**Moving from inputs to output**

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Productivity is defined as the ratio between output over inputs (output/inputs). In other words, inputs are always to be measured against output. The transformation mechanism that converts inputs to output is called a ‘process’. Only a well-defined and managed process can result in a desirable output otherwise it turns into a futile activity or wasted motion also termed in Punjabi as ‘Ania-Janian’. Unfortunately, in the land of the pure, output is neither measured nor it matters any more in almost all government departments.

Here I must admit that most of the teachers who taught us were focused on their students, they considered us their most cherished output. They were always proud of their wards and remained in constant touch with them; no one ever talked or complained about the inputs, it was the output that mattered. Most of them were role models to follow and emulate.

Dr Nazir Ahmed, the legendary Principal of Government College Lahore, paddled every morning to work. In the cold weather of December he would wear an overcoat in the morning, which he would then fold in the afternoon and carry back on the bicycle carrier. Dr Khawaja Salahuddin, Director Institute of Chemical Engineering and Technology, University of Punjab had a very limited wardrobe, he spent all his salary on building his library. He did not wear warm clothes; in summers it was a half sleeve ‘Kurta’ while in winter it was full sleeves. Every morning, he arrived on the campus at 8am and left around 8pm. After his death his collection of books was donated to the Dyal Singh Library.

[Security forces kill one terrorist in South Waziristan](https://nation.com.pk/13-Apr-2021/security-forces-kill-one-terrorist-in-south-waziristan)

Professor Shakir Ali of the National College of Arts was a chip of the same block. The list is long—these teachers laid the foundations of the nation by building both institutions and individuals to man them. It was their output that kept Pakistan on course. In 1995, we had five world championships; today, we do not have a single Olympic Gold Medal as everyone seems worried about usurping the input perks with total disregard for output.

When the British decided to knight Dr Muhammad Iqbal with the title of Sir, he insisted that before his elevation, his first teacher and guide Syed Mir Hassan of Sialkot should be recognised. The title of Shams-ul-Ulama was then bestowed upon Mir Sahib. Both Dr Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz considered themselves to be a product of this great scholar of Arabic and Sufism.

A good product speaks for itself; it hardly needs any publicity. Ultimately it is the output that matters, the inputs are mostly consumed and also wasted at times. It is widely believed in Urdu language that every century is dominated by a single poet. The 20th century belonged to Iqbal, though Faiz could also have been a claimant had he been born in another.

[Japan decides to release Fukushima wastewater into sea](https://nation.com.pk/13-Apr-2021/japan-decides-to-release-fukushima-wastewater-into-sea)

It goes to the credit of Mir Sahib that he produced two stalwarts—one was recognised by London while the other won the highest award in Moscow. The foundations were laid by this great scholar who worked with minimum inputs to produce two outstanding men of letters who proved to be the pride of mankind. Where have all these great nation builders gone? Have they been deliberately sidetracked and hounded?

Lalu Parsad, a not very literate man, rose to be the Chief Minister of Bihar and then the Railway Minister of India. He turned around the Indian Railways by linking inputs with output. He enforced SOPs under which every case that was put up to him had a column titled, ‘Benefit to the public?’ If an increase in fares was proposed, the output improvement had to be justified otherwise the file was returned unsigned. Pakistan Railways (PR) can also be turned around if the focus shifts to output. It is widely believed that PR has a record of expeditious recovery from ill-fated accidents but a poor record of avoiding them. In Italian, the service is called ‘Ferro Via’ which means an Iron Pathway.

[TLP protest causes gridlocks across country](https://nation.com.pk/13-Apr-2021/tlp-protest-causes-gridlocks-across-country)

All inputs have to be focused on the maintenance of tracks and wheels to ensure the desired output of safe movement, but this is not the case in the land of the pure. Trains get derailed, recovery operations are carried out and business as usual continues for another calamity to strike anywhere/time.

The performance of the bureaucracy and the judiciary also remains pathetic and input-centric with almost nil output. Both are overloaded with unresolved cases with no relief in sight for the public. While the inputs have increased manifold, output has declined.

The masses who demand results neither count nor matter while the officers and judges enjoy the perks of the job. The pensions bill in Punjab has crossed the Trillion Rupees mark. Such inputs are no longer sustainable, it is time to review the output from this huge state expense. As Chairman Pakistan Science Foundation (2002 to 2005) almost all the cases I reviewed were of a personal nature. There were mostly individual issues of promotion, house rent, bills etc with no focus on output.

[Protest held against makers of counterfeit cigarettes](https://nation.com.pk/13-Apr-2021/protest-held-against-makers-of-counterfeit-cigarettes)

I soon realised that I would be bogged down by input demands with no time left to worry about output performance of the foundation. Almost all government departments operate in this zero-output mode totally concerned about inputs only. I decided to decentralise the working of the Chairman’s office. For most individual/personal issues ‘Grievance Committees’ were formed under respective department heads, with appeal jurisdiction to the Chairman

 PSF was created by an act of the parliament in 1973 for the promotion of Science and Technology leading to socioeconomic development. Yes, the employees had to be facilitated but not at the cost of the organisational goals of the foundation. Those who came in the way were dealt with under the law but there was no compromise on performance and output. If Pakistan has to move forward, key performance indicators have to be identified and then delivered.

Consumption and more consumption with no output can no longer be tolerated, the non-productive bubble can burst at any time. Currently, there is stagnation not evolution which eventually results in a bloody revolution as rightly pointed out by the Prime Minister.