[Mindless Administrative Reforms Part-II](https://nation.com.pk/08-Oct-2019/mindless-administrative-reforms" \t "_new)

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7. Pakistan is one of the very few countries where policy making at almost all levels of Federal and Provincial tiers is controlled by “generalists” instead of specialists and experts of the respective fields. For a graduate ( or a post graduate) it would take at least twelve to fifteen years to be an expert of one specific field, whereas a ‘generalist’ administrator of old CSP/DMG and at present Admin Service remains “jack of all trades and master of none” in this age of specialization. After his appointment as Assistant Commissioner and then Deputy Commissioner, he becomes the head of one provincial department after another. He becomes policy maker as head of Education department, then Health department, Finance and Taxation, Communication then Home department to Irrigation, Industry to Agriculture/Food, to Live Stock, to Labour Manpower, Social Welfare to Local Government and Rural Development and so on. Likewise, he also heads the Federal departments and is a policy maker at highest level without any specific expertise and involvement in any single field. That explains the lack of long term planning and priorities in our country for the last 72 years. The generalists have not even spared the corporations and posts at divisional levels with purely specialized jobs, which greatly discourage the professionals like engineers, educationists and technical experts, resulting in what is called “brain drain” – the experts leaving the country.

8. The main excuse is the propaganda that professionals are bad administrators besides being biased because of inter-professional jealousies and (personality) clashes. The generalists have succeeded to use this propaganda for their supremacy because: (a) they have numerical dominance in the decision making bodies. They endorse each other’s point of view and have tremendous maneuverability and power of manipulation as a mafia (headed by Chief Secretary in a Province), since they control almost all the departments and organizations; (b) they control Establishment Division at the Centre and Services Department at the provincial level; (c) they develop connections during their postings in the field with politicians, landlords and industrialists and utilize them very successfully; (d) they are very often secretly instrumental in organizing and provoking pressure groups, political elements and vocal influentials, advising them to raise demands through electronic and press, media, processions and strikes. Information is selectively leaked out highlighting government’s weaknesses with negative propaganda to achieve desired results; (e) articles are got published for and against certain issues, delegations are arranged and then reports/summaries are prepared by using intelligence agencies to their own interest.

9. At district level, this redundant and outdated system has become core of corruption and inefficiency. Almost every days, there have been complaints in one form or the other, both from public and local specialized departments, in which root cause was found to be this decadent system. The A.C , D.C and the Commissioner, with the help of Tehsildars and other officials have been obliging the politicians for arranging their jalsas, meetings, and meet their expenses for boarding and lodging, resorting to every trick of sycophancy, besides rendering useful “advice” and “expertise” in local affairs. The Tehsildars and Patwaris, everybody knows, fleece the public openly and even a copy of an ordinary legal document of ‘fard’ is not issued without charging illegal money. Same is the case when various bills or cheques are signed or contracts (of development projects) are signed by ACs, DCs or Commissioners. These officers were known as Political Agents for administering the Tribal Areas and it is well known that smuggling and kidnapping was sponsored by their subordinates in those areas. Despite all these open malpractices, they make everybody believe that they are the guardians of honesty as they cannot be caught. There are more than 30 departments in every district and it is not possible to know and co-ordinate their functions by a mediocre officer. Their primary job is relevant to land revenue and land settlement/property rights as “mall afsar”. This system has been left by them obsolete and full of complications, resulting in over-delayed litigations, enmities and mutual rivalries among a large section of population with wastage of time and public energy.

10. The officers of various departments have been complaining that ACs and DCs do not understand the technicalities of the departments and they keep bossing over them just to impose their supremacy. These professional and technical officers are very often insulted and humiliated just because they disagreed on technical grounds. If something goes wrong, the officer of the concerned department is to be blamed. This also includes the Police department. But if everything goes well then AC, DC and Commissioner gets all the credit. The generalist head of any organization, department or ministry has hardly ever been held responsible for bad performance and inefficiency of his institution. Instead the non-D.M.G subordinates are made the victim because generalist officers are good at presenting the executive summaries with superficial knowledge of every type. This supremacy of ignorant generalists over professional competence has resulted in continuous brain drain due to disillusionment of professional talent. Even if a professional is appointed head of any organization, the working conditions are made very difficult for him by different methods till he is got out of the post. A very senior and honest Chartered Accountant appointed as a Commissioner of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, was not provided a Stenographer for one year. A classic example is that of great nuclear scientist, Dr. Abdqul Qadeer Khan, who was humiliated by the bureaucrats to such an extent that he had almost decided to leave the country. But the timely action of the then head of the government persuaded him to stay back, by giving him full authority and control over his organization.

11. The officers of DMG/Administrative Services are deadly against devolution of powers particularly at local level, which is the main aim of the present government to empower people at grass root level. The reason is quite obvious. They would lose their supremacy for ruling over the people through public representatives. According to a report of UNO experts on Asian Democracies “the elitist culture of bureaucracy by itself is divisive producing distorted values with wrong kind of expertise having no relevance to the living knowledge of society’s needs and possibilities …. some governments are trying to top-down the processes of ‘development’ that seek to serve the masses through bureaucracies and the vested interests, the very agents from whom masses could be liberated …. the result is a continued degeneration of Asian personality starving, semi-starving, dehumanization of millions who have lost their self-respect and sense of their own potential”. Many reports of various Commissions and Committees on Administrative Reforms during the last more than sixty years have been submitted to various Governments. This includes Cornelius Report (Pay & Services Report 1620), and also during Z.A Bhutto’s period, in which similar observations were made. In a seminar, an expert of very high credibility had remarked : “either you save Pakistan by getting rid of the generalist administrators as policy makers, or you save ACs, DCs, Commissioners and their class as policy makers”.

12. The Generalist Officers, as the remnant of the past Colonial rule, enjoy unmatched powers and privileges having no specific and direct responsibility. Even as a district collector and in charge of land settlement their figures about lands, crops and other related matters are frequently fudged and incorrect, as is evident from the fact that hardly any correct appraisal could be made about productivity of land and crops in any year by any government. On the contrary corruption is quite rampant right under their nose in the offices of Tehsildars, Registrars, Patwaris and Magistrates.

13. They are known by the seat they occupy and not by expertise they have. Therefore they cannot enhance the status of the institutions they head and instead they reduce their level to the level of their mediocrity. They vehemently oppose any purposeful changes in the system for fear of losing the power and supremacy and they have keen desire to get the past glory restored. As regards law and order, it is increasingly becoming specific to Police Organization. The Police Officers are rightly protesting against the bureaucratic attempt to revert to colonial system Police should be headed by Police Commissioner as is the practice in various countries including India and Japan etc. A thorough study was made in this regard during General Musharraf’s time and Police Law was properly amended keeping in view the requirement of our society. So to make the Police subordinate to AC, DC or Commissioner will not work and will create damaging problems for the government.

Let us hope that government would avoid repeating unnecessary and outdated experimentations, and better sense would prevail in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister.

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