

Efficiency of bureaucracy vitally matters for development

Economic growth and development are expected to move as fast as the Arabian horse if the bureaucratic system works sincerely, honestly, efficiently, positively and productively, writes M Azizur Rahman

THE policy direction of the governmental activities is to reach or achieve the goal of national development. When those who are involved in implementation of policies change the related direction or guidelines of intentionally, this causes deviation from, or slows down the activities aimed at meeting or fulfilling national mission and vision of development.

Bureaucrats are the engine of economic growth and development. They are expected to be educated, trained, experienced, smart and intelligent enough to operate the wheel of governmental activity. Nobody is perfect in his/her life. We can always commit a mistake in our life. Mistakes made by bureaucrats can be intentional or unintentional. Intentional mistakes are defined as corruption. Bureaucratic corruption has to be curbed in order to promote sustainable development.

In the past, we had experience about the Indian Civil Service (ICS) during the British-India period and Pakistan Civil Service (PSC) during the Pakistan period and now we have experiences about the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS). Historically, we found ICS and the civil service personnel in both the eastern and western world, including Europe and America, as very much well-trained, educated, smart and especially relatively more sincere, honest or relatively less corrupt. Many people can define this bureaucratic system of relatively less corrupt or as free of corruption. According to our experience of the recent past, we cannot say that the Central Superior Service (CSS) in the then Pakistan and the BCS personnel in Bangladesh, are free of corruption. The bureaucratic system in Bangladesh may sometimes be designated as anti-people. Or quite a few bureaucrats work against the interest of the nation or national development. The sources of

bureaucratic corruption are too many. Necessity knows no law. Sometimes necessity is also the mother of invention. In addition to the individual's ambition and attitude in the bureaucratic world, necessity sometimes becomes a mother of corruption. In many developing countries, quite a few bureaucrats are satisfied with what they have on their own. They are at times ambitious and over-ambitious in order to satisfy their need and demand for both necessity and luxury goods and services. They are well aware of the human trait -- "more is better than less."

We are selfish by birth. We are interested in the self in everything or many things. We love to have ownership right and unlimited private property right in an effort to maximize our wealth and movable and immovable property and assets in our life and living. We love our own ownership more than that of the others. We would like to maximise the benefit of our family and ourselves first, before we can think about the wellbeing of others. Envy means a feeling of wanting something that someone else has. Briefly, envy or jealousy makes a man or a woman unduly concerned about the assets and property of the others. For example, elderly people can be envy of the young one's success. All it means that the people are very much conscious about their relative position and relative income in the society. People strive to satisfy or meet their necessity in life including food, shelter, wear, education and health. Simultaneously, the people as much as the bureaucrats like to work for their name and fame and social, political, and economic positions in the society. Through their actions, they do hardly care about what can happen to others because of that.

In a developing country like Bangladesh, some politicians sometimes become vindictive or

their politics is, in reality, of a vindictive nature. Politicians think something in their mind and express the other thing before the public, as a technique to attract and to acquire their political support in the next election.

Bureaucrats or the officers at all levels from the top to the bottom in both private and public sectors - or, the public sector in particular, are given various kinds of duties and social responsibilities with economic and non-economic actions, project planning and the whole bunch of development programmes. All privileges including the source of work, duties and responsibilities can serve as a source of good work for the bureaucrats or also can serve as a big and available source of corruption, too. Some administrative officials or the bureaucrats are good, some are bad or some are modest and a mix of all kinds.

They can also be cooperative or less than cooperative, or non-cooperative in their duties and responsibilities. If the bureaucrats are good, sincere, honest and cooperative in addition to being efficient and smart, a country with educated human resources or manpower and with available natural resources can develop itself economically at a faster pace. Economic growth and development are expected to move as fast as the Arabian horse if the bureaucratic system works sincerely, honestly, efficiently, positively and productively. Under such a bureaucratic system, none can hold back progress towards balanced development. If the bureaucratic system works with a negative attitude, this becomes detrimental to development. The country will then hardly be able to develop itself. The people will then suffer inhumanly.

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