

Problem of Reforming the Civil Service in Bangladesh: Abolishing Generalist Domination or Depoliticizing Administration?

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Abstract: Bangladesh inherited its civil service from Pakistan which is a direct descendant of the Indian Civil Service. Since partition of India, Pakistan made series of abortive efforts to curbe elitism of generalist/administrative class. Bangladesh since independence pursued the reform efforts to abolish colonial heritage of the civil service and establish a classless egalitarian service structure that would ensure equality of opportunity to functional services to move up the national decision making hierarchy. This paper is an attempt to assess the intended results of the reform efforts. Ultimate analysis demonstrates that generalist domination has not been abated because of politicization of services. Experience suggests that dominance of any class is rooted in its tradition, elitism of any particular class is counterbalanced by creation of an apex elite cadre drawn from all branches of civil service in developed civil service system and issue of politicization is tackled by a provision of hybrid appointments. Bangladesh has not adopted either of the mechanisms in civil service reforms. This paper is based on secondary data and content analysis in nature.

Keywords: Bangladesh, ‘classless’ generalist, specialist ‘egalitarian’, ‘depoliticization / politicization’ of civil services.

Introduction

“Bureaucracy in the new states, as elsewhere, is a two – edged sword. It can be a force for good or a force for evil. It can be a ruler, guardian or servant” (Goodnow, H. F. 1969). Bureaucracy in the Indian Subcontinent is one of the oldest bureaucracies in the world that bears the legacy of guardianship over the ordinary citizens. Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, said that: “the British civil servants were the very basis of the Empire in India and so he could not imagine of any period, when they can dispense with the guidance and assistance of a small nucleus of the British civil servants. He

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stated emphatically if you take that steel-frame out of the fabric, it would collapse. There is one institution we will not cripple, there is one institution we will not deprive of its functions or of its privileges; and that is that institution, which built-up the British Raj—the British Civil Service in India”*. The ICS with its virtual monopoly in all top level administrative and judicial positions, added and strengthened the British desire to keep strict control over native population and officials (Griffiths, 1953, p. 195 in Khan, 1980, p. 72). The civil service which Pakistan handed down to Bangladesh was a direct descendant of the Indian civil service by which British government ruled India nearly two hundred years. Braibanti observed that the structural organization of the civil services of Pakistan was one of the most complicated of any bureaucratic system in existence (Braibanti, R., 1966, p.132). The system of classification and grading of services in Pakistan had been criticized on the ground that it was undemocratic, bred class feeling and superiority and inferiority complexes among the services (Government of Pakistan, 1949, p.12). Bangladesh since independence has clearly realized the inappropriateness of the system of administration which was designed for an era that has gone by and appointed dozens of reform commissions/committees to transform inherited closed and caste like civil service system into an open, egalitarian civil service that will ensure equitable opportunity for all cadres of services in the decision making layers of the national secretariat to create dynamism and vigour in administration and to increase pace of development to meet the aspirations of an independent nation. But it has always been very difficult to transform an instrument of ruling into an element of service to the people. The recommendations that reform commissions/committees put forward in Bangladesh resemble to a great extent with the recommendations of previous committees constituted during Pakistan period.

The objective of this paper is to examine what extent Bangladesh Civil Service has been egalitarian in respect of promotion opportunity of all cadres to the decision making positions of the national secretariat and whether the policy of abolition of generalist’s elitism was relevant to the context. In order to delve into the broader objective, this paper will address a few pertinent questions like:

- to what extent the recommendations of the major commissions/committees implemented in regard to egalitarian service structure
- to what extent domination of the generalist cadre reduced so far

- to what extent specialists/ functionalists promoted to the decision making layer of the national secretariat
- What is major constraint that jeopardized reform measures – bureaucratic resistance or political influence?
- whether abolition of elite cadre would resolve perennial problems of inter-service rivalry
- whether abolition of elite cadre of generalist service was appropriate in the context
- how other countries have tackled this issue in civil service management
- and, how Bangladesh can come out of this situation

In order to address the basic research questions, this paper will be exploratory and qualitative in nature and analyze information available in secondary sources like reports, books, government orders, notifications, journals and newspapers. Proper understanding of the nature and behavior of the civil service in Bangladesh, particularly its attitude towards major administrative reforms, can best be understood by consideration of its history as an institution. With this end in view this paper will briefly trace the reform efforts that civil service underwent in Pakistan (1947-1971) and in the post-independent Bangladesh and what extent they were implemented. Before we move on to the details of reforms measures it is worthwhile to define key terminologies – ‘Generalist’, ‘specialist’, ‘Egalitarianism’ ‘politicization’ as this paper revolves around these ideas and issues.

Generalist

A generalist officer is an amateur administrator who had education in linguistics or classics and is a highly intelligent man with certain personal qualities of character. Indian Institute of Public Administration conference on public administration defined generalist officer as a bright young man who received a liberal college education in any subject. www.preservearticles.com A key challenge is that specialists continue to be under-represented and under-valued at all levels of government. The perennial controversy on the specialist vs. generalist issue has plagued the harmony and efficiency of public administration ever since partition of India in 1947. It may be that in the past, a country's class structure and educational system tended to produce administrators with these clusters of attributes. Now, changes in socioeconomic backgrounds of students and advances in knowledge and teaching of social sciences and systems theory and analysis make it possible to speak of trying to educate professionals who can deal with problems in a

broad, innovative and open-minded way--"experts in generalism." Similarly, new patterns of civil service management (e.g. rotation and exchange of position) may do away with rigid careers based on and perpetuating specialist-generalist assumptions. The real problem hiding behind the specialist-generalist facade is how to develop new types of public administration professionals and achieve a synergetic mix between a variety of differently qualified persons. (Dror, Y., p. 10, retrieved from <http://www.governancenow.com/views/columns/theperennial-generalist-vs-specialist-debate> <http://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P3997.html>).

Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism is a trend of thought in political philosophy. Egalitarian expects that people should be treated as equals and enjoy equality of social status of some sort. Egalitarian doctrine tends to rest on a background idea that all human persons are equal in fundamental worth or moral status. In modern democratic societies, the term 'Egalitarian' is often used to refer to a position that favors a greater degree of equality of wellbeing across persons than currently exists. A non-egalitarian would be one who believes that people born into a higher social caste, or favored race or ethnicity, or with an above average stock of traits deemed desirable, ought somehow to count more than others in calculations that determine what morally ought to be done.

"Egalitarianism can be instrumental or non-instrumental. The instrumental egalitarian considers equality as a means to some independently specifiable goal; the non-instrumental Egalitarian considers equality for its own sake – as an end" (Egalitarianism" Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Someone who believes that equality of some sort is a component of justice, and morally required as such, would be non-instrumental Egalitarian. In a hierarchical caste society, positions of advantage are assigned to people on the basis of birth lineage. If one is legitimate offspring of parents who are aristocrats, one will also enjoy the privileges of aristocratic class (Ibid). In the context of Bangladesh Civil Service the term 'Egalitarianism' is used as a means to attain 'equality of opportunity' in regard to equal career progression of all members of civil service irrespective of cadres unlike that of British Indian ICS generalist administrative class or CSPs during Pakistan period.

Politicization

"Conventional wisdom is that civil service is politically neutral. Politicization of civil service means the substitution of political

criteria for merit based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards, and disciplining of members of the public service”. A partisan bureaucracy was thought to be leading to inefficient and chaotic administration. “Bureaucracy is a powerful institution that must be checked by its political master” (Lipset 2011, p. 66 in Roberto; Ohemeng, 2011, p. 67). However, of late, politicization of administration has gained some acceptability even in industrialized democracies on the plea that ‘responsive competence’ from the politically loyal civil service is preferred to ‘neutral competence’ from career civil servants in order to ensure control over policy and quick implementation of government programs (Peters and Pierre, 2004, pp.1–4).

Contextuality of Civil Service

In any system of civil service whether specialist or generalist should dominate is a country specific issue. The use of specialists in government finds its most vigorous expression in the American civil service. The skills needed to administer a vast continent, to develop its natural resources, to promote social and economic growth were specialized skills. The staffs of the government were accordingly recruited as specialists, each group highly committed to the importance and relevance of specialization. These were led by specialist administrators. No generalist administrator was interposed between the specialist and the “political” executives and the legislators who supervise them. Coordination was achieved by statute, by budgets, by Presidential supervision and by Congressional vigilance.

In the US the generalists struggle for greater recognition and have gained a little. A generalist civil service recruited by competitive examination and known as the junior Management Service has been created. All other administrators are recruited departmentally. In Britain the situation is opposite. “In Britain the generalist administrator is on top, the specialist is on the tap to the generalist, while in the US the specialist is on the top while the generalist is on his tap” (Quoted in Roy, A. M., 1964, p. 1049). The specialists, however, in the British system have made some notable recent gains in science agencies, in public enterprises, in the welfare agencies. This has been possible following the implementation of Fulton Committee Report (1968). Under the changed situation recruitment and promotion to all levels of civil service is made absolutely on the basis of merit and range of experience, and personal qualities in disregard to their classes. This was applied even at the highest levels what Fulton described as the ‘Senior Management and Policy

Group' (Fulton Committee Report, 1968, Para 1. 222 in Greenwood, J. and Wilson, D., 1993, p. 110). The essence of Fulton structure is that "horizontal barriers within the service have largely been removed, facilitating upward promotion within particular classes (or similar groupings). This been achieved by merging many former classes into entities known as 'groups' and 'categories'" (Ibid, 111).

"The problems of defining the respective role of the generalist and specialist in an administrative system becomes acute at or near the top of the hierarchy, deepen as the functions of government expand and become crucial in a government committed to direct participation in securing rapid economic growth" (Ibid).

The domination of generalist civil servants in this subcontinent is derived from its origin of Indian Civil Service (ICS) rooted in the recommendations of Aitchison Commission (1986). The job of the ICS was to administer the country, collect revenue, maintain law and order, and assist the colonial rulers in the exploitation of India's resources. The ICS was to maintain the ruler-subject relationship - an elite, western educated bureaucracy exercising control over the illiterate, ignorant Indian native - ostensibly for their benefit, in reality for their exploitation" (Raja Shankar, "Steel Frame of Indian Democracy" www.himalmag.com/component/content/article/2630) For British Rulers services engaged in control functions were important than any other. By education, training and experience ICS was deliberately made non-specialized. Their functions were to limit the role of government, to promote stability by minimizing change, to coordinate the activities of government. Their major administrative tasks were the "rules" and "files". The British administrative class and the Indian civil service (ICS) have truly embodied the principle of the generalists in governmental administration. They neither had much interest in public welfare schemes nor did they interfere unnecessarily in the interest of privileged sections of the society.

Aitchison Commission laid the foundations for the cadre system that was later incorporated wholesale into independent Pakistan. The ICS cadre became the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), with minor modifications. The Police Service became the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP); and the External Affairs, Commonwealth Relations and Political Departments eventually became the Pakistan Foreign Service (PFS). Laporte argues that the higher bureaucracy in Pakistan not only managed to maintain its colonial prerogatives, but also extended and expanded its authority to include additional areas of concern (Laporte, R. Jr., 1978, p. 48 in Ahmed. N., 1995, p. 57).

Following the colonial ICS heritage, members of the CSP held most of the key positions in the central and provincial secretariat; positions in the field administration and all strategic positions including one-third of the superior posts of the judiciary.

Major Reform Initiatives during Pakistan 1947-1971

After independence Pakistan government appointed 28 reform committees/commissions between 1947-1962 to reorient ethos and attitudes of inherited civil service and to improve different facets of administration (Gorvine, A., 1966) to meet the demand of an independent nation. Gorvine observed that Pakistan's new leaders quickly realized that better administration was crucial factor, realization common throughout the developing world, particularly evident in Pakistan. Moreover, with Ayub revolution in 1958, the interest became veritable obsession, as the government attempted to extend its revolution by administrative reforms (Gorvine, A., 1966).

Rowland Egger and Bernard Gladieux suggested radical reforms in Pakistan secretarial system. They observed that small secretariats were operating in central and provincial ministries with attached departments, major decision making power vested in few generalist CSP officers with no background, experience or competence in technical areas (Gorvine, A., 1966). Egger suggested that highest technical posts in the secretariat be opened to men from technical service cadres like engineering, agriculture, medicine etc.

The recommendations of the reform bodies underscored the need for establishing an unified civil service structure, abolition of the reservation of posts in favor of a particular cadre CSP; overhauling the secretariat set up, recruitment, training and promotion based on merit, common training arrangements for all civil servants, establishment of uniform pay structures throughout the civil service; enhancement of the role of specialists in the civil service; giving comparable status to the heads of departments and secretaries of ministries; provision of lateral entry into the cadres; and, raising status of the Public Service Commission (Kenney, C. H., 1987, pp. 57-64).

However, independence of Pakistan did not bring any major change to the overriding powers of the bureaucracy; rather it provided an opportunity for the latter to prove the mettle in Pakistan (Vorys, K. V., 1965, p.111 in Ahmed, N., 1995, p. 57).The administrative elite in Pakistan inherited intellectual orientations of the ICS and the apparatus of the colonial bureaucracy, being recruited and trained in the same tradition and working within the same institutional

framework, were able to retain their elitist nature and became the most dominant social sector in Pakistan – in fact more dominant than its predecessors (Ahamed, E., 1981). CSPs became and remained ‘ruling elite, by faithfully adhering to the colonial administrative heritage, and resisted major reforms by ensuring exclusive monopoly over key policy making and policy execution positions, by manning and dominating key/command positions at the centre and the field levels, by keeping its size deliberately small, by prohibiting lateral entry from outside into its cadre, by allowing generalist officers from its rank to dominate specialist and technical officers (Gorvine, A., 1966, pp.185-204). About changes in the civil service of Pakistan Vittachi observed only Brown Shahibs substituted for white ones (Vittachi, T. 1962).

Reforms Efforts in Bangladesh

The following sections will trace out briefly the recommendations of major reform commissions/committees to reorganize the civil service system that Bangladesh inherited at independence from Pakistan.

With the changes in the philosophy of the new state after independence of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman asked the civil servants to shun their bureaucratic mentality and work in close cooperation with people to assure the nation that their interest lies with serving the people rather protecting their self-interest. For the first time ever since the partition of India the unfettered authority of generalist civil servants came under challenge. The autonomy of the bureaucrats was curtailed by the promulgation of the Presidential Order (PO) 9 which screened 9 hundred civil servants including former Chief Secretary Shafiul Azam without giving the opportunity of self-defense (Maniruzzaman T., 1974). Also enormous powers retained in the hands of the prime minister curtailed the autonomy of bureaucracy. Most of the policy advisers to the prime minister were non-bureaucrats, a trend completely reversed from the past (Rahman, ATR., 1974).

In order to give effect to the new philosophy of the state, AL Government realized crucial importance of reorganizing civil services and appointed a reform body named Administrative and Services Reorganization Committee (ASRC) under the chairmanship MA Chaudhury, an eminent academic of the country, with comprehensive mandate to overhaul the bureaucratic structure of the country.

Administrative Service Reorganization Committee (ASRC) 1972: Threats Poised to the Generalist Elites

The ASRC realized the futility of continuing an age old service structure established with the purpose of serving a federal government of Pakistan under capitalist economy. The existing structure of so many services of general character as distinct entities developed complexes in the services, divided the total work into water-tight compartments, militated against the pooling of administrative resources, encouraged class consciousness, created tensions and conflict in many vital areas of administration and prevented maximum utilization of talents in accordance with aptitudes and emotional pull, to mention only a few of the evils emanating from it (Government of Bangladesh, ASRC, 1973, p. 16). Under this backdrop the ASRC recommended:

The main theme of the recommendation was the abolition of the elite cadre, no reservation of posts for any cadre; adequate opportunity for the talented persons to quickly rise to the top from any level of service; provisions would be there for systematic re-exposure of senior officers serving at the national headquarters to the field; and towards the establishment of living fellowship of officers with the common man. ASRC also recommended a single classless grading structure covering all services into 10 grades in which there shall be an appropriate number of pay levels and responsibilities and the correct grading for each post should be determined by an analysis of the job. Grade I, II and III to be grouped into Senior Policy and Management posts (SPMP) (Government of Bangladesh, ASRC, 1973, p. 17). The SPMP should consist of those possessing specialization in different fields and would be responsible for planning of public policy and overall supervision of the national administration. Entry into this group would be highly competitive (Khan, M.M., 2013, p. 73).

Far reaching recommendations of ASRC on the establishment classless, unified and egalitarian service structure made no impact on the government of the day and the entrenched bureaucracy of the country. The report like the previous ones was shelved as the secret document. The indifferent attitude of the government to accept and implement the recommendations are attributed to the unstable leadership and lack of revolutionary political impetus for implementing such radical reforms in the prevailing political economic compulsions and unfavorable time of the regime (Mascarenhas, 1986; Lifschultz, 1979; Jahan, 2005). By the time (October 1973) the report was submitted, AL eroded much of its

popularity, alienated from the masses and had to recourse to various repressive measures to halt the process of gradual alienation of the masses from those in power. In this perspective higher echelon of civil service, particularly erstwhile CSPs dissatisfied with ASRC recommendations persuaded the government to maintain status quo rather than implement radical reform measures (Khan, M. M., 1989, p. 303).

Pay & Service Commission (P&SC) 1976: Resurrection of the Generalist Elites?

In February 1976 the military government of General Zia appointed Pay and Service Commission (P&SC) under the chairmanship of MA Rashid, who retired as the secretary to the central government of Pakistan. The commission was mandated for (a) examining existing pay and service structure of the civil servants, (b) recommending a suitable service structure along with their methods of recruitment, training and deployment, (c) devising rational and simple principles for the amalgamation of employees of the erstwhile central and provincial governments performing similar duties and (d) recommending suitable pay structure including fringe benefits for the civil services and employees of the autonomous bodies and corporations (GOB, Pay and Service Commission, p. 7). The military government believed that only an extra-political regime could make radical changes in the administrative infrastructure given the failure of earlier political regime to overcome bureaucratic intrigues and politically chaotic conditions (Khan, M. M., 1989, p. 303). P&SC observed that the prestige of the civil servants was being progressively eroded. The infamous PO 9 which provided for the dismissal of officials without any right to appeal was repealed. Some of the officials dismissed under the provisions of the above law were reinstated, and the bureaucracy was accorded constitutional recognition and protection against arbitrary dismissal of its members by politicians. From the early days of Zia's rule the bureaucracy also succeeded in achieving representations in cabinet, public corporations and National Economic Council. Some held the view that Zia government was fundamentally a resurrection of 'administrative state' that Ayub Khan left behind in Pakistan (Jahan, R., 1980, p. 201).

With regard to restructuring and integration of services the P&SC was greatly influenced by ASRC. The point of departure of the P&SC was its emphasis on the cadre concept which visualized the restructuring of the civil service system on key functional areas of

government activity. The P&SC's retention of the cadres and rank concept appeased the bureaucracy because cadre system lies at the heart of dominance by the generalist over the specialists from their rank and status (Obaidullah, ATM., 1992, pp. 173- 175).

P&SC realized that an all-purpose civil service had to be built with individuals possessing technical qualifications as well as those who were intellectually gifted and capable of working under political direction. The P&SC made a number of significant recommendations covering wide areas within the broad canvass of the civil service. Major recommendations include inter alia:

Merit based civil service where barrier between the erstwhile CSP and other specialist and non-specialist services should be removed; equal initial scales of pay and ensuring equitable opportunities for advancement to the top for all; a Superior Policy Pool (SPP) to be designated as the open structure consisting of posts requiring all round experience drawn from all branches of the civil service on the basis of merit and proven ability; organized cadre service should be formed at the top of the civil service; and, the civil service in Bangladesh should consist of four tiers (Report of P&SC, vol. 1, 1977, p. 28).

The government accepted, in principle, some of the recommendation of P&SC with partial modifications. The most important outcome of P&SC report is Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) of 28 services under 14 cadres that as such exists. All designations were made functional and pay scale became the only index of determining the positions and privileges of the government functionaries. Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC) 2000 held the view that converting a caste-like system of public service into a 'classless' structure was no doubt a big accomplishment (UNDP, 2000).

The new service structure aimed at elimination of spurious class consciousness, equal status under unified grading system and appropriate level of participation in the decision making layers of the national secretariat, offering career opportunities to the deserving, developing a sense of belonging and harmony, establishing the principle of equal pay for equal work, and finally transforming a disorganized institution into an orderly one (UNDP, 2000, p. 32).

Scheme of Senior Services Pool (SSP) and its Implementation

In order to usher in a new era, P&SC recommended for creation of an apex cadre of senior officials of proven quality named 'Senior Services Pool' (SSP) drawn from all cadres of the civil service on the basis of merit and ability to be tested in an objective manner by the Public Service Commission (PSC). ASRC in 1973 had previously put forward similar recommendation. The SSP purportedly stood for free and open representation for all the services of Bangladesh in the key positions in the secretariat and to that extent, it represented a step which was forward looking and democratic (Emajuddin, A., 1981, p. 54). The SPP Order thus poised a sharp challenge to the domination of the generalist class and accorded specialists and the professionals an opportunity to rise to the highest policy making positions within bureaucracy.

The generalist bureaucrats accepted the principle of 'equal pay at entry level' for all cadres but foiled the scheme of 'Unified Grading System' and open service structure as envisioned in the SSP in the process of implementation as it would have enervated their established dominance over the rest of the cadres from their ranks (Obaidullah, ATM., 1995, p.14). According to Section 4 of the SSP Order all officers who have at any time before March 1, 1979 held the posts of Deputy Secretary in the Secretariat, or the post of Director and Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are to be considered automatically encadred as SSP officers from March 1, 1979 (GOB Establishment Division, Senior Service Pool Order, 1979). The automatic induction of generalist civil servants into the SSP who held the posts of Secretary, Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, and Deputy Secretary before March 1, 1979 left hardly any opportunities for other cadre officers to be represented in the SSP because CSPs and EPCSs already monopolized the top administrative positions in the secretariat. Initially only three civil servants out of 523 belonging to specialist cadres were allowed to join the SSP (Obaidullah, ATM., 1991).

Thus despite the august intention of the P&SC to create an open structure in the secretariat for specialist, the SSP Order was implemented in such a manner that the real objective behind SSP was willfully destroyed and ensured the primus inter pares of BCS Administration cadre. World Bank Report 1996 referred to the inequalities of career advancement in cadre services, though they are being equal at the entry level, inequality becomes conspicuous as

their careers progress on. For many cadres, as such, provisions for getting up to Grade 1 and 2 are non-existent in their career path, which makes cadre discrimination more glaring and commitment to profession more indifferent (Obaidullah, ATM., 2001, p. 61).

It is also alleged that SSP was even worse than the elitism of former CSPs, because the number of CSP officers was not so large as to enable them to occupy all posts reserved for them. At any point of time, members of non-CSP central and provincial members filled up around 50 per cent of the Secretariat posts and one-third of the CSP cadre posts in and outside the Secretariat (Obaidullah, ATM., 1996).

The formation of the SSP leaving such exceptions as 50 per cent of posts in the Ministry of Law virtually prohibits the lateral entry of talented outsiders into the top-rank Secretariat posts. “This cuts at the root of the claim that SSP and Unified Civil Service in the shape of BCS have done away with hitherto prevalent elitism. It merely confirmed the view that the restructuring of the higher civil service in Bangladesh has substituted super-elitism, or at any rate ensured, if in a different form for the perpetuation of the latter” (Mamoon, M. & Roy, JK., Asian Studies 198, p. 53).

However, the irony was that SSP did not even satisfy the generalists, rather precipitated intra-bureaucratic feud to an alarming extent. The BCS Administration registered the grievance that SSP as they were, marked a victory of specialists with vengeance. Specialists, on the other hand, contended that the formation of SSP was the repletion of old elitist position of CSP and EPCS in disguise (Obaidullah, ATM., 1996). In the face of the crescendo of protest from all cadres of BCS generalist and specialists, the SSP was abolished in 1989.

PARC Report 2000: An Alternative Proposal to Curve Generalist Domination

Public Administration Reform Committee (PARC) realized that fundamental cause of discontentment amongst different services for more than 60 years has been the privileges accorded to one class (generalist) over the rest. In order to come out of this inequitable cadre situation, PARC observed following actions to be taken to improve the present situation:

- Creation of cluster of functional ministries, and
- Professional policy making group

In the secretariat three clusters of closely related ministries, namely, General, Economic, Socio-Physical Infrastructure clusters should be

constituted with the posts of deputy secretary, Joint secretary, Additional Secretary and Secretary. Senior Management Pool (SMP) should be introduced consisting of the posts of DS and above. The posts of DS would be filled up from all cadre officers through competitive examination, to be conducted by the PSC. This would provide them with the opportunity to compete for higher posts in the cluster on the basis of merit, professionalism and experience. Their grievances regarding lack of opportunity to go to the top could thereby be redressed (UNDP, 2000, p. 33). For the post of DS in a cluster of ministries officers from all cadres who are in the senior scale and have completed eight years of service will be eligible for appearing at the examination. This will ensure scope of representation of all cadres at the secretariat and also facilitate fast track promotion for the meritorious officers (Ibid). Government may allow up to 15 percent lateral entry in the posts of the level of secretary and up to 10 percent in the posts of deputy secretary and above. This would reduce the stultification that inevitably results from a rigid bureaucracy. The PARC report again urged for replacement of the Class (I-IV) structure by National Grades for determining the status of any official.

The Recommendations of PARC with regard to civil service reform were not implemented. The work of Public Administration Reform Commission was severely impeded by weak political support and bureaucratic obstruction (World Bank, 2002, p. 11). The government succeeding in the next election by BNP led four party alliance did not take any interest to implement PARC recommendations. The trend has been that government succeeding in the next election discards the reform measures of the previous government.

Present Scenario in Cadre Services

At present promotion of the BCS cadre officers are administrated under Promotion Rule 2002 for promotion to the position of Deputy Secretary, Joint Secretary, Additional Secretary and Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh. Promotion Rules 2002 reserves 75 percent quota for BCS Administration cadre and 25 percent quota for other 27 cadres for promotion to the position of deputy Secretary of the government. Promotion Rule 2002 stipulates that anybody who has served in his/her cadre for 10 years of which five years in the senior scale of National Pay Grades shall be considered eligible for promotion to the position of deputy secretary subject to successful completion of 'Foundation' and 'departmental training' as determined by the government. (GOB, 1st Schedule of the Promotion Rules, 2002). And to be eligible for promotion she/he has to earn 83

out of 100 marks in the evaluation process on different criteria (GOB, 2nd Schedule of the Promotion Rules, 2002). There should not be any quota for the position of JS and above for any cadre.

Before the commencement of Promotion Rules 2002, 70 percent of the Joint Secretaries were to be made from BCS Administration and 30 percent from the rest of the cadres with five years experience as deputy secretary and total fifteen years of service in his/her respective cadres who successfully completed Advanced Course on Administration and Development (ACAD) training imparted by Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC). Or any officer who has served three years as deputy secretary and completed total twenty years of service in his her cadres may be considered eligible for promotion to the rank of Joint secretary. Now this provision is not in force. Instead, promotion to the post of JS is being considered only from amongst the existing deputy secretaries of the government who qualify for his/her merit, seniority and service records (average of ACRs) and able to earn 85 points out of hundred in the evaluation process by the Superior Selection Board (SSB) (Ibid).The issue of the abolition of the quota for JS and above was settled in a judgment by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (Mannan. A. vs. GOB, 2012).

Aftermath of Promotion Rule 2002 and the Profile of the Inter-Cadre Services

The Table below demonstrates at a glance the numerical strength of senior level officials of the government and also their belonging to their cadres—from secretary down to the deputy secretary.

Table 1. Distribution of senior level positions amongst BCS Administration and cadres

Sl No	Positions	BCS Administration	Other Cadres	Total
1	Secretary	65 (91.28%)	7 (9.72%)	72
2	Additional Secretary	209 (84.28%)	39 (15.72%)	248
3	Joint Secretary	511(82.03%)	112(17.97%)	623
4	Deputy Secretary	1415 (85.04%)	249 (14.96%)	1664

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and [www. MOPA.gov.bd](http://www.MOPA.gov.bd)

The Table 1 shows the present scenario of the glaring imbalance in the promotion expectancy of other cadre officials vis-à-vis BCS Administration cadre. Promotion Rule 2002 makes provision for 25 percent reservation of deputy secretary for other cadres. But as of March 31, 2013 functional cadres occupy 249 deputy secretary positions out of 1415 which constitutes only 14.96 percent of their stipulated quota. At the secretary level, situation of functional cadre is abysmally low. And for Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary, the situation is also far from satisfactory.

Thus it is not exaggeration to say that Promotion Rule 2002 has perpetuated the predominance of BCS Generalist Class despite all reform efforts pursued since independence of Bangladesh to ensure that an egalitarian Civil Service established and reservation of key positions for particular cadre abolished and equal opportunity for all cadres to represent at the decision making layer of the national secretariat exist. The position of other BCS cadres as such is no better than what they had been in the British colonial rule in India and neo-colonial rule of Pakistan.

Why Bangladesh Experiment with Egalitarianism Failed

Analysis of the situation up to 2013 makes it evident that despite all efforts during 42 years after independence egalitarian service structure could not be established and generalist domination and their elitism remained almost intact. Now the question is why the measures could not be implemented?

It is already mentioned that elitism of particular class in civil service is a matter of bureaucratic tradition of a country. It is too much to expect that a 'classless' egalitarian civil service be established in a tradition bound society which bears the legacy of elitism of generalist administrative class for more than 125 years and that such a situation can be reversed so easily. Abrupt decision of elimination of generalists' elitism and replacement by egalitarian service structure without accompanying coherent personnel policy to substitute that by specialist-functionalist cadres was not well conceived of. Egalitarianism cannot be established in a bureaucratic milieu where elitism thrives best.

When Bangladesh government in early 1970s planned to establish a new civil service structure to do away with colonial legacy, nothing was thought of about changing colonial bureaucratic culture characterized by authoritarianism, elitism, superiority complex, centralization of authority, lack of trust in subordinates and

excessive control and so on (Khan. M. M., 2013, p.55). Unified civil service and provision of equal pay and benefits to all cadres at entry level has been possible to ensure but career progression of all cadre members at equal pace cannot be guaranteed as that is subject to certain conditions. However, the experimentation of establishing egalitarian service structure through the scheme of SSP that was underway in the 1980s which was ended in fiasco because of political intervention from the highest level of the government and built-in flaws in the provision of SSP Order particularly in respect of induction of its members and relaxation of qualification clause to be encadred in the SSP up to certain period without consulting Public Service Commission (PSC) nullified the purpose of constructing this pool.

The elitism of generalist service or specialist service is not an evil per se so long as it is based on merit and performance. The issue to be reckoned with is whether the civil service is based on meritocracy promoting efficiency and delivering services to the citizens.

The US civil service which was clearly supposed to be a 'spoil system' where the party that wins the elections can recruit its 'own' civil servants recognized the need for attracting competent and talented individuals through a system of merit and open competition. United States which developed its government almost in stark contrast to the British system of governance is one of the few large economies that do not have a career civil service in the British, Japanese or French traditions (Khurshid, A., Pakistan Development Review vol, 45, issue, 4, 2006, p.1233). Yet in 1978 president jimmy Carter signed a civil service reform bill that created a Senior Executive Service resembling the Elite service in Pakistan. Almost half of the US senior federal executive service positions are reserved for career civil servants and the rest majority are filled competitively (Ibid).

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is comprised of the persons who possess well-honed executive skills and share a broad perspective of government and a public service commitment which is grounded in the Constitution. The keystone of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the SES was designed to be a corps of executives selected for their leadership qualifications. Members of the SES serve in the key positions just below the top Presidential appointees. SES members are the major link between these appointees and the rest of the Federal work force. They operate and oversee nearly every government activity in approximately 75 Federal agencies.

Recently several developed countries have adopted a scheme of establishing an elite apex cadre for highest level policy advisory services to the executive after the experience of SES (Halligan. J., 1996, in Hans Bekke, James Perry and Theo Toonen, 1996, pp. 227-246) In Khurshid, A. 2006, p.1230).

The Table below compares SES systems in US, Australia and New Zealand and shows some of their salient features.

Table 2. Features of Senior Civil service

Features	United States	Australia	New Zealand
Date Establishment	1979	1984	1988
Open Recruitment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Main Employment Basis	Career	Career	Contract
Executive Development	Yes	Yes	Yes
Performance appraisal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Performance Pay	Yes	No	Yes
Service Identity	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Adopted from Halligan. J. (1996)

So having an elite civil service is not the problem so long as it earns its status through a merit based system. It is the adherence to merit and the emphasis on professionalism that earns the senior civil service its elite status (Khurshid, A., 2006, p. 1234).

Having considered the necessity of an apex elite cadre almost all reforms commissions/committees constituted after independence of Bangladesh recommended senior policy pool or similar pool in any name with same purpose. However, after the failure of SSP no such scheme was put under trial though subsequent committees also suggested creation of senior policy or management pool to receive diversified experience and leadership from all segments of the civil service. Had SSP or anything like that been continued with trial and error without political influence of the incumbent government completely based on merit, by now Bangladesh could establish something like an elite apex cadre like SES to provide highest policy support to the government and minimize age old generalist-specialist rivalry.

Confrontational Party Politics and ascendance of the generalist class into ‘Super- Elite’ position

During Pakistan period (1947-71) it was alleged that higher bureaucracy used to play a role of guardian and offered hard resistance when government decisions called for change in their power and entrenched privileges in society. CSPs were held liable for non-implementation of major administrative reforms suggested by Rowland Egger, Bernard Gladieux and AR Cornelius (Khan, M. M., 1980). Now in Bangladesh, incumbent government use bureaucracy, particularly generalist bureaucrats of top echelons in their self-interest, rather than national interest, to stay longer in state power.

Confrontational politics in Bangladesh helped flourish generalist bureaucrat’s ascendance to a super elite status. Massive promotion in the secretariat positions beyond sanctioned posts without objective scrutiny and competitive examination with changes in political power causes ramification of BCS Administration all over. Present situation and recent past reminds the fact that after every new elections, party in power tried to manage the state machinery by their own people insofar as possible and leaving others on the sideline as OSDs who served the previous government. This partisan behavior of the government creates artificial vacuum in the secretariat positions and field administration. In order to fill the gap created due to putting a good number of officials as OSDs provides BCS Administration with ample opportunity to get quick promotion superseding their comparables and seniors in other cadres at different levels of administration. Since civil service reform in Bangladesh has always been subject to inter-services power struggle, and government depends to a large extent on the senior generalist civil servants than functionalists-specialists, to ensure law and order and control political opposition, civil service reform measures end up in favor of generalist bureaucrats. The field administration at all levels is administered by the generalist bureaucrats – administration and law enforcing agencies, government recourse to them during general elections to take care of elections. And field administration finds interest in it because defeat of incumbent government in the election will cause lot of sufferings for them by the succeeding government in state power. (UNDP, Edward, H. Stiglitz, 2007).

How Other Countries cope with Politicization issues in Administration: a Way Forward

There are number of partial solutions to the frontal attack of patronage system. Most novel idea – to most developing countries –

is that of hybrid appointments, i.e. a mix of merit and political considerations together. But there are variants that involve the elective introduction of merit in specific areas of government, with the expectation that these areas can move to a higher level of efficiency and probity, while other areas will continue, to bear the brunt of merit appointments (Shepherd, G., 2003, p. 17).

Brazil provides a useful example of such reform. Its federal government has evolved a system of senior appointments that combined the hybrid appointment system typical of many advanced countries with the depth of appointments characterized by US. Brazil is noteworthy as a developing country which has developed merit based civil service and successfully mixed merit and patronage elements. A World Bank Report 2000 recommended a hybrid appointment system to achieve the managed depoliticization of Brazil's civil service. The recommendations also envisaged the need for a commitment to a gradual decrease in the scope of political appointments.

Most developed countries separate political appointments from merit appointments; with a fairly restrictive approach to the number of political appointments. Some of these countries make significant numbers of hybrid appointments: typically, qualified candidates of whatever political color are placed in a pool and selections are then made using political criteria. There are also arrangements to minimize the risk of candidates entering the pool, for instance by allowing the civil servants having employment through the pool to reassume jobs in the regular service, once their political appointment has terminated. The application of merit criteria to hybrid appointments is usually overseen by an independent body (Ibid).The management of patronage in senior appointments differs among advanced countries. Such a system would require clear rules on the maximum number of such positions and on the merit and political criteria for selection (Ibid).

Where We Stand

The objective of the civil service reforms is to increase professionalism and capacity of the state to undertake gigantic task of development. But if it does not result in substantial improvement in the quality or professionalism of its members and delivery of services to the people, reforms carry no benefit to the polity. Foregoing discussions makes it evident that reformists' intended policy of abolishing elite cadre and establishing egalitarian civil service did not materialize. Rather, the so-called "Steel-Frame" of the civil service has become rusty and blunt because of undermining merit in the career of civil services for indulging excessively on party politics in their management. Both Awami League and

Bangladesh Nationalist Party allegedly have their own ‘team’ of civil servants who were patronized and promoted not on merit but on their perceived loyalty to their respective political masters (World Bank, 2002).

In the initial years after independence of Bangladesh policy makers thought that existence of elitism of generalist cadre constructed the basic hindrance of building a new civil service structure to be dedicated to the cause of massive development of war ravaged economy. Constitution of an egalitarian civil service with equal opportunity of career progression of all cadres at the decision making layer of the national secretariat on the other hand therefore would be major solution. In his book *Bangladesh Civil Service*, Shawkat Ali in describing the civil service reforms in Bangladesh after 1971, states: recommendations of reorganization and reform of civil service were dominated by the obsession with concept of elitism, which had to be brokenthe overemphasis on egalitarian approach to recruitment to and promotion in civil service may well lead to compromise in efficiency (Ali, AMMS., 2004 in Khurshid, A., 2006). As a matter of fact, despite the declared policy of abolishing elite cadre of generalist civil servants in Bangladesh, their *defacto* dominance has increased over the rest of the cadres instead of being decreased.

One of the reasons underlying for counter-productive result may be that Bangladesh tried to adopt a very substantive reform measure without taking into consideration of the scope of reform in a given time and capacity of the state to absorb such reforms and confront likely risk involved in it. No alternative arrangement was planned for substituting abrupt withdrawal of generalist officials hitherto occupying all policy making and policy implementation positions by specialist –functionalist cadres.

Actually the necessity of elite service is recognized in developed democracies for ensuring more efficient service and high level policy analysis support to the chief executive. Even in case of Pakistan when CSPs allegedly reined over state affairs their efficiency and competence never came into question. It can be argued that the administrative reform policy in post independent Bangladesh initiating a radical trend of abolishing elitism of generalist bureaucracy not only ended in fiasco, rather caused degeneration of meritocracy in the whole process of civil service management -- lowering its standards in recruitment, promotion,

performance and professionalism of the civil service. People, by and large, lost confidence in the civil service of the country and hold the perception that they belong more to the party in power than to the republic, engaged in fulfilling the desire of party in power rather than national interest.

At present there is no elite cadre in principle and any senior policy or management pool for ensuring representation of specialist-functional cadres in top decision making level. The provision of reservation of 75% post of deputy secretary for BCS Administration and 25% for all other cadres under Promotion Rule 2002 and no quota reservation for joint secretary and above for any cadre ensures the monopoly of BCS Administration over the rest the cadres (GOB 1st Schedule of the Promotion Rules, 2002). The present arrangement thus makes it certain that under no circumstance officers of other cadres can be promoted to the rank of joint secretary beyond 25% at most. Practical scenario is even far worse.

Indiscriminate creation of supernumerary posts for Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary and Deputy Secretary and their appointments creates a chaotic situation in the national secretariat (Mazumder, A. I., Prothom Alo, March 19, 2013). As such the national secretariat has twice as many staff as it requires. And large scale allegations have been made that comparatively better merit, efficient and senior officials have been superseded by junior and incompetent ones on political consideration. WB observes that “...nearly half of the staff who are reemployed after reaching their retirement age being rewarded for political ties, rather than in recognition of their skill and expertise” (WB, 2002, p. 71). The Table below shows the difference between sanctioned posts and existing staff at three layers of the secretariat.

Table 3. Discrimination between sanctioned posts and existing positions in the Bangladesh Secretariat

Position	Sanctioned Post	Present staff
Deputy Secretary	830	1530
Joint Secretary	430	623
Additional Secretary	107	249

Source: Good Governance, Ali Imam Mazumder, Prothom Alo, March 19, 2013

The large scale political promotion on the one hand brought morale of the non-partisan civil servants at the lowest and opened Pandora's' box for the inferior and incompetent to move up to the highest policy level on the other. Bangladesh government could counteract this politicization issue in administration by emulating hybrid appointment model followed in developed and developing countries. And meritocracy and professionalism could have been held high had Bangladesh government adopted an apex cadre of policy and management pool without being politically influenced after the experience of the US SES and other developed country experiences. Country needs the service of the elite cadre of diverse expertise of different segments of civil service not a privileged class of any one cadre at the highest level for better policy advice and dynamic administration of the country.

Concluding Remarks

Foregoing discussion suggests that all major reform efforts aimed at establishing a classless egalitarian service structure of civil service after independence of Bangladesh have been foiled either due to the inherent shortcomings of the reform measures or political interference of the government. In principle though the elite civil service like CSP does not exist yet elitism of BCS Administration does exist. But it is not based on meritocracy and track records; rather on their affiliation to party in power which is detrimental to the country. Bangladesh needs to get out this vicious cycle by any means to establish an efficient and professional civil service to dedicate to the cause of national development where class consciousness would not act as barrier. Recruitment and promotion at all levels should be based on merit, performance, and personal attributes and bureaucracy would maintain its impersonal character irrespective of any party in power as expected of them.

End Note: * Speech delivered on August, 2, 1827, in the House of Commons on Indian Affairs,
See <http://latasinha.wordpress.com/2009/05/03/bureaucracy-in-india-before-independence>.

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