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“Power Structure and Institutionalization in Pakistan from 1947-58: A case study of Bureaucracy”

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Abstract

"Power Structure and Institutionalization in Pakistan from 1947-58: A Case Study of Bureaucracy" offers a comprehensive examination of the evolution of power dynamics and institutional development in Pakistan during its formative years following independence, with a specific focus on the role of bureaucracy. The article delves into the intricate interplay between political elites, state institutions, and bureaucratic structures, shedding light on the processes of state-building, governance, and nation-building in the nascent state. Drawing upon historical analysis, the study traces the legacy of colonial rule and British administrative policies that shaped the bureaucratic landscape in pre-independence India and laid the groundwork for post-colonial governance structures. It explores how colonial-era bureaucratic practices, such as the implementation of the British Act and policies, influenced the formation and functioning of bureaucracy in Pakistan from 1947 to 1958. By analyzing key events, policies, and actors shaping this period, the article offers insights into the complexities of governance, administrative reforms, and the consolidation of state power in Pakistan's early years. Ultimately, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power and institutionalization in post-independence Pakistan, highlighting the enduring legacy of colonial-era bureaucratic structures and their impact on state-society relations.

Key Words: political institutions, bureaucracy, British parliamentary, Civil Service.

The efficacy of the state machinery depends on the functioning of the institutions. If the institutions are balanced and effective, then the system would be smooth and vice versa. The chapter would analyze the comparison of the political institutions with that of non-political institution. Moreover, it would also emphasize that the potency of political institutions and political processes nourish the democratization process.

The bureaucracy has its roots in colonial India. The British colonialization in India started with East India Company. The East India Company has an overwhelming impact on the society, laws, state structure and organizational set-up of India. The Company, firstly and foremost, apologetically entered in Indian Sub-continent through the strategy of trade and commerce. Steadily, their business designs changed to political and occupied the economy of Bengal. Later on, they penetrated into the social and political set-up of Indian Sub-continent. After ruling for an elongated period of three centuries, they introduced new and modern trends, values and institutions in India.¹ The East India Company had initially brought commercial designs but steadily it was transformed to political. The servants of the company were just employees. When the status of the company changed from commercial to political, the status of its servants also changed. The servants of the company, who were traders, now transformed to administrators.² Now the specific term 'Civil Service' was used for them. These 'Civil Servants' subsequently opted for various tasks ranging from administrative level to Quasi-judicial level.³

It was basically the British parliamentary decree that had forced the company to divide the civil administration from business enterprise.⁴ Acquiring the governmental status, the nature of company changed from organization to system. The Company had started to carry whole the administrative activities. So, now number of changes was brought, under various Acts, regarding the administration and civil servants' performance. These Acts, more or less, brought some modification regarding the

¹ Henry Frank Goodnow, *The civil services of Pakistan: Bureaucracy in a New Nation* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1969), 26.

² Irfan Ur Rehman Raja, *Administration: Its Theory, History and Practice with Special Reference to Pakistan* (Lahore: Catapult Publishers, 1976), 130.

³ Mumtaz Ahmed, *Bureaucracy and Political Development in Pakistan* (Karachi: National Institute of Public Administration, 1974), 26

⁴ Goodnow, *The civil Services of Pakistan*, 32

mechanism of recruitment and organizational structure of the Civil Service.

The British parliament comprehensively discussed the issue of Civil Servants. In the light of these discussions, the parliament passed two Acts in 1784 and 1787. These bills organized the structure of Civil Service by providing solid pay scale, fix age for admission in Civil Service and promotion on the ground of seniority.⁵ All the higher cadre servants were forced to sign an agreement with company. So, the servants of the company were divided between 'covenants' and 'uncovenants' by 'signing' and 'not signing' the agreement respectively. After some time, some of the 'uncovenants' servants All the higher cadre servants were forced to sign an agreement with company. So, the servants of the company were divided between 'covenants' and 'uncovenants' by 'signing' and 'not signing' the agreement respectively. After some time, some of the 'uncovenants' servants⁶ The Commission further accentuated that the appointment of both the service would be held through a competitive examinations. But the only difference would be that the exams of 'Imperial Civil Service' would be conducted in England only; whereas, the 'Provincial Civil Service' would be held in India. Both the Indians and Britishers would be eligible for these exams. Moreover, in the context of salary and status, the 'Imperial Civil Service' officers were paid more but the status of both imperial and provincial service would remain equal.⁷ In 1833, the commercial activities of the company were abolished and the company, more or less, controlled the administrative aspect. Further reforms in 1853 Act, initiated the process of competitive examinations to recruit the civil servants. Through the competitive examination, academically sharp students would be recruited to civil service.⁸ In 1886, the Aitchison Commission came to India. Under this Commission, as discussed aforementioned, abolished the distinction between 'Covenant' and 'un-covenant' civil servants. Later on, the Isleton Commission of 1912 brought more modifications in the favor of Indians. According to this Commission, 25 per cent posts in the civil services of India were assigned for Indians.⁹ This Commission also intensified the hierarchical nature of civil services. As a result of this Commission, the civil servants transformed from mercantile servants to administrative servants. These Servants were divided into four classes. Class I officers were assigned administration and executive tasks; the class II, had the posts of operational level; the class III, were assigned clerical jobs; and the class IV, were imparted the position of peons and messengers.¹⁰ In the beginning of 20th century, the political consciousness of Indians at mass level had intensified. As the Indians were conditioned to take the exams of Civil Service in Great Britain; so, the political leadership of India compelled the British master to hold the competitive examination in India too. Consequently in 1922, for the very first time, the competitive examinations were conducted in India for the recruitment of higher bureaucracy.¹¹ In 1924, the Lee Commission brought striking changes regarding the civil service mechanism. This Commission actually Indianized the civil service. According to this commission, 20% of the civil servants might be promoted from the Indian Provincial Civil Services. Moreover, the remaining 80% would be divided on the equal grounds between Indians and Britishers.¹² At the time of formulation of the 1935 Act of India, the civil servants agitated for the rights of their safeguard in the new constitution. The new Act incorporated the demands of Civil Servants according to their wishes.¹³ The same 1935 Act was adapted by Pakistan, after its creation, with least possible amendments. The Act still carried the safeguards of the civil servants, who have now acquired the status of the master. Moreover, the constitutions of 1956¹⁴ and 1962¹⁵ have emphatically manifested the security of their jobs.

The British had framed this institution of bureaucracy to meet their own needs. The British masters were less in number and so they needed to control the huge and complicated society of India administratively. They had obviously calculated well, in that spectacular time and space, to run the administration by the way they did. After decolonization, their withdrawal gave genesis to two independent and sovereign states in the form of India and Pakistan. So, to continue this institution of bureaucracy, experts' opinion was inevitable to be held. For this cause, the Pakistani state positioned those bureaucrats who had already worked in Indian Civil Services. These highly positioned bureaucrats exactly copied the I.C.S. and civil service with changing its only names for the purpose to secure their own interests.¹⁶ To analyze the Civil Service of Pakistan at the time of partition, one needs to have statistical data of that time. In the words of Ralph Braibanti, the administrative strength of Pakistan can be judged from the fact of shortage of the civil servants at the time of partition. During 1947, the total strength of the Indian Civil Servants was 1157. Out of these 1157 officers, only 9 per cent or 101 were Muslims. Among these 101 Muslim Civil Servants, only 95 opted for Pakistan, whereas; the remaining six Muslims, ICS-IPS civil servants, continued their services in India.¹⁷ Later on, one Christian officer, 11 Muslim military officers and 50 British officers joined this bureaucratic

⁵ Ahmed, *Bureaucracy and Political Development in Pakistan*, 27.

⁶ Charles H. Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 21.

⁷ Jameel Ur Rehman Khan, ed., *Evolution of Pakistan's Administrative System: The Collected Paper Braibanti*

⁸ Ahmed, *Bureaucracy and development in Pakistan*, 28

⁹ Raja, *Administration: Its Theory, History and Practice with Special Reference to Pakistan*, 137.

¹⁰ Dr. Agha Iftikhar Hussain, "The Civil Services" in Jameel Ur rehman Khan, ed., *Government and Administration in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Pakistan Public Administration Research Center. O&M Division, 1987), 126-127.

¹¹ Goodnow, *The Civil Services of Pakistan*, 33.

¹² Raja, *Administration: Its Theory, History and Practice with Special Reference to Pakistan*, 139.

¹³ Ibid., 140.

¹⁴ Government of Pakistan, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic Of Pakistan* (Karachi: Government Printing Press, 1956) Article, 181.

¹⁵ Government of Pakistan, *Constitution Of the Islamic Republic Of Pakistan* (Karachi: Government Printing Press, 1956) Article, 177.

¹⁶ GoodNow, *The Civil Services of Pakistan*, 36.

¹⁷ Raph Braibanti, 'Public Bureaucracy and Judiciary in Pakistan' in S.M.Haider, ed., *Public Administration and Police in Pakistan* (Peshawar: Pakistan Academy For Rural Development, 1968), 37.

class of Pakistan.¹⁸ A nut shell of 157 officers, comprising the bureaucratic cadre, started services for Pakistan. Out of these 157 officers, only 136 had been assigned for the administration. Moreover, the quality of experience was not of satisfactory level. The burden of whole the state was conferred at the hands of inexperienced bureaucrats. Those bureaucrats who were somewhat experienced created hegemony over the whole institution. The quality of the experience can be analyzed from the fact that only four bureaucrats were present on the position of joint Secretary and none was prevalent at the post of Secretary.¹⁹ Out of these bureaucrats, 20 had crossed the 40, whereas; 60 of them were below the age of 35 years.²⁰ The deficiency of the experienced bureaucrats, after partition, demoralized the efficacy of policy making process in Pakistan. The policy making process was pushed towards complexity because of lack of accurate direction. All those who were positioned at pinnacle positions, occupied the whole mechanism of policy making. Specifically, the policy making process was strategically imparted to ICS-IPS cadre officials. The two top positioned bureaucrats, Ghulam Muhammad and Chaudri Muhammad Ali,²¹ controlled the administration in a way to direct whole the mechanism according to their own will. In the words of Dr. Ralph Braibanti, it cannot be stated that the managerial talent was insufficient at the other departments of government.²² The concentration of bureaucrats, on the top position of administration, helped the bureaucracy to prove more strong, compact, organized and institutionalized in comparison to other political institutions. This centralized level of bureaucracy encouraged it to overcome the political organizations and political institutions. This master and slave relation, between bureaucracy and political institutions, stemmed imbalance between political and bureaucratic arms of the state. The superiority of the bureaucracy of state machinery goes around two factors. Firstly, the politicians were fragile to conduct the administrative functions and bureaucrats were efficient in this line. And secondly, bureaucracy of Pakistan was an organ like other organs of states, but it lacked any kind of political and judicial check.²³

In the very first decade, Pakistan was a federation demeanor by a parliamentary system. The system would constitutionally confer strength to representative institutions. But in this period, the political institutions were at lower ebb. Whole the authority was concentrated in the hands of Governor General. The arbitrariness of the Governor General or President had superseded all the other authorities. To substantiate this, from 1947-65, Governor General and President issued 459 ordinances against 454 acts passed by the parliament.²⁴

The same power of Governor General was assigned to the provincial Governors. Governors are representative of the Centre. They are appointed by Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Governors of the first decade were client to the Governor General or President but they were masters to their respective provinces. In this regard, they neither hesitated nor dawdled in exercising their power. This arbitrariness of their power exercise can be authenticated from the fact that Governor Raj was executed in Punjab from January 1949 till 1951, in Sindh from December 1951 till May 1953, and in East Pakistan from May 1954 till 1955.²⁵ If the structure of bureaucracy is further narrowed down at divisional and district level, the bureaucrats serving at that positions have despotic powers. Below the Governors, the administrative policies are framed and executed by the Chief Secretary, Divisional Commissioner and District Officers in secretariat, division and district respectively. The Deputy Commissioner of any district is the 'kingpin of administration'²⁶ of that particular district.

During 1947-51, the bureaucratic set-up was under the strict control of the career politicians i.e. Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan. Quaid-i-Azam, an inspiring leader, neither allowed bureaucracy nor military to overcome the representative institutions.²⁷ Liaquat Ali Khan was comparatively less efficient to Quaid-i-Azam but still he was symbolized as a national leader until the disintegration started inside Muslim League. Later on, the status of the bureaucrats especially CSP²⁸ changed after the demise of Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951. The gap of the career politicians created after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan was filled by bureaucrats.

The ex-bureaucrats, Ghulam Muhammad, became the Governor General of Pakistan. Since 1951 till his resignation in 1955, he arbitrarily exercised his power. He had in totality hindered the fosterage of representative institutions and forces. After the resignation of Ghulam Muhammad, his offshoot in the form of Sikandar Mirza, occupied the position of the Governor General. He like Ghulam Muhammad considered oneself above the system. Like the former, who dismissed premier Nazim-ud-din and dissolved the constituent assembly, the latter did so in a more technical and strategic way. Sikandar Mirza ousted all those politicians from the system who were dissident to his ideas. To substantiate this, he made a new Republican Party and encouraged Dr. Khan Sahib to propagate its goals, aims and objectives. For this purpose, he discredited the role of Muslim League.²⁹

To restrict the policies and curtail the power of C.S.P officers, various commissions have been formed. The first Pay and

¹⁸ Ralph Braibanti, *Research on the Bureaucracy of Pakistan: A Critique of Sources, Conditions, and Issues, With Appended Documents* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1966), 116.

¹⁹ Good Now, *The Civil Services of Pakistan*, 29.

²⁰ Braibanti, 'Public Bureaucracy and Judiciary in Pakistan', 39.

²¹ Good Now, *The Civil Services of Pakistan*, 29.

²² Braibanti, 'Public Bureaucracy and Judiciary in Pakistan', 35.

²³ Ali Cheema and Asad Sayeed, *Bureaucracy and Pro-Chang* (Islamabad: Pakistan Institution of development Economics, 2006), 8.

²⁴ Ahmed, *Bureaucracy and political development in Pakistan*, 40.

²⁵ Ibid., 42.

²⁶ Mustafa Choudhury, *Pakistan-Its Politics and Bureaucracy* (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1988), 176.

²⁷ Ibid., 139.

²⁸ In *Research on Bureaucracy of Pakistan* Ralph Braibanti says; That CSP is the term designated for a small group within the public services. P, 97.

²⁹ Choudhury, *Pakistan-Its Politics and Bureaucracy*, 102.

Service Commission was formed in 1948 headed by Chief Justice Supreme Court Justice Muhammad Munir. The final report of the Commission realized that the remuneration of the C.S.P. officers might be scaled down.³⁰ But the modifications analyzed by the Commission could not reach a stage to be materialized. The fact remained that the power structure of bureaucrats, generally, and C.S.P. officers, specifically, was so strong and compact that it did not allow the system of bureaucracy to be reformed.

In conclusion, the journey from British colonial rule to independence marked a pivotal period in the evolution of Pakistan's bureaucratic landscape. Under the leadership of visionaries like Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan embarked on the challenging task of nation-building, with bureaucracy playing a central role in shaping the newly established state. The policies implemented by leaders such as Malik Ghulam Muhammad, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, and Sikandar Mirza reflected a mix of continuity from the colonial era and attempts at adapting bureaucratic structures to meet the needs of a nascent nation. Moving forward, Pakistan's bureaucratic apparatus must continue to adapt and evolve in response to the changing needs and aspirations of its citizens. By fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and meritocracy, Pakistan can harness the potential of its bureaucracy as a catalyst for progress, prosperity, and democratic governance. The lessons learned from the experiences of the past, coupled with a commitment to reform and innovation, can pave the way for a more efficient, responsive, and inclusive bureaucratic system in the years to come.

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