairness. Rule was top down with people considered as the loyal subjects rather active citizens of the State.

g.   Public personnel were hired through a formal recruitment system for a permanent service. They were subject to prescribed disciplinary codes and were provided legal in-service and retirement benefits.

   h.   Performance of bureaucracy was evaluated through prescribed official and accounting standards and was not tied to their tangible performance. This formalistic conception was of little advantage to the people.

Reinvention of the Government: The NPM

There was a growing criticism on the classical government since 1970's which peaked with the election of Reagan, Thatcher and Mulroney in America, England and Canada respectively.[17] The hegemony of politicians and diminution of bureaucracies were ascribed to be causing inefficiencies in the public sector. The solution proffered by NPM reforms was that since government is no different from private sector, it needs to learn from the 'management' revolution in the business sector. It emphasized democratic values and responsiveness to the public (customer/ consumer) demands. The NPM prescriptions, however, did come with own paradoxes and ambiguities.[18] The salient insights of the NPM are as under:

   a.   The conception of governmental autonomy was replaced with a more enabling role of bureaucracy. Government was not to directly provide services but be a sponsor, contractor or coordinator of the direct provider organization.[19] Public organizations which are direct provider of services were to become autonomous entrepreneurial agencies and public policy making and organizational staffing mechanisms were to be devolved.[20]

   b.   Control of bureaucracy was to be taken away from politicians and entrusted to the professional managers and senior officials of the autonomous public organizations. Such arrangement would provide protection to employees from political interference. Instead of controlling bureaus through laws and regulations they are to be subjected to performance reviews and differentiated incentives.

   c.   Accountability of bureaucracy was to be through internalized and professional system of quantifiable indicators.[21] The focus was thus shifted from political accountability to managerialist accountability.

   d.   The career bureaucracy was deemphasized by seeking elimination of incompetent public servants. Direct recruitment of professionals was to be undertaken who would enjoy performance based flexible tenures. The public service provision was not to be uniform.[22] Bureaucracy

would itself professionally determine the appropriate instruments of policy delivery. However, keeping such instruments politically neutral was a challenge for bureaucracy.[23]

    e. Public policy was not to be universalistic. It would serve the customers with differentiation and permit them more 'choice' from an assortment of public products.[24]

Governance: The Contemporary Paradigm

Governance paradigm proposes a major shift in the governing style. It argues that government should fundamentally 'steer not row' the society using all possible mechanisms. Government has to become 'enabling' than commanding. Rhodes called such a system is "governance without government".[25] His argument gives a formal role to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. The repertoire of government in governance includes and adopts new and innovative policy delivery mechanisms like contracts, partnerships, coproduction and co-finance etc.[26] However, despite many theories of governance, government continues to have a vital role in ascertaining societal goals and monitoring implementation of its programmes. It encompasses following:

    a. Public policy decisions in governance are contestable and negotiable by all stakeholders. Government's service delivery strategy has to be transparent. In addition to stakeholders, the participation of customers (public) is essential in the policy process for the success of any program. Potential of private sector organizations including NGOs should be fully exploited for provision of public services. It externalizes the government.

    b. Both the NPM (empowered managers) and the classic approach (control by authority) exhibited mistrust and pessimism about bureaucracy and hence lay stress on its control. Governance on the contrary, is articulated by the middle level bureaucrats who are entrusted with decisions about delivering public services. Consequently, it is not all that egoistic on the control of bureaucracy. It condenses the traditional state verses society dichotomy by sharing its sovereignty with civil society.

    c. Accountability gets transformed and broadened in governance as it relies more on private sector. It abates the connection of bureaucracy

with their actions and blunts political control.[27] Accountability is subsumed in demonstrable performance and is exercised through collaboration between various actors and finally by the courts. Hierarchical control of bureaucracy is typically lost which can have negative consequences on its capacity of policy implementation.

d. The uniformity of service provision is debunked and replaced with diversity, wherein consumers / customers can make their own choices. Consequences of such diversification may breed a shirking in bureaucracy from their constitutional/ legal obligations.[28] This poses a challenge to the public bureaucracy, which traditionally is denigrated for being impediments to the efficiency.

e. In governance, normative structures of policy problems and their solutions are subject to bargaining through range of cooperative measures.[29] Such mechanisms facilitate in achieving public values. Therefore even in a public policy having a common or universalistic framework, different versions of delivery can be implemented in different locales in conformity to the differences in clients.

f. The permanent and hierarchical civil service system becomes less viable in governance. Governance demands flexibility and openness from and in the bureaucracy. Engagement for a specific term on 'contract' is one functional option for the democratic transformations of the classic bureaucracy.[30] The flipside, however, is that professionals recruited from the market may lack public service values.

g. Governance entails a very broad conception of democracy compared with earlier approaches. It considers 'state' as the ultimate authority which provides legitimacy to any public policy. Simultaneously it not only grants but also accepts that the role of the civil society as crucial for public policy. This broader perspective does have the questions of legitimacy and accountability of private actors and about their mandate to stray from the legislated policies. On the extremes, it faces a threat of regulatory creep from the private actors 'managerialism', irrespective of whether it fetches positive or negative consequences.

h. Governance remains somewhat ambiguous in crafting the role of bureaucracy in shaping polices.[31] The ambiguity comes from the simultaneous stress on autonomy and the management of policy networks. Bureaucracy is expected to play a crucial role in 'steering' or

shaping the governmental direction and to be a key interface between the public and private sectors. It remains the ultimate physical power to define meaning of polices to the citizens, employing policy tools, monitoring programmes and partnering with the private sector.

Review and Synthesis

Ideas and paradigms of government have origin in western democracies. NPM was the first paradigmatic break from the classic bureaucracy of Max Weber (1946), politics-administration dichotomy of Wodrow Wilson (1887) and scientific management of Frederic Taylor (1911). This break was a reaction to its perceived weaknesses and monopolistic forms of governance.[32] It got fully embedded in many countries and partially in Pakistan by the beginning of 21st century. NPM considered NGOs as efficient mechanisms, intended to limit the bureaucratic power and reduce the spread and the cost of government. Contracting was preferred over traditional bureaucratic service delivery. Bureaucracy was considered self interested, resource waster, budget maximizer, power enhancer, status/ income conscious and beholden to discretionary power and patronage.[33]

To grapple with the NPM paradigm, bureaucracy had to undergo transformations in diverse forms and foci which diluted its power. NPM eulogized private style professional management and preference of market solutions to public problems under the philosophy of New Institutional Economic. It hinged on the Public Choice belief that governments are inefficient and monopolistic. It promoted reduced government, privatization, corporate planning, contract employments, and performance monitoring of individuals.[34] Based on individual rationality, it treated bureaucratic problems from the insights of Principal-Agent theory and hence shaping of a system of rewards and incentives for them.

NPM, however, remained a complex concept, fiercely debated in the academic literature. It failed to deliver true governmental 'competition' in policy implementation. It led to the additional costs of contracting and monitoring.[35] It did not comprehend that governance must preserve values in public service. Its proposals of downsizing and privatization did not produce claimed efficiency gains.[36] Conversely, it ushered deficits of democracy and accountability and undermined public values. It demoralized bureaucracy, created conflict

amongst public and individual demands, eroded the sense of responsibility in bureaucracy and made it unethical.[37]

In contrast to the NPM model, the paradigm of governance is based on the assumption that previous systems and especially NPM have become superfluous. Governments need to adopt new methods that correspond to the contemporary society. Governance model drifts from the principles of market versus state provision, recognizing that public values cannot be addressed by the markets' calculus. It exhibits collective preferences of citizenry and not the individuals. Governance emphasizes "Steer, don't Row".[38] To bring efficiency in public service delivery, it exhorts creation of environments of self management by society and tasks bureaucracy to manage policy networks.

Governance concern is not about policy outcomes alone but also the means like fairness, equity, and efficiency. It seeks to build social capital by developing public values and trust.[39] People must be involved in governmental decisions along with elected officials, bureaucracy and services producers. It recognizes legitimacy of inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders and proposes an integrative framework for policymaking. Governance blends efficiency, quality, security and reliability of the private sector with public preferences. Bureaucracy has to do more than just 'steering', and be conscious that government is not like buying and selling goods. It encompasses higher order aspirations such as national security, poverty reduction and public health. Bureaucratic policy strategies and solutions must be legitimate and operationally and administratively feasible. Public policy ethics stand out as a major concern of governance which was marginalized by NPM.[40] It needs to engage with diverse communities and users of services for which they need to develop skills of boundary-spanning and diplomacy.

Both approaches resemble in their thrust towards breaking with the past hierarchical system and decentralizing the functions of government. In the NPM, private actors are engaged for efficiency, cost reduction and limiting the state power. Governance cares about efficiency, but its main logic is the involvement of civil society and public participation. It builds on the normative vision of humanity, providing a new thinking about policy making and service delivery by bureaucracy. It proposes creating and engaging civil society networks to explore the potential of their self-management. Governance is measured through a holistic approach looking at its overall impacts. It carries a

freshening narrative for reform that relies less on rules and incentives and more on public motivation.

Both approaches adopt compatible and complementary proposals like measurement of productivity and performance management. They contain some incompatibilities and contradictions as well. For example the use of private sector organization can raise issues of accountability for the government which is ultimately responsible for efficient provision of services. The chain of delivery becomes extended and produces problems of monitoring. Conflict may also be produced with simultaneous empowerment of managers, clients and targeted interests. Bureaucracy must be careful in their application as the compatibilities and contradictions can become counterproductive.

The above discussion has distinguished NPM and governance paradigms which are a continuum of classic bureaucratic model. It delineated bureaucratic responsibilities with focus on the accountability, performance, service structure and delivery. Politics remains at centre of the governance paradigm, profoundly challenging the acumen of cotemporary bureaucracy. It is here that capacity and dexterity of bureaucracy become critical. It has to move beyond its classic role of implementers of grand plans of the government to discover and create value in their governance and policies. They are not clerks or martyrs but promoters of societal values.[41] They need to be entrepreneurial in producing preferred policy outcomes and align their organizations with the political environments for their stability.

Bureaucracy in Pakistan: Paradigms and Practices

Pakistani bureaucracy is a colonial legacy. It was created as an instrument of despotic rule deigned to provide security to the colony, functioning in tandem with military. It was covenanted bureaucracy of officers from British Army working under East India Company Act-1793. Indian natives were inducted only after statutory reforms in 1879 and later initiatives through Islington Commission (1917) and Lee Commission (1924).[42] The elitist Indian Civil Service (ICS) was created in 1887 on the recommendations of the Aitcheson Commission.[43] It continued to dominate governmental administration and policymaking till creation of Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP). CSP inherited classic paradigm of rigid standards, methods and procedures. The Governor Generals of Pakistan from 1947 to 1956 perpetuated this system as they

felt comfortable dealing directly with bureaucracy instead of politicians.[44] Consequently, unelected institution (civil-military bureaucracy) remained intact, while democracy and political leadership both suffered from decay and disruption. Ayub Khan (1958-69) relied on the same framework. He carved a legal space for military officers in the civil administration through parallel recruitment as well as induction in the CSP. The developmental dimension of Ayub's policies provided opportunities to bureaucrats to learn and acquire skills in planning and economic management. CSP-military duo became the embedded bureaucratic Modus Vivendi for governance and public policymaking which continued through Yahya regime (1969-1971).

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977) made some sweeping changes in the governance structure. He purged hundreds of officers from the bureaucracy and cut the size and share of military in government. The consequence was dominance of elected politicians and politicization of the bureaucracy. The deepest wound that bureaucracy continues to lick was the abolition of CSP and their constitutional service and tenure guarantees**.** Bureaucracy was provided a structure of 'unified grade' and it could be inducted laterally from the market. Lateral entry was intended to seek and reward political loyalty and to eliminate their opposition to his leftist policies.[45] The negative consequences of these moves were voluntary exit of some competent officers sensing a vulnerable, unsafe and uncertain future. Military too was not spared from political control and his Bonapartist practices. The most prominent was the promotion of a junior general, Zia Ul Haq, who later sacked and hanged Bhutto himself. Public policymaking under Bhutto remained highly personal with limited role and input from the bureaucracy. His reforms also partially demined the elitist colour of bureaucracy.

Capitalizing on the shortcomings of governance by Bhutto, Zia (1977-1988) endeavored to restore confidence of bureaucracy and governmental integrity. The consequence was however reverting back to the practices of Ayub and Yahya era. The policymaking predominantly went again in the hands of military leadership, in cohort with pliant bureaucracy and technocracy. The autonomy of civil bureaucratic decision making that was usurped by Bhutto could not be reestablished. Direct inductions at senior level bureaucracy continued through political appointments. Public policymaking was hence virtually depoliticized. The period of 1988-1999 saw interludes of democratic governments, which were

humdrum from the perspective of governance. There were battle of ideas and politics for power and conflicts in perceptions of governance amongst the politicians, civil and military bureaucracy. These conflicts further polarized the bureaucracy and made it interest-driven and inefficient.[46]

Musharraf's rule (1999-3008) was a combination of historical public administration in Pakistan. It was amalgam of practices from pervious regimes. Only the devolution reforms were novel in his rule, which partially diluted the power of bureaucracy. Role of locally elected political leaders was enhanced in governance and policy making.[47] It led to unprecedented expansion of civil society politics fueled by a vocal media. Mushraff's reforms were partially successful in creating politico bureaucratic balance in governance, but the same has been gradually scraped by the succeeding governments from 2008 onwards.

The clientalist and patronage politics of colonial period pervade in Pakistan. Bureaucracy has gotten accustomed to being a tool to serve the interests their political master. Inter service rivalries are thriving with Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) ruling, by pushing other groups to mundane and subordinate positions. Such factional battles and politicization have compromised the competencies of bureaucracy leaving them handicapped. There were no worthwhile efforts towards governance reforms in the post Musharaff era except intermittent trial of older versions or some donor funded and directed initiatives. The incumbent government (2018- present) has structural reforms on its agenda but so far continues to rely on the system it inherited.

Pakistani bureaucracy, in this age of governance, predominantly reflects characteristics of the classic paradigm which can be summarized as under;

a.   It has retained its colonial heritage and elitist character.
b.   It has a Weberian structure that is minimally impacted by global academic developments.
c.   It has been unable to become a bridge between politicians and the public.
d.   It lacks autonomy in policymaking and is politicized.
e.   It is polarized due to factional apartheid.
f.   It lacks dynamism to handle the modern complexity of governance.
g.   Its competency and performance has gradually declined.
h.   Lack of public trust has heightened the principal-agent problem.

i. Clientelist attitudes have been gradually entrenched in its methods and structure. It has become a rent seeker.
j. Accountability systems have been kept inert and cumbersome. Corruption triumphs.
k. Declining efficacy has become impediment to democratic values.
l. It lacks knowledge, training and skills to handle demands of governance.
m. It is gigantic. A textbook case of government failure.

Implications and the Way Forward

The Paradigmatic Dimension

Modern governance and policy field is no doubt cumbersome and complex. It requires collaborative efforts due to its interconnectedness and interdependence. Such collaborations span within and across institutional boundaries which means consultation, communication and deliberation with all the relevant actors from civil society. Contrarily, colonial system envisaged ruling through command and control of the public and exploitation of citizens and state resources. Pakistani civil service system is well-established, but on an incongruent paradigm. It is skilled on the traditional model of top-down state administration with less emphasis and concern for public values. It is essential for any reform agenda to be sure about reforming 'what' towards 'what'. A very important aspect is the realization and acceptance by the bureaucracy that its methods are redundant and counterproductive. Reformers have, concomitantly, to be cautious in dismantling the existing structure. Any inconsiderate loosening of hierarchical controls might turn out to be a step towards mismanagement and corruption. With that in mind, changes inherent in Governance are likely to be poorly suited in our institutionalized civil service system which has generally been accustomed to very feeble democratic systems. Pakistan must draw this lesson from its past futile efforts towards bureaucratic reforms. The irony has been the ignorance of national reformers to understand this point. Most reforms that were promoted by western donors and their protégés in Pakistani government had naïvely trusted that governance lessons drawn from western experiences can be situated across the board in our national context. It is apprehended that the reform agenda of the incumbent government may similarly fall flat as it draws from the neo-intuitionalist and

neoliberal western philosophies. This is understandable from its emphasis on government efficiency, austerity, simplistic economic measurements of values and ignorance of ethics.

Past efforts to reform the government in Pakistan have caused several institutional fragmentations and posed problems for the bureaucracy accustomed to traditional model. It continues to be criticized for its inefficiencies, incompetence and corruption. It has always been and is once again on the agenda for reform. The team headed by Dr Ishrat Hussain[48] for reforms by the incumbent government is a clear denunciation of the contemporary system and its bureaucracy. The concepts of NPM and governance reverberate prominently in the reform beliefs periodically expounded by Dr Hussain through his reports and book titled 'Governing the Ungovernable'. Hussain's solutions (past and present) have had multiple perspectives, from the public policy activity, institutional economics and management that visualize interactions with civil sector. His ideas dilate the alternatives mechanisms for achieving policy goals. Most ideas advocate that government and bureaucracies are no more the main actors in the public service delivery, which now encompass much broader perspective and options. The recommended changes may lead to confused advice and administration, having both beneficial and injurious aspects. Such aspects may get exaggerated and politically manipulated when not truly comprehended or practiced.

Governance profoundly draws upon partnerships with private actors, networks, and individuals' active participation as citizens. It equally depends on actors from for-profit sector. It must also be kept in mind that viability of public sector and bureaucratic reforms greatly depends on a vibrant civil society and the willingness, accessibility and reliability of societal partners for production and delivery of government services, institutionalized morals and norms, academic think tanks and a legitimate democratic government. In nutshell, Pakistan must adopt a system of governing that is a more cooperative, flat and devolved than it has been usually thought of and practiced by our bureaucracy. Institutional reforms in Pakistan must be contingent upon its societal traditions. It may be recognized that ideas propounded by governance paradigm may succeed in some sectors. These may/will fail in others, especially where governing is primarily through laws (national security, foreign policy, Justice etc) and not by management values (education, health, municipal services etc).

The Bureaucratic Dimension

Governance demands that bureaucracies engage in the policy process.[49] Such engagement will depend on their capabilities and the kind of competition they face from think tanks, academics and policy entrepreneurs etc. Here lies the contrast with the classic model that visualized their monopoly on policymaking. They are however still crucial for understanding organizational dynamics of governance and integrating policies and programmes.[50] But for that, bureaucracy has to overcome its classical model leadership deficit and become performance and customer-oriented. They have to get out their cipher role and narrow agency focused scope. Such leadership deficit can be overcome by inculcating habit of tolerance for ambiguity, acknowledgment that they lack absolute policy knowledge, serious self-reflection and dispersed leadership capacities to succeed within and outside their organization. They should train themselves in collaborative skills, bonding management, conflict resolution, building public trust and sharing information with stakeholders. They should have a keen sense of "what works, which solution is the best and whether a market solution will work".[51] This requires policy analytical ability to adopt the best governance solutions.

The classics considered public policy decision-making was in the hands of politicians, while bureaucracy was for policy implementation and evaluation. Contemporary governance claims to the contrary and finds bureaucratic influence ubiquitous in policy field. Both ideas reflected logic because bureaus are custodian of historical information and "are 'privileged insiders' serving within government".[52] They provide different public policy options of intervention based on their technical expertise. They ought to have the knowledge of the policy process and skills to operate in organizations where public policy resides. They enjoy wide discretion in the policy evaluation which serves as input for new policies. Their position in the public organization empowers them to broker policies amongst different groups. They create and develop policy networks which eventually determine the feasibility of any policy alternative.[53] There should also be a functional matching of bureaucracy. Bureaucrats should be able to select public, private, or nonprofit sector of their matching ability and ambition. This can however be driven by political factors and practicing such system will be challenging the bureaucratic capabilities.

Governance paradigm has garnered substantial interest around the world as it transforms the traditional role of bureaucracy and calls for learning new skills (summarized below) to effectively navigate the complexities of the change. The 'division of labour' into separate domains enables bureaus to focus on a specific policy. Bureaucratic policy skills are thus critical. They should reflect expertise and organizational commitment, something referred to as a 'mission mystique' by Goodsell.[54] Mission mystique is inculcated through expert training, and a specialized career. This is acquired by having academic and professional knowledge of the public policy.

a. Bureaucracies must take their clients seriously and acquire a domain specific knowledge of their policy environments. Technical/ professional knowledge and situational expertise of the bureaucracy is 'necessary' and 'sufficient' for their influence on public policy. Unlike their classic model attitude, they need to develop to be a state-society link. Lower tiers of the bureaucracy (street-level bureaucrats) must be incorporated in policy process as they see policies in action and its impact on citizenry. Their feedback and knowledge is crucial for subsequent improvements in policymaking.[55]

b. Bureaucracy should protect and ensure flow of policy information to all stakeholders. It is essential because of the diffusion of public-private and bureaucratic-private structures in governance.

c. The bureaucracy capacity must be enhanced by acquiring advocacy skills. This is important, because ideas, information and policy proposal may otherwise not reach the political decision makers.

d. Bureaucracies must become masters of procedures and processes. They should understand how government works and therefore should make things happen in organizations. They must realize that they can expedite/hinder the policy process. Their knowledge is an important strategic tool because action, inaction or slow action; all have political and policy ramifications.

e. Government institutions are a source of collective memory and permanency which provides policy stability. Bureaucracy has a pivotal role in such environment. They can exploit institutional characteristics both ways for facilitation or as an impediment to good governance. Conversely, it must be realized that hyper-stability does have negative

impacts and it creates stereotypes. These stereotypes then become impediments to change and adaptation which is critical in governance.

f. Organizations have their inherent politics and bureaucracies therein rear their own political resources. Their connections with citizens facilitate them to mobilize pressure on political decision-makers. In case of disagreement with political executive, they may shirk or withhold information and advice.[56] The partisan pressures on institutions can clash with their organizational agenda. Hence they need to understand the politicized environment in order to be able to do their jobs effectively and 'speak the truth to power'[57] to satisfy public preferences.

g. Effective policy implementation remains the unrivaled domain of bureaucracy right from classics. These skills are desirable from the political dimensions as well. If policy is successful, political masters are ready to take its credit. Conversely, politicians will blame the bureaucracy for policy failure.

h. Bureaucracy should be able to stand to the demands of institutional autonomy and still be engaged with political executives in policymaking. In parliamentary systems like Pakistan, there have been and will be continuous invasive attempts to control policymaking from the democratic rationales. It must be remembered that parliaments provide a locus for legitimation and support. Bureaus should be skilled to discern political intrusions to sustain a system of merit and quality in policymaking.

i. Policymaking experience and knowledge must become an essential for recruitment in public organizations. Bureaucracy should know that these are the skills that political masters lack and need. Public policy management education is therefore essential for them.

j. Governance has challenged the traditional ministerial top-down accountability and provides alternatives to improve the mechanisms for public service delivery. The accountability has now to be ensured through professionalism of bureaucracy and mobilization of civil society actors by adopting more mechanistic instruments.

Conclusion

Governance has undermined the classic wisdom that public bureaucracies are inert with little interest in public policy and that they are merely the implementers of policies handed down to them from their political masters. Bureaucracies have become pivotal in policy sphere and enjoy the potential to intervene and enrich its process as its dynamic participants. In many cases they are themselves the makers of public policy. To be effective within the policy process they now face a number of challenges. The foremost of such challenges is exploiting the strength and resource of their legitimacy in policy sphere. Questions of legitimacy gain importance in a democratic system because they have to carve out their space with the competitors from politics who vie their claims for legitimacy, the forerunners being the NGOs. The periodic reform initiatives in Pakistan have proved futile, conversely fragmenting the institutional structures and presenting barriers to their autonomous policy role. Empirically, elsewhere bureaucracies remain the vital contestants in public policy sphere, provided they have significant skills and aptitude to overcome their functional restraints. Gaining and later utilizing their knowledge remains more difficult to be approved in a democratic structure. Politicians are elected to craft policies and will be averse to acquiesce to the bureaucracy. Concurrently, they require the skills, information and expert advice from the bureaucracy. These pressures are factual and describe functional restraints in the existing policymaking. They now also face competitors within and outside government and the organized civil society. Pakistani bureaucracy has therefore to be resilient and capable of facing the challenges which arise from the governance paradigm and be aware of the latest mechanisms of public services delivery and democratic accountability. They need to shun both colonial rigidity and western liberty and be in harmony with national ideology and polity. That requires their dexterity.

Endnotes

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