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## **INTERFACING POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION IN CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRACIES**

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### **Abstract**

Politics is the process of achieving public good and administration is an essential instrument of political structure for formulating and executing the policies, plans and programmes. Relationship between the politicians and the administrators is so intricately enmeshed that the distinctive functions of both parties may evolve only through a painful but sustained democratic process. The journey of democratic process is still in a nascent state in Bangladesh. Political control over administrative machinery of the state can be maximized by improving the quality of the inputs from the political system including the politicians, political culture, standard norms and values. For improving the functioning of representative political institutions, free and fair electoral processes within a pluralist political system, a free but responsible press and better access on the part of the common people to information are exigent. A vibrant civil society is also a *sine qua non* to democratic process in which a healthy relationship between politics and administration may thrive.

Democracy and development, the twin ideology, now deemed to have attained a unanimous acceptance – have become the catchwords in the firmament of today's world politics. Standing on

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the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the whole world is experiencing cataclysmic change in the sphere of political transformation, economic globalization, technological innovation, media revolution and rapid growth of the nation states, it is now quite exigent to arrange or reorganize the state machinery for coexisting with the changes in world order. In consonance with the change, gradual dwindling of regulatory role of government must be ensured. On the other hand, government should play the role of a promoter to create a framework and an enabling environment for democracy and development. In a pluralistic society, it is the political institution what should have the predominant responsibility of bringing about the desired changes through the legally constituted institution – bureaucracy. Theoretically, bureaucracy must be subservient to the political will but bureaucracy often plays a decisive role. In simple terms, bureaucracy implements public policies by which we mean policies made by public representatives. These representatives ventilate public demands and materialize public choices through legal arrangements and administrative measures. These policies or choices are to be carried out or implemented by the bureaucratic set up. Absence of accountability, representational political culture, institutional weakness of the political, social and economic systems and malfunction among these systems facilitate the bureaucratic system to become enormously despotic.

### **The Context of Contemporary Democracies like Bangladesh**

Human institutions everywhere have their roots deep in the past. Bangladesh inherits its administrative system from Pakistan through the British rule. The Britishers founded the cornerstone of today's administrative system in a manner that it could facilitate their very

purpose of surplus extraction from this self-sufficient repository of enormous resources.<sup>1</sup> During period internal colonialism – which was still very much in the British style – Pakistan meted out the same treatment to this part of the Subcontinent as the Britishers did. Due to despondent result emanating from frequent changes of policies and programmes, half-hearted implementation or non-implementation of the programmes undertaken by successive regimes, lack of commitment and coordinated efforts, little commendable success has been achieved for its development. In the process, the problems of grueling poverty, malnutrition, mass illiteracy, unemployment, diseases and deaths afflict the country are yet to be addressed. Several reform measures to refurbish its local government system policy were also initiated but these tentative attempts have been thwarted by the anti-participatory bureaucratic system. As a result, institutional and structural continuity is maintained without having any substantial change in its oligarchic form and practices.<sup>2</sup> These efforts were carefully confined only to electoral process rather than devolution of power to representative bodies that needed to engage themselves in the country's decision-making process.<sup>3</sup> The administration indeed possesses expertise per excellence – it is run by the best employees recruited on merit basis. Yet public administration in Bangladesh presents a grim picture. It suffers from low morale, low performances, and unaccountability. Low morale arises from non-existence of ideal value system,

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<sup>1</sup> See, Hamja Alavi, "State in the Post Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh" in K. Gough and H.P. Sharma (eds.), *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> See, Hussain Zillur Rahman, "The 'Rule of Law' as Executive Despotism- Bangladesh: Colonial State Power and its Structural Continuity", *The Journal of Social Studies* [Dhaka University], No. 38, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> See, Hussain Zillur Rahman and Ahmed Kamal, "Accountable Administration and Sustainable Democracy: A Survey of Issues", *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 53, 1991.



professionalism, provision of reward and punishment. Bureaucratic performance is dependent on the nature of political institution to which it is accountable and answerable for all its actions and inactions.

After nearly two decades of autocratic rule, the nation experienced phenomenal change in Bangladesh politics. Following a relatively free and fair election in 1991, Bangladesh switched over to parliamentary democratic system on the basis of consensus. Again in 1996, through a peaceful election under arrangements of Caretaker government like 1991, new regime came to power. In a situation like this, it is speculated that democratic sustenance will go on smoothly in the days to come until and unless exception happens. In a democratic regime, politicians and administrators have their distinctive role to play for the country's overall development and that is why it is pertinent to understand their respective roles very well. Therefore, the paper aims at elucidating the roles and relationship between politics and administration. At first, theoretical aspects of public administration, politics and public policies will be discussed. Thereafter, the role of administrators and politicians in making public policies, relationship between politics and administration will be analyzed. In the last part, some measures for consolidation of democracy will be suggested.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The term administration is derived from the Latin words "Ad" and "Ministaire". "Ad" means 'to' and "Ministaire" means 'serve and care'. In this way, the meaning of administration is to take care, to serve, to look after or to manage affairs. The dimension of "public" is equated with government that has the major stake holding for developing the entire society or nation. The concept of public administration, as a distinct discipline, emerged after the



Second World War. Public administration is interdisciplinary. Public administration -- an admixture of various subjects – deals with the application of knowledge and insights of social sciences, like social psychology, political science, economics, sociology, international relations, psychology and anthropology etc. Above all, it has borrowed many concepts from management. The main proponent of the concept of public administration was Woodrow Wilson who was inclined to the idea that administrators should be amenable to political will. In the words of Woodrow Wilson, “public administration is detailed and systematic application of law. Every particular application of law is an act of administration.”<sup>4</sup> According to M.E. Dimock and G. O. Dimock” administration is concerned with the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of government. The ‘what’ is the subject matter, the technical knowledge of a field which enables the administration to perform his tasks. The ‘how’ is the techniques of management, the principles according to which cooperative programmes are carried to success. Each is indispensable, together they form the synthesis called administration”.<sup>5</sup> Public Administration is essentially the process of carrying out public will as expressed in law, the coordination of collective efforts to implement public policy.<sup>6</sup> Public Administration is “government’s central instrument for dealing with general social problems”.<sup>7</sup> In

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<sup>4</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “The Study of Administration”, *Political Quarterly*, 1941, p.481-566, quoted in Gurmeet Kapoor, *Public Administration*, (Macmillan India Limited, Delhi, 1986), p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall Edward Dimock, *American political science Review*, Vol. xxxi, pp.31-32.

<sup>6</sup> Paul C. Bartholomen, *Public Administration*, (Littlefield, Adams & Co. Paterson, New Jersey, 1962), p.2.

<sup>7</sup> Dwight Waldo, “Development in Public Administration”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 404, p. 222., quoted in Flix A. Nigro, and Lloyd

short, assumption can be drawn that public administration accomplishes or implements politically determined goals. F. A. Nigro & F. G. Nigro have given the most comprehensive definition of public administration when they bring out the essence of the concept in terms of the following connotations: i) Public Administration is cooperative group effort in a public setting; ii) It covers all three branches - executive, legislative and judiciary and their inter-relationship; iii) It has an important role in the formulation of public policy and is thus, a part of the political process; iv) It is different in significant ways from private administration; and v) It is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community.<sup>8</sup>

Let us define what politics is. Politics is the art of securing and retaining power. It tries to translate the public choices through a legally established system i.e. bureaucracy. It is concerned with uses of the state power. "Politics is the process by which power and influence are acquired and exercised".<sup>9</sup> Gurmeet Kapoor opined that political science is the science of power. Politics is the study of authority relations between individuals and groups and the hierarchy of power which establishes itself within all numerous and complex communities.<sup>10</sup> Maurice's idea about politics is that the object of political science does not raise great difficulties; it is the science of authority, of governors, of power.<sup>11</sup> Gurmeet Kapoor believes that

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G. Nigro, *Modern Public Administration*, (Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1984), Sixth Edition, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> Nigro and Nigro, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> John M. Pfiffner and Frank P. Sherwood, *Administrative Organization*, (Englewood Cliffs and Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1960), p. 3111., quoted in Nigro *et. al.*, *ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> See, Gurmeet Kapoor, *Public Administration*, (Macmillan India Limited, Delhi, 1986), p. 237.

<sup>11</sup> See, Duverger Maurice, *University Paperbacks on Political Parties*, (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1964).



politics is the process of achieving public good and administration is an essential component of political structure for formulating and executing the policies, plan and programmes.<sup>12</sup> Politics has a bearing on administration as politics is run by political ideologies and these political ideologies are reflected in administration. Marshall Edward Dimock and Gladys Ogden Dimock pointed out the relationship between politics and administration in a way that “an understanding of politic is the key to understanding of public administration – politics and administration are two sides of a single coin.”<sup>13</sup>

Policy supplies necessary guidelines that help in planning, implementing and realizing desired objectives and in keeping the activities of the executive within a “prescribed framework of action”. In the words of Terry, a policy is a verbal, written or implied basic guide to action that is adopted and followed by a manager.<sup>14</sup> In a nutshell, public policy is governmental policy. According to Musselman and Hughs, public policy is a statement or an interpretation of an action that carries the weight of governmental authority. It may be used in determining business and political decisions.<sup>15</sup> In the words of Dimock and others, “policies are the consciously acknowledged rules of conduct that guide administrative decisions – which deal with basic issues and provide basic tools for the workings of the whole administrative machinery. Public policy postulates a wide spectrum of public dimension that entangles public choices”.<sup>16</sup> A policy is the guideline or set of guidelines or governing

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<sup>12</sup> See, G. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>13</sup> Marshall Edward Dimock, Gladys Ogden Dimock, and Louis W. Koenig, *Public Administration*, (Rinehart & Company, Inc., New Work, 1960), p.4.

<sup>14</sup> George R. Terry, *The Principles of Management*, Sixth Edition, (Irwin-Dorsey Ltd., and Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Hollywood, Illinois and Georgetown, Ontario, 1972), p.225.

<sup>15</sup> See, Musselman & Hughs, *Introduction to Modern Business*, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey), Seventh Edition, p. 139, quoted in G. Kapoor, *op.cit.* p. 157.

<sup>16</sup> M. E. Dimock *at. al.*, *op. cit.* p. 47.



principles made by an authority.<sup>17</sup> A public policy is in fact, the expression of the government's intent; it concentrates on what the government actually does. Values, preferences and social needs are the basis of a policy. Friedrich connotes that policy is a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal, or realize an objective or a purpose.<sup>18</sup> Policies formulated by a government are called public policies. R.K. Arora elaborated that policy is political to their degree that it is of public importance whether it is associated with publicly designated agencies, is recognized by participants to have public consequences, or it is recognized by the researcher to have such ramifications. Alternatively, public policy involves the creation and pursuit of courses of political action desired to achieve envisioned ends.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Role of Administrators and Politicians in Public Policy Making**

In every society public administration plays a crucial role in the entire development process of the society through a structured social, political, economic and institutional set-up. In a society, governmental power can be divided into two parties. One is politics and another is administration. The implication of politics lies with the declaration of public will in a legal framework that can be termed as public policy whereas administration works for giving an

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<sup>17</sup> See, Syed Naquib Muslim, "Role of Bureaucracy in Policy Making and Policy Analysis", *The Daily Independent* [Dhaka], 14 December 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Carl J. Friedrich, *Man and His Government*, (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1963) p. 79 quoted in Ramesh K. Arora (ed.), *Perspective in Administrative Theory*, (Associated Press Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979), p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> R. K. Arora, *Ibid.* p. 204.

effect to those laws. Public administration is a sub-system of the political system in which it operates. Such an assumption might imply that administration has greater interaction with the political system than with the economic and socio-cultural system.<sup>20</sup> Max Weber, the main exponent of the modern administration which is otherwise called as bureaucracy, also believes that societal goal can only be achieved through power politics.<sup>21</sup>

The process of government basically consists of two parts: policy-making and policy execution. Administrators implement the policies formulated by the politicians in power. Policy-making is the function of politics and implementation is the function of administration. In implementing public policies, such role of administrators has been extended to providing advice, suggestions, recommendations and consultancy to the policy makers. The acceptance, rejection or non-acceptance of these suggestions or advices lies at the discretion of politicians. During the period of 1880 to 1950, the classical theorists of public administration like Woodrow Wilson, Leonard D. White, Max Weber, Luther Gulick, advocated the separation of politics and administration. At that time, the notion of separation of politics and administration was called as politics-administration dichotomy. According to those thinkers, the function of administration is only to implement the public policies. But after 1950, some theorists started thinking that the process of politics and administration are interdependent. In line with this thinking politicians and administrators began to work together for solving the national problems. Administrators help the politicians by influencing them in making correct policies, guiding them in the right direction and providing counseling to them on policy matters.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85.

<sup>21</sup> See, G. S. Sudha, *Excellence in Management Thought*, (University Book House Pvt. Ltd., India, 1994), p. 64.



It is of no denying that administrator's role in policy making is needed because policy making is a technical job; it requires skill and expertise in formulation of policies. That is why administrators need to be trained in policy making. They need to develop professionalism in order to enable themselves to play their role effectively. Politicians generally seek assistance from the administrators for sound policy making. In reality, for making public policies both administrators and politicians play supplementary and complementary role and the execution of policies largely depends on the administrators whereas politicians supervise and monitor the execution.

Public policy making is a complex process. The role of politicians and administrators in policy making cannot be clearly demarcated. Policy-making requires specialists' knowledge, advice, technical know-how, hence some administrative implications cannot be over-emphasized. As a matter of fact, politicians in practice, rely heavily on their officials when they need to formulate policy. Politicians require help from administrators for preparing the necessary documents.

However, in making public policies the role of politicians and administrators are not always very clear. There are differences of opinion among the scholars too. Even Max Weber does not make any explicit assumption about administration playing an effective role in the policy making function of a state as he emphasized that it is the function of politics. He understood the separation of politics and administration to be an ideal but an improbable one. He recognized that "bureaucracy has a tendency to monopolize power and conquer new areas of life in modern society".<sup>22</sup> In Third World

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<sup>22</sup> Mustafa Chowdhury, "Bureaucracy in Cross Cultural Settings", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. xxxvi, p. 27., quoted in Farah Kabir, "Bureaucracy in Bangladesh: The Political Involvement and Influence", *BISS Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1991, p. 243.



countries, bureaucracy plays the role, 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 in spite of ample criticism against it. Riggs also found historical and contemporary evidence to support the conclusion that the administrative power and its expansion had adverse consequences for the development of political system.<sup>23</sup> It is now an accepted fact that administrators will participate in both policy-making and its execution but the important consideration lies with the issues that how much power will the bureaucracy exercise in policy making. This depends on the political culture and political structure of a society that helps to shape the behavioural pattern of administrators. As public bureaucracy is a sub-system of the political system and therefore, political system should determine the behaviors of the sub-system.<sup>24</sup> Here the problem is beset with the politicians, specially in Third World countries like Bangladesh, who lack expertise, information and even time to decide the hundreds of policy question that a modern government faces. Therefore, even if administrators wanted to obey orders or merely follow them, as some honestly try to do, it often becomes impracticable too.

### **Interfacing Politics and Administration**

Politics is the process of achieving public good and administration is an essential component of political structure for formulating and executing the policies, plans and programmes. While politicians were expected to concentrate on electoral and legislative functions, administrators devote themselves to administrative tasks, i.e. to the implementation of public policies

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<sup>23</sup> See, F. W. Riggs, *Public Administration and Change*, p. 8., in B. C. Smith, *Bureaucracy and Political Power*, (Wheatsheaf Books, London, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> See, Farah Kabir, *op. cit.* p. 244.

determined by the political leadership. The public responsibility for the goals of administrative action should, therefore, devote on the politicians and not on the administrators.<sup>25</sup>

According to Mannheim "Politics is an area of change and indeterminacy while administration is one of stability and routine".<sup>26</sup> Another way of distinguishing politics from administration is in terms of careers and vocations. According to this view, in democracies politics is concerned with the activities of elected representatives or officials, and of those who elect or influence them; and administration with the activities of professional administrators and advisers.<sup>27</sup>

The conventional concept of relationship between the administrator and the politician visualizes such relationship purely in terms of a neat division of labour between the two. The politician formulates the policy and the administrator executes it. In the process of decision making and implementation, collection of facts, formulation of policy alternatives, discharge of responsibilities – like allotments of sites or giving of loans, release of grants or issue of licenses or permits – the administrator is supposed to be impartial and neutral. The conventional maxim lays down that administrator has an instrumental role and ultimate determination of policy is the politicians' discretion. These maxims nevertheless fail to govern, guide or control the behaviour of either of the two in the complex or even not-so-complex situations of interactions between them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> R. K. Arora, *op. cit.* p.35.

<sup>26</sup> See, quotation from Mannheim in A. Lepawsky, *Administration*, pp. 71-73, quoted in Peter Self, *Administrative Theories and Politics*, (S. Chand & Company Ltd., New Delhi, 1990) p. 152.

<sup>27</sup> See, Peter Self, *Ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>28</sup> See, S. C. Vajpeyi and P. K. Kaul, "Politicians and Civil Servant Relationship", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, June, 1993, pp. 30-31.

The political system performs the role of interest articulation and aggregation. The administrative system must include methods of effective arbitration or compromise between conflicting interests of different actors in the society.<sup>29</sup> For making policy, administrators are bound to follow a rationalized sphere of settled procedures. On the other hand, politicians need not bother for that. They act upon a non-rational matrix whose end product flows into that settled sphere.

The fact that administrators stress technical factors and politicians' claim to decide questions of value may partly be due to the interest of both groups in maintaining the conventions or myths of their relationship. As Richard Rose has argued that the roles of politicians are numerous and diverse and cannot easily be summarized.<sup>30</sup> Another difficulty is that political contributions are divided between those made by members of the legislative and those made by members of the executive. The executive-legislative distinction is often more significant for the analysis of decision-making than is the political-administrative one. The executive politicians work in close cooperation with administrators, so that their respective contributions are often hard to distinguish.<sup>31</sup> Their relative role is also contingent on situation. The policy making influence of administrators tends to diminish or vanish, for example, at times of acute social crises or major reforms and the politicians have to be driver's seat at such moments.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Joel D. Aberbach *et. al.*, *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1981) p. 9., quoted in Vajpeyi *et. al.*, *ibid.* p. 30-31.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Rose, *Policy-Making in Britain*, (London, 1969), and *People in Politics*, (London, 1970) quoted in Peter Self, *op. cit.* p. 152.

<sup>31</sup> See, Peter Self, *op. cit.* p. 186.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.



Politics refers to the process by which power and influence are acquired and exercised.<sup>33</sup> It is not limited to political parties and election because the effort to gain power and influence is an inherent characteristic of all organization. Administration is done on jurisdictional premises though sometimes these are not strictly maintained. Politics is concerned with the use of state power, more specifically powers of all duly constituted public authorities. The constitutional view of administration is that it is concerned with translating political decisions into practice that are independently derived from other sources.

Politics in its purer forms is a speculative activity; it carries not certainty of reward even for prolonged efforts, and even the successful politician is likely to move upwards and downwards in erratic jumps. Politics calls for gifts of persuasion and manipulation, and for the projection either by eloquence or other means of successful public 'image'. By contrast, professional administration offers the prospect of a stable and evenly graduated career, moving towards positions that can be clearly envisaged. Traditionally, such careers attracted individuals with a preference for security, regularity and anonymity – the very opposite of the qualities which a politician needs.<sup>34</sup>

Prudence, practicability, moderation and avoidance of risk, comprise the preferred work-culture of administrators, while politicians prefer rhetoric, rigmarole, challenge and compromise. They provide philosophical guidelines to the administrators and the society. The natural habit of a politician is the public podium whereas the bureaucrats are found seated at a designated table.

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<sup>33</sup> See, J. M. Pfiffner and F. Sherwood, *op. cit.* p. 311.

<sup>34</sup> See, Peter Self, *op. cit.* p. 186.

Politicians seek publicity and raise innovative issues whereas bureaucrats prefer the back room to manage incremental adjustment.<sup>35</sup>

To win the election, politicians must appear to be applying successful and dynamic policies. They like to claim credit for many development activities to which they may contribute little or nothing. In case of real success, the political ground of causation are exaggerated and praised, and in case of failure, politicians are condemned. Sometimes bureaucratic contribution for that success or failure, are not taken into account considerably. In case of ushering positive change, development and creation of some beneficial public provisions, politicians may be rewarded by the general mass that can help them winning popular verdict in the next election. On the contrary for the administrator, the problem is that no system of bureaucratic promotion can offer adequate rewards for acting energetically or taking risk.<sup>36</sup>

Public administration deals with the execution and enforcement of public policies as framed and enacted by those in the authority i.e. representatives of the people in government. The real distinction between politicians and bureaucrats is that whereas politician articulates broad based interest of unorganized clientele, bureaucrats mediate narrow focused interest of organized clientele. The responsibility for the implementation and realization of the target of all major policies and development plans have been placed on the administrators. The responsibility of eliciting public participation and involvement, too, is placed on the politicians.

The politician is an expert on political acceptability, as they become attuned to the party and other pressures generated within the

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<sup>35</sup> Aberbach *et. al.*, *op. cit.* p.9., in Vajpeyi *et.al.*, *op. cit.* p.31.

<sup>36</sup> See Peter Self, *op. cit.* p.187.

political process. The administrator measures the capacity of his machine to undertake new tasks and assesses evidence about the probable reactions of departmental clients or other groups. Each party needs to have that delicate sense of feasibility that eschews both an unworkable idealism and a cloying pragmatism.<sup>37</sup>

Important areas of interaction between politicians and administrators include policy-making, the arbitration of interest, the treatment of individual and localised claims, and the balance between political accountability and administrative discretion. In the first two cases, politicians possess formal responsibility, but administrators supply the missing elements of political decisions. In the third case, administrators defend their distinctive character of uniformity and impartiality against politicians' frequent interest in influencing particular decisions. The fourth case represents an inevitable point of conflict between the needs and interest of the two groups.<sup>38</sup>

Politicians enjoy traditional and charismatic power. Traditional power comes from family background whereas charismatic power lies with the magnetic qualities of the leader who can influence the behaviour of his disciples and think the leader superhuman. This can only be obtained through merit. Competitive examinations are taken for choosing the right persons for the right job. The relationship between politics and administration are shown in Appendix 1.

### **Issues in Consolidation of the Democratization Process**

Administrative system of any country cannot be auto-responsive. As it enjoys legal-rational power, it is very natural for the

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>38</sup> See, Peter Self, *op. cit.*, p.153.



administration to deviate from the desired role and functions. Even Max Weber who developed bureaucracy was also doubtful about the control of bureaucracy by the political institution. The colossal development of the developed countries in the world have become possible following the same procedure. Question is : why are the Third World countries still lagging behind? Possibly, it is lack of the political development as well as the consolidation of democratic process. The development and flourishing of the democratic process in the developed countries took a long time to come to shape to the present stage. Though administration and politicians are playing complementary and supplementary role in policy-making and execution, the role of the politicians in our country is not as substantively strong as that of the developed countries. After nine months bloody liberation war Bangladesh achieved its much-wanted independence. Immediately after that politics in Bangladesh fell prey to a series of military rules. The political process in the country remained stunted. Consequently, the distinct roles of the politicians and administrators have not been easy to come by. *Ipsa facto*, several issues relating to the political development and consolidation of the democratic process are raised.

**Development of Civil Society:** A vibrant civil society is probably more essential for consolidating and maintaining democracy than for initiating it. According to Diamond, civil society is a vital instrument for containing the power of democratic governments, checking their potential abuses or violations of the law and subjecting them to public scrutiny.<sup>39</sup> The organizations of civil society represent many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests which are shaped to fit their social base, constituency, thematic orientations (e.g environment, gender human rights) and

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<sup>39</sup> See, L. Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. cited in Mark Robinson, "Strengthening Civil Society in Africa: The Role of Foreign Political Aid", *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1995, p. 72.

types of activity. They include church related groups, trade unions, cooperative, service organizations, community groups and youth organizations as well as academic institutions and others.<sup>40</sup> Basic to democratization is the development of a pluralist civil society comprised of a range of institutions and associations which represent diverse interests and provide a counterweight to government. Interaction between the formal political regime and civil society contributes to and also requires, a responsive government, which is one of the characteristics of a functioning democracy. Supporting pluralism, e.g. the development of autonomous civil associations, professional and interest organizations, is an important step for fostering democratization. The democratic developmental state will need to have a broad writ with at least three basic socio-economic functions: regulative, infrastructural and redistribute.<sup>41</sup> This involves areas of traditional political engineering such as electoral systems, division of powers and the nature of legislatures. Periodic free, fair and neutral elections are considered to be an essential feature of functioning democracies. The institution of the Caretaker government in Bangladesh is an innovation in that sense.

For improving the functioning of representative political institutions, electoral processes and consultative mechanisms, a pluralist political system, a free but responsible press and better access to information are exigent. White argues that the growth of civil society can contribute to democratic governance in four complementary ways: by i.) altering the balancing of power between state and society to achieve a balanced opposition in favour of the latter; ii) enforcing standards of public morality and performance

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<sup>40</sup> See R.C. Riddell and A.J. Bebbington, *Developing Country, NGOs and Donor Government, Report to the Overseas Development Administration*, (Overseas Development Institute, London, 1995), quoted in M. Robinson, *ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>41</sup> See Gordon White, "Towards Democratic Developmental State", *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 31.



and improving the accountability of politicians and the state officials; iii) transmitting the demands and articulating the interest of organized groups in the process for providing an alternative sphere of representation; and iv) instilling and upholding democratic values.<sup>42</sup> However, White points out, while civil society holds real potential to influence the process of democratic consolidation, its role and significance in any given context is contingent on the specific character and power of the state and the international political environment.<sup>43</sup> The role and functions of the democratic political institutions are heavily influenced by the character and behaviour of the organized groups in civil society. These also depend on the heterogeneity, the capacity to coalesce and the nature of the relationships the civil society maintains with the parties and state institutions. This area of discussion includes the issue of corporatism as a specific way of organizing the links between state, political society and civil society so as to create the political consensus, stability and capacity needed for longer-term developmental decision-making. Sometimes, organized and strong civil society group can change some political and administrative policy directives when it seems to be harmful for the public or environment or for any other causes. The decision for shifting the site of the proposed international conference centre for NAM summit from the Osmani Uddayan to Shere-e-Bangla Nagar is a case in point in Bangladesh. Even in India through legislation from the Supreme Court some harmful industrial set-up or units were closed down for the sake of saving the historical Taj Mahal. This

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<sup>42</sup> G.White, Civil Society, "Democratization and Development: Clearing the Analytical Ground", *Democratization*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Autumn, 1990, cited in M. Robinson, *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.



was very much possible due to severe movements by the environmentalists group. It is now an axiomatic truth that civil society can play a role of a watchdog and thus they can substantially contribute for consolidating the democratic process.

This is not to suggest that civil society in Bangladesh is coherent or monolithic. Polarization and politicisation have very much affected the civil society domain. A cohesive civil society, it seems, will be as hard to achieve, as democratisation. One possible and incremental way will be interaction across the divides and shades of opinion. Most often what we have is monologue within the same group, not dialogue between groups. Cross-fertilization of viewpoints is what is needed.

**Political Stability:** Under conditions of political instability, the bureaucracy is able to enhance its power. In the western democracy, the government and opposition play a responsible role for the entire development of the country. Through parliamentary committees, opposition parties uphold their views, provide alternative suggestions and point out the likely negative aspects of the intended public policies. Instead of frequent walkouts, absence from the parliament, *hartal*, seizure, terrorism etc. opposition should make the parliament more vibrant to undertake issues of public interests. Parliamentary debates can make the government more accountable and responsive to the public causes. It can also make the general mass aware about the day-to-day affairs of the state. This practice can contribute functional efficiency of the administration because in such cases, the administration will be compelled to produce relevant information in response to the queries of the opposition parties. A vibrant political process instills confidence in the investors from home and abroad. The civil society, even if segregated, should not

fail the nation here in making sufficient noises aimed at the political leaders about the need for sustaining the parliamentary process and minimum political working relationship.

**Development of Political Culture and Institutions:** Political culture is defined as the systems of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values that define the situation in which political actions take place.<sup>44</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 organization and institutions. Political culture is the embodiment of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments, manners, assumptions and rules the politicians foster which provide order and meaning to a political process. Political culture represents an idea that governs and guides the behaviour of the politicians. Concepts of political ideology, national ethos and spirits national political psychology, fundamental values of the people, style of behaviour of the politicians as well as individuals groups and elites of the society process of articulation of public choice and aspirations, procedure for formation of public opinion are all some important elements involved under the purview of the political culture. Democratic political culture can only thrive when execution of anything is done on the basis of force of arguments, not on the basis of 'argument of force'.<sup>45</sup> Democracy upholds some basic features i.e. establishment of rule of law, established norms of political cooperation, negotiation and compromise the practice of peaceful competition for

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<sup>44</sup> Sidney Verva, "Comparative Political Culture", in Lucian Pye and S. Verba (eds.), *Political Culture and Political Development*, (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1965), p.513.

<sup>45</sup> Azizul Haque, "Politics in Bangladesh: Conflict and Confusion" in M.M. Khan and Syed Anwar Husain (eds.), *Bangladesh Studies: Politics, Administration, Rural Development and Foreign Policy*, (Centre for Administrative Studies, University of Dhaka, 1986), p.1.



power among competing elite's which in turn emanate from a widespread "interpersonal trust and confidence" in the society. But on the contrary political culture in nascent democracies like Bangladesh is infested or wrought with mistrust, suspicion and intolerance. General people have lesser confidence or no confidence on the politicians and do not even believe them too. To overcome the above situation, in a multi-party democratic system, there are fundamental belief that politicians should have mutual trust, bear tolerance, practice peaceful co-existence and work cordially and maintain standard norms of negotiations and compromise. The healthy growth of political development hinges on both the development of the efficient and accountable public institutions and the spread of real democratic citizenship and enfranchisement through an increasingly pervasive process of social empowerment. Political culture thrives on the nature of political parties and its efficacious function, because it has to maintain crucial links between citizens and governance. The conventional notion of democracy prevalent in the development circles includes a multiparty system as a central defining element. Behaviour of individuals is also determined by political culture prevailing in a society. The value system of the entire society has been eroded a lot. As politicians provide the philosophical guidelines to the society, so politicians should have to endeavor for developing hope and confidence that would help in bringing back the value system of the society. All political parties should have equal stake and play responsible role for consolidating the political institutions. If they remain bifurcated for any of their genuine causes bureaucracy will then take advantage of that situation.

**Participatory Development:** Popular pressure and participation from the grassroots organizations are necessary prerequisites for



political change and economic progress. Participatory development or management is defined as a process by which people take an active and influential part in shaping decisions that affect their lives. Empowering groups, communities, and organizations to negotiate with political institutions and bureaucracies, are deemed essential for influencing public policy, providing a check on government discretion as well as enhancing effectiveness and sustainability of development programmes.<sup>46</sup> Development economists have put significant emphasis on human resource development for augmenting popular participation. They considered human resource development as one of the preconditions for increasing popular participation. Empirical evidence reveals that the return of investment in primary education is much higher than that of higher education.<sup>47</sup> NGOs are playing a seminal role in augmenting social mobility and popular participation in the sub-national level i.e. grassroots. If NGOs undertake voters education programmes in the grassroots areas, such programmes can facilitate awareness building and consciousness raising, that, in turn, can help ushering good leadership in the local level.

Centralization and bureaucratic control of the local government, on the other hand, weakens the educative effects of political participation. The remedy lies in decentralization of administration and elective local government system that makes bureaucrats accountable to elected leadership at all levels of administration. The system of participatory management and decentralization of policy

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<sup>46</sup> See, Peter Nunnenkamp, "What Donors Mean by Good Governance: Heroic Ends, Limited Means and Traditional Dilemmas of Development Cooperation", *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 26, No.2, 1995, p.10.

<sup>47</sup> See, George Psacharopoulos, *Returns to investment in Education*, World Bank Policy Research Working Papers, No. 1067, (Washington D.C., January, 1993).

making authority in the field level and bottom-up planning machinery can also help for establishing an accountable, efficient and a transparent system of public administration. That is why, devolution type of local government system needs to be responsive to stakeholders interests and needs which requires a participatory approach not only in service delivery but also in planning and decision-making. In this regard, the tasks of local governments are to identify and support the development of local partnerships, for example, with NGOs, and the private sector, and ensure commitment to a partnership/participation-enabling strategy.<sup>48</sup> In Bangladesh, decentralization of devolution type does not represent a very encouraging result and issue of local government accountability does not get enough footing like that of national level. But it has been argued, for example, by Davey, that local accountability is the “hallmark” of local government; it makes local government more responsive to local needs and officials more directly answerable for their decisions and performance.<sup>49</sup> To develop participation it is essential to support grassroots organizations and intermediary organizations, such as professional associations, consumer groups and trade unions; to involve all project stakeholders in programme design and implementation and to provide support for decentralization programmes. For participatory development, it is essential to ensure better access of marginalized groups to the formal economic and legal system that requires a change in political and bureaucratic attitudes by definition. The success of participatory development cannot be harvested overnight, rather it is an issue of

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<sup>48</sup> Josefa S. Edralin, “The New Local Governance and Capacity Building”, *Regional Development Studies*, Vol. 3, Winter 1996/97, p.140.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth J. Davey, “Elements of Urban Management” in World Bank, *Urban Management Programme Discussion Paper*, (Urban Management and Municipal Finance) (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1993), section 3.2., quoted in J.S. Edralin, *Ibid.*, p.121.

long term exercise, which requires better economic policies and more investment in human capital, infrastructure, and institution-building, along with better governance. Sometimes the ruling regime tries to suppress the efforts of participatory development in fear of losing the base of its own power. Genuine participation of the people in administration and implementation of the government programmes can also help in smooth functioning of democracy which otherwise can make ground for holding bureaucracy accountable at the grass-roots.

**Orienting the Parliament Members to Policy Making:** Policy making is a complex process. To have a good command over policy making, special knowledge and training are extremely essential. The members of the parliament, specially those who are occupying portfolio positions, need to be oriented to the role and functions of the parliament, duties and responsibilities of the legislators, legislative process, functions and jurisdictional arrangements of the parliamentary committees, parliamentary procedures and other legislative implications. No less important, they need to be made fairly conversant with rules of business in administration, manuals of the local government bodies so that the interface between politics and administration could be managed. The parliament secretariat may arrange the orientation and exposure programmes where university vcs, professors, speakers and veteran parliamentarians from home and abroad can be invited as trainers. There are several government departmental training institutes all over the country to train the civil servants of various cadres. To train the civil servants from all cadres, Bangladesh public administration training centre is playing a significant role. All these can arrange some relevant courses for the parliament members. Parliament members' involvement in seminars, symposium workshop may be very helpful



to make them aware about the state of the art of our socio-economic and politico-administrative condition of our country. Exchange programme for sharing of experience and foreign tour may be designed in a manner that parliament members can have insight of the parliamentary affairs of the developing and developed countries which are practicing parliamentary democracy for a long time.

### **Conclusion**

In a democratic polity, bureaucracy must be subservient to political will through representative and participatory system of management and decision-making. Bureaucracy in all countries is made accountable to the general public through the legislature and the executive. Parliamentary control is exercised mainly through control over policy, control over implementation of policies through ministries, control over finances through financial committees and Comptroller and Auditor General. By parliament, public accounts committees, independent judiciary, administrative tribunal, departmental action, responsible political parties and pressure groups, free press and public opinion the system of censure or reprimand, publication of the reports of the disciplinary actions committees, bureaucracy can be made accountable. The perceived role and relationship between the politicians and the administrators are so intricately enmeshed that the distinctive features of both parties evolve through the maturity the democratic process over a long time. The journey of democratic process is still in a nascent state in Bangladesh. The exact exertion of the political will and its proper realization as well as translation of the good intentions and public policies into actions depends on the nature of the control the higher system - the political institutions - have over the lower sub-system - the administrative system. Such political control over administrative machinery of the state can be maximized by

improving the quality of the inputs of the political system i.e. politicians, political culture, standard norms and values etc. Highly experienced parliamentarians with substantive knowledge, education and personal qualities like morality and honesty, patriotism etc. can help them understand the ideal role of the politicians. Political leaders should use their judicious discretion in choosing the candidates for nomination for parliamentary election, because if the inputs are not the best one, no amount of training and education will be able to produce the best product from them.

### Appendix 1

#### Comparison Between the Politician and Administrator

Sl. No.	Differential Criteria	Politician	Administrator
1.	<b>Duties</b>	To formulate policies	To execute policies
2.	Work Place	Parliament and political institutions	Any government bureau/ office
3.	Accountability	Politicians are directly accountable to public through parliament for his actions and inactions	Administrators are accountable to their political masters, i.e. ministers. Lower offices are accountable to higher offices
4.	Nature of Works to be Performed	To bring development and change in the society. The work of politicians is not confined to routine job only.	Administrators act in accordance with the guidelines set by the politicians. Thus administrators do relatively stable and routine job.
5.	Functioning Branch	Politicians work in legislative branch where they articulate their discretion in the form of legislation.	Administrators work in executive branch. They exercise executive power in almost every segment of the governance.
6.	Mediation of Interest	Politicians perform the task of interest articulation and aggregation.	Administrators perform effective arbitration and help conflict resolution among the contending interest groups.
7.	Selection Process	Politicians come to power through adult franchise/popular verdict by the majority.	Administrators are recruited on merit principle.
8.	Types/Basis of Power Both Enjoy	Politicians enjoy traditional and charismatic power. Traditional power comes from family background but charismatic power lies with the magnetic qualities of the leader who can influence the behaviour of his disciples.	The foundation of administrators' power is legal rational power which can only be obtained through merit. Competitive examinations are taken for choosing the right persons for the right job.



9.	Age Barrier	Any person who obtains voting right can be a politician and can contest in the election. Here there is no age limit.	To become an administrator there is age barrier, it is maintained as per rules of service. There are certain age limit for entry into and retirement from service.
10.	Role in Policy Making	Politicians drum up support from the general mass, add value and ideology/philosophical guideline to that particular policy issues.	Administrators provide technical expertise in making policies. They provide facts and figures, knowledge, logical framework, choose suitable site for projects, release of grants, issue permits or licenses and prepare documents for authorization.
11.	Work Culture	Politicians uphold public demand, choices and problems. Sometimes they adopt populist stand through rhetoric and rigmaroles. The nature of action of politicians requires challenges and compromise; they are expert in manipulating anything they like.	Administrators have prudence, technical knowledge and are pragmatic. They prefer avoidance of risk, red-tapism/procrastination, misuse of power, strict rigidity, buck passing etc. They are forced to act in accordance with the wishes of the ruling regime.
12.	Method of Articulation and Implementation	Politicians are found seating in public podium, marching in procession, rally and adopting other means of political pressures.	Administrators execute their assigned duties and responsibilities as per their jurisdiction and legal framework. They are found seating in various committees for execution and implementation of decisions.
13.	Role and Function during Crisis Moments	In any crisis moments, politicians have to play very active role and they should have to be in driver's seat for tackling such moments. Bill for extra budgetary allocation may require to be enacted through parliament.	Administrators daily affairs are suspended for the time being. Cuts in regular budgetary allocation is exercised through review meeting of ADP in Planning Commission.

14.	Types of Clientele to be Served	Politicians have to serve a broad based unorganized clientele.	Administrators have to mediate narrow focused interest of organized clientele.
15.	Personal Qualities	Politicians are passionate, partisan and idealistic. Good politicians have keen sense of patriotic zeal.	Administrators possess various professional qualities. They are prudent and pragmatic.
16.	Tenure of Office	Politicians come to power for a tenure of parliamentary election. It is ephemeral. Generally the tenure covers four to five years.	Administrators are recruited for a stipulated time. Generally regular posts are filled-up by employees recruited for the whole tenure of service. Ad-hoc appointments are made on the basis of terms and condition.
17.	Growth and Development	Politicians don't have any fixed way for achieving maturity and development. By holding portfolio positions in the ministry, parliamentary committees, leading political movements, parliamentary debates, gathering knowledge and education from books and family tradition they grow as seasoned politicians.	Administrators have career plans through which they receive various professional training and are being assigned in various positions. Career stages are strictly maintained through promotion on the basis of seniority cum merit.
18.	Types of Employment	Politicians enjoy their job as vocation.	Administrators are careerists. They enjoy their office for the whole official tenure.
19.	Process of Refinement of Policies	At the top level of policy enactment and refinement, political will flows into which energizes the administrative system.	In the administrative process such refinements are made on the basis of scalar chain process i.e. from lower level to higher level.
20.	Inputs to the System	Political ideology, cultural sub-systems, party manifesto and public confidence are the driving force for the political process.	Administration is governed by the written rules and regulation.

Source: Prepared by the Author.