

FULTON'S PROGRESS*

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It appears interest has been generated once again (and this has happened with monotonous regularity over the past 25 years odd) in administrative reform. It would appear the Civil Services Commission at long last has submitted its report to the government of Pakistan. Since, in many ways, our administrative heritage derives from the UK we might have a look what progress has been made since the Fulton Committee reported in 1968, especially as I have felt it had borrowed some ideas from the Cornelius Report. We may recollect that the Fulton Committee was concerned with assessing various aspects of the government service machinery of the UK including its

- Structure
- recruitment
- Management, including management training

The British Civil Service since has undergone reshaping and modernization in an attempt to make it more effective in carrying out continuously changing tasks with increasing efficiency.

We are aware that prior to 1968 the British Civil Service reflected the ascendancy of their equivalent of our CSPs. Now the position is that although work requiring specialist skills is always done by appropriately qualified individuals those with the necessary aptitudes are given opportunities to gain suitably wide experience to adequately qualify them for higher posts, **without regard** to their academic background or to whether they were previously in a specialist or generalist stream.

TONING UP 1969:

It will not be out of place to mention that on July 4 1969 a report on the "Toning up of the Provincial Administration" was presented to the then government of West Pakistan. The necessity for such a report arose out of the then general frustration with the administrative structure and process, on account of the lack of obtaining results and mounting inefficiencies. The Chairman of the study group took a very unusual step in inviting me, and outsider, to assist them in my capacity as a management consultant, in their investigations. This group looked into the various aspects of government work and recommended:

1. Measures to promote honest and efficiency amongst government servants through Internal Vigilance.

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2. Suggested steps to organize External Inspection Team on a regular basis, to carry out inspection of government officers, Semi-Autonomous Bodies Organizational & Local Bodies.
3. Suggestions regarding setting up of professional Associations and other Interest Groups with a view to providing consultative, participatory and Advisory machinery for the Improvement of Administration.
4. Suggested ways and means to create greater amount of confidence and better image of Administration through Improved Public Relations.

In view of the then opposition by the bureaucracy I feel quite sure that it would most probably be a difficult proposition to lay a hand on the then numerous printed copies of the abovementioned report in two volumes.

Concerning Inspection, we in 1969, had several suggestions to make. They are as fresh today! Having brought out the differing nature of both the curative and preventive aspects of Inspection the report (amongst others), said that a Management Advisory Group (MAG) should be set up as a body to be concerned with management audit, management improvement, management administrative reform and the management services. That this would encompass personnel administration including job analysis, records management, executive functions, evaluation, control as well as ensuring the structure permitted work to flow unhindered to its logical conclusion **in good time** Far better the approximate decision at the right time than the right decision at the wrong time, when we talk of administrative work effecting the future. It is of little immediate use to raise the price of agricultural produce after the sowing season is over or to prosecute organizations **after** they have done the damage. The right decision at the wrong time is given more importance because of lack of cognizance of since of omission (which many a time are for worse than those of commission), arising out of judicial standards being forced on to administrative decision-making. The idea of the MAG was to also have back-up assistance through setting up management Service Units in each major department reporting administratively to the government.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Returning to Fulton. Consequent to this committee's recommendations a Civil Service Department (CSD) and within it a Management Services (MS) Division along with MS units in all major Departments consistent with their management responsibilities were set up. This has been quite an achievement for "conservative" UK. The functions of the CSD/MS are to:

- a. Provide a comprehensive MS service for 28 small Departments that have no MS units of their own
- b. Provide a range of MS skills which are available to all Departments
- c. Carry out, in collaboration with other Departments, major reviews of management and organization

- d. Develop and promote appropriate approaches for tackling management problems, disseminate information and experience and co-ordinate the discussion of MS questions between Departments
- e. Maintain close liaison with the Civil Service College in regard to MS training Advise Departments on the selection and engagement of Management Consultants for MS-type assignments.

Presently there are 4 Management Services (MS) divisions mentioned below:

- Special Assignment Division
- Accountancy Division
- Operations Research Division
- General Division

O&M is part of the work done in the General Division. This Division has also introduced Management by Objectives (MBO) in more than 10 Departments particularly for improving management systems. It is interesting to learn of the varying tuyepe of assignments that CSD/MS have taken up from time to time and the penetrating analysis of the Expenditure Committee of Parliament in comparing the two sides of the balance sheet. Reading the minutes of evidence (1975-76) to the General Sub-committee of the Expenditure Committee and noting the repeated questioning on Inland Revenue (ie tax collection agencies) concerning the cost of collecting taxes one can feel the representatives of CSD/MS sweating it out! However, more importantly a Pakistani such as myself has access to this information! Most probably, if we did have questions and answers on similar topics the proceedings could be labeled "top secret" --- a carry over of our colonial heritage, the ruler/ruled concept, that "we know what's good for you". I may add exposure is the best self-regulating force we know of. Why hide dust under a carpet or a skeleton in a cupboard?

BENEFIT : COSTS

In 1975-76the CSD/MS costs were £ 514,000 including the cots of management Consultants which amounted to £ 162,000. Yes, just imagine all management consultants are not necessarily civil servants but are merely citizens of their country, being privy to government documents! The input costs taking a few identified areas where savings could be made include but are not restricted to:

1. Savings of £ 0.6 million on cars, though improved maintenance procedures and a reduction in size
2. Savings of more than £ 6 million in communications through greater use of second class mail etc.
3. Savings of £ 4 million on reduced paper consumption
4. Savings of £ 0.5 million on account of accommodation costs in libraries in Whitehall from weeding stocks
5. Savings of more than £ 1.0 million through rearranging outstation typing pools

6. Bringing about improvements in inventory control (savings not worked out).

The cost of CSD-MS of the above 6 studies was £ 152,500 including £ 50,000 for Management Consultants. It may be of interest to know that the average direct man-day costs amounted to about £ 90, this would include both senior and junior staff/consultants. Examples of benefits introduced by normal assignment work include:

1. On microcopying, for a cost of £ 53,200 the potential savings in capital costs of some £ 6.25 million plus over 100 posts
2. Work on unnecessary financial checking has produced a saving of 400 posts of £ 1.4 million in 6 years
3. An Operations Research study, including a public survey, reduced the planned production of decimal coinage by 50%. Savings were £ 105,000 for a cost of £ 10,000
4. Savings of £ 70,000 were achieved by rationalization of the Overseas Service between Foreign and Commonwealth office and Ministry of Defence at a cost of £ 1240.
5. Bringing about the more efficient use and control of resources in the long term, here it is not possible to quantify direct and immediate savings.

However, what is so very much more important than a bald recital of figures, is the fact that various government departments are looked into and the CSD/MS ie the looker-into has to testify before a Parliamentary Committee as to developments in the Civil Service since the Fulton report. This is but one aspect of what has happened in the last 10 years and it can be seen a lot of progress has been made.

There can be no doubt that we need, more than anything else administratively a goodly dose of some management services. It is not technological competency, as such, that we lack, if we did, our professionally qualified individuals who go abroad (without any additional education and training) do very well in the face of international competition be they engineers, accountants, medicos What we do lack are the skills to coordinate a host of different functions working towards a common goal. Administratively it means: administrative standards must be brought to bear on adjudicating administrative problems not through the legal law of evidence. And there are ways and means of achieving this end. One input is the Management Services as they move in the direction of exposure which is the most potent self-regulating force that we know of. All organized activity is generating information. The more systematically (scientifically) we can get hold of it, the better knowledge one has to make decisions. After all executives are **only** handling information and making decisions and nothing else. Techniques in MS have been developed (since 1960 as long as we insist on a subjective approach relying entirely on judgement and intuition by itself the utilization of such techniques will continue to remain foreign to us. This bespeaks of an unscientific attitude.

SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE REQUIREMENTS

If one may borrow from Humayun Kabir, three concepts are basic to the continuous growth of a scientific attitude, the understanding that:

1. the universe is not a multiverse
2. the laws of nature are not capricious ie they are uniform
3. the value of the exceptions to mandate rules.

It is no accident that scientific thought has been continuous for the last 14 centuries. It is not without reason that science's challenge to the validity of religion can only be successful when religion cannot produce a universal law. Islam says religion is universal and ought to be so, that nature's laws are "God's thoughts thinking themselves in orbits and tides". It is for us to use our faculties of logic and reasoning to investigate problems at the level which senior officers shy away from --- where the physical transactions **actually** take place. They easily forget they were, in the not too distant past junior officers also! This leads to respect for the empirical fact and from several such facts it is possible to arrive at inferences. Contact with reality (ie where the physical transactions take place) by a senior officer, on account of human and time limitations depends that reliable mirrors to reflect the "goings on" be created. Again, there are techniques for doing this.

Because man-made procedures, theories or laws **are** man-made they cannot be perfect ie take care of all combinations of circumstances. Exceptions **must** therefore, by definition exist. It is through understanding exceptions that science progresses and generates respect for the individual---which is what democracy is about – is encouraged. Newton's Laws could not account for certain observed phenomenas a la Einstein. Later, it was found that those Laws were a special case of Einsteins' thinking. Of course the acme of realization of the particular or individual has been brought out so well by our philosopher-poet----Iqbal, when he talks of **Khudi**. It is no accident that both the arts and sciences developed together as a result of the scientific, empirical or inductive method and equally it is no accident that the scientific method and democracy do go hand in hand.

Writers and thinkers of repute **in the West** again and again keep making references to studying Nature to understand matters better---whether it novelist Naipaul or Nobel Prize winner Illya Prigogine (not to mention the Book of Wisdom) whose work on the thermodynamics of social systems has drawn worldwide attention. He deals with self-organizing problems under conditions of change. His investigations indicate the open cell (biological) is a good model to understand,. amongst others, the dynamics of urban areas so as to assist planning better transportation systems, automotive systems or efficient building design. Using similar thinking economist Georgescu-Roegen has become a continuing embarrassment to the economists profession because he has dared through his treatment of mathematics and thermodynamics, to tell his profession that its foundation in physical science has crumbled!

This article could have been written without mentioning either Prigogine or Georgescu. Reference to them has been made just to indicate some new approaches and by comparison we should feel how backward we are in our thinking, supporting the status quo ante. And in most cases it arises out of either not having subject matter knowledge of what one is dealing with or a person has 3 years experience 10 times in his 30-years service period, because of not having professionalized his experience. Finally let's not forget the test of any policy lies in its successful physical implementation. The desire to obtain simple quick-fix answers to 'superficially' simple problems leads to an unscientific, hence undemocratic attitude the exception to the rule being given short shrift. Administration doesn't receive what it pays for, but what it **demand**s and can assimilate. If we demand logical replies to the questions raised below then there is hope that we can pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps:

- does the present administrative set-up deliver the goods?
- why have individuals full of verve and ideas a few years ago adopt an attitude of passive acceptance today?
- What is contemporary experience around the world?
- is a scientific attitude basically undemocratic since it ultimately leads to "sacrosanct" procedures becoming more important than dealing with the exceptional case as routine work? As a result decision-making (while judicially fine) creates a veritable jungle of administrative lawlessness
- why do our technicians, and professionally qualified individuals achieve so much more elsewhere than here, **without** any additional training/experience?
- do those in authority, say with 20/25 years "experience" dread the fact that with proper training that it now takes one-third of that time of develop similar or even better skills?
- is it that we lack the capability to understand or the learning itself?
- is it that even though we have the capability, we do not wish to be burdened by the facts of a given situation?
- is it that there is blind adherence to the status quo on account of fear of the unknown?
- or is it that we pay lip service by making the appropriate noises at the right time concerning adaptation to the one unchanging fact that change there always will be?

The uncreative mind can spot all the wrong answers, the creative asks the right questions. Rabbi Zidni Ilma.

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