

The Role of Civil Bureaucracy—Facilitative or Regressive? Perspectives from Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper explores some of the theoretical limitations of classical theory of bureaucracy. It also analyses Pakistani bureaucracy's organisational composition and behaviour which reveals that the Pakistan's civil administrative structure is incongruent with the principles indoctrinated in the classical theory of bureaucracy postulated by Max Webber. When the civil bureaucracy of a state trespasses into the domain of other institutions including the political ones, the very character of the civil administration becomes politicised and this phenomenon is evident in the case of Pakistan. Likewise, the civil administrative institutions are routinely pressurised for manipulating and twisting their rule-bound operating procedures in accordance with the vested interests of politicians. This makes the politicisation of administration inevitable and the concept of 'legal rational authority', a highly idealised principle. The organisational and institutional analysis of Pakistan's civil bureaucracy illustrates that it is a poor materialisation of the classical model of bureaucracy mainly because this system of administration was inherited from the epoch of colonial rule and as such it was never a manifestation of the theory of bureaucracy in the first place.

Keywords: Bureaucracy; Governance; Social Services Delivery; Corruption; Institutional Development

Introduction

Civil bureaucracy has been one of the dominant institutions in the governance arenas of Pakistan whereas the periodically implemented local government reforms have regularly been overshadowed under the patronising guardianship of civil administration for years. Based on secondary sources, this paper attempts to assess the organisational parameters of Pakistan's civil administration system in comparison with the doctrine of classical Weberian theory of bureaucracy. Weberian theory propounds that under certain conditions, the institution of bureaucracy works effectively and efficiently in administering the public sector and delivering social services. It is however argued that despite the continued domination of Pakistan's civil bureaucracy, the performance of this institution has been far from satisfactory, mainly because Pakistan's civil administration system was inherited as a legacy from the colonial British rule and as such, it never was a complete manifestation of classical theory of bureaucracy. After the independence, a vast range of functions remained the responsibilities of

Pakistan's civilian bureaucracy nonetheless the apathy of state towards the much-needed corresponding reforms—professionalization and organisational development—severely affected bureaucracy's performance.

What is Bureaucracy and How Bureaucracies Work Effectively?

Contemporary public management theorists use the term bureaucracy synonymously with 'public administration' in contrast to the emerging concepts of 'public management'. After the Second World War, the Western world's (spearheaded by the US) relentless advocacy for upholding the free market economies and privatisation of public entities orientated policy makers around the world to indoctrinate the corporate sector's managerial principles into public sector management. A shift was emphasised on moving away from 'public administration' (the traditional way of administering the public sector wherein the state owns and operates most of the public-sector institutions that deliver the social services) towards the emerging paradigm of 'Public Management'. The 'New Public Management' model of this paradigm prescribes privatisation of public entities and recommends the application of corporate, entrepreneurial and managerial principles and strategies to run the affairs of public sector institutions. Generally, the terms civil administration, public sector, and bureaucracy would denote significantly different phenomena in the study of any modern state's politics. However, in case of Pakistan, the civil administration setup has been developed along the lines of colonial administrative system and despite many phases of privatisation of public entities in the post-independence era, there still exists a large yet highly inefficient public sector, which is apparently responsible for the delivery of a range of social services. Hence, the terms civil administration, public sector and civil bureaucracy are used interchangeably throughout this paper - essentially referring to the state owned, and state run public sector organisations.

As defined by Heywood (2007), bureaucracy (literally rule by officials) is, in everyday language, a derogatory term which means pointless administrative routine. In social sciences however, the concept of bureaucracy is understood in a more specific and a relatively neutral sense. Bureaucracy refers to a rational mode of organisation that constitutes non-elected (appointed) officials and an administrative machinery of the government. Weber (1946 cited in Gerth and Mills, 1970) outlined the features of bureaucracy as professional administration structured by clearly defined division of labour, an impersonal authority structure, a hierarchy of offices, dependence on formal rules, employment based on merit, pursuit of career, and a distinct separation of members' organisational and personal lives. According to Weber, rationalisation of collective activities is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency. For various reasons though,

the Weberian idealisation of bureaucracy has been at odds with the principles and doctrines of present-day public-sector management concepts and theories.

The following section briefly highlights the gist of general principles of Weberian bureaucracy and its critique which is mainly built around the premise that 1) the theory of bureaucracy is highly idealised and obsolete in a modern-day state and 2) the benchmark of conditions required in the theory of bureaucracy for the attainment of effectiveness and efficiency in public management is way too higher than what can be expected in a post-colonial state.

Weberian Theory of Bureaucracy and its Critique

Max Weber, a German Sociologist and political economist, propounded bureaucracy in its ideal form - a legal rational authority. Hughes (2003) enumerated six principles of modern bureaucracy deriving from the idea of legal rational authority modelled by Max Weber.

1. Authority derives from law and from rules made according to the law.
2. Strict hierarchy means that legal rational authority and power are maintained organisationally, not by any individual but by the position s/he holds in hierarchy.
3. Organisation is something with an existence separate from the private lives of its employees; it is quite impersonal. Written documents are preserved, something that is essential as previous cases become precedents when similar events occur. Only with the maintenance of files can the organisation be consistent in its application of rules.
4. Administration is a specialist occupation that deserves thorough training; it is not something that can be done by anyone.
5. Working for bureaucracy is full time occupation instead of a secondary activity.
6. Office management is an activity that can be learnt as it follows general rules

Many contemporary scholars have severely criticised Weber's theory of bureaucracy by denying the possibilities of efficient outcomes from bureaucracies. There are some major practical limitations involved in the classical theory of bureaucracy e.g. its premise that organisation can be treated as something that is separate from the personal life of the bureaucrat and the immunity of legal rational authority of an organisation against politicisation. However, most of the contemporary critiques overlook the nuances between the practical limitations of the principles of classical theory of bureaucracy and the bureaucratic misconduct of the post-colonial third world countries. The assessment of organisational parameters of Pakistan's civil administration will

highlight this fine distinction. Theory and practice of bureaucracy is criticised by scholars from highly diversified ideological positions. Irrespective of context in which the theory is practiced, some of the critics have quite compelling arguments against the theory itself. For instance, it has been widely conceded that technical superiority of bureaucrats is a romantic assumption and therefore a more pragmatic theory of bureaucracy is required, that would emphasise on professionalization of administration and on bureaucracy's rule-bound character that needs 'to be supplemented by recognition that human attitudes and behaviours are involved' in administration (Kamenka, 1989:161). Therefore, the assumption that, organisations can be considered as entities that are separable from the private lives of organisations' employees, needs to be rethought in a more pragmatic manner. On a similar note, Hyden (1983) believes that official commitment to non-bureaucratic ties (e.g. kinship, tribe, ethnicity, and religion) can override the rational features of bureaucratic models of public administration.

With the involvement of human values and social behaviours in the administration of an organisation, the legal rational authority vested in public office is also very susceptible to be contaminated with politicisation. Public choice theorists also construe bureaucracy as highly inefficient. Dunleavy (1986) argues that people have sets of well-informed preferences, which they can perceive, rank, and compare and ensure that their preferences are logically consistent. They are maximizers i.e. they seek maximum benefits from least costs and they behave rationally. By nature, they are egoistic, self-regarding and instrumental in their behaviours - choosing how to act on basis of consequences for their personal or families' welfare. Hughes (2003) explains that Weber's theory primarily relies on bureaucracy being essentially disintegrated and motivated by higher ideas e.g. service to the state. However, from public choice theory's perspective, this assumption of Weber's theory is unreasonable; bureaucratic forms of governments try to maximise budgets in which their own personal utilities can be maximized. This represents a classical principal-agent problem where the principal and agent have competing individual and aggregate objectives and the principal cannot easily determine whether the agent's actions comply with the principal's objectives or whether they are self-interested misbehaviour (Milgrom and Roberts, 1992).

Apart from the normative critique, the theory of bureaucracy is also confronted in terms of its practical outcomes. For instance, the Weberian model reckons that bureaucracy is ideal for efficiency however, Turner and Hulme (1997) criticise this notion specifically in the context of developing countries and believe that bureaucracy's performance is hindered by red tape, poor communications, centralisation of decision-making, delays in operations and the distance of public servants from citizens which leads to poor functional capacity that eventually

undermines efficiency. Generally, the criticism on bureaucracy revolves mainly around the argument that bureaucracies' operating goal is system maintenance not developmental outcomes. Hughes (2003) referring to the practice of bureaucratic conduct in developing countries, is of the opinion that highly bureaucratic administrations breed time servers rather than innovators and therefore bureaucrats tend to avoid taking risks. Others like Behn (1998) and Gerth and Mills (1970) reckon that bureaucracy is susceptible to inertia, lack of entrepreneurial orientations, mediocrity and inefficiency and that secrecy, rigidity, hierarchy in bureaucracy leads to conflicts between bureaucracy and democratic institutions.

It is worth noting that the institution of bureaucracy, in principle, is responsible for the execution of the public policy that is devised by the political institutions. Besides, the institution of bureaucracy can also provide technical advice to the political institutions on policy-making nonetheless, adherence to the formal rules and procedures usually thwart bureaucracy's capacity in terms of innovative policy-making and taking associated risks. In post-colonial authoritarian regimes, where civil-military bureaucracies have assumed the domain of political institutions, the practice of bureaucratic conduct does not follow the classical doctrines of bureaucracy. Instead contrary to the principles of classical Weberian theory, bureaucracies in the third world countries are legacies of colonial administrative structures which were not designed as one of the state's institutions for good governance, in fact those structures served as the only institutions of governance. In the post-colonial era, these civil military bureaucracies have retained wider responsibilities, including those of political and judicial institutions, which is one of the reasons why these administrative setups remained incapable of efficiently delivering the social services. Resistance to change and path-dependency continued to be the innate features of bureaucracies; being the central stakeholder in the institutional power spoils, the civil bureaucracy is naturally disincentivized to reform itself. The collective rationality of the bureaucratic organisations disincentivize them to share the authoritative power and the ability to deliver targeted patronage.

In a nutshell, it is argued that post-colonial bureaucracies epitomise the poorest manifestation of classical theory of bureaucracy. In order to elaborate this point, the following part of the paper explains the organisational limitations of Pakistan's civil bureaucracy with reference to the core principles from the theory of bureaucracy. The following review which is based on the secondary sources, will demonstrate how Pakistani bureaucracy's organisation and behaviour deviates a great deal from the doctrine of Weber's theory of bureaucracy.

CIVIL BUREAUCRACY IN PAKISTAN: PARAMETERS OF TRAINING, RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Although the malpractices in the administrative structures of post-colonial regimes have been generally epitomised to criticise the theory of bureaucracy, there are some strikingly valid applicability limitations in the theory. The following part focuses on the major organisational deficiencies like the lack of training; deteriorating levels of civil servants' professional skills; criteria for officials' APT (Appointments, Promotions and Transfers); unmanageably large functional jurisdiction and domain of responsibilities; politicisation of bureaucracy; citizens' accessibility; corruption and finally the lack of economic development. The post-independence transformation of the historically purpose-built structure of Pakistan's civil bureaucracy has resulted in a multitude of systematic weaknesses. Therefore, the institutional frailties within Pakistan's centralised form of governance structure are more ingrained and contextually complex as compared to the frequently contested normative issues associated with the Weberian theory of bureaucracy.

Training and Professional Ability

The institution of Pakistan's civil bureaucracy lacks the most important requirement - professionalization of administration. Induction to the senior administrative posts is based on generic competitive examination and other similar non-professional recruitment and appointment criteria. Public officials normally assume the responsibilities of a public-sector department for which they are not properly trained and/or qualified and the lack of the required levels of professional qualifications, expertise, and trainings of civil servants mark the most striking level of the public sector's problems. The Pakistani Civil Service System, composed of the Federal and the Provincial Civil Service Cadres, is a rank-based system, where generalists are preferred to specialists (Huque and Khawaja, 2007), and a lifetime employment is provided to its incumbents. A somewhat relevant issue is seniority, which is the foremost criterion for promotion. Seniority as a primary formal criterion for promotion may minimise the probable discord among the civil servants, but seniority is not necessarily the best indicator of a person's productivity and competence (Rosenbloom, 1986). By contrast, a system where promotions are based on merit is likely to enhance competence of the civil service by providing incentives for civil servants to improve their skills and do their jobs diligently and honestly (Azfar, 1999).

Husain (2007) describes Pakistani civil servants as poorly trained, sub-optimally utilised, badly motivated and ingrained with attitudes of indifference and inertia. The absence of reliable and continuous mechanisms for professional training of public officials has always been a major issue. In Pakistan, this shortcoming is not too pervasive in the higher echelons of public sector departments but at the

subordinate levels, optimum levels of essential training is ironically considered as a perk. For instance, Huque and Khawaja (2007) found in their study of Pakistani bureaucracy that ‘seniority’ and ‘connections’ were two major criteria in civil servant’s selection for professional trainings. They found that training is considered as a benefit rather than a necessity for doing a job. Training sessions are conducted either internationally or in local capital cities, both of which are preferred holiday destinations for civil servants and their family members. Seniority as a criterion for professional training is also absurd in a sense that an official who is about to retire is more likely get training than any other official who is in their early or mid-career level. By and large, the formal and informal practice of administration in the public-sector organisations in Pakistan does not comply with the principle of theory of bureaucracy which reckons administration as a specialist occupation that needs thorough training and that administration cannot be done by non-professionals.

Recruitment Matters: Appointments, Promotions and Transfers

Pakistani civil service is highly politicised, and the regime change is invariably followed by massive upheavals of civil servants’ politically motivated appointments, transfers (inter-departmental and spatial rotation) and promotions. Contrary to the classical theory of bureaucracy which upholds merit based employment, Pakistan’s bureaucracy works as one of the major cogwheels of political machine. The appointments, promotions and transfers of civil servants which are typically contingent upon incumbents’ political allegiances, seriously affect operational effectiveness of civil servants thereby undermining their motivations to pursue professional careers. Cheema and Sayeed (2006) believe that excessive political interference reduces the time horizons of the bureaucrats, which eventually compels the bureaucrats to defect from collective arrangements and result in fragmentation of the state structure. In addition to that, short and uncertain tenure of civil servants fundamentally undermines their incentives to develop their expertise in specialised and professional career pathway.

This is so because the public officials are not only rotated geographically across different administrative units but also across various public-sector departments that require varying qualification, skills and training. In the absence of coherent recruitment criteria and effective training programmes, the civil servants are more likely to form a large pool of redundant generalists instead of divisions/departments with professional employees that are qualified, recruited and constantly trained in accordance with the job requirements. This is how the officials’ pursuit of career as a professional career civil servant is put at stake and eventually they become time- servers instead. In such situations, civil servants are more likely to be hesitant in taking initiatives for the execution of major administrative tasks or leading their staff in instigating any development projects.

Instead, the civil servants would rather be induced to serve their tenure at any administrative unit by involving in the routine official matters. Prospects of public accountability also diminish with the frequent and unnecessary rotation of employees across various public-sector departments.

Keeping in view the historical institutional formation of Pakistan's civil administration setup, Khan (2007) narrates that the British colonial administration used to deliver lavish patronage, usually in the form of land grants and targeted recruitment quotas in government service along with other perks to the loyal native's groups. The post-independence continuation of this practice in the public sector of Pakistan made it clear that the retention of authoritative powers, with almost non-existent accountability mechanisms and ever-increasing official patronage were the sole motivations of Pakistani bureaucracy. Other than patronage delivery, politicians and bureaucrats in Pakistan also compete for manipulating powers in the affairs of APT of appointed public officials. Cheema and Sayeed (2006) mention that appointments and promotions are no longer based on well specified 'rules' but on the ability of officials to sustain political protection. The problems associated with APT are overwhelmingly critical in case of Pakistan because the large size of public sector (which is already too bloated in proportion to the resources) provides enormous opportunities for patronage delivery in the form patronage employment. Kardar (2006) argues that all levels of governments are operated as employment bureaus rather than as efficient providers of public goods and services.

Wider Jurisdiction and Responsibilities

Kardar (2006) indicates that the public sector of Pakistan is over-extended and over-committed and is performing too many functions that are far beyond its competence level. Purview of Pakistani senior civil servants' job responsibilities especially that of the elite district management group's employees, is ironically large. This feature too finds its roots in the colonial administration era. A massive sphere of responsibilities of a Deputy Commissioner during the British Rule of the subcontinent was penned down by Hunter (1892: 513-514) as follows:

Upon his energy and personal character depends ultimately the efficiency of our Indian government. His own special duties are too numerous and so various as to bewilder the outsider. He is a fiscal officer, charged with the collection of revenue from the land and other sources; he also is a revenue and criminal judge, both of first instance and appeal. But his title by no means exhausts his multifarious duties. He does in his smaller local sphere all that the Home Secretary Superintendent in England, and a great deal more; for he is the representative of paternal and not of a constitutional government. Police, jails, education, municipalities, roads,

sanitation, dispensaries, the local taxation, and the imperial revenues of his District are to him matters of daily concern. He is expected to make himself acquainted with every phase of the social life of the natives, and with each natural aspect of the country. He should be a lawyer, an accountant, a surveyor, and a ready writer of state papers. He ought also to possess no mean knowledge of agriculture, political economy, and engineering.

Although it was for the colonial administration under the paternal British government, it is still hard to imagine that such a god-like viceregal officer/bureaucrat can oversee the immensely vast administrative realms in accordance with the demands from the imperial government as mentioned by Hunter. Even in the Greek mythology, ancients Greeks used to worship various gods that they thought were ordained by the king of gods – Zeus - for utilising their special capacities and capabilities. For instance, they believed in various gods and goddesses who used to control their respective domains like the skies, seas, the dead in the underworld, wars, intelligence, arts and literature etc. It is obvious that the type of official mentioned in Hunter's description was a colonial administrator and certainly not a bureaucrat that is conceptualised in Weberian theory of bureaucracy however, the discussion is relevant over here because it was more or less this type of administrative machinery that was inherited by the newly born state of Pakistan. Pakistan's bureaucracy along with the executive arm of the state retained the composition that included elites belonging to higher social and economic strata from a highly fragmented society. Although several sporadic phases of reforms have attempted to ameliorate the bureaucratic conduct and streamline the functional domain of the post-independence Pakistani civil administration structure, unfortunately the very character of the system kept on deteriorating with the time. Over a period of around seven decades, due to expansion and departmentalisation of public sector, the functional jurisdiction of public servants has been reduced considerably nonetheless, the core weaknesses within the system remain uncured.

‘A certain degree of cohesion, staying power, organisational capacity to sustain continuity of policies, preserve the status quo and maintain a semblance of stability continue to be hallmarks of Pakistani bureaucracy’ (Shafqat, 1999: 997). Nonetheless, Shafqat's institutional analysis also reveals that adherence to procedures, reluctance to take initiatives and general apathy towards citizens' welfare are still the major problems of Pakistani bureaucracy. He points towards the iron curtains around the civil bureaucracy and mentions that currently the bureaucracy withholds information on areas of public concerns under the garb of secrecy which must be made available to citizens. As mentioned earlier, the principles of good governance in a democratic polity requires the institution of

bureaucracy to enact the regulatory apparatus and implement the policy that is devised by the elected political institutions. Civil administration has to adhere to the procedures because that is how the institution of bureaucracy essentially works. Principally, the bureaucracy needs to adhere to the procedures in order to implement the policy and should not intrude into the jurisdiction of other institutions like government or judiciary. In states where professional bureaucracies confine themselves to their constitutional jurisdiction, their adherence to the procedures and execution of policy can rarely be challenged. Contrarily, in case of Pakistan, since the civil administration has engulfed the domain of almost all other institutions of governance, citizens expect them to deliver social services of all kinds.

Politicisation of Bureaucracy

Bureaucracies inevitably exist and operate in almost all forms of legitimate or illegitimate governments, ranging from far right to far left. Civil bureaucracy is an indispensable institution of the state even in the countries that claim to have minimal involvement of the government in governance. A sound civil bureaucracy is always used as a help for peaceful transfer of power, notably during and after elections (Smith, 1985). Governments have to rely on state machinery for such transitions and for the execution and implementation of public policies. In theory, bureaucracy works only when it retains its legal rational authority and enjoys absolute separation from politics e.g. Woodrow Wilson (1941) argued that there should be a strict separation between politics and administration (or bureaucracy). According to him, administration lies outside the sphere of politics. Although politics set the tasks for administration, politics should not manipulate administration because public administration is actually the detailed and systematic execution of public law. In similar vein, Stillman (1991:107) argued that the dichotomy between politics and administration ‘justified the development of a distinct sphere for administrative development and discretion - often rather wide - free from the meddling and interference of politics. The dichotomy which became an important instrument for progressive reforms allowed room for a new criterion for public action, based on insertion of professionalization, expertise and merits values into the active direction of governmental affairs.’

However, such dichotomy of politics and administration is an illogical proposition. In fact, this dichotomy can very reasonably be termed as ‘divorce of convenience’ between politics and administration because politics can by no means be separated from the spheres of public administration. They are profoundly mingled together. Caiden (1982:82) very aptly argued that the two are effectively ‘fused with politicians performing administrative duties and administrators assuming political responsibilities’. The same stance was taken by

Peters (1989). Interdependencies, in terms of administration, between politicians and civil servants make it almost impossible to avoid the mutual use and abuse of these two complementary institutions. Deconcentration of administrative hierarchy does not separate administration from politics. Smith (1985) emphasises this point by arguing that although there is organisational politics within any structure of administration, the bureaucrat is also a political figure within the community in which s/he serves.

In countries where the political institutions are functional and influential, it is quite common that the civil administration finds itself under an enormous pressure exerted by local political elites for twisting official procedures and protocols in favour of the local elites' interests. The field officer or civil bureaucrat has to wield bureaucratic procedures as a protection against these stipulations. A formal stance of neutrality and instrumentality is necessary in the administrator's dealings with politicians and leaders of powerful social classes, especially if the policies to be implemented go against the interests of dominant rural classes (Wood, 1977 cited in Smith, 1985). The maintenance of required levels of instrumentality and neutrality in civil servants' working relationships with politicians becomes difficult especially in countries where institutions of the state compete for acquiring political powers. Baxter et al. (2002) mentions that in some settings where a professionalised civil service is in place, ambitious politicians mount an effective assault on it, reversing its autonomy and turning it into a source of patronage. In case of Pakistan, the aggregate and individual interests of political institutions and civilian administration often leave them in an uneasy and antagonistic relationships. Particularly in cases where the purview and jurisdictional domains of public institutions is not demarcated precisely or when those demarcations are ignored in practice, public institutions are likely to develop hostile working relationships among themselves.

Access of Citizens to Bureaucrats

'Pakistan is an 'hourglass' society – where state and public are mutually related through minimum of institutional links and people are generally disengaged from politics except for the occasional exercise of their right to vote. In Pakistan the bureaucracy typically operated as gatekeeper of distant state' (Waseem, 2006:13). Access relationship between citizens and civil servants are of great concern in the study of local governance. Considering the peculiar nature of centrally appointed civil administration system in Pakistan, bureaucrats are quite reasonably accused of being quite distant from their 'subjects' and hence the bureaucrat-citizen relationship does not provide any substantial incentives for improved and tailored service provision. The rationale for devolved local government emphasises that centrally appointed public officials are not easily accessible to the public and are more likely to be indifferent towards their civic

demands whereas locally elected officials (mostly native) would remain very close to their constituency and would be willing to go an extra mile to make sure that their constituency is not neglected in the affairs of social service delivery. Smith (1988) believes that access relationship between the citizens and bureaucrats is worse because of the lack of independence of bureaucrats from political forces, their lack of understanding of citizens' problems, lack of dissemination of information about entitlement and knowledge of bureaucratic process, and because bureaucrats steer their activities away from citizens.

Another important issue that Smith (1988) raises is that citizens' relationship with bureaucracy depends upon the extent to which the claimant depends on bureaucratic allocations i.e. whether the citizen has an exit option in his/her affordable range for instance, access to open market (non-bureaucratic) allocation. Exit option refers to the financial capability of citizens to resort to the private market allocations for basic social services. Exit to the open market allocations may well be a desirable and quite possibly an available option for the poor masses but certainly not an affordable one. When market provisions, in such circumstances, cannot be relied upon in terms of meeting demands from vast majority of citizens, public provision of goods and services needs to be rationed via public sector institutions equitably. In Pakistan, where the income inequality is alarmingly high, and masses of population are unavoidably dependent upon the provision of public goods and services for their basic necessities like health, education and municipal services, rolling back of public provision and expecting the private sector to abruptly fill in a large vacuum is obviously not a rational proposition.

Corruption in Bureaucracy and the Lack of Economic Development

The tumour of corruption is an evil that remains pervasive in all institutions of governance, and not only in the civil bureaucracy. In fact, most forms of institutional corruption are omnipresent in almost all formal and informal institutions of governments and states of the world. Undoubtedly, owing to the weak institutional setups, the levels of corruption are alarmingly high in the third world states where the civil administration has proven to be one of the most vulnerable institutions in terms of proneness to incidence of corruption for many reasons. In this paper, corruption is referred to as typical financial embezzlements, bribery, kickbacks and the abuse of public office and authority by the civil servants with specific reference to the execution of public works and delivery mechanisms of non-excludable public goods and services. The centralised system ends up differentiating services to different categories of customers based on their willingness to pay bribes, resulting in non-uniform delivery patterns (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006).

While there is a broad agreement in literature of public administration about corruption being malfeasance that perpetuates economic, social and political inequalities, there also exists a substantial discourse asking, ‘what’s wrong with corruption’. Put differently, one may argue that bribes stipulated in return for basic social services by the underpaid civil servants of a poor state may well serve as an informal alternative solution to the negative impact of free market externalities. Huntington (1968) advocates such an idea; he believes that for economic growth, the only thing worse than a society with a rigid, over-centralised, dishonest bureaucracy is the society with a rigid, over-centralised, and honest bureaucracy. Similarly, Hutchcroft (1997) argues that from the perspective of an individual businessperson or citizen, corruption does indeed grease the wheels of a bureaucracy. Honest bureaucracies can be infuriatingly inflexible to those with a justifiable need to bend the rules, and dishonest bureaucracies highly responsive to those who have the means and/or connections to do so. The rigidity and inflexibility of bureaucracy as a system for the public service provision, that assumes the procedures as ends in themselves, hinders the efficiency of such institutions.

Nonetheless, such arguments cannot be made as a basis for the justification of corruption in the public sector. In fact, these arguments undermine the possibilities of institutional rectifications of procedures that are prone to corruption. Bureaucracies’ corrupt behaviours have underlying reasons. Rather than allowing the bureaucracy enough leeway to act corruptly, it is essential to rethink and reform the organisational mechanisms that perpetrate and incentivise the corrupt behaviour. NPM model prescribes privatisation of public sector departments as a solution for the corruption and inefficiency. But in case of Pakistan, this may not be a viable strategy to be implemented abruptly without securing an institutional arrangement for it because 1) economic status of many citizens constrain their access to the privatised market provision of social services delivery, 2) the state doesn’t have the capacity to regulate the privatised public sector and/or to prevent a public monopoly from becoming a private monopoly and 3) corruption is very much likely to remain pervasive in public sector departments particularly those which are extremely difficult to be privatised for instance the law enforcement, municipal services, civil and national defence and other state regulatory authorities. While a gradual and vigilant process of privatisation may help, it certainly is not the only next available option for curbing the nuisance of corruption.

A very brief synopsis of some alarming statistics cited in Khan (2007) would be helpful in reflecting upon the prevalence of corruption in the large and inefficient public sector of Pakistan. According to Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Pakistan’s 2006 CPI score of 2.2 placed her in the most

corrupt quintile of 163 countries surveyed. This score was almost the same as the CPI score of 2.25 in 1995. Khan (2007) quoting from a report published in a Pakistani Newspaper, Dawn, describes that the extensive levels of corruption in the education department were indicated by the first Pakistani National Education Census conducted in 2006 which found that '12,737 educational institutions out of a total of 164,579 public sector schools in the country were 'non-functional', a euphemism for 'ghost schools'¹. It goes without saying that such statistics only depict the tip of the iceberg and reveal that the spread of corruption is more rooted than it apparently seems. The complexities involved with containment of corruption needs thorough diagnosis of factors that create an environment which is ripe for perpetrating the public officials' tendencies for corruption. The menace of corruption is highly associated with another issue - the lack of economic development.

Susceptibility of administrative machinery to corruption and indifferent behaviour is ascribed to the fact that the large and superfluous public sector is usually underpaid. The World Bank (1997) states that in many countries, civil servants' wages have eroded as a result of expanding public employment at lower skill levels and fiscal constraints on the total wage bill. The result has been a significant compression of the salary structure and highly uncompetitive pay for senior officials, making it difficult to recruit and retain capable staff. According to Jabbara and Dwivedi (2004), the low salary structure for public employees in Lebanon has always had two serious results: first, competent employees receive more attractive salary offers from the private sector. Second, those who join and continue with civil service have little motivations and are more incentivised to look for other sources of income (including bribery) to compensate for their low salaries. Brain drain, especially from the higher echelons of civil administration, is natural in such circumstances and the able civil servants prefer to switch over to either private sector or international organisations. In states where the private sector opportunities spurred by foreign investments offer attractive remuneration packages, the public-sector job market face enormous levels of competitive pressures in attracting pool of capable incumbents. Generally, the budget constraints and external pressures to privatise and downsize public sector constrain governments to underpay the civil servants, leaving them susceptible to corruption and professional decay.

¹The term 'Ghost Schools' refers to those public schools that exist only in the official records of the Education Department. Ironically, the building contractors are paid for the building and teachers regularly draw salaries for teaching. Some of the school buildings are usually used by the local village influential for a variety of personal utilities.

Conclusion

This paper focused on exploring some of the theoretical limitations of classical theory of bureaucracy. The study also included the literature review of Pakistani bureaucracy's organisational composition and behaviour which reveals that the civil administrative structure as well as the practice is not in line with the principles indoctrinated in the classical theory of bureaucracy. These limitations are not only the hurdles in institutional development of civil bureaucracy itself, but they also exacerbate the institutional relationships between civil bureaucracy and other institutions of governance such as the elected local governments.

The classical theory of bureaucracy assumes that the public organization is an entity that is separable from the personal lives of its employees and secondly, the principle of legal rational authority considers the civil bureaucracy as immune to the political interventions. It is argued that when civil bureaucracies take over the domain of other institutions including the political ones, the very character of the civil administration becomes politicized as is evident in the case of Pakistan. Also, where the political institutions are capacitated in terms of making policy decisions, the civil administrative institutions are routinely pressurized for manipulating and twisting their rule-bound operating procedures in accordance with the vested interests of politicians, making the politicization of administration inevitable and the legal rational authority, a highly idealized principle. Civil bureaucracies have a constitutional role i.e. of implementing the public policy and of enacting the regulatory procedures. It can only work effectively when it doesn't trespass its constitutional domain. Having assumed an overwhelming authority and functional domain, Pakistan's civil administration has been working as more or less the only institution of governance and that is why citizens condemn the administration's failure because they perceive it as the only institution that is responsible for delivery of social services.

The organisational and institutional analysis of Pakistan's civil bureaucracy illustrate that it is a poor materialization of the classical model of bureaucracy mainly because this system of administration was inherited from the epoch of colonial rule and as such the system was never a classical expression of the theory of bureaucracy in the first place. After the independence, Pakistan's civil administration assumed a vast domain of responsibilities but her professional credentials kept on deteriorating; the state consolidated this institution in terms of power spoils but the organisational development was ignored altogether. The quality of training and specialization of public officials in most of the public-sector departments is poor. Consequently, the employees make a large redundant pool of generalists instead of specialists. Their prospects for professionalization are further hampered by the politically motivated appointments, promotions and transfers which also adversely affect the pursuit of career opportunities. In

Pakistan, such political manipulations have transformed the public-sector departments into employment agencies that provide patronage employment.

Access relationships between bureaucrats and citizens are also far from satisfactory and since a majority of the population relies on public provision of social services, improvements in the access relationships are very crucial. Abrupt privatisation of public entities is not a viable remedy for containing the massive levels of corruption - at least not in the short term - because masses of poor citizens do not have the financial means to access privatized market allocations. Besides, the government and state institutions are already too corrupt and incapable to regulate the private sector and prevent a public monopoly from turning into a private monopoly. Corruption in public sector is also stimulated to greater extent by the lack of economic development. Evidence from the literature review suggests that the public officials' propensity to corruption is triggered by the fact that they are underpaid. The lower wages offered to the civil servants eventually affect the professional quality of officials and organizations alike.

Civil bureaucracy being an instrumental and indispensable institution has to effectively coexist and function alongside other institutions of the state such as the local governments. The challenge is to make bureaucracy functionally compatible with those institutions therefore, the reforms in the civil administration are as important as the reforms in the political organisation of the government. The legacy of colonial mode of bureaucracy continues to be an anathema for the developments in local governance in the post-independence Pakistan.

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