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Reforming the civil service

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NDEPENDENT Bangladesh inherited a but progress has been slow.

as "underperforming, inefficient and weak. It remains a constraint on service delivery and implecompetent people within the service but their performance is limited by their work environment, low salary scales, outdated procedures and practices and monitor-implementation. mismatch of skills with positions held.

In the 21st century, economic efficiency and effectivedepends on free market comgoals. This means that transparency. although the civil service no Computerization is critical remains of immense impor- rent seeking. tance.

than doubled in terms of minundertaken too many comtasks that can be done better by other agencies. It is overstaffed

involved in micromanagement and causing

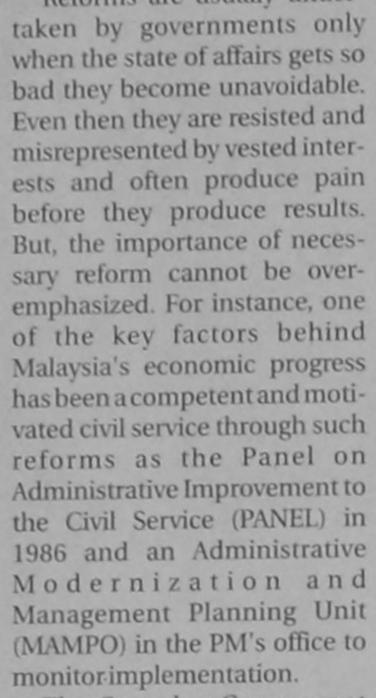
civil service that still taken by governments only retained many colonial when the state of affairs gets so features and rules, although bad they become unavoidable. populist and trade union pres- Even then they are resisted and sures radically narrowed salary misrepresented by vested intergrades. It was institutionally ests and often produce pain weakened and increasingly before they produce results. corrupt. Many reviews and But, the importance of necescommissions were set up for sary reform cannot be overthe reform of the civil service emphasized. For instance, one The civil service is perceived Malaysia's economic progress has been a competent and motivated civil service through such mentation of reforms". (World Administrative Improvement to Bank 2006). There are many the Civil Service (PANEL) in Modernization and Management Planning Unit

(CTG) of Bangladesh has recognized the central importance of improved governance, includness in steering society towards ing upgrading the civil service. health, education, justice, and It has attempted to clamp entrepreneurial development down on corruption in the bureaucracy but has recogpetitiveness within an appro- nized that real reform can only priate regulatory framework. come through a combination The latter is needed to promote of factors including adequate a level playing field and demo- pay scales, institutional cratically chosen development accountability and maximum

aspects of the economy, its unnecessary regulations which quality and fitness for purpose only create opportunities for

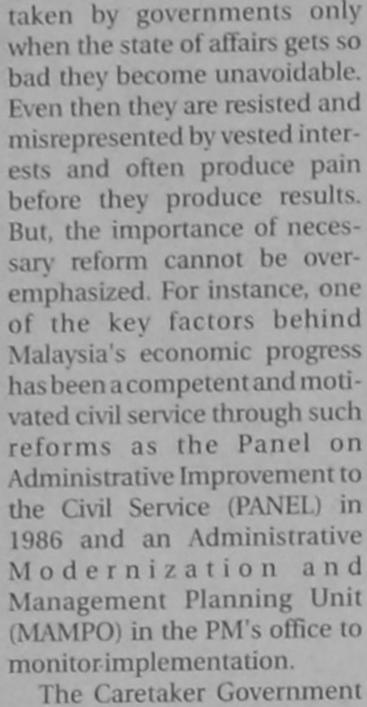
Since independence the size away from traditional methods

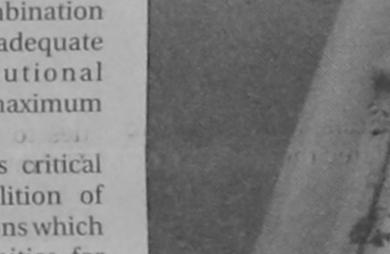
unnecessary delays and costs.



longer aspires to administer all here, as is the abolition of

Reforms are usually under-





The civil service must move



i) Structuring for efficiency

the private sector, and

ing reform and is in the process of presenting its recommendations for further reforms at all levels of government. This is an important step towards a

robust civil service.

De-politicizing the civil service

Sections 30 and 32 of the Government Service Conduct Rules strictly prohibit civil servant from being influenced by political or other influences and those who are so influenced can be subject to the Disciplinary

and Appeal Rules of 1985. But, political neutrality in the bureaucracy has been compromised resulting in poor and weak governance. Mass promotions and partisan recruitment for political reasons has service. Contractual appointments and extension of conand to protect them from being victimized.

Planning for a quality

ented. It needs to stay close to its customers, i.e. the citizens. Therefore, it would be essential to regularly check the experience and views of the public. Quality initiatives orient civil servants towards providing better services to the public and improve internal ways of working as team members. Since quality is achieved through people it is necessary to look at: i) Recruitment pro- government to delegate delivcess, ii) Induction, iii) Job eryofsome essential goods and description, iv) Delegation, v) services to NGOs and the pri-

A good example of quality service was the development of the Citizens' Charter in Britain which empowers consum-

ers/public by specifying and service providers will enable publicizing their rights to the civil service to concentrate redress, if government services on the monitoring and evaluado not meet advertised needs.

FIGURE FEET FRENCH FIRE

BANGLADESH PUBLIC SERVICE

Transparency and right to information

Institutional changes to the civil service are not enough without an alert press with free flow of timely and accurate information, an independent and trained judiciary and an educated population aware of its rights and able to hold politicians and civil servants to account. Bangladesh has been slow in these areas. A Right to had a debilitating effect on the Information Act would be another ambitious step of the CTG. It would join the independent judiciary, EC and ACC be retrospectively confirmed

Accountability

Proper audit and public reporting on the civil service through sonnel backed by appropriate ministries and departments, rules that will significantly exposing to public scrutiny the change the way it functions. financial position and performance achieved promotes relationships with the public. accountability to public repre- The "new" civil service will be sentatives and encourages self lean, efficient, highly motiexamination by those involved vated "agents of change" to in such stocktaking. It may be meet the needs of the 21st essential to establish a high powered task force within the civil service to address the issue of corruption and enforceable

Working with NGOs

and the Private Sector With increasing demand for education, health and other services it is necessary for the vate sector as well as to local a society still containing mass elected bodies. The NGO com- poverty, patronage and an these can become a range of munity is vibrant and active in education system based on Bangladesh and the private only 2.2 % of GDP? sector is developing quite rapwell as the private sector as Development Agency.W

tion of services and on good governance.

BUMMISSION

Management of Change From the last half of the 20th century phenomenal strides have been taken in the field of science and technology. Among other things, this has given rise to increased rate of

technological innovation through the cross cutting nature of technological change resulting in a paradigm shift in styles of administration and management. Technological develop-

ment is transforming the opportunities for and methodologies of work. The challenge to the civil service would be to develop institutional capacity to develop, adapt and adopt technologies, including IT, to support socio-economic growth and good governance.

The civil service requires a critical mass of trained per-This will be based on new

The reforms being undertaken by the CTG are designed to strengthen institutions by ordinances which, if implemented and retained by future governments, can reinforce each other to create the environment for an effective civil service and limit partisan political influences and corruption. But the question and challenge remains: how far can all this succeed in

idly. To facilitate and foster Prof. Selina Mohsin, Education private sector enterprises and Adviser Program Support Unit use the capacity of NGOs as of Canadian International

