

**ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS
THE SIMPLE VS. THE COMPLEX***
by Masood Hasan

The increasing pace of living in this world has created several anomalies which we face daily. The commercial jet at 600 mph (shortly to be 1400 mph) overflies bullock cart with its small wooden wheels unchanged since Mohenjo-Daro in its heyday! The ubiquitous teleprinter printing out messages from all over the world on the one hand and the difficulty of communicating with an individual just 30 miles away on the other! Examples can be multiplied many times. The problem of adjustment in the face of such dichotomies is very real. The answer to these difficulties lies in the human beings capacity to transcend the outdated traditional way of doing things. This is basically a problem of thinking differently, a very difficult change to bring about indeed. Of course, we require nothing imported, save objectivity, in utilizing our intellectual faculties to accept the new.

A FARMER may be faced with any or all of the following problems:

- a) Irrigation canal water is not available at the right time.
- b) No electricity for the tube-well.
- c) Fertiliser deliveries are delayed indefinitely.
- d) The new seed which is resistant to last year's blight will be delayed by one sowing season.

It would be idle to pretend that the farmers—who constitute some 74 per cent of the population in West Pakistan—can be isolated from the effects of events over which they have no control. In other words they are part of a larger organism which must be examined so as to understand what it is in the first instance, before we can attempt to rectify the situation. It is since 1962 that the Management Services Sciences have developed the tools, the ways and means to relate what on the face of it appears unrelated.

We must recognize that though solutions to our problems (and any problem viewed in isolation may present an incorrect picture) may be simple in nature, the thought processes and other efforts that go into their resolution are definitely not. For example—if we have before us a problem to reach the under-privileged—it can only work successfully if, at grass roots level, the agencies involved have sufficient, effective authority to make and implement their own decisions. But the process which helps in working out all the implications of such an effort calls for resolving some extremely knotty issues which have to be given serious thought.

Let us consider the human body. If one touches a hot body a message is relayed from the nerves the contact with the body to the decision-making apparatus. The "brain" having

* Pakistan Times, January 26, 1970.

delegated authority to a subsidiary control permits the spinal sub-system to send a message back to the muscles which retract immediately, and with good reason, and a very practical one too. It takes the minimum time to remove that part of the human anatomy in contact with the hot body in this fashion of decision-making. If all messages were sent to the brain it would become so cluttered up that it would refuse to function. We can thus observe decentralization of the decision-making process but only within the overall control of the brain. This master control ensures that nothing else goes radically wrong and generally ensures body is right.

DIFFICULTIES

Coming back to the four difficulties faced by the farmer listed earlier.

- a) We are aware of the economies of scale—wherein resource mobilization is centralized and then it should be parceled out along with authority to permit the sub and sub-sub-systems to get on with it. In water control (and allied to it are power production, water-logging, inland water transport), unless estimates are made the winter before regarding how much snow has been precipitated on the mountains around the catchment areas it may create a lot of trouble later by not having enough time to meet an impending crisis, because water from melting snow may not be enough. So much of all our administrative activity is to move from crisis to crisis—ad hocism. It is not possible to go into a number of other details, save maintaining that we must accept that on account of improved communications in all aspects of our life not only are human beings far apart brought closer together (impossible a scant 15 years ago!) but the simple and complex are likewise brought face to face.
- b) The fact that there is no electricity for a tube-well might very well be on account, as mentioned before, of not knowing how much snow fell the previous winter. It might very well be on account of not bothering to pay attention to the meteorological report for the next few days forecasting (very much more accurately now-a-days, thanks to satellites) an extremely cold spell resulting in very much higher consumption of electricity for heating purposes. It might very well be on account of selecting the wrong contractor to put up the distribution systems on account of the inefficient ad hoc administrative bureaucratic process which is snarled up in red tape. It might very well be on account of lack of planning to dovetail the increased power generation units into a grid of larger size because no one bothered about it. This would be like building a barrage but not having the canals ready when the barrage is ready to supply the water for irrigation.
- c) Better quality, higher yielding seeds require not only lots of fertilizer but fertilizer of the correct composition. Assuming that the capital intensive large complex manufacturing units have been planned properly, have been erected properly, have been commissioned properly, get enough electricity as and when required, but have neglected management development. The proper training programmes to create skills that assure that hundreds of multifarious

activities which all go into producing a bag of fertilizer have neglected to encourage to factors that motivate human performance and end up with a labour-strike on their hands. It is easy to assume that good pay, medical benefits, subsidized meals, paid leave and bonuses should determine efficiency. They do not, they are hygiene factors only. The moment an individual has enough in his stomach his attitude towards money changes. After all are not good pay, medical benefits, subsidized meals, paid leave and bonuses directly related to cash! If a person is starving does the first rupee that he gets and which is a real life saver have the same value as the second, even though the cost is the same? It is obvious that attention must be paid to factors involving recognition of the human being as an organism crying out for respect and status, crying out for justice, crying out for the opportunities which must be given to him based on nothing else but merit....

- d) Even if he gets water, electricity and fertilizer in time, the farmer may yet not be able to raise a crop—and thus not be in a position to provide the State with revenue and food. And this just because the egg-head researchers involved in genetics and the creation of disease resistant and better seeds find their efforts at creativity frustrated at each and every turn they take. It is possible that they are not the best that we have because the better ones have moved away to other climes: the “brain-drain”. That at once presumes a “mutt glut” for the absence of light means darkness. As has been said”If a man who consumes more than he produces knows of a land where the underproducer is subsidized he will wish to go (or stay) there. If a man who produces more than he consumes, knows of a land where the producing classes are less exploited by the consuming classes he will wish to go there.... If, a man can prove his productivity, produce and enjoy the fruits of his labour, he will usually stay where he lives.”

In the final analysis unless the farmer gets a seed that will provide him with enough the next crop might bring disaster in its train.

We have to recognize that in any country there are basically very few people who decide the course the country is going to take. Those few are the politicians (where there exists an effective political process) and those administering the executive functions (whether it is an efficient management process or not).

IMPERATIVES

It is imperative therefore, to ensure

- i) decentralization for the Executive process as far down the line as is possible.
- ii) That a process is created which permits merit to play the most important part in rising up the hierarchical ladder.

Regarding (i) it will be necessary to continue to use the Basic Democracy set-up minus its electoral college, functions. At each level it will be necessary to associate interest

groups of the affected people who would be in a position to provide as professionals, consultative, participatory and advisory machinery for administrative improvement. One can visualize groups including teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, trade unionists, farmers, tube-well associations and commercial and industrial interests. Broadly such interest groups would be a group of people who by nature of economic, religious, social or occupational identity have formally organized themselves into more or less permanent associations to safeguard and promote their common interesting society.

The professional associations, not simply a collection of individuals who make their living by the same kind of work, but a body of men who carry on their work in accordance with rules designed to enforce certain standards for both the better protection of members and for the better service of the public must be encouraged for the greater the number of pressure groups in the country the better it will be for the administrative process. Such associations must:

- (a) Establish standards of competence and promotion in service and persistent efforts to secure the general acceptance of such standards.
- (b) Be responsible for the development of training opportunities for present and prospective members of the profession.
- (c) Develop a deep feeling of obligation to serve the public honestly and well.
- (d) Lay down a code of ethical conduct, the violation of which may sever defaulting members from the profession.

It is in the interests of whichever government is in power to encourage such groups. Likewise it is in the interests of any Opposition party. As mentioned earlier the greater their number the greater the chances of dynamic equilibrium in the country.

Regarding (ii) ie the creation of a process that permits merit to hold sway else involved splitting up Administration into several specialisms such as:

1. Economic Administration.
2. Industrial Administration.
3. Agricultural and Rural Development Administration.
4. Social and Educational Administration.
5. Career Planning and Functional Training (excluding the Management Services Sciences but including their evaluation) Administration.
6. Financial Administration.
7. Defence and Internal Security Administration.
8. Land Revenue and Magisterial Administration.
9. Management Services Sciences and Training (Excluding the functional training in 5 but including their evaluation) Administration.
10. Planning Administration.

A training (continuous) programme must be set up for (a) Functional (specialism) improvement and for application of the (b) Management Services Sciences.

The former will encourage further specialization and the latter the broadening of sights of the managers so as to ensure a more competent manager and thus a more stable administration.

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