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## **BUREAUCRACY IN BANGLADESH : THE POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND INFLUENCE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Bureaucracy is of much interest in Third World countries due to the role it plays in national life both in policy making as well as in implementation. Bureaucracy is so intricately entwined with modern administration that it cannot be separated from administration inspite of ample criticism against it.

Literally bureaucracy is understood to mean "a system of government by officials responsible only to their department chiefs",<sup>1</sup> Social scientists define it as a particular way in which people organise themselves and their resources to achieve some agreed upon goal. Bureaucracy is a social organisation which contains certain features that we attribute to large scale organisations. We can compare bureaucracy with other organisations in the same manner as we compare machine to non-mechanical modes of production. Bureaucracy in a way is a mechanical system. "Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic adminis-

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1. *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary*. Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1979 p. 172.

tration."<sup>2</sup> The more one or other of these specific features are maintained the more bureaucracy is dehumanised, that is, it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred and all purely personal, and emotional elements which escape calculation.

In every day conversation the connotation of bureaucracy is to call something bureaucratic is to condemn it. Bureaucracy implies red tape, long lines, elaborate forms, unpleasant officials and the cold sweat that accompanies the feeling that one is not being understood. In popular image bureaucracy is in short, inefficient, inhuman and inaccessible. The radical view considers bureaucracy dangerous for the individual and society. However, to a social scientist it is neither efficient nor inefficient but a particular manner in which people organise themselves and resources available to achieve certain objectives.

The bureaucracy of Bangladesh is a classical example of bureaucracy in third world countries. The Civil Service of Bangladesh or for that matter the military bureaucracy as well, are heirs of the colonial service set up by the British Raj. The British organised Indian Civil Service (ICS) to assist them in ruling Indo-Pak sub-continent. On partition of India-Pakistan, Pakistan inherited the structural set up, system and practices of I. C. S. which was passed on to Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) in 1971. Bangladesh Civil Service will be discussed at length in the process of our discussion. Our focus, however, will be on the political involvement of bureaucracy and the participation of bureaucracy in policy making. The main interest is to see how bureaucracy promoted and supported autocratic rule and did not help develop political institutions. We will also examine how autocratic rule helped to develop bureaucracy, increased its participation in policy making, and strengthened the institution to such extent that it considered itself indispensable and involved in corruption at

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2. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Translated and Ed.), *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, London, Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 215-216.

random. The purpose in other words is to see how bureaucracy and autocracy used each other for each other's survival leading to deviation from ideal concept of bureaucracy.

The first part of this paper discusses briefly bureaucracy and its characteristics as suggested by Max Weber, the German sociologist whose writings are considered of seminal importance in the study of bureaucracy. How and why bureaucracy is actively taking over the role of policy making particularly in the Third World context ? What factors contribute towards the monopolization of bureaucracy ? These and related issues are taken up in the first part. Then we proceed to examine the legacy inherited by the bureaucracy in Bangladesh. We try to explore how bureaucracy became an instrument in the hands of the autocratic government. We also try to analyse the allegation of politicization and corruption of bureaucracy that is creation of negative bureaucratic behaviour, mainly during the autocratic rule of Ershad. By negative bureaucratic behaviour we mean deviation from the principles and characteristics suggested by Weber accepted the world over.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bureaucracy is inevitable in all societies. It is an efficient form of administration compared to other forms. This was Weber's opinion and it was he who created interest in bureaucracy through his writings. Max Weber is considered the founder of systematic study of bureaucracy.

He alerted social scientists to the importance of bureaucracy. He pointed out the important relationship between the emergence and consolidation of a modern state with the advancement of bureaucracy in recent times. According to Weber the conditions that led to the rise of bureaucracy are, (a) the development of money economy; (b) increasing size of states and organisation; (c) the impact of cultural, economic and technological develop-

ments, and (d) the technical superiority of bureaucracy over other forms of administration.<sup>3</sup>

Weber stated that bureaucracy is governed by six principles. The position of the bureaucratic officials is also based on six principles.

**The six principles are :**

1. Duties are fixed and official jurisdictions are ordered by rules; official duties are regular activities, based on the ends of the organisation.
2. There is a firmly ordered hierarchy providing for the supervision of lower offices by specified higher ones. Lower officials have the right of appeal as a counter-balance to the regulated domination from above. Such offices are not ephemeral, they are fixed and then filled by successive incumbents.
3. Office management is strictly based on written documents and a filing system. Office and home of the official is clearly separated, and the segregation of business and family interest are presupposed for all members of the bureaucracy.
4. For each specialised position a specific training is required
5. Official business should occupy the energies of official full time and not to be a secondary activity.
6. The rules of bureaucracy demands relevant learning and expertise based in relevant academic disciplines.<sup>4</sup>

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3. For details see, *ibid*, pp. 196-244, and Dennis Warwick, *Bureaucracy* (London Longman, 1974) p. 52.

4. For detail see, G. Roth and C. Wittich, (ed.), *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, 3 vols. (New York : Bedminster press, 1968), pp. 956-962.

**The six principles behind the position of officials are ;**

1. Office holding as a profession requiring a prescribed course of training, the passing of examinations to indicate quality, and impersonality of relationship among career professionals in the bureaucracy and with their clientele.
2. The official enjoys a social esteem in accordance with his rank in the hierarchy.
3. The official is appointed by a superior authority.
4. The official enjoys a tenure (of office) for life.
5. Security is ensured for the officials by the payment of a salary in accord with his status in the hierarchy (and a pension at the end of his service).
6. In the career there is a system of promotion based on merit where the official moves from less well paid to better paid offices in time.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, in simple terms Weber suggested that bureaucracy works on the basis of specific rules and regulations laid down in black and white in a rational objective manner within a firmly ordered hierarchy. The job of the officials is a full time occupation. They are given specialised training for specialised position. Officials are recruited on the basis of open competitive examination and appointed by a superior authority. The important characteristics of bureaucracy that Weber emphasised as a result of the principles on which bureaucracy is based are neutrality, rationality and efficiency.

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5. *Ibid.*

Just as Weber considered bureaucracy as the superior form of administration in comparison to any other form, he was also aware of the consequences of bureaucracy. The most noted consequence was alienation. Due to its nature of formalism and impersonality this alienation occurs and cannot be permanently eradicated. Secondly, it has been said that bureaucratization leads to a "bastardized form of democracy"<sup>6</sup> and unlike the democratic mass parties which are democratically organised it leads to decline in active participation of people in government. It also leads to the "leveling of the governed in the face of the governing and bureaucratically articulated group, which in turn may occupy quite an autocratic position both in fact and in form"<sup>7</sup>

Bureaucratic allegiance is to the authority above it and it is hardly affected by the changes at the political level. Bureaucratic orientations like recruitment and training helps the bureaucrats to adopt quickly to changing situations.

Weber promoted bureaucracy as he considered it the most efficient system of administration. However, Weber and his ideal type of bureaucracy has been criticised. The main criticisms are on the specification of organisational structure and the lack of human elements in organisations. Weber was of the opinion that organisations are autonomous and not vulnerable to external influences and therefore, paid emphasis on the structural aspects of organisation ignoring the behaviour of personnel working in the organisation. He did not consider the human element. Informal and unofficial aspects of behaviour play a substantial role in the maintenance of organisation.

Weber's theory of bureaucracy and the characteristics suggested by him are nevertheless the basis of bureaucracy the world over. Hierarchy, specialisation, formalism, recruitment on

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6. M. M. Khan, *Bureaucratic Self-Preservation*, University of Dhaka, 1980, p. 32.

7. Dennis Warwick *op. cit.*, p. 53.

the basis of open competitive system based on merit, promotion and so on are the grounds on which bureaucracy is built.

We have studied Bangladesh bureaucracy in this paper in the light of principles and characteristics suggested by Weber and tried to analyse the prevalent position of bureaucracy and examined the type and extent of deviations from Weber's principles.

### III. ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN POLICY MAKING IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Early theories on the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats was simple: politicians make policy, civil servants execute. The official norm of every state is that civil servants obediently serve their political "masters". This concept of specialisation between politicians and bureaucrats "exalts the glittering authority of the former and cloaks the role of the latter in gray robes of anonymous neutrality."<sup>8</sup> This presumption of separation of politics and administration nevertheless cannot prevent administrators from getting involved in politics as they are not going to be held accountable politically for the outcome of their actions. They are free of the interference of politicians who might otherwise make demands upon bureaucrats for modification of those policies. Again "the separation allows a certain latitude to politicians; (permitting).....many of the difficult decisions of modern government to be made by individuals who will not have to face the public in subsequent elections."<sup>9</sup>

Weber does not make any explicit assumption about bureaucracy playing an effective role in the policy making function of a state as it is the function of politics. He understood

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8. Joel. D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putnam and Bert A. Rockman, *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies*. Harvard University Press, 1981. p. 5.

9. B. G. Peters, *The Politics of Bureaucracy*. (New York : London 1978) p. 137.

the separation of politics and administration to be an ideal but an improbable one. He recognised that "bureaucracy has a tendency to monopolise power and conquer new areas of life in modern society".<sup>10</sup> "Every problem, no matter how technical it might seem, can assume political significance and its solution can be decisively influenced by political consideration,"<sup>11</sup> writes Weber. The crux of the problem is that politicians, specially in Third World countries like Bangladesh, lack the expertise, the information and even the time to decide the hundreds of policy questions that a modern government faces. Therefore, even if civil servants wanted to obey orders or merely follow them, as some honestly try to do, it often becomes impracticable.

Having accepted that bureaucracy will participate in policy making the important consideration is how much power the bureaucracy will exercise in policy making ? This is dependent on the political culture and political structure of a society which shape the behaviour of bureaucracy.

Behaviour of individuals is determined by political culture prevailing in a society. By political culture we mean the systems of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which define the situation in which political actions take place.<sup>12</sup> It defines the framework for political behaviour of the individual, and at the same time provides the systemic structure of values and rational considerations that shape the nature and performance of organisation and institutions.

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10. Mustafa Chowdury, "Bureaucracy in Cross Cultural Settings," *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Volume, XXXVI, p. 27.

11. As cited in Alfred Diamants. "The Bureaucratic Model : Max Weber Rejected, Rediscovered, Reformed," Ferrel Heady and Sibyl L. Stokes, (eds.), *Papers in Comparative Public Administration*, (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, Institute of Public Administration, 1963) p. 85.

12. Sidney Verba, "Comparative Political Culture", in Lucian Pye and S. Verba (eds.) *Political Culture and Political Development*. Princeton University Press, 1965, p. 513.

Public bureaucracy is a sub-system of the political system and therefore, political system will determine the behaviour of the sub-system. Ferrel Heady was of the opinion that political system plays an important role in shaping the kind of bureaucracy. Six kinds of political systems were identified by him to show the close relationship that exists between the characteristics and the political role of the bureaucracy in the context of developing countries. The political systems are : (1) traditional autocratic system (Iran), (2) bureaucratic elite system—civil and military (Pakistan and Thailand), (3) polyarchal competitive system, (Turkey, Philippines and Israel), (4) dominant party semi-competitive system (Mexico and India), (5) dominant party mobilization system (Egypt), and (6) communist totalitarian system (North Korea and Cuba).<sup>13</sup> Till December 6, 1990 there existed the bureaucratic elite (civil and military) system in Bangladesh. We will discuss this later in the paper.

### **Bureaucracy in Policy-Making**

There are a number of factors that contribute to the involvement of bureaucracy in the policy-making process. These factors include :

(a) *Absence of strong political institutions* : Efficient administration is dependent on the growth of strong political institutions. Administration can be made effective only when there is a mature political process capable of exerting its will on bureaucracy.<sup>14</sup> Thus efficient administration is dependent on the growth of strong political institutions which can provide the means for and exact performance from the bureaucracy. On the other hand strengthening of the bureaucracy is bound to inhibit the growth of political institutions. In the absence of strong political

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13. Ferrel Heady, *Public Administration; A Comparative Perspective*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall 1966), p. 72.

14. F. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964), p. 74.

institutions there is a vicious circle : weak political institutions lead to strengthening of the bureaucracy's monopolising capability and scope which for its part leads to the weakening of the foundation for the promotion of political institutions.

(b) *Expertise of the bureaucracy* : Bureaucratic organisations by their very nature and origin can claim a superior expertise of statecraft. La Polambora wrote that bureaucracy is able to monopolise considerable power in the policy making institutions because of the scientific and technical character of government policy. Formulation and implementation of any dimension of national policy require highly specialized technical skill. Bureaucracy is that part of the government where these qualities are almost invariably found in considerable disproportion to other parts. The intricate nature of government programming in a technological era has resulted in a dynamic growth in the administrators influence even in societies with viable and dynamic representative structure.<sup>15</sup>

(c) *Public sector in social and economic development and growth of interest groups* : The governments in developing countries are directly and indirectly involved in most of the programmes for social and economic development. This extends the opportunity for the bureaucracy to cultivate variety of resources, such as professional and enterprenuerial and thereby exert pre-dominant influence in policy making and implementation. This touches the population in nearly all spheres of life. To carry out such programmes many special interest groups have to be mobilized at official initiative. Various committees and councils are set up to plan and implement programmes under government supervision. In almost all cases the creation of these interest groups follows a bureaucratic initiative. The growth of state sponsored interest groups helps to increase bureaucratic control.

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15. Micheal Lofchi, "Representative Government, Bureaucracy and Political Development", *The Journal of Developing Areas*. Vol. 11, Oct. 1967, p. 37.

(d) *The tendency to centralisation of power* : Centralisation of power is also associated with expansion of power of bureaucracy. In the absence of representative governments in many developing countries like Bangladesh authority tends to be concentrated more at the highest echelons often irrespective of the type of government. In such situation the government needs to depend too heavily on the administrative capability and expertise of the bureaucracy. Indeed as experience in most cases including Pakistan and India suggest, the bureaucracy, both civil and military, becomes an important part of the core power-base of the government. Eventually there becomes a mutual dependence between the bureaucratic and political elites.

(e) *Aid dependence* : An important factor that has contributed to the increase of the dominance of bureaucracy is international aid programmes. These programmes strengthen and increase the power of bureaucracy in countries like Bangladesh. The donors cannot undertake the economic development programmes directly and for obvious reasons need to depend on the bureaucracy as the institution through which the largest part of their aid programmes are implemented. By virtue of its positions as the negotiating, executing and evaluating institution for aid programmes, the bureaucracy grows in importance and influence. It also often becomes a part of the national and international vested interests that tend to increase aid dependence rather than reduce it. We will now proceed to examine the political involvement and influence of bureaucracy in Bangladesh.

#### IV. THE LEGACY OF BANGLADESH BUREAUCRACY

Bangladesh became a new independent state in 1971 liberating itself from Pakistan after nine months of bloody struggle. One of the basic reasons for the secession was that East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was not allowed to be an equal partner in either decision making or economic development although it contributed the greater share of national output and foreign

exchange earning. The state apparatus that existed in Bangladesh at independence was a legacy from Pakistan which the latter in turn had inherited from British India. The British Raj created bureaucracy as the chief instrument of control and domination of the sub continent.

Bangladesh is a classic example of a Third World developing country. Its roughly 56 thousand square miles are inhabited by over 120 million people the majority of whom live in the rural areas. It's economy is predominantly agricultural with the substantial proportion of its masses living below the poverty line. Only about 22% of its population are literate. The 68 thousand villages of the country have a long way to go to build infrastructure, electrification, communication and so on, the basics of any developed country.

In the twenty years of its existence, except for the period 1972 to 1975, it has been under military rule in one form or the other. Political institutions as such have had no scope to develop. The intelligentsia, the professionals, the civil-military elites, bureaucratic elites and other interest groups control the destiny of the majority of the people. Nepotism, favouritism and regionalism are evident in all spheres of life. Bureaucracy being a sub-system of the society reflects the socio-political and economic features of the society. Bangladesh bureaucracy is a descendent of the Indian bureaucracy during the British Raj. The British set up the Indian Civil Service to administer the country. The prominent feature of the colonial rule used to be the control over the structure of government and monopoly on decision making by the bureaucrats. The military officers also joined with the bureaucrats in the governance of India.

The officers of Indian Civil Service were trained by the British to run the colonial administration. They were specially trained in western system and method initially in England, and later in India. They ended up being prototypes of British officers. As a result

they became a class by themselves, turning to the west and alienated from their own people.

On partition from India in 1947, Pakistan as a post-colonial state and as the lineal descendent of the colonial bureaucrats inherited from their predecessors their attitude and orientation. "The elitist character of the Indian Civil Service, became the ideal of the Civil Service of Pakistan".<sup>16</sup>

The general trend observed in Pakistan was that administration and bureaucracy had more influence in state affairs. The impact of politics and politicians were less in the overall management of the country. The bureaucratic elites in Pakistan had been in command of the state power from the very beginning. There existed a parliamentary facade of politicians in the 50s. But in 1958 when the military took over power, the bureaucracy in collaboration with the military played the key role not only in managing the administrative system, procedures and relationships, but also in decisions involving basic political, economical and social issues. The imposition of Martial law by Ayub Khan strengthened the role of bureaucrats in decision making. There were not any substantial change during Yahya Khan's regime.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was the Governor General of Pakistan and Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister relied very heavily on civil servants.<sup>17</sup> The reason for this dependence was said to be the lack of sufficient number of capable and trustworthy politicians in Muslim League which resulted in Jinnah and Liaquat turning to qualified bureaucrats. Moreover, "neither Jinnah nor Liaquat had any reputation for democratic disposi-

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16. Hamza Alavi. "The State in Post-Colonial Societies : Pakistan and Bangladesh", in K. Gough and H. P. Sharma (eds.), *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, New York Monthly Review Press, 1973, p. 147.

17. Khalid B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin 1967), p. 40.

tion".<sup>18</sup> Again, politicians were held in poor esteem by Jinnah. He directed bureaucrats "to watch the activities of the politician closely, he even warned the bureaucrats against possible misdeeds by politicians."<sup>19</sup> May be that is why we have the evidence of the Chief Secretary of East Bengal testifying before the law in 1950 about his vigilance on Bengalee Ministers and sending of reports to the Central Government.<sup>20</sup>

The bureaucrats were very proud of their performance and their role in decision making in Pakistan. The situation that prevailed was that bureaucrats worked without political restraint, instead they held politicians, in general, in contempt. This gave birth to political ambitions of bureaucrats. One such example is Chaudri Muhammad Ali who was the Secretary General and for four years he undertook the coordination work of various ministries. This "could be regarded as the personification of political ambitions in the bureaucracy."<sup>21</sup> The post of the Secretary General was created at his suggestion and was abolished in 1951 when he left the post and became the Finance Minister. The chance of reconciling the interests of politicians and bureaucrats was destroyed largely as a result of political ambitions of bureaucrats.

This was the picture in general but if we turn to the condition prevailing between bureaucrats of West Pakistan and East Pakistan it was not a politician-bureaucrat clash. The bureaucrats of West Pakistan, who were a minority in East Pakistan, tried to dominate their East Pakistan colleagues who were a majority. The design of

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18. Muntassir Mamoon and Jayanta Kumar Ray, *Inside Bureaucracy : Bangladesh*, (Papyrus Publishers, Calcutta, 1982) p. 15.

19. Kalim Siddiqui, *Conflict, Crisis and War in Pakistan*. (London, Macmillan 1972) p. 77 in Mamoon and Ray, *Inside Bureaucracy : Bangladesh*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

20. Mamoon and Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

21. Khalid B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1967), p. 75-76.

West Pakistan Bureaucrats for mastery over the politicians of East Pakistan was more than a struggle of bureaucrats against politicians. It was a struggle undertaken by bureaucrats on behalf of the dominant minority of Pakistan trying to impose and strengthen their rule over the majority. Ultimately, it resulted in the weakening of national unity and the birth of Bangladesh.

In the 24 years of Pakistan before Bangladesh, we find a politically ambitious bureaucracy in partnership with the military dominating the running of the administration. The psychology of the Pakistan bureaucrat was that "as a successor of his all powerful British predecessor (he) felt that just as the British civil servant had exercised untrammelled power and often kept the politicians under control so should he be allowed to exercise his power without political interference."<sup>22</sup>

The Pakistani bureaucracy that Bangladesh inherited on the eve of its birth was colonial in nature. Features inherited by administration such as hierarchy of services, limited and strict entry points for each service, elitist feature of superior service were maintained. The super elite cadre were the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) who occupied all the key administrative positions and were involved in new development institutions. The CSPs secured 60 percent representation in the Economic Pool, held important positions in the Planning Commission, and were also the Chairmen and Directors of most of the new enterprises.

The actual strength of civil servants in 1971 in government offices, autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies was 4,54,450.<sup>23</sup> Out of these only 315 were in the rank of secretary, additional secretary and joint secretary.<sup>24</sup> A good number of civil servants

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22. Mamoon and Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

23. Bangladesh Establishment Division, *Statistics on Civil Employees of the Government of Bangladesh*, Dhaka, BGP, 1975, p. 2.

24. Syed Giasuddin Ahmed, *Public Personnel Administration in Bangladesh*, (The City Press, Dhaka 1986), p. 155-167.

were stranded in West Pakistan. The former Civil Service of Pakistan, the Police Service of Pakistan, Pakistan Foreign Service, Pakistan Audit and Accounts and Taxation Services as well as the higher echelons of the military bureaucracy were in disorder.

The early liberation period was not socially and politically favourable for domination by bureaucratic elites. They were considered collaborators having been identified as a part and parcel of Pakistani bureaucracy and not as Bengali civil servants. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman publicly stated that their services were no longer required.

A set-back was suffered by the bureaucrats as a whole, during 1972 to early 1975. The civil servants were alienated along with military bureaucracy. The senior and experienced Bengali Civil Servants and military officers working with the Central Government were left behind in Pakistan. Those remaining in Bangladesh were victims of 'schism and factionalism'. With the independence of Bangladesh those is the provincial service started agitation for a merger between other services and the former central service. The important factor that supported such merger is relationship between job specification, skills, merit, posting and rank in the higher civil service. Moreover, those in the provincial service began to claim that they were now performing jobs similar to those performed by the former members of the central service. Thus they wanted the elitism to end. In fact they asked that members of both services should be given equal opportunity. This situation was aggravated by some selective cases of discriminatory promotion permitted by the new governments. In one such case, an officer not only "secured extraordinarily rapid promotions for himself but boosted the career opportunities of his ex-EPCS colleagues in expected disregard to the claims of ex-CSP officers".<sup>25</sup> In addition, rewards to those who fought in the liberation movement or supported it from within the government

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25. T. Moniruzzaman, as cited in *Mamoon and Ray, op. cit.*, p. 49.

were awarded by appointing them in the civil service without sufficient consideration of qualification or merit. A special examination was organised for the recruitment of freedom fighters. Again, certain administrative reforms were introduced which broke down the use of cadre affiliations of civil servants. A distinguishing feature of Pakistan Civil Service was reservation of posts. This was not strictly followed. The officers of East Pakistan Civil Service occupied now after liberation, important administrative positions in the Secretariat while non-government officers were employed to important posts on the basis of political patronage. Mujib's government also introduced the Presidential Order 9, through which civil servants could be removed without any explanation, thus weakening the security of government service.<sup>26</sup> The position of the bureaucracy became clearly subservient to political leadership and the ruling party which in many cases dictated the way administration was to run. Ironically though, the saying has it that during those days the civil servants would check the newspaper in the morning to be sure that they were still in office.

The set-back of bureaucracy during Mujib's era was, however, short lived. When it became evident that non-bureaucrats were unable to administer the country bureaucrats were called back. Reliance on bureaucrats became inevitable and gradually increased. Facts such as the nomination of "21 senior bureaucrats (9 former CSP officers, 1 police officer, 4 top military officers and 7 senior members of other services) as members of the central committee"<sup>27</sup> of Baksal speak of such dependence. Through a

26. The Constitution of Bangladesh contains provision relating to the services similar to those provided under the Government of India Act of 1935, and the Constitutions of 1956 and 1962 of Pakistan. Article 29, Part III and Part IX deal with the services. However it is noteworthy that the constitution provides no procedural protection to civil servants. The constitution firmly maintains that "decision of the authority empowered to remove or dismiss such person or to reduce him in rank shall be final." In Bangladesh the President is such authority.

27. *Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, June 7, 1975.

Presidential Ordinance the 19 provinces of the country were made into 61 districts and the 61 Governors of these districts consisted of 14 senior bureaucrats (9 CSP officers 1 military officer and 4 members of other services). Gradually CSP officers replaced party nominees in key position.

The military had also been alienated during Sheikh Mujib's early days of reign. The budget for the military was cut down from 16% to 15%. The entry of military back into the national scenario came about with the need to check rampant smuggling and hoarding, as well as checking other internal threats that were mounting. This exposed the weakness of the ruling party to the bureaucrats and military. Sheikh Mujib reinstated both groups by 1975. They in turn began to assert themselves in the decision making process. Subsequently, when Zia's government came to power in the wake of series of coups and counter coups the bureaucrats joined the government with open arms. The Martial Law regime of General Zia "was in fact a partnership between the military officers and elite civil servants."<sup>28</sup> It was also been observed that there is a tendency among military rulers to rely on bureaucrats in their desire to establish their illegitimate rule.

The six years of Zia's rule may be classified as a military rule for the first half while the second half was a military rule under civilian facade. In either case the military and civil bureaucracy occupied important positions in the country. In the first half of his rule Zia as the President was the Chief Martial Law Administrator as well as Chief of Army Staff. The Chiefs of Staff of Airforce and Navy were the Deputy Martial Administrators. The country was divided into 9 Martial Law Zones placed under the charge of 9 Zonal Martial Law Administrators who were not only responsible for the maintenance of law and order they also participated in policy making by contributing significant inputs.

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28. Emajuddin Ahamed, *Bureaucratic Elites in Segmented Economic Growth: Bangladesh and Pakistan*, UPL, 1980, p. 162.

### Composition of the Advisers to the President during Zia regime

Professional Background	Number
Military bureaucrats	3
Civil bureaucrats	6
Police	1
Teacher (University)	4
Businessmen	4
Doctor	1
Lawyer	1
Journalist	2
Women Social Workers	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

If we also look at the composition of the Advisers that helped the President in running the country we see a dominance of military and civil bureaucrats. The positions of the President, the Chief Martial Law Administrator, Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator and advisers in the over all power structure were very important. Similar to those in Pakistan days the key policy making bodies like the National Economic Council (NEC), Planning Commission as well as Secretariat and other Corporations were headed by civil-military bureaucrats. The President and Chief Martial Law Administrator, Zia, headed the National Economic Council which consisted of none others but the Deputy Martial Law Administrators the Advisers to the President and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, that is civil-military bureaucratic elites. A civil servant was the head of the Planning Commission. In the 38 public corporations existing in 1975 the Chairmen or Managing Directors were as follows : 11 former CSP officers, 5 military officers, 2 police officers, 6 officers belonging to EPCS while the rest belonged to the former central and other services. These clearly manifest how

civil-military bureaucrats were involved in the policy-making process of the country.

In the second phase of Zia's rule he tried to civilianize his regime. However, the domination of civil-military bureaucrats continued. At the time of Zia's death his last Council of Ministers was made of 24 full ministers and their composition was : military bureaucrats - 6, civil bureaucrats - 5, technocrats - 6, Businessmen - 4, Landlord - 1, Lawyer - 2. Between the civil and military bureaucrats, at the later stage of his regime the former was acquiring more say or power than before in decision making. The military however also remained dominant. There were 79 military officers in the civil service in 1980. Key positions such as that of Joint Secretary, Additional Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Chairmen or Directors of Corporations were held by 16 military bureaucrats in 1980.

This set-up of the state apparatus was inherited by Ershad when he took power in 1982. He took over on the ground that politicians were corrupt and unable to run the country. This cut short the civilianization process of Zia's government and military rule prevailed openly in the country for the next three years. There were not any qualitative difference in the politico-economic and administrative field at the initial stage of Ershad's rule as he followed the same strategy as Zia's government. However, Ershad helped to enhance the power of the military bureaucrats. In the prior regime, particularly at its later phase civil and military bureaucrats were more or less equal partners but under Ershad the civil bureaucracy became the subordinate partner of the military bureaucracy.

During Ershad's military rule he was also the Chief Martial Law Administrator. The country was divided into five Zones and twenty sub-Zones headed by army officers. These officers were Chairmen of various development and planning bodies as well as heads of civil administrative units in their respective areas.

To aid and advise the CMLA, a Council of Ministers, which was originally a Council of Advisers, were appointed. The composition of the Council in 1982 was : 7 military bureaucrats, 3 retired civil bureaucrats, 2 technocrats and 4 lawyers. Political leaders were later inducted as a part of the regime's attempt to civilianize the government. By 1988 the Ministers of Ershad government consisted of 13 military bureaucrats, 9 civil bureaucrats, 7 intellectuals (teacher, doctor, lawyer and so on), 6 businessmen and 45 persons affiliated with party politics. In the same manner as that of Zia's rule, during Ershad government the civil-military bureaucrats were dominating the chief policy implementing institutions like the NEC, Planning Commission, National Councils, National Council Committees and Public Corporations. In the last few years a progressive increase was noticeable in the representation of the armed forces in government and semi-government service. "The colonization of civilian posts by military officers, which began in a small way during Zia regime, greatly expanded under Ershad."<sup>29</sup> Retired military officers virtually took over the police service.

There were 28 senior posts occupied by military officials in the secretariat, "serving or retired members of the armed forces headed 14 of the 22 lucrative public corporations. Six more were headed by civilians with special connections with Ershad and other senior army generals."<sup>30</sup> One-third of the 48 heads of Bangladesh missions abroad were from the defence services. This was Ershad's way of ensuring the loyalty of the army personnels to him. He would discuss all important policy measures with his military officers before formally placing it to the Cabinet.

This was the scenario till Ershad held the controversial election of 1986. Subsequent upon the election his confidence increased and reliance on bureaucracy was not to the extent of the early

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29. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka*, (Cambridge University Press 1989), p. 222.

30. *Ibid.* p. 222.

days of his rule. Ershad helped to create conflict and clash within the civil bureaucracy intentionally by inducting army personnel so as to weaken the civil bureaucracy. The bureaucracy was, however, not going to give up. Thus, the 9 member secretaries committee, considered to be the "elite committee or super cabinet"<sup>31</sup> was influential in decision making on national issues even to the last days of Ershad's fall. Efforts were on as late as November '90 to raise the age limit for the retirement of government officers and employees to 60 years. If this attempt had succeeded than "the Pakistan generation officers who are reportedly close to the Ershad Government would have got three more years to help this regime to cling to power."<sup>32</sup> Some of the most influential secretaries reported to be the crux of the extended power base of Ershad were due for retirement within a year or two, thus this step was to be taken.

#### V. BUREAUCRACY AS AN OBJECT OF PATRONAGE

In the nine years of rule Ershad and his government broke down all rules, regulations, norms and practices in order to ensure domination by distribution of patronage. There were anomalies in appointment, posting, promotion, transfer and so on. Bureaucracy, as already mentioned, follows specific rules and regulations. This is among the basic principles of bureaucracy, Bangladesh bureaucracy is also supposed to be guided by such rules and regulations. Articles of the Constitution, President's order and different rules of the Establishment Ministry are applicable for appointment, promotion, transfer and so on.

Ershad managed to disregard all these whenever it pleased him. This practice started even before he became the President. Ershad was instrumental in the promotion of Finance Director of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, Musharraf Hossain

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31 *Dhaka Courier*, August 10-16, 1990.

32. *Dhaka Courier*, November 23-29, 1990.

to acting chairman in 1981.<sup>33</sup> Prior to this the officer was being investigated for corruption charges under Zia's government. In fact Zia had asked Ershad to look into the matter. With the blessings of Ershad, subsequently Musharraf Hossain became the Industries Secretary and exerted extraordinary influence.

A. G. Mohiuddin a junior officer in the taxation department of the Pakistan Government soon rose to prominence in foreign service under Ershad regime merely by virtue of a matrimonial relationship between the two. Immediately after the change of Government in 1982 he was posted in Washington as a diplomat. The last post held by Mohiuddin was that of Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations. "The principle of seniority was blatantly violated in order to promote Mohiuddin. He was given the rank of Ambassador in 1986 superseding as many as 14 officers."<sup>34</sup>

There was cause of discontent in Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) as well as in Bangladesh Parjatan (Tourism) Corporation. Gulam Mohammad Kader, the younger brother of Ershad was made the director of BPC in 1989. He was serving as Operation Officer in the said corporation in 1977. By 1984-85 he became Operation Manager by virtue of being Ershad's brother.<sup>35</sup>

Habibur Rahman, another of Ershad's relatives became the Chairman of Parjatan Corporation and Foreign Employment Bureau simultaneously. On the basis of regular promotion in 1975 he was promoted to the post of Assistant Director. But with change of power he became Managing Director of Export Promotion Bureau and later Chairman of the Parjatan Corporation.<sup>36</sup>

The Foreign Ministry has been amongst the worst affected out of Ershad's political and family patronage. He damaged the structure, efficiency and image of the ministry. During President

33. See for details *Robber* (Bengali Weekly), December 30, 1990, and *Sangbad* (Bengali Daily), 27 December 1990.

34. *Holiday*, December 29, 1990.

35. *Sangbad*, December 30, 1990,

36. *Ibid.*

Zia's rule there was widespread political appointment in the Foreign Ministry and induction of Army. The practice of lateral entry was introduced during Zia's time. To regularize their services Zia government absorbed them in the Foreign Service Cadre. Army personnel who were absorbed were going to be considered for seniority from the day these officers were commissioned. By the time the officers were 30 years they could become Director General of the Foreign Ministry. But a university graduate not below the age of 21 could appear for the BCS competitive examination and join the service. Thus anomaly was created by Zia. He appointed General Shafiullah, General Dastgir and Air Marshal Khondakar, to name a few of the army officers, as Ambassadors. Ershad followed the footsteps of Zia to inflict severe damage to the dignity of the Foreign Office, structurally and otherwise. There were violation of various rules. There is, for example, a regulation that officers including the Head of Mission should not be posted abroad for more than eight years in a row. But Ershad's favourities have been abroad for 15 uninterrupted years. "Major General (Retd) K. M. Shafiullah, now High Commissioner in London, tops the list of beneficiaries, Brig A. N. M. Nuruzzaman, Ambassador in Stockholm (13 years), Major General (Retd) Quazi Golam Dastgir in Riyadh (12 years), A. H. G. Mohiuddin, Permanent Representative to the UN in New York (12 years)"<sup>37</sup> and so on. None of the Foreign Service officers benefited from this violation. Again an officer from the Foreign Service cadre has to serve as Director General for 3 to 4 years before he is given an ambassadorial post. The lateral entrant A. H. G. Mohiuddin did not have any difficulty in securing Ambassadorial appointments without serving as Director General."<sup>38</sup> The student leader Jalaluddin was appointed to the Bangladesh High Commission in Australia as a reward from Ershad for his role in breaking up the student political groups in the university.

37. *Holiday*, December 29, 1990.

38. *Ibid.*

Besides these anomalies in posting and induction of army personnel Ershad was involved in the promotion of civil servants even upto the level of Deputy Secretary. These interventions often did not abide by the rules of appointment and promotion.<sup>39</sup> Again, Ershad managed to obtain the support of some highly placed bureaucrats for his political party. An influential secretary to the Government was reported to have joined politics directly while in service and openly worked for the ruling party. In different meetings and processions he rendered slogans in favour of Ershad and JP. During the anti-Ershad movement he tried to stop engineers from joining in processions and meetings against Ershad.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, army retired bureaucrats, both civil and military, joined the ruling party and/or government.<sup>41</sup> The prospect of becoming a minister or influential factor in the government at the highest echelons of service and thereafter led to patron-client relationship between the government and bureaucracy, thereby damaging the neutrality of the latter.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper was aimed at understanding bureaucracy as it functions in Bangladesh in the light of the characteristics and principles prescribed for bureaucracy by Weber. We have seen that Weber's rational type of bureaucracy is not functioning in Bangladesh in its true form largely due to the political environment and socio-economic factors. Under autocratic rule bureaucracy was stripped of its neutrality and it became a partner of the autocratic ruler in running the state to serve the interest of only those at the top and not the people or the nation as a whole.

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39. See for details, *Ananda Patra* (Bengali Weekly), Dec 21-27, 1990.

40. For details see *Robber* (Bengali Weekly) January 20, 1991, p. 40-42.

41. A. B. M. Golam Mustafa, B. M. Abbas A. T., Humayan Rasheed Choudhury, Mahbubur Rahman, Syeduzzaman, A. R. S. Doha, are amongst the retired civil bureaucrats who joined Ershad's Cabinet. Military bureaucrats who joined Ershad's Cabinet on retirement include Major General Munim, Major General Mahmudul Hassan, Major General Shamsul Huq, Lieutenant Colonel H. M. A. Gaffar and Major Manzur Kader to name a few. For details see *Ananda Patra* (Bengali Weekly) December 7-13, 1990.

From our observation we find that bureaucracy and autocracy promote each other in their own interest and for retaining their domination in the management of the state. Bureaucracy supports autocratic rule for the sake of self-aggrandizement. Autocratic and military rulers rely on bureaucracy to establish, legitimise and perpetuate their rule. This in effect implies violation of rules and regulation in such areas as appointment, promotion, transfer and dismissal. Subjective factors tend to prevail over basic norms and principles of bureaucracy which causes severe damage to the institution itself, particularly its neutrality and objectivity.

On the other hand, bureaucrats who succeed in carrying favour with the autocratic ruler got involved in different means of self-aggrandizement. Bureaucrats lose their neutrality ending up as yes-men of the autocrats. Politicization of the bureaucracy makes the bureaucratic decision-making less independent, civil servants do not practice neutrality any longer and instead involve themselves in the competition among interest groups. Bureaucrats in the process become a part of the group of sycophants around the autocratic ruler and in the name of advising the ruler cause irreparable damage to the cause of the welfare of the masses.

There is a tendency among military rulers to favour military bureaucrats over civil bureaucrats. So was the case in Bangladesh. The military regime equated the civil bureaucrats with lower military bureaucrats. "Military rulers of Bangladesh. . . scandalously downgraded the civil service by repeated enhancement of military pay scales and revision of the Warrant of Precedence, so that even a Major General enjoys a superiority to a Secretary."<sup>42</sup> This breeds discontent and frustration among civil servants. They are demoralized. Therefore, a group reacts with apathy, obstructionism or evasiveness towards duty while the other group tries to make material gain and advance their career by pleasing the military rulers, inspite of the humiliation suffered.

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42. Hassan Uzzaman, *The Military and Socio-Economic Reality and Politics in Bangladesh*, Published by Author in 1985 in Bengali, p. 36-37.

This tendency of pleasing bosses and promoting personal gain has set a bad precedent. Therefore, fresh entrants enter the service with the understanding that if they please those in power or in the higher echelons their advancement in life will be ensured. Since the senior bureaucrats involve in corruption in which the Chief Executive of the country is himself involved, there are no examples for the new entrant, no role models or political example which would teach them to abstain from such practices. They begin by serving those in power so as to gain their patronage and fail in their duty to the people as the servant of the Republic.

The image of bureaucracy has to be re-established first by restoring pride and neutrality and efficiency of the services. Rule of law should be emphasized which is essential for maintaining the neutrality of the bureaucracy. Accountability needs to be introduced in all the government offices, corporations, and autonomous bodies. Committees or national bodies comprising of people's representatives and government officers should be set up. Along with financial audit, performance audit should be emphasised. This will help assess the achievements or failures of individuals and organizations. Heads of departments may be held responsible for any lapses, commissions or irregularities.

Writing in the 60's Warren Bennis<sup>43</sup> said that bureaucracy will demise and democracy will take its place in twenty years time, that is by the 80's. But what we find today is that bureaucracy remains "necessary evil". Bureaucracy continues to be a permanent institution indispensable for sustaining the political system. And indeed there is no conflict between bureaucracy and the principles and functioning of democracy. The two are rather complementary to each other. Bureaucracy is an organised and efficient machinery vital for managing the affairs of the state. For its part bureaucracy draws its stability from its position as the supportive institution for the state. The objective of this mutual dependence can however, be best served by ensuring strict neutrality, independence and professionalism of bureaucracy and by minimizing the political involvement and influence on this institution.

43. Warren Bennis, *Beyond Bureaucracy*, (New York, McGraw Hill Book Co.), 1966.