

Another Administrative Note*
Masood Hasan

REPORTS of the Ombudsman's recommendations include overhauling the administrative structure, increasing efficiency, eliminating corruption, restructuring the colonial administrative legacy, reframing of financial rules and redesigning the financial management system, review of the 1861 Police Act, overhauling the anti-corruption agencies and giving them something reorganised, reoriented, reviewed and amended. That the 1973 reforms eliminated employees security, encouraged zig-zag procedures and the government failed to benefit from the findings of several Commissions to eliminate corruption. That the anti-corruption function needs redesigning and upgrading as per Speedy Trial Courts/Anti Terrorist Courts and that they be invariably manned by judges of the High Court. Further, the existing FIA rules need revamping and generally, we need the simplification of procedures and the introduction of an internal grievance system in public utility organisations and where possible, a one-window operation be introduced.

Does the above related litany tell us anything that we have not been showered with in the past? Of course not. However, the Ombudsman needs to be complimented on what we need being reminded of time and again that is, the obvious.

It is clear that whatever administrative system we had in 1947 and whatever we have done to it over the past 46 years quite obviously has not delivered the goods. Present day requirements are of quick reaction and adjustment to change brought generally through technology (which must not be mixed up with science).

To continue to bring in "improvements" without understanding the basic problem will merely provide the same, only much more of it! Looking back to the way our administration has developed when in 1947 over 90 per cent of government revenues were on account of land revenue, now it hardly makes a dent in our budget. Consider also the 1960 watershed when "development" began in a big way. Emphasis moved increasingly towards value added activities, ie to social change catalysed by increasing quick communications (jet travel, TV, phones, telexes and faxes) coupled with stifling Martial Laws both military (1958-71 and 1977-86) and the civil Martial Law for a while, in Bhutto's time. In the bargain our administration just caved in. The forces were just too powerful. It is not the purpose of this article to go into the role of the "administration" itself but to see what is required to be done.

It is clear that a new approach is required, otherwise what prevented us from progressing like Korea or Taiwan, or as Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia are moving right now?

There are four aspects that need looking into:

1. The administrative structure (hierarchical).
2. The operational (systems and procedures).
3. The personnel (human resource development).
4. The Constitutional.

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However, another aspect needs consideration and that is: steady but sure deterioration over the years has made us arrive at the thick mess we are in: should not a qualitatively different approach be used? If it concentrates (with reference to the future) only on the negative aspects of corruption it will lead to a penal-cum-curative approach (the highest form being Martial Law) to which immunity is developed over repeated cycles like malaria, the mosquito and insecticides. We need a constructive-cum-preventive approach. How is this approach possible? It needs an understanding that accountability of the executive can only be really effective from within the executive itself. Just as quality control never reports to the production manager, but through another ladder to the Chief Executive so that he can take preventive action in good time to avoid collapse or bankruptcy. This is also how discipline has been safeguarded in our Armed Forces by their Chief Executives---The Chief of Army, Navy and Air Staff. The need for altering Article 212 of our current Constitution to Article 216 of our provisional Constitution of 1972 is needed. which lays the basis of Administrative Courts, whose jurisdiction is independent of the Supreme Court.

The complexities of the administrative process need certain support or staff functions which are missing or misused. A prime example is the use of the computer. It usually deals with "system'-wide" problems and it should, therefore, report to the "system-wide" responsible person, ie the Chief Executive. This hardly ever happens because it means being physically inconvenienced and having plenty of homework to do, but in the long run it simplifies matters.

Systems and procedures concern the flesh and blood of the administrative process. We know it is all too simple to alter policy but almost impossible to alter a lowly procedure, eg try to change a land revenue (patwaris) procedure! Comprehension of the reasons for this needs much more space. The administrative process should be sympathetic to procedural change. It isn't.

Personnel administration, amongst others implies career development and training. Both should report to one boss. In our administrative process they are poles apart. Hence training, which should be right on top, is yet a khudda line. In the Armed Forces it is not so because of the correct realisation of the paramount importance of the training function. We need to make a sea change in this function, for only then can human material be developed. To conclude, it is easy to find fault, but much more difficult to rectify matters. More so when dealing with large (hence complex) systems. Hence we must have a clear methodology of approach. Unfortunately this yet remains to be developed. The sooner it is done the better, otherwise, we should not complain. We deserve exactly what we get. We only get what we demand. *Laisa lil insaani illa ma sa-a (53:39)*.

(The writer is a former Chairman, Federal Management Development and Inspection Commission).

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