**CSS: A Curse or Blessing?**

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CSS results are out and the performance of students has been dismal. More than 30 thousand appear on the test, but only a few hundred have passed the exam. From this scant number, there will be people left to be allocated because of a short number of seats. Given the result and resources spent on this test, it seems CSS has become a curse for the country than a solution.

More importantly, given this context of time, it is an outdated way of hiring public servants for running the machinery of the state for the fact that it is draining the resources of students who are capable of aiding society as good teachers, as researchers, as doctors and as engineers are appearing in this test; leaving their professions for the sake of perk and privileges.

Every year, thousands of candidates appear in the CSS test–from engineers to doctors to social science students. They invest their energies in this test for years. Despite being outstanding in their professions, they want to become CSPs because they know this is the only way to satisfy their family needs and overcome social pressure. They also know the fact that they cannot be respected in their society until they crack CSS or PMS. For these reasons, they want to crack these tests, depriving society of good modern doctors, engineers and teachers, and so on and so forth.

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This trend is not only dangerous for society but also for the state for the reason that those who can develop a soft image of Pakistan by studying its culture, traditions and history are not doing their job. Those who can nurture the upcoming generation as teachers are careless about the future of this country, and above all, those who can work as a researcher to enhance political and social discourse based on social problems are not providing the cures to the socio-political ills of this country. Everyone is doing someone else’s job, exacerbating the crisis of the state. This is why tests like CSS and PMS are more problematic for a country like Pakistan where every person from the middle class want to pass it to change his or her class.

Another reason why Pakistan is suffering economically is that it has failed to produce highly educated economists who can lead the country out of the economic crisis with locally-based economic solutions. Had Pakistan developed good economists, Pakistan would have been far better in terms of exporting its local products and creating their worth in the international market. It is not that Pakistan has nothing to sell to the world. Rather, it has everything to sell to the world as it has resources, minerals and tourism points. It can attract the attention of the world if they are presented amicably to the international markets. For that, economic vision is required with experts in place in every department from the mineral sector to education and local businesses. That is why Pakistan has to shift its talent to other sectors of the state instead of putting its all eggs in the basket of bureaucrats who come to rule us cramming a few notes.

More than anything else, Pakistan needs social scientists who can analyze our societal and state issues and provide us with evidence based on solutions. For that, Pakistan needs to focus on the educational sector and produce good quality and evidence-based research. This can only be achieved via spending in the sector of education. Until Pakistan focus on resource building via schools, colleges and universities, ours will be a barren land with ghosts of educational institutions everywhere failing to add value to society. Until Pakistan gives equal respect to its teachers as it is given to mere technical bureaucrats, it will suffer in the longer term.

Moreover, it is known to us all that Pakistani cities are crumbling. Their infrastructure is rusted, failing to accommodate its public. Buildings are being built everywhere without thinking, resulting in damage to the climate and public places at the same time. This is a big failure on the part of the engineers that the country is producing. It is therefore Pakistan needs to focus on producing talented and skilled engineers rather than providing a way for them to induct into administrative services via CSS or PMS. For every department of life, there should be a test like CSS so that every person in every profession can serve the state in the right manner. Hiring engineers or doctors in administrative services is no less a disaster. Pakistani policymakers and its government thus need to think along these lines.

Last but not the least, CSS as a test is a curse for it has created a herd mentality in our students who can otherwise serve as an asset to the state. The only way out of this crisis is to give respect to every profession by conducting similar standard tests that are in place for CSS or PMS. Leaving the nation to the romanticisation of CSS, as shown by CSPs via social media, would incur further damage.

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