

Book Review

Aminullah Chaudary. *Political Administrators: The Story of Civil Service of Pakistan.* Oxford University Press, 2011. 371 pages, Rs 895.00.

A bureaucracy is a group of individuals who are non-elected and serve as government employees to help implement rules and laws of a country. The term bureaucracy was created by combining the words 'bureau' which means desk or office and 'kratos', meaning rule or political power to govern. Different countries have adopted various ways to induct people to run the government and make new laws. Max Weber, a renowned and notable German administrative scholar is credited to be the pioneer of the use of bureaucracy in public administration.

In this book on the Civil Service of Pakistan, the author has described the way bureaucratic culture gained strength and restricted the grooming of political culture in the country. He shows how 'seniority' overwhelmed 'merit' in the promotion process of the officers in the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), an offspring of the Indian Civil Service (ICS). The CSP officers always considered themselves as an élite class and looked down upon the politicians. The author narrates the superior attitude of Iskander Mirza (a notable member of the ICS, then CSP) in these words: "Mirza was proud of his IPS and CSP lineage and never missed an opportunity of proclaiming this fact. His admiration for the colonial system of administration was matched by a corresponding contempt for politicians." The relationship between the bureaucracy and the military was to ensure that politicians did not make a mess of things. The bureaucracy was able to call on the military in times of crisis and never worried about its overstaying the visit. The basic theme of the Indian Civil Service was that the local Indians were recruited as officers by the British to suppress and control an enslaved people. Unfortunately, even after gaining independence the mindset of the bureaucratic staff didn't change and they conveniently forgot that an independent nation required a different approach.

The first effort to recruit locals to govern was done by the Mughal Emperor Akbar to collect revenue. Once the East India Company started its expansion in India it realised the recruitment of locals was helpful in collecting revenue and implementing law. Though the entry to the ICS was opened through competition, the entry for Indians was a daunting task as they would have to travel to London to take the competitive tests. Many commissions were formed to find ways to enrol more locals in the system. A few years after World War I, the quota of locals in the ICS was increased to 33 percent. The first ICS examination in India was conducted in 1922 in Allahabad. At the time of

Independence, out of 1157 members of the ICS, only 101 were Muslims; among them Punjabis constituted the highest number at 27, followed by Bengalis at 18 and 16 from the United Provinces. Nepotism was prevalent in the selection of Civil Services even during the times of the British. Influential families were able to induct their sons in the ICS.

After Independence, the ICS was first called the PAS (Pakistan Administrative Service) and then CSP (Civil Service of Pakistan). Chaudhry Mohammad Ali, a former member of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service played an important role in setting up the CSP. It was nurtured under Ghulam Mohammad and it reached its apex under Iskander Mirza who was from the Indian Political Service. The CSP wobbled a little under the Martial Law of General Ayub Khan but it soon regrouped itself to become stronger than before. Since Independence, Pakistan has set up more than thirty committees to propose recommendations and reforms in the Civil Services. Most of the times the reforms have been inspired and used to sort out old grudges and have resulted in sorting out individuals rather than the system. This happens every time when a new government assumes power and carries out a series of dismissals, removals and transfers to give a message that it means business. Funded by the Ford Foundation, Rowland Eggers submitted a report in 1953 that made a few recommendations to restructure the civil service in Pakistan. It suggested that there should be a properly coordinated central secretariat headed by a cabinet secretary. The line departments headed by technocrats should be treated at par with the generalist secretariat officers. He wanted the authorities to strike a careful balance between 'centralisation' and 'delegation' and the most important suggestion was that all cadres of services should be unified. Justice A.R. Cornelius headed two separate commissions, first in 1959 and then in 1969. Both recommended basic changes in the bureaucracy but were met with stiff resistance by the cabinet secretary Aziz Ahmad. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto launched a campaign to make revolutionary changes in the bureaucracy under Vaqar Ahmed and Hasan Habib. The Administrative Reforms of 1973 led to three important consequences: The CSP was immediately dismantled by Bhutto. The CSP cadre was divided into three groups, namely the Secretariat Group (SG), the District Management Group (DMG) and the Tribal Areas Group (TAG). The members of the CSP were barred from keeping the former designations. General Zia-ul-Haq after assuming power through a military coup appointed a Civil Service Reforms Commission under the chairmanship of Justice Sheikh Anwarul Haq. Though the commission made a wide variety of proposals, but General Zia implemented only those that were politically advantageous to his rule. He discouraged the lateral entry of civilians into the bureaucracy and ordered a review of the appointments made under this system. The review board looked at 199 cases of recruitment in the Secretariat Group out of which 94 officers were retained in service, cases of 10 were sent to further review, 59 were reverted to their former posts and 36 were removed from service. The other important step taken was to merge the Tribal Areas Group into the District Management Group.

The governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto didn't carry out any massive changes in the bureaucracy but made sure a number of transfers and dismissals were made to announce their power. General Pervez Musharraf seized power through coup d'état in 1999 and immediately set up a National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB)

under retired Lt.-Gen. Naqvi. Its basic purpose was to reconstruct all the institutions other than the Army which had **abrogated** the constitution four times. It abolished the Divisional system in Pakistan and the new tier of government saw the District at the top level. The plan was termed as 'people friendly' and announced that districts would be headed by Nazims, translated as Mayors. The intent was the same as Ayub Khan's Basic Democracy system to build a political base for the military regime. The office of the deputy commissioner was abolished and the district administration was supposed to be run by an elected Nazim, district and session judge, district police officer (DPO) and district coordination officer (DCO). The initial plan for this kind of set-up was to ensure the office of Nazim would not be party based. But as the events turned out, the 2005 local government elections were fought with clear violation of the rules, the Kings party of the President, Pakistan Muslim League (Q) securing most of the districts with their candidates as Nazims. In April 2006, a National Commission for Government Reforms (NCGR) was made under the leadership of Dr Ishrat Hussain, the outgoing Governor of State Bank of Pakistan. By the time the NCGR submitted its recommendations to President Musharraf, the latter was on his way out.

The concept of including the officers of the armed forces in the civil services has a long history. Before the Partition, both the ICS and the Military worked in a cohesive and complimentary manner and helped Britain consolidate her rule over India. The induction of the armed forces personnel in the civil services was used as a ploy to increase the influence of the military in the political affairs of the country. Last but not least the bureaucracy has been used to support the despotic rule and authoritarian decisions of military dictators which has often marred the fate of the nation and caused incalculable losses to the country.

The book gives a very comprehensive picture of the bureaucratic structure since the setting up of the East India Company up to the regime of General Pervaiz Musharraf. It is a good historic documentary and helps to provide the students and researchers useful background material for further exploration. A lot of good stuff has been written about the bureaucratic structure in Pakistan but this book has been authored by none other than a decorated civil officer himself who has served on very important positions in Pakistan. The major theme of the book is a critique of the bureaucratic structure and its romantic relationship with the military. The book provides an insight into how the grooming of political culture in Pakistan was obstructed by the civil service in collusion with dictators.

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