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## Genesis of Civil-Bureaucratic Enclave in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pakistan

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### Abstract:

Civil bureaucracy was introduced by the British Raj in India to administer the empire. The cultural composition of the institution allowed it to emerge as a tool to serve the interests of the Empire during colonial era and become a determining factor in deciding the political fate of the post-colonial states after the partition. This paper overviews the genesis and evolution of the dominant role of civil bureaucracy of Pakistan, where it turned out to be a major authoritarian enclave, hampering Pakistan's journey to a smooth functioning democratic polity. The central question dealt in this paper is; How civil-bureaucracy retained its power intact in the post-colonial political setup? The study is significant for the students of democracy in the post-colonial societies. This study is based on secondary sources while various perspectives on the role, position and strategies adopted by the top bureaucrats to influence political processes are critically analyzed.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, politics, bureaucracy, authoritarianism, democracy, election, institution

### INTRODUCTION

Max Weber is one of the most influential writer on modern bureaucratic theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Weber 'bureaucracy is the basis for the systematic formation of any organisation and is designed to ensure efficiency and economic effectiveness' (Udy, 1959). Although impersonality is one of the fundamental principle of Weberian theory, yet the role of bureaucracy greatly deviated from this principle in the post-colonial states like Pakistan. While commenting on the role of bureaucracy Shafaqat remarked that bureaucracy despite its extraordinary role in modern governments plays and behaves differently from country to country in the developing world owing to their different socio-economic contexts, patterns of political development, cultures and political systems (Shafaqat, 1999).

This paper is an attempt to analyze the genesis and evolution of civil bureaucracy in Pakistan. The main objective of this study is to analyze the role of bureaucratic elite and their colonial legacy in post-colonial state like Pakistan. This study revolves around questions such as: Why civil-bureaucracy deviated from its ideal role in Pakistan? How bureaucratic interventions in the political process hampered the evolution of smooth democratic process? To explore answers to these questions this paper is based primarily on secondary sources. Different books and research articles were consulted to review, interpret and analyze the historical role of bureaucracy in Pakistan.

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## **CIVIL BUREAUCRACY IN PAKISTAN**

The controversial role of civil-bureaucracy has remained an important topic of debate among the academic circles of Pakistan. There are two schools of thought vis-a-vis the over-active role of bureaucracy in the political structure. The first group argues that this role is due to the vacuum created by the incompetence of political leadership, whereas, the second group alleges the colonial cultural inheritance of this institution, where this institution was structured as a tool to meet the demands of the colonial empire. The aforementioned two arguments have been evaluated and analyzed in the following passages.

Since the inception of Pakistan, civil bureaucracy assumed central position in the political structure. The role of bureaucracy was more prominent during the first decade after independence. For instance, according to Alvi, (2014), "the bureaucracy has been the most powerful weapon in the Sub-Continent during the imperial rule and Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) is the successor of Indian Civil Services (ICS)". The British government conferred the title to ICS as the 'Steel Structure', with whose help, the British power had been able to preserve the extensive rule over the vast continent of India. Subsequently, it continued to preserve its position even after the establishment of the Pakistan by obtaining large share in the state, however, military had substituted the powerful status of civil bureaucracy by taking control of the elected government in 1958. Similarly, according to Malik (2011) the civil bureaucracy had possessed the powers including: controlling the administration, collecting of taxes and seizing of the centralized and discretionary powers. The non-elected institutions, bureaucracy and military, had considered themselves as precursors of stability and solidarity of the state, for instance, taking over by the Ghulam Muhammad, wherein, he not only kept the entire control in his own hands but even dismissed the sitting Prime Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin in 1953-54.

Furthermore, civil service had remained a nonpartisan in nature during early phase, however, its non-partisan nature was adversely affected when it assumed extremely politicized role by possessing excessive power later on. For instance, upon assuming the power, it began to regard the legislator's inferior. However, the self-ordained image of civil bureaucracy had dashed into pieces after their bad governance, rampant corruption and poor democratic deliverance. Despite all this bureaucracy emerged as a very influential authoritarian enclave in the political structure.

Notwithstanding civil bureaucracy has a pivotal role in Pakistan's power structure; the bureaucratic enclave has become larger to the extent that it continued to exercise dominant position in the system as well as in decision making even after the imposition of Martial Law. Sajjad (2018) has remarked that the high bureaucracy occupied an indispensable position immediately after the independence, for instance, Urdu speaking bureaucracy had developed a mechanism to promote symbiotic linkage with predominantly Punjabi rural-military nexus to safeguard its vested interests. Though, the seminal of the bureaucratic-military enclaves were already present in the womb of a nascent state, however, they began to threaten the newly formed weak structured democratic government by exerting influence on decision making after the British rule. According to Jalal (as cited in Toor 2011), the act of 1935, the brainchild of colonial power, was the last ditch plan assigning control to bureaucracy, for instance, it assigned an extra-ordinary power to the Governor General and Governors of the Provinces. By this, bureaucratic control was strengthened over the politicians. Similarly, according to Noman (as cited in Toor, (2011), the act empowered the

military and bureaucracy to make the elected representatives submissive and docile. According to Toor (2011), the act of 1935 was functioned like the de-facto constitution with the bureaucracy as the shadow government. G.W.Choudhury(1969) also supported it by putting forward that Pakistan inherited vicegeral system of the British Colonial Raj. It laid deep impact on the political system of the country. This tradition was indeed not in conformity with the democracy as it brought here the same modus operandi as it remained functional in the colonial period. Though, they had faith in the establishment of Pakistan, however, they had no regard at all for the process of democracy and its consolidation.

In the light of the above, it could be assessed that the colonial power kept its indirect control through administrative bureaucratic structure to make political institutions submissive and dependent. As a result, the system gave birth to constant intrigues and conflicts between administrative and political institutions. Since, bureaucracy and military were trained and sound in administrative functions, hence, they took control of the government and put the political representation at their whims and wishes.

After independence, Pakistan had only a model of governance, the British Vice-regal system. According to B.Sayeed, (2015), the political leadership of Pakistan followed the British model, on the other, civil bureaucracy had assumed excessive power and it thus confined the politicians for nominal affairs alone. This gross dependence led political leadership to bow their knees to the unbridled power of bureaucracy. One could analyze the intention of the civil servants from a report entitled "The Report of the Sind Special Court Inquiry" which mentioned that "secretaries must be allowed to draw the attention of the Governor if ministers would violate the rules of business by granting favor to their party members". The content of the report presents powerful status of the bureaucracy and it was thus easy to understand the reasons behind failure of the political process in establishing a viable democratic system. The civil bureaucracy had eliminated all the patronage and it was not possible for the political leadership of the underdeveloped country to get support of the public to initiate the process of industrialization and other developmental projects. According to Hamad Haq Choudhary the Minister for Finance and a hardliner bureaucrat, the Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Ahmad left negative impact on East Pakistan in particular and the entire political system in general. Furthermore, civil servants, though, remained loyal to civilian government during 1947-1951, later on, both the civil-military bureaucracy changed their attitude and grew up as authoritarian enclaves that had resulted in the contamination of the entire democratic atmosphere by adversely affecting the continuity of the process of democratization at all. B. Sayeed (2015) has further remarked that bureaucracy in the developing countries could be seen in the light of Western values and customs, wherein, bureaucracy being a professional organization performs its allotted duties according to the characteristics mentioned in the Max Weberian model and of which the recruitment, promotions and transfer criterion is based on universalistic principle rather on particularistic. He further added that this kind of organizations grow up mostly in highly industrialized countries of the West and the major cause of its successful functioning is that the elected representatives make policies and bureaucracies then execute them. Though, some developing countries borrowed ideas from Westminster system, however, their operational realities are quite different. However, powerful bureaucracy in Pakistan exerts its influence over the political leadership. Bureaucratic system in Pakistan is a colonial legacy that was established to

administer law and order and not to deliver for public welfare. It is, therefore, the civil service of Pakistan always keeps on opposing reform projects at the expense of their vested interest.

Even after independence, a huge difference was seen between marginalized classes and the state. The state had maintained its overwhelming control over the poor masses. According to Hamza Alvi (as cited in Ahmed,2013), the pre-independence colonial imbalance was continued to remain between the state and the society after independence. The Muslim League, after the death of Jinnah, was become defunct and, therefore, remained in complete fiasco to restrict civilian supremacy to its limits. Consequently, both the civil service and military bureaucracy took the entire control and thus established their hegemony in both the political and economic domains. The view of Hamza Alvi is the clear evidence that how the civil-military oligarchy established its dominance just after the inception of the country and how the imbalance of the colonial era was retained even after independence. Hence, the growth of democratic process and its consolidation would have become a mere dream in the presence of such a powerful oligarchs.

East Pakistan, as compared to the West Pakistan, was representing majority population but its share in different sectors was less than its numerical strength. B. Sayeed (2015) has mentioned that it was strange that nearly nine years after its independence, a leader from the East Pakistan observed that reality was quite different. Because there were two nations rather one out of two people and two countries rather one. To justify his view, the author has mentioned that in the entire first decade, Pakistan had remained under the influence of constituent assembly, bureaucracy and military. The numerical strength of bureaucracy and military of the West Pakistan, as compared to East Pakistan, was larger in size and East Pakistan remained deprived of obtaining due share in politics and economics and it was just all due to the hegemony and influence of the civil and military bureaucracy of the West Pakistan. Furthermore, after the defeat of Muslim League in East Pakistan elections, the Ex-civil servant and the then sitting Governor General, Ghulam Muhammad, had become cognizant to the extent that his like-minded group alongwith the military wished to introduce one unit by merging all the units of West Pakistan into one unit and also warned that any opposition to the said decision would result in punishment through Public & Representative Officers Disqualification Act (PRODA). Though, some measures were taken to prevent Governor General, however, he refused to comply with and asserted that ministers would hold ministries with the pleasure of Governor General. Subsequently, he dissolved the Constituent Assembly in collaboration with bureaucracy and military on October 24, 1954. According to the daily Express, “there have indeed been times--such as that October night in 1954—when with a General to the right of him and a General to the left of him, a half mad Governor General imposed upon a captured premier the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and a virtual setting up of a semi-dictatorial executive”.

Similarly, Saif (2010) also supported the view that the democracy was first obliterated by an ex-bureaucrate and the then Governor General Ghulam Mohammad with the assistance of the army after the approval of America. After the dismissal of Nazimuddin, he appointed Muhammad Ali Bogra as the new Premier for his pro-US stance. Subsequently, this unconstitutional act was a big blow to the nascent democracy in the first decade of the newly established country that had laid down a trend for the subsequent periods of political history of Pakistan. Seeing early phase of nine years, it is apparent that how the civil-military bureaucracy of the Punjab usurped share of the East

Pakistan and intentionally deprived the majority availing of its due rights. Consequently, strain relations between the two wings led to the derailing of democratic norms and afterwards ended up in the break up of Pakistan in December, 1971.

Civil service had remained a key player in managing to run affairs of the state just after creation of Pakistan. Referring Keith Callard's historical account, Aziz M, (2008) elaborates that though failure could be seen on the part of political parties in organizing themselves and articulating and aggregating public interests in practical terms, but the control of the state apparatus was in the hands of bureaucracy, supported by the military. Hence, it explicitly seems that politics in Pakistan was determined through the lens of the relationship of Pakistan with India. Moreover, referring Chaudhary Muhammad Ali's biographical account, he presents evidence in support of his contention that civil bureaucracy and military were well embedded within democratic government and being the premier for a brief period, Muhammad Ali, created civil service position of the Secretary-General to the government and initiated a channel of communication between cabinet and administration, whereas, he himself took charge of the secretary establishment division. He even found a justification for the inclusion of military personnel in civil service due to scarcity of trained civil servants.

Talbot, (2014) also argues that it was in the result of the bureaucracy during colonial period that had nurtured such anti-democratic sentiments, and history provides an evidence that how Iskander Mirza and Ghulam Muhammad managed to pave the way for the coup for the dismissal of the elected government. Furthermore, Allen McGrath, in his views, not only severely criticised Ghulam Muhammad but also invalidates Chief Justice Muhammad Munir's verdict on the basis of "Doctrine of Necessity". Secondly, the Governor General established a unified West Pakistan province with the intention to pre-empt any possibility of a Bengali-controlled centre. Consequently, an authoritarian military-bureaucratic supremacy was established, wherein, they were given authority to impose nation-building.

In the light of all these arguments and evidences, it is clearly explained that how the country just after its creation was put into the lap of civil- military bureaucracy and from there-onward they have been involved in filling spaces and creating authoritarian enclaves till yet in the political system of the country. For instance, according to Aziz M., (2008), Iskander Mirza viewed the people of Pakistan as illiterate and foolish , therefore, they were unable to control the political system of Pakistan. However, Pakistan witnessed a system of controlled democracy by the subsequent inclusion of illiterate, foolish and irresponsible representatives of people into the civil and military bureaucracies for the best public interest.

According to Kamran, (2008), the colonial legacy undermined the position and role of the representative government even after creation of Pakistan. To support his contention, he quotes works of Ayesha Jalal, Khalid Bin Sayeed and Ian Talbot that have clearly provided evidence that how bureaucratic system provided with the centralized administrative structure to the country. The Westminster parliamentary system aims to provide with the separation of powers between bureaucracy and representative political executive, however, it was evaded altogether and bureaucratic authoritarianism was installed instead. Therefore, it became almost difficult to establish supremacy of the legislative body over the executive, for instance, he further quotes

Hamza Alvi by using the term “overdeveloped state structure”. All this earlier colonial practices preferred maintaining law and order rather over facilitating way for the popular representation.

Furthermore, it was colonial legacy that persuaded the bureaucracy to insult and look down upon political leadership. For instance, the debates in the constitutional assembly disclosed about the indifferent attitude of bureaucrats towards compliance to their orders and service discipline. The elected ministers had no powers at all to make the bureaucrats accountable in the performance of their functions. According to Mohammad Waseem’s words “bureaucratic paternalism” that was employed by imperial power during its rule, also left deep imprints on the post colonial phase. The prevailing circumstances, wherein, military-bureaucratic oligarchies became powerful to the extent that political leadership could not effectively perform its assigned responsibilities, hence, the process of democratization remained stagnant in the country.

Under such an adverse environment, democratic representative norms could not flourish and, consequently, non-representative authoritarian enclaves smoothly grew up and began to firmly exert their influence in decision making process of the country. The colonial legacy remained intact and it seems that the country has been witnessing neo-colonial masters in the guise of civil-military bureaucratic enclaves since decade. Referring Hamza Alvi and others, Saleem (1990) has also mentioned the similar view that when Ghulam Mohammad, the then Governor General, dissolved the constituent assembly and established One Unit, no province of West Pakistan including East Pakistan, with the exception of Punjab, accepted the decision. However, the then government forcibly implemented the decision and provincial chief ministers were fired on their refusal to compromise with the decision. Though, chief minister of Punjab furnished his consent for the the dissolution of the assembly, however, he was against the accumulation of all administrative power of Lahore with the Governor and, hence, he was also sent home. The civil-military bureaucracy was intolerant to any independent thought and divergent view and they thus exploited the slogan of welfare of the people all the time, however, they never accepted a novel idea or a diverse opinion.

Considering political leadership incompetent, Governor General Ghulam Muhammad and Ayub Khan not only hatched maneuvering in East Pakistan but they were also involved in manipulation of policies in West Pakistan. For instance, they badly treated popular leadership such as Suhrawardy, Hameed Chaudry and Fazlul Haq and many more. ZAB was also accused of not accepting the results of the general elections 1970 and was thus blamed for the dismemberment of Pakistan. Indeed, it was the first move towards the break up of the country and political instability.

Pakistan, in the initial stage of its independence, was struggling to meet with the critical circumstances, however, some elements of bureaucracy were involved in striving to tactfully safeguard their vested interests. According to Saleem (1990), Chaudary Muhammad Ali, one of the shrewd bureaucrats of the pre-independence period, was engaged to occupy an important position in the administrative set up of the country and he thus succeeded in creating an additional post of the secretary general and got it approved from Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Though, it was sheer violation of the administrative laws that also affected administrative machinery later on, however, he seized numerous interests from this high position.

During the course from 1947 to 1958, bureaucracy seemed powerful and far-sighted, however, with the occurrence of substantial changes in ZAB regime and reshuffling of their role and position had

challenged their status. For instance, Shafqat, (1998) mentions that it was the democratic rule of ZAB that established supremacy of elected representatives by challenging the superiority and dominant role of bureaucracy. For instance, he brought structural changes at the macro and micro level in the bureaucratic structure. He wanted to create an environment of sensibility and confidence for the political leadership and for the promotion of civilian supremacy over military and bureaucracy. However, the politics of patronizing bureaucracy had adversely affected bureaucracy and it thus plunged into the menace of corruption. This had created a new phase of emerging problems, though, it succeeded in containing dominance of bureaucracy, but it helped to strengthen the feudal authoritarianism on the other hand that also proved fatal to the process of democratization.

According to Alvi, (2012), bureaucracy remained dominant till the dictatorial rule of Ayub Khan in 1960s, however, ZAB brought revolutionary changes and the status quo of bureaucracy was entirely changed by curtailing its overdeveloped apparatus of state. On contrary, the military enclave grew up that had firmly replaced the role of civilian bureaucrats.

However, Sajjad (2018) has disagreed by mentioning that though ZAB wanted to bring bureaucracy under civilian control but there were some flaws and contradictions in his policies, for instance, he appointed a junk of his close-associates, from amongst the civil servants, for decision making and control over other affairs relating to the policy of nationalization. Meanwhile, his government was also responsible for politicization of bureaucracy, furthermore, after the dismemberment of the country people had great expectations from ZAB but his tactical strategy proved utmost failure and he fell prey to his own policies. As a result, bureaucracy became stronger and it developed a nexus with military and succeeded in regaining its image. During all this, the process of democracy and its consolidation have been neglected and remained out of sight.

During the prolonged dictatorial rule of Zia, the non-elected institutions obtained their pre-ZAB supremacy and dominance. According to Jalal, (1997), when BB formed the government after Zia, her government also inherited structural constraints from the system that proved obstacles in establishing stable and consolidated democracy. It is thus said that both the civil and military bureaucracy were not ready to accept the progressive change and parliamentary supremacy in the country.

It is further argued by Jalal that the political economy has remained the real bone of contention between elected and non-elected institutions in the political system of Pakistan. For instance, bureaucracy and the military wanted to keep control over the political economy and when Nawaz formed government after the dismissal of BB government, he also faced the same issues. Military, in connivance with, bureaucracy showed reservation on newly elected premier for keeping control of mighty financial portfolio in his own person and it was reminded ZAB's controlling of populist mobilization. As a result, this has given birth to continues imbalance between the weak political structures and civil society.

The eleven year military rule of Zia had laid worst impact on the subsequent political developments in the country as Alvi, (2012) has mentioned that Zia's legacy had left irreparable repercussions for the political system. Whereas, his constitutional changes had led the country derailed from the process of successive democratic governments. In the entire history of Pakistan his power and

substantiation has been the focus of tensed relations between the elected and the non-elected institutions. However, military and bureaucracy had remained the real decision-makers, whereas, both bureaucracy and military are strong enough having disciplined cadre and mostly belonging to the province of Punjab. They have nothing to be worried about except fear of emergence of regional movements and ethnic politics alongwith the popular will of the electorate in Punjab who are also in favour of establishing a democratic system of governance. On the contrary, Sajjad (2018) has mentioned that the democratic governments from 1988 to 1999 have been responsible for politicizing bureaucracy due to their unsteady nature. The manipulation of the administrative institution for getting influence over each other adversely affected civil services' non-partisan approach and, consequently, bureaucracy became non-functional.

To make bureaucracy responsible and efficient, democratic governments are responsible to keep it at distant from indulging into politics. Whenever, bureaucracy was used by the political leadership for their vested interests, they in turn exploited them for their bureaucratic ambitious goals. All this has adversely affected democracy and its nourishment and also helped bureaucratic enclave to grow up and expand its sphere of influence. According to Waseem, (2006), even after the establishment of Pakistan, colonial legacy had deep impact on the electoral politics of the country and the existing power structure, based on tribal and feudal features, was preserved and linked with the district administration and thus democracy was implanted upon the established bureaucratic system. To retain status quo, bureaucracy brought changes subsequently in constituencies, electoral rolls and also remained involved in pre-poll, during poll and post-poll rigging. He argues that bureaucracy as one of the factors played its role in making Pakistan an "hourglass society". In such a society state and public institutional link is restricted to the minimum level and therefore people are kept away from politics with the exception of their occasional role in politics. Bureaucracy plays its role as a gatekeeper of the distant state.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although civil bureaucracy played a vital role in administering the post-colonial Pakistan yet its over-active role in political process is criticized in the democratic circles. This article overviewed the key criticism on the central role of bureaucracy in Pakistan. The core of all the arguments against the over-developed role of bureaucracy is that bureaucratic influence in politics is an authoritarian enclave that hampered the functioning of smooth political process. During the first phase of Pakistan's history it was in the leading position but after the promulgation of first Martial Law in 1958 it took a sub-ordinate position giving space to military elite in the leading position. Since then it supplemented the power of military elite. This overdeveloped role of bureaucracy is suitable for developing democracy, it may, thus, be suggested that structural reforms in civil bureaucracy are the need of the time to make it more responsible, subservient to public representatives and more efficient in performing its responsibilities.

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