

**Messing in Pakistan**  
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**Introduction to the Mess**

What with the conflicts going on within and around us, should we not do something to resolve those within the country. Of course, there is no single solution to bring us out of the woods. If it is possible to attack a big problem in part, the solving of which can have a multiplier effect it should be one facet that should be addressed as a top priority.

No one can deny we are in the throes of severe moral decay which reflects itself in many ways. One symptom is corruption. Not that this is anything new, but it appears we are moving fast from a failed government to something far worse. No one can deny that the two of the three traditional pillars of state are being needled by the judiciary, which is fighting a valiant battle to ensure its own survival for all of us. For survival it is. No one can deny that the executive arm of the government is chasing its own tail in a fog of hypocrisy. This is reflected in several of the well known scams, the circular debt, inaction by our water losses to counter Indian water terrorism (eg Baghliar). The list could be expanded. Locally look at what happened in Sialkot on more than one occasion.

No one can deny that the executive is reluctant to take action on critical judgements of the supreme judicial body if only through interminable delayed "action". Justice delayed in justice denied. Executive action that should be taken, and if not at the right time is far worse than at the wrong.

Who can deny that many our legislators firmly believe that a fake degree is a degree to be reckoned with! It escapes their attention that an immoral foundation must lead to higher levels of moral decay. We are working towards becoming history, rather than making it!

Can any one deny, if the skimming of billions of rupees of taxpayers money were put into vertical circulation the middle and lower classes peoples of Pakistan would have a much higher quality of life. In fact there would be no poverty. Conditions are getting more and more miserable for the vast majority of our 175 million. The current floods have disrobed all the civil government institutions, not to talk of many politicians.

Who can deny that such a disequilibrated condition will not lead to social earthquakes in an effort to find an new but equitable equilibrium or at least something better? Remember has it not been said that God will never permit the obliteration of any society that looks after its citizens fairly, even though they may be steeped in "shirk" (for which they will have to individually answer for later).

The malaise list can also be expanded, but to what effect? Don't we know all this? What we do not want to learn is how to harness technology to help us out of this self-excavated hole which we have readily jumped into. Technology provides the know-how to solve problems all sorts in man made systems, be they of transportation, of water, of institution building etc... Digitization is the preferred pathway : by no means easy, maybe capital intensive in absolute terms, but with long term benefits continuing, provided we ensure its proper maintenance. After all it is based on knowledge, and knowledge is priceless. There are so many facets that need to be attacked but let us look at one which could have a massive domino effect with low capital investment affecting the improvement in the effectiveness of state governance ie improving productivity. Look at the rubbish bins of old, followed by triangular skips, now large rectangular skips, there are two outside my residence and that is also growth of the kind that should not be our goal.

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Can anyone deny that making existing assets more productive is the best way of initiating constructive progress? The capital investment has already been sunk. It appears we are fearful of upsetting the abominable status quo. But remember time can never be recycled, it advances whether you like it or not.. Being courageous is not the absence of fear, it is the will to do what is right even though one may be afraid. This is what really matters in the executive processes. The approximately correct decision at the right time is much better than the perfect, long after the event. This is where confidence in top management is necessary. This is also where judicial accountability works against this concept because it is curative. We must look forward, and that is prevention. It means not finding out all the wrong answers (easy enough) but asking the right questions (try it). Believe it or not, the judiciary will achieve the independence it wishes to sustain only when and until the Executive achieves its independence.

### **On trying to resolve the Mess**

Pakistan came into being starting with the Vision of Allama Iqbal (with posthumous prompting by Syed Ahmed Khan). The Vision was converted into a Mission to achieve Pakistan by Jinnah, which he achieved. The need in achieving the Mission, led to the definition of the Goals/Objectives that prompted Jinnah's lieutenants to investigate , e.g. electoral alliances. The Muslim League/Congress alliance we know led to the 1937 elections when the Indian National Congress unilaterally jettisoned the Muslim League leading another route to Pakistan, in which the Muslim Youth were also harnessed. The Dawn newspaper started publication (founded by Jinnah) our disassociation from the Quit India movement, electioneering to the assemblies, increasing the membership of the Muslim League ..... Each had its own Objective or Goal to help achieve the Mission.

The next stage was to work this out to move ahead. This stage was basically of Strategy or allocating resources for whatever had to be physically achieved including, amongst others : naming individuals and defining what they had to do, raising funds, increasing Muslim League membership, organizing processions, preparing memoranda, dealing with the local administrations, checking electoral rolls and arranging transport getting donations. This is the statagization stage .

To meet the above needs of the Strategy (allocation of resources) detailed instructions had to worked out, a secretariat and several offices (regional/local) were set up because this is the level where the physical work was actually accomplished. Strategy is therefore more flexible than the other requirements.

To summarize : the Vision/Mission/Goals-Objectives/Strategies which are intellectual activities, performed away from the madding crowd, in meetings sitting in comfortable surroundings.

Looking at our current situation, what with drones, suicide bombings, the terrible flood, even increasing scams (when ERRA is investigated, it will be the biggest by far), political shenanigans, denying flood hit Sindhis access to Karachi, forgetting how they welcomed all those who escaped with their lives in 1947..... The list makes it difficult to see light at the end of the tunnel. We need to strive harder as enjoined by Quaid-e-Azam. There is no peak that cannot be humbled if we conquer ourselves first. "Self reverence, self-knowledge , self-control these three alone lead life to sovereign power" (Tennyson) is in conformity with what is given to us in our book of Guidance or the Glorious Quran. Fig 1 below indicates the above.



FIG - 1

However, in Pakistan it now looks like this because of an additional tier. This is part of the big disconnect. This Void is basically an administrative no-man's land shown in Fig 2 below.

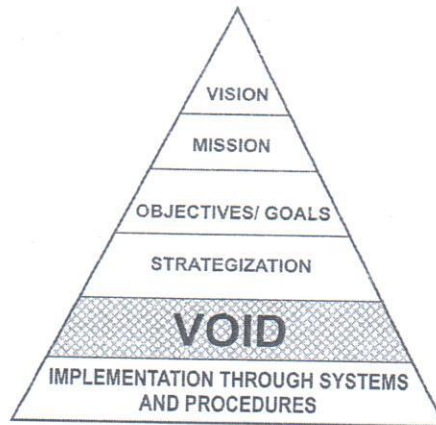


FIG - 2

It is in the Administrative No Man's land and where the foundations of institutionalized corruption are well and truly laid. We need an accurate definition of the ground level systems and procedures (S&P), which must be kept current. No department can claim this, because they have not budgeted the resources annually (financial, human, equipmentwise) to ensure maintainability. The result is that the junior lackeys manufacture on the "spot" fixes, (like cricket fixing noballs at will, not to talk of wides). To amplify three examples are given below:

**Obtaining a death certificate:**

On applying the applicant is asked fill in a form. The lackey then says the address given on of your residence is wrong. On being told it's been there since 1947/48 he says that is incorrect, prove it to me (there Is no known procedure/instruction to prove this wrong) and so it goes on. No senior officer dare interfere because the systems donkey work is far too much hard work to lay down on account of the disjointed procedural incrementation of red tape over the years. The result is speed money.

**Police Complaint:**

**Concerning a Police Station:** Three vehicles were leased through a Bank. Two different agreements were prepared and signed with a gap of about two months. Under one agreement a Range Rover was obtained whereas under the second agreement a Toyota Corolla and a Mehran. The Range Rover was stolen and an application for theft was filed with the concerned Thana. An FIR was lodged and copies

were sent to the Bank and Insurance Company. The Corolla and Mehran installments were paid regularly but after some time the bank sent some gundas who took possession of the cars for Range Rover for non-payment. The company got court orders that the SHO lodge an FIR against the Bank and gundas. The Bank somehow got to know and approached the Police Station, resultantly the matter was kept pending. Finally, the applicant was asked to visit the Thana to take part in the investigation. The lawyer visited the Thana and debated with the Police and Bank people. The point is, we were there to discuss as to why two cars were forcibly taken away by the bank using gundas when there were no arrears in installments, hence no default. We asked the bank to prove that if there was a default, they could not. If there was no default, then the bank's action was illegal and an FIR should have been lodged. But to our surprise, the bank and Police were insisting on bracketing the Range Rover case. They argued why are you not paying the installments of the Range Rover. They were told that the Range Rover case was entirely different and it had nothing to do with the cars and that we are here to discuss the court order; not the stolen Range Rover. Moreover, we explained that when you will call us for Range Rover case, we will be there to discuss it, but today we are here to discuss Corolla and Mehran. But, they didn't listen to us. The conclusion is that the thana SHO concocted a procedure -- not authorized by any SOP -- on the spot ie in real time which is part of the, VOID, the administrative no-man's land. Would any senior police officer dare to put it right?

#### **A semi-autonomous office:**

Was visited on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, the lift was not used as it was liable to be affected without notice by power cuts which had actually been experienced – an earlier really bad experience, to deposit a letter with enclosures. There were three enclosures. (1) Revised Form-29 dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009, (2) Revised Form-29 dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 and, (3) An Affidavit, cancelling the previous Form-29s of 2009-2010. At the reception the duty clerk refused to accept the letter saying why are you depositing revised Forms instead of a new one? He was told that this is none of his business, that he was there to accept and give a receipt of the documents handed over to him. But he insisted and refused to do so. Naukarshahi at its best. An approach had then to be made to the concerned Dy. Registrar, (the boss), he reluctantly signed on the letter and we went back to the same person and showed him the signature. The papers were accepted and a receipt obtained. The reception clerk had created a new procedure on the spot because there were no current SOPs. Incidentally the Dy Registrar's office was elsewhere, resulting in a lot of inconvenience. Does anyone think there is a relevant up to date SOP for this? Since there is not, the VOID includes this procedure as an unexpected no ball/wide, in real time

The above three examples are very condensed versions of real life. Multiply this by thousands. It's happening all the time. The administrative no man's land, is therefore, full of unpredictables, pot holes, mines, no balls, wides and what not increasing over the years as one lackey is replaced by another. The constant is speed money.

The situation may be better indicated in Fig 3 below.

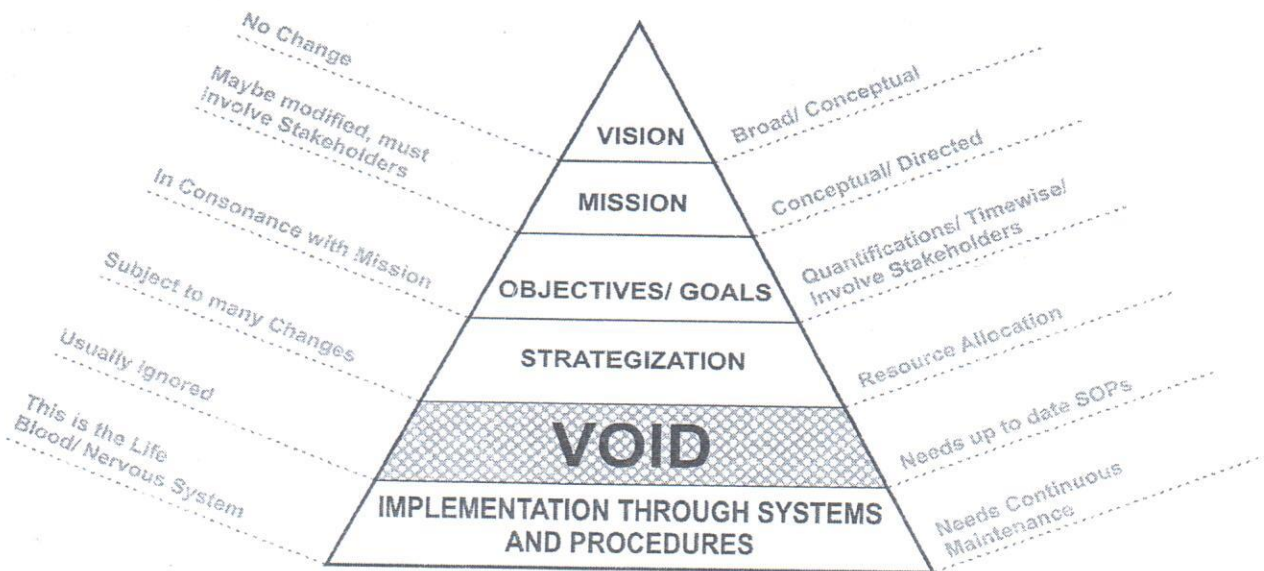


FIG - 3

How does one get down to Level 6 through the thickets of no man's land which is unmapped territory? Level 5 (VOID) this level forms the disconnect between the intellectual activities in levels 1, 2, 3 & 4 and actual physical implementation *through* up to date SOPs. Unless Level 5 is defined explicitly and this information is available to the harassed citizen, he will always be at the mercy of Level 5 sharks. There are techniques to take care of this. These are the managerial tactics, which are explicitly defined in the form of SOPs. This ensures strategies can be successively achieved, because a defaulting individual can be held accountable by those who are responsible for proper departmental functioning (higher up). Otherwise, it will be like having a route map of Lahore of the year 1910 trying move from Neela Gumbad to house number 99 in Defence Housing Authority situated in Block X, Street 7. You will never ever arrive. Maybe after wasting time and fuel (ie money) arriving to find out that the inmate of House No 99 is out. Frustration all around. This also explains why the best plans are not implemented properly, leading to failures of Strategies.

The corruption at level 5 (fig 3) is of a different nature to that at the higher levels wherein it depends on providing a supplier/contractor/consultant..... favours at the expense of the State, in the form of a prepaid kickbacks. We have much of this being worked out on a catch as catch can fashion. Call it Scamistan, Quickbuckistan, Kickbackistan or what have you. Each individual "corruptions" act can run into billions. At the implementation level involving this Void the sums of money involved are much less, but is happening all the time.

It follows that it is a fact that the devil always lies in the detail. In agreements, the fine print conditions disagreements e.g when obtaining a credit card or overdraft there are pages of fine print, this detail is all important. In computer programming it is exactly the same, all conventions must be rigourously adhered to and it goes down to binary, the ultimate in detail. In manufacturing the log sheets consist of operating details, which again are made use of later to determine in which shift, which operator did what to a particular machine providing an answer to why a particular lot/batch is not up to standard. Similarly the accountants cash book provides details at the operational level of the movement of money. Likewise the patwari's land record registers has details down to the last square inch defining ownership. It would not be out of place to mention, brought out in a recent article involving foreign policy by Arif Ayub in Nation that the Americans did not consider the inter tribe and sub-tribe rivalries (attention to detail!) which ultimately led to a wrong policy being adopted on the other side of the Durand line. The important point

is that there has to be a methodology of recording all that is going on ie current status leading to success or failure of the expectations higher level intellectual activities mentioned earlier.

After all even if our macro economic indicators look good, the micro economy is not. Even if our plans are good implementation leaves much to be desired. Even if our strategies are excellent there are failures at the tactical levels. Even if our wholesaling is well worked out there is failure at the retail point of sale level; this has also been observed at Sunday bazaars.

The first requirement is to admit that the situation arises out of the rejection of technological (amoral) inputs. Technology is the know-how to solve problems all sorts in man made systems, shows the way. We have consistently rejected this; witness results of several suo motos leading to excessive executive reaction at the higher levels. Recognition of this big disconnect (VOID) will help in moving forward, reducing the fog of administrative behaviour. All defined processes do produce expected results consistently because they have an environmental transparency which makes it possible to keep matters in balance, making the incremental beneficial changes from time to time providing satisfaction to the stakeholders. The alternative is to add on incrementally disjointed adjustments (as at present), ending up in swathes of red tape which suits the lower lackeys as well as the higher ups who "benefit" from this form of mismanagement or misgovernance.

There are several techniques to map how work flows. The first stage is to provide a true reflection of current status with all its warts and imperfections, involving the stakeholders who "work" the processes (S&P). This exposure will make it obvious where matters go off kilter. Doing something about it comes later, in any case top management support is required. Since this article is meant to make us cognizant of the disease of misgovernance, it avoids attacking the main symptom ie corruption. This approach is preventive ie forward looking not trying to prove who is wrong, that should be left to the curative (penal) agencies who, so far have made a right royal mess of that too! The writer has made use of both extensively and intensively of the concepts brought out in improving institutional capabilities in several organizations over the years and firmly believes good practice produces excellent theory, not necessarily the other way around. It is such theory, firmly based on the scientific, empirical or the inductive method that can help resolve, to a very great extent, the self-made mess we are wallowing in.

A description of a powerful mapping technique was authored by the writer about forty years ago. It can be obtained through : [masoodh12@gmail.com](mailto:masoodh12@gmail.com)

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