Public Administration Education in Pakistan:
Issues, Challenges and Opportunities¹

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Introduction

Soon after the birth of Pakistan in 1947, its planners recognized Public Administration as an important instrument of development and social welfare. It was realized that the administrative system being a colonial legacy of the British was unable to meet the needs of an independent nation destined to develop as a modern welfare state. The need for fundamental reforms in the administrative machinery of Pakistan was expressed in the First Five Year Plan (1955-60) in these words:

"The defects as well as the merits of the existing administrative system stem largely from the fact that it is a heritage from a colonial power, which reared upon certain indigenous institutions a super-structure adapted to the needs of ruling subject country. The combination yielded a system of Public Administration admirably suited to the requirements of a government engaged largely in the primary functions of collection of revenue, administration of justice, and maintenance of law and order. Under the stress of social and economic change, some alternations were made in this system from time to time, but, fundamentally and broadly, the methods and outlook of the public service, the
tasks they performed, and the procedures they followed remained unchanged. The inevitable result has been that, with the independence and the shift of emphasis from regulating the life of the community to positive action for promoting its welfare, the system has become outdated and seriously inadequate. (First Five Year Plan, P. 91)

The same plan identified the following Public Administration requisites for the purposes of national development:

1. A streamlined organization at the Center and in the provinces
2. Central planning machinery
3. Planning and development departments in the provinces
4. Statutory public corporations and authorities vested with autonomy to implement special programs
5. A revitalized district administration directed towards development
6. Democratically constituted local self-government institutions
7. A rational system of financial administration
8. Public service policies designed to maintain an efficient corps of workers
9. A progressive look on the part of public service.

Transformation of Public Administration on these lines would have been unthinkable without giving due attention to the education and training of public administrators. Thus, the need for pre-entry and in-service training of civil servants and Public
Administration education at the university level was recognized. The United States, under its technical assistance program, extended elaborate help to Pakistan in setting up various Public Administration education and training institutions. By the mid 1960s, the following Public Administration educational and training institutions were fully operational:

1. Department of Public Administration, University of Punjab, Lahore.

2. Administrative Staff College, Lahore for training of senior officers.

3. The Civil Service of Pakistan Academy.


5. The Academies for Village Development.

6. National Institutes of Public Administration in Lahore and Dacca for training of mid-career civil servants (Second Five Year Plan).

The spirit of American Public Administration was infused in these institutions through US consultants, American professors and US educated Pakistani academics and administrators. The University of Southern California alone trained hundreds of officials under contract with the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The Department of Public Administration at University of the Punjab, the first institution offering a Master's degree in Public Administration was established by the same university.

American influence on Public Administration in Pakistan is self-evident in the establishment of Public administration education and training institutions, and training of public administrators and academics. Pakistan was not the only recipient of American administrative technology. In the 1960s,
Public administration was the major category in the technical assistance program of the United States (Siffin, 1976), which aimed at improving the administrative capability of developing countries. Quite a few researchers in the field of Public Administration have made early assessment of the results of American influence on administrative reforms in developing countries (Braibanti, 1966, Siffin, 1976). However, there is dearth of in-depth analyses of diffusion of American administrative technology in individual countries. Such studies could be both theoretically and practically rewarding in the age of globalization which has accelerated the diffusion of ideas, technology and culture among countries and regions. This paper reviews Pakistan's experience in Public Administration Education which was introduced to Pakistan in 1960s under the Technical Assistance Program of the United States². The nature, structure, values and intellectual orientation of public administration education in a country largely depends on the concept of the state, administrative context, organizational setting in which PA programs are offered, teachers of public administration, and professional and accreditation bodies. In this paper, all these aspects are examined to see how the diffusion of American public administration education took place in a country like Pakistan, which offered different political, administrative, educational, and cultural context to MPA program.

**Brief History of MPA Education in Pakistan**

The first MPA program was started in 1962 at University of the Punjab, which was housed in a newly established Department of Public Administration³. A team of American professors from the School of Public Administration, at the University of Southern California provided administrative and intellectual leadership to this department from 1962 to 1964. There was only one Pakistani professor on the faculty who received his PhD from Cornell. He later became the first Pakistani head of the department. During this period five to six newly selected lecturers were sent to the University of Southern California to pursue doctoral degree in Public Administration. Most of these lecturers were teachers of Political Science in the Punjab University and its affiliated colleges
with the exception of one who had a Master's degree in Statistics. They all returned within five years after completion of their doctoral degrees and resumed their teaching positions in the Department of Public Administration. One lecturer completed his PhD in Sociology from University of Munster, Germany. This group of teachers provided the core of intellectual leadership in the discipline of Public Administration not only in the Punjab University but also in the entire country.

The MPA degree program, originally designed by an American team of professors, was a general program consisting of eighteen courses with the thesis equivalent to two courses. The titles of the courses suggest that it was a pure public administration program with no components on Business Management. The following were the courses:

1. Government Administration of Pakistan
2. Principles of Public Administration
3. Statistics for the Public Administrators
4. Government and Administration in Contemporary Societies
5. Comparative Public Administration
6. Economic Development
7. Public Personnel Administration
8. Research Methods and Techniques
9. District Administration and Basic Democracies
10. Public Financial Administration
11. Management Analysis
12. Policy Making in Public Administration

13. Organizational Behavior

14. Administrative Law

15. Governmental Accounting

16. Administration of International Affairs

17. Seminar in Directed Reading

18. Seminar in Public Administration Problems

19. & 20. Thesis

The MPA program of the Punjab University since its inception in 1962 has undergone major changes. It was started as a pure Public Administration program but it gradually lost its original identity and was turned into a management degree with a strong flavor of business administration courses. In 1965, the name of the Department was changed from Public Administration to Administrative Science. This was done under the headship of a professor who was a graduate of Cornell University where Business and Public Administration were part of Administrative Science. The PA program was made to cater to the needs of both public and private sector organizations by offering concentrations in management, financial administration, personnel administration, and local and regional planning. The word public was removed from titles of all the courses to make the program suitable to both public and private sector for example new titles for core courses were as follows:

1. Governmental Administration in Pakistan

2. Principles of Administration

3. Statistics for Administration
The faculty of the Department of Public Administration gave high priority to the placement of graduates in the job market. Concerted efforts were made to create a link between the department and its potential employers, primarily the government department, training institutions, public corporations and private sector. The Federal Public Service Commission was persuaded to allocate 200 marks to Public Administration in the Central Superior Service (CSS) Examination. The authorities in the government were requested by the department to give preference to MPA graduates in professional jobs in government departments and public corporations over other Master's degree holders. However, despite the best efforts of the faculty, no such linkage could be created between the department and public sector job market. MPA graduates, however, were being accepted both in public and private sector organizations mainly for two reasons; first, the MPA program provided broad based management education suitable for both sectors, and secondly, the Department of Administrative Science was the only such institution other than the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Karachi in the entire country.

Taking the model of Cornell University, the Board of Studies of the Department of Administrative Science recommended to the higher academic bodies of the Punjab
University to raise the department to the level of Graduate School of Administrative Sciences, which would give the school a legitimate base to formally start a Business Administration program in the future. This proposal could not carry through for reasons unknown to the authors. The Department of Administrative Science, however, started a Master of Business Administration program in 1971 which was separated in 1973 through administrative action from the Department of Administrative Science (DAS) and a separate department, the Department of Business Administration, was created to house this program. This marked the beginning of a new era in Public Administration education.

Two departments of the same university would start competing with each other, one with an MPA degree having a blend of public and business administration, and the other with an MBA degree with a focus on business management only. MBA graduates rapidly started taking their share of the job market particularly in the private sector, which was previously being captured by MPA graduates. The claim of MBA graduates on private sector jobs was justified but unfortunately, such claims could not be established for MPAs on the jobs in the public sector even in the state-owned enterprises. However, the MPA survived this competition and the faculty of the Department of Administrative Science, fully trained and groomed in the discipline of Public Administration kept the discipline alive, a result of which, other new universities picked up the Punjab University model and established both MPA and MBA programs under different administrative arrangements. Despite the popularity of the MBA degree, Public Administration programs have been growing, but only in public sector universities. Presently, ten universities in Pakistan and one university in Azad Jammu Kashmir are offering MPA and BPA programs. The Department of Administrative Science directly and indirectly helped new universities in setting up Public Administration programs. A notable example is Gomal University, D.I. Khan, in NWFP province.

The Department of Administrative Science which introduced, guided, and nurtured the discipline of Public Administration in
Pakistan kept its tradition of steering the wheel of MPA education. In 2001, after becoming the Institute of Administrative Sciences, it gave new impetus to Public Administration Education by starting several new areas of specialization such as Health Administration, Human Resource Management, Environmental Management, Public Policy and Management, Finance, Management Information Systems and Marketing for Non-Profit Sector. Several of these new specializations have been raised to full-fledged Master's degree programs.

**Current Status of MPA Education**

The following aspects of the program may best describe the status of Public Administration education in Pakistan:

1. Number and Size of PA Programs
2. Organizational Settings
3. Program Structure and Types of Programs
4. Teachers' Academic Background
5. Research in Public Administration
6. Accreditation and Professional Bodies

**1. Number and Size of PA Programs**

Presently, ten out of twelve general universities in the public sector are offering Public Administration programs at the Master and Bachelor levels. There are a total of ten MPA programs for fresh college graduates, and the same number of programs are being offered to in-service people working in the government, private and non-profit organizations. Four universities are offering Bachelor's programs (BPA) in Public Administration. The
Institute of Administrative Sciences has started BS (Hons) in Management with one of the concentrations in Public Management. There are not less than 2000 students studying Public Administration in Pakistan.

2. Organizational Setting

The PA programs in various universities are being run under different administrative and organizational settings. In eight out of ten universities, Public Administration programs are operating in management schools, which have different nomenclatures such as Administrative Sciences, Management Sciences and Management Studies. These schools also offer MBA programs. There are only two universities, which have separate departments of Public Administration.

3. Program Structure, Core Courses and Specializations

All Master's programs require two years of education in Public Administration after the Bachelor's degree. PA programs in the entire country operate under a semester system which is an American system of assessment and evaluation. The courses consist of core, specialization and elective courses. Sixty credit hours is the minimum requirement of MPA degree. However, there are a few exceptions; a few universities offer more than seventy credit hours to complete the degree. An internship of six to eight weeks is compulsory for non-service students. A thesis is optional, and can be taken in lieu of two courses. The core courses consist of two types of courses: a) Public Administration courses such as Public Administration and Society, Public Policy Analysis, Local Governance, Financial Administration, and Comparative and International Public Administration; b) general Management courses such as Organizational Design and Behavior, Human Resource Management, Economic Analysis, Financial Accounting, and Principles of Management. These courses were approved by the National Curriculum Committee (Public Administration) of the Higher Education Commission.
(formerly known as University Grants Commission) of Pakistan in 2002 (UGC, 2002).

The new specializations introduced in the revised curriculum of Public Administration are Health Administration, Development Management, Environment Management, Human Resource Management, Public Administration and Law, and Management Information Systems. The Institute of Administrative Sciences, at the University of the Punjab has already introduced these specializations in its MPA program while other universities are gradually adapting these new courses.

In recent years, there has been a trend toward three year and four years bachelor's programs in the universities. This has created the opportunity for starting a BS/BA in Public Administration at university level. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is pursuing all the universities to start four years bachelor's programs in Science, Humanities and Management Sciences including Public Administration. The newly established Virtual University has started a four years BS program in Public Administration. The Institute of Administrative Sciences has a four years program BS (Hons) in Management with a concentration in public administration and management.

4. Teachers of Public Administration

Over 80 percent teachers of Public Administration in Pakistani universities are Public Administration graduates. For example, in the Institute of Administrative Sciences, University of the Punjab, out of eleven full-time teachers, there is only one teacher who is a commerce graduate. All of the rest have master/PhD degrees in Public Administration. The departments that run both MBA and MPA programs certainly use both MBA/MPA teachers for teaching common courses especially management courses. Heads of the institutes/departments offering PA programs come from different disciplines; Public Administration, Political Science and Business Administration. The department/institutes that are headed by Public
Administration/political science graduates are more innovative and aggressive in marketing of MPA programs. On the contrary, institutes who are being led by business graduates manifest more ownership of MBA programs vis-a-vis MPA programs.

5. Research in Public Administration

So far, Public Administration institutes/departments in Pakistan's universities have only been producing MPA graduates. Research has not been the priority of the departments primarily due to lack of funding for research and linkages with government departments and training institutions. Back in the 1960s, the Public Administration Research Center and Council was established to provide such linkages but this institution could not continue due to the lack of interest in research by the government and the universities. One of the reasons for the lack of research traditions in Public Administration institutes/departments was the absence of MPhil and PhD programs. For training of Public Administration for higher degrees, universities relied mostly on the foreign universities. Under the Central Overseas Training Scheme of the Government of Pakistan (COTS), teachers were being trained till the late 1990s. Now that the COTS Scheme has been terminated, the Higher Education Commission is encouraging the universities to start PhD programs in all the disciplines including Public Administration and Management Sciences. Universities are positively responding to this initiative of the HEC and hopefully, a research culture will develop in the Public Administration departments.

6. Accreditation and Professional Bodies

There is no accreditation and professional body to set the standards and monitor the quality of the program. The Higher Education Commission does have a curriculum development wing, which periodically reviews the curricula of all the subjects including MPAs offered, by public sector universities. A body like National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and
Administration (NASPAA) in the United States is needed in Pakistan to ensure the quality of Public Administration programs. Similarly, a professional body like ASPA is also long due in Pakistan to provide link between Public Administration Education and practice, and to promote the discipline.

**Analysis of MPA Education in Pakistan**

The history and the current status of Public Administration education reveals that:

a) MPA education has no formal links with Public Administration practice and is not considered as a mean for preparing graduates for public service;

b) Public Administration is generally perceived as a management discipline despite the fact that the new curriculum of PA programs include courses on Governance and Public Policy; and

c) Public Administration is not a growing discipline in Pakistani universities.

We have identified these contextual aspects which are complex and interactive and together provide the basis for understanding of the status of Public Administration Education in Pakistan:

a) bureaucratic and authoritarian state;

b) tool orientation of Public Administration;

c) preference for generalists in bureaucracy;

d) neglect of social sciences in the higher education.
Bureaucratic Authoritarian State

Pakistan since its inception has remained essentially a bureaucratic polity. Both civil and military bureaucracy occupies most powerful position in the political system of Pakistan. Bureaucratic elites, military and civil, have directly and indirectly ruled Pakistan throughout its history as an independent nation. Military regimes or military-controlled regimes (except for a short period of Bhutto's rule), and the prominent role of bureaucracy in policy making, developed the bureaucratic and authoritarian character of Pakistani state. A bureaucratic and authoritarian state by design tends to regulate the production of knowledge and does not encourage intellectual endeavors outside state control. Intellectual freedom cherished by the universities and academics do not go well with the bureaucratic and authoritarian orientation of the state. Thus, the bureaucratic and authoritarian nature of the Pakistani state is probably the major reason behind the lack of formal linkages between Public Administration education and practice.

The government has established several research institutions outside the universities including the Pakistan Public Administration Research Center. The Public Administration training institutions established under government control were given the research task instead of using universities' departments of Public Administration. Ralph Braibanti, a famous researcher on bureaucracy of Pakistan, observed a long time ago that higher bureaucracy in Pakistan "does not have deep residual respect for extra bureaucratic intellectual endeavor" (Braibanti, 1966: 15). This attitude of the bureaucracy persists even today. For example, efforts are currently being made in bureaucratic circles to establish a National School of Public Policy or National University of Public Administration, which will be a degree-awarding institution, and all the in-service training institutions will be affiliated with the proposed university. The American tradition of using universities for education and training of public servants and conducting Public Administration research in universities failed to penetrate Pakistani public administration.
Tool Orientation of Public Administration

The discipline of Public Administration is grounded in both instrumental and democratic values. Although instrumental values such as rationality and administrative efficiency have always been more prominent (Denhardt, 1979), the democratic values freedom, equality, equal opportunities, justice, and personal responsibility provide the core of public administration as articulated by its early students such as Paul Apleby (1945) and L.D White (1949). However, American Public Administration, which was exported to developing countries including Pakistan was singularly guided by instrumental values. Public Administration was presented as a tool through which society can achieve its goals. Siffin (1976) characterized American public administration exported to developing countries as tool-oriented, which consisted of a set of tools and a set of ideas about them; for example, personnel administration, budgeting and financial administration, and organization and methods. This tool-oriented public administration was supported by instrumental values.

The idea of administration as an instrument or tool for development was well-aligned with the technocratic value structure of the bureaucratic state of Pakistan which in the 1960s was being ruled by a Military General, Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan. Therefore, democratic concerns of public administration were pushed backward when the administrative technology was being exported to Pakistan and other developing countries.

This brand of public administration was not a full and true reflection of American public administration. F.W. Riggs, a renowned American scholar of development administration, while criticizing the American export of administrative doctrines and practices that might aid authoritarian government, categorically said that the father of American public administration, Woodrow Wilson, weighted democratic values more than administrative efficiency (Riggs, 1965).
The MPA education supporting the American exported administrative doctrine and practices was perceived in Pakistan as a mechanism to produce graduates who would be equipped with modern tools of administration grounded in science and rationality\(^\text{13}\). This perception about the discipline of Public Administration at the time of its inception in Pakistan explains why Public Administration education could not make inroads to an elitist and generalist-dominated bureaucracy. As a result of that, MPA graduates never received, even now, due consideration for public service positions filled through competitive examination or otherwise against other graduates (business graduates). It was mainly because of two reasons: a) The MPA degree being a professional degree was never considered as a means for preparing graduates for a civil service which has a built-in preference for generalists; and b) if Public Administration education is dominated only by instrumental concerns (i.e., efficiency, rationality) then there is no difference between Public Administration and Business Administration. Rather, the latter, which is completely devoid of democratic values, may be more suitable for serving the interests of a bureaucratic authoritarian state. A very recent job advertisement for positions in a newly created Civil Service Reforms Unit in the Establishment Division of Government of Pakistan giving MBA degree holders preference over MPA graduates confirms the bureaucratic inclination towards business administration.

**Preference for Generalists in bureaucracy**

One of the salient features of bureaucracy in Pakistan is its preference for generalists (Kennedy, 1987). The generalist cadre Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) and its predecessor, the District Management Group (DMG) even after 1973 reforms have consistently enjoyed privileged positions in Pakistani bureaucracy. They assumed the top positions in the federal, provincial governments, and statutory and state-owned corporations. The issue of the role of generalists versus professionals was discussed even in the First Five Year Plan and it was decided not to eliminate the generalists, and rather, due importance should be given to the professionals. The preeminent
position of generalists however remained intact till now but professionals have not yet attained the same status in bureaucracy. The elitist and generalist bureaucracy in the top policy making positions in the federal and provincial secretariats would definitely not accord a tool-oriented and professional discipline of Public Administration the status it deserved. This was the reason why the discipline of Public Administration was not very well received by the bureaucracy and it is treated at par with other professional subjects.

Neglect of Social Sciences in Higher Education

Public Administration like many other social sciences has suffered as an academic discipline due to lack of institutional support for its growth (Hashmi, 2001). The science and engineering subjects always received preference for limited available resources to the universities. Therefore, there is an extreme shortage of faculty in Public Administration and other social science disciplines. Research in Public Administration also suffered because of lack of funding from the government. Now with the establishment of Higher Education Commission, social sciences are being considered for research funds and scholarships for faculty development.

Challenges and Opportunities

Public Administration is being taught only in public sector universities. In the last few years, the government has given a charter to private as well as public sector institutions engaged in postgraduate and undergraduate education in professional disciplines such as computer science, engineering and management sciences. Now the latest count of degree awarding institutions on the list of Higher Education Commission is over 105. While MBA programs exist in most of the new universities, MPA programs only exist in 11 public sector universities and in the management schools. Public Administration in Pakistan is recognized as a management discipline. The Higher Education
Commission of Pakistan treats Public Administration under the category of management sciences.

The greatest challenge to the discipline of Public Administration today, is to maintain its identity while being a sub-discipline of Management Sciences and survive the increasing competition from Business Administration. Private universities will not offer PA programs unless there is an explicit demand from the government, public sector, and non-profit sector organizations for MPA graduates.

The devolution plan under which power is being shifted to newly established district governments and local bodies provides a great opportunity for growth of Public Administration as an academic and professional discipline. In Punjab alone, one of the four provinces, there are sixty eight district governments in addition to other local councils. MPA graduates who possess the skills of management and are fully educated to safeguard and protect the democratic values can provide the new local government institutions with an unprecedented human capital needed for the successful implementation of the devolution plan. Such a blend of managerial skills and sensitivity to public interest would not come from any other Management discipline including Business Administration.

The rising non-profit sector in Pakistan also provides tremendous opportunity for growth of MPA education. There are more than 6000 registered NGOs in Pakistan. Public Administration is the discipline which has legitimate claim over this sector due to its normative values that give legitimacy to non-profit sector organizations. Public Administration programs need to prepare their graduates for this expanding sector. Once MPA programs create its niche in the job market, private sector universities will definitely respond and will most likely initiate PA programs in the future. Private universities offer the best PA programs in the United States. To reach this stage, the government has to play its role by recognizing and appreciating the importance of normative aspects of the discipline of Public Administration that distinguish it from Business Administration.
Conclusion

Public Administration education was accepted in the bureaucratic state of Pakistan because of its perceived instrumental/tool orientation. However, due to its professional and obviously democratic concerns, it was not very well received by the bureaucratic and military elites. The discipline has not yet acquired the same status as it enjoys in the United States mainly because of the different political and bureaucratic context embedded in the bureaucratic authoritarian state. In the wake of increasing popularity of MBA degrees and an expanding private sector in higher education, the discipline of Public Administration will only survive if it is able to project its normative value orientation along with instrumental concerns for efficiency and effectiveness. To what extent the well-entrenched bureaucratic authoritarian state of Pakistan will respond to such an effort, will depend on the changing administrative scenario of Pakistan.

References


**Notes and References**

1. The earlier version of this paper was presented at the Second Sino-US. International Conference: “Public Administration in the Changing World” Beijing, China, May 24-25, 2004.

2. Since none of Public Administration training institutions in Pakistan offers MPA degree program they fall outside the scope of this paper. This paper focuses only on MPA education.
3 In 1955, Institute of Business and Public Administration at the University of Karachi was established where MPA program was discontinued without producing any graduates. It only focused on business education and was renamed as Institute of Business Administration (IBA). Now IBA is a degree awarding institution and has no administrative link with the University of Karachi.

4 The authors were told by some senior faculty members that USC trained faculty was not happy with the change of name of the department from Public Administration to Administrative Science as they were all Drs of Public Administration.

5 Administrative Science Quarterly, a prestigious journal of management is the publication of Cornell's School of Management.

6 The official proceedings of various meetings of the Management Committee of the Department of Public Administration, University of the Punjab from 1962-1964 confirms such efforts.

7 This was done probably due to organizational politics.

8 This was exactly in line with the provisions of First and Second Five Years Plans of Pakistan in which it was clearly mentioned that Public Administration institutions should also offer courses in business management.

9 Private sector was not previously allowed to set up universities. Since the late 1980s over forty private universities have been given charter by the government as part of policy of privatization of higher education.
10 The Faculty of the Department of Administrative Science, University of the Punjab established both MBA and MPA programs in two separate departments in Gomal University. The graduates of DAS also contributed to the early developments of these departments as HOD and faculty members.

11 Several public sectors universities established in the last 2-3 years are not included in this count. These universities are still at their infancy stage.

12 University Grants Commission (Curriculum of Public Administration for MPA (Revised 2002).

13 Public Administration education taught in Pakistani universities however takes care of democratic concerns along with its instrumental orientation. Since American text books are used in PA programs, both instrumental and democratic values provide the basis of Public Administration education.