THE HEGEMONIC GENE:
BUREAUCRACY AND MINDLESS DOMINANCE

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(English Version)

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Four decades of endoscopic experience within one of the most difficult bureaucracies in the world is bound to stimulate introspection and analysis, even among the many insensitive ones who occupy different positions of power within the system. And if one has a grasp of the rudiments of empirical methods of inquiry that are mandatory in the social sciences and working experience in handling the tools, then postulates like the one titled above are not expected to emerge, without fear or favour. Such a clear stand would, of course, require some articulation and validation by professionals, though unanimity and immutable laws are just not possible in the social sciences. This is just what prompted one to lay this usual proposition before this august audience of anthropologists and other social scientists at this conference of 'Round Table:2015 on Society, State and Governance' today. This proposition is basically a submission based on forty years of experience as an insider within the system, and though it does not pretend to be any major addition to the social sciences. These four decades cover all shades of political regimes, from administration during the Emergency in 1975, to several years in governance under more dogmatic Left Front rule to 15 years in the Central government, under at least six different and opposing shades of politics. The genetic hegemony of the bureaucracy has remained constant through these wild swings of politics and despite strong attempts by well meaning new governments to alter, control or expurgate such repugnant responses in public service. To the extent possible for a single human, one has tried to examine issues that may contradict or erode the sharpens of the postulate, through different

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bureaucratic formations, over a sufficiently long period, but at the end there is no option but to state rather categorically that hegemony is so intrinsic to the bureaucracy that it is incapable of being wished away with pious declarations or theories.

2. Such an irretrievable position remains open to critical examination to survive in the realm of concepts and its purpose is to stimulate further studies and discussion. It is my submission that instead of theorising on whether the bureaucracy can be made more responsive or not, it may be more worthwhile to focus on the very dangerous possibility that it may never be able to be deliver the services required by any aspirational democracy, because its very character militates against it. It is further submitted that its intrinsic hegemonic genes make the bureaucracy palpably inadequate to meet the ever growing demands for transparency and accountability. It may have served the needs of monarchic, oligarchic, feudal, imperial and even industrial systems, but it is at a loss from the mid-twentieth century to harmonise its unavoidably-domineering nature with the requirements of either welfare-democracies or of internet-digital civilisations where nothing can remain a secret for too long. As a congenitally-hegemonic and non-transparent organisation, it cannot but remain firmly and decidedly unresponsive to the needs of democratic governance. Let us not forget that the root of the word "secretary" lies in "secret", i.e., the keeper of secrets and the term "secretariat", that usually denotes a public bureaucracy, is but an extension of this ageless idea.

3. Let us consider the trail of points that lead to the postulate that hegemonic genes are too deeply embedded in the very nature of the bureaucracy to make it too clumsy and overbearing to cope with the challenges of the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries:

(a)   This domineering aspect of the bureaucracy has been derided too often but existing literature on the subject does not focus adequately on the

inevitability of such hegemony as an embedded genetic trait, and this fact appears to have escaped serious academic analysis;

(b)   Social sciences have focussed mainly on the origin, development, need or nuisance of the bureaucracy as a structure, but the entire discourse appears to be de-centred from the cardinal issue, that it is this indestructible trait that constitutes the core of the phenomenon, not just an aberration or an curable side effect;

(c)   The prevailing debate tends to descend to value judgements of different schools, from symptomatic appraisals, but it fails to recognise that domination is an end unto itself within the bureaucratic structure, which no amount of theorisation can hope to rid it off;

(d)   Such symptomatic analyses of 'bureaucracy' that most social sciences indulge in are based on external observational methods or participant behavioural studies and these are ipso facto inadequate to express the internal dynamics of bureaucratic hegemony, which are indeed very difficult to grasp by 'outsiders';

(e)   Despite attempts by different political systems and regimes, through expression of citizens' rights and the mandatory listing of public services and deliverables, the domineering genes of bureaucracy simply do not disappear, but actually manifest themselves in newer forms, through mutation;

(f)   In the governance of large anonymous but aspirational populations which emerged mainly as nation-states and dominate the present political landscape, hegemonic bureaucracies discover a new ambience within which to thrive, multiply and perpetuate their hold over the citizenry;

(g)   It is only an endoscopic analysis that can reveal the internal compulsions and mechanisms and evolve situation-specific solutions, but theories or attempts

at complete de-bureaucratisation or reform of this characteristic hegemony appear to be utopian exercises;

(h)   Unless the social sciences pool in their efforts to understand this facet of the phenomenon, not only will the discourse remain largely confined to ineffective theorisation and cause a veritable loss to the corpus of societal knowledge, but the intelligentsia would be accused of remaining a mute spectator in this paradigm.

4.   Let us now venture into the etymology and definition of the term bureaucracy mainly for the purpose of getting our specific direction clear within the framework. These exercises are mandatory in many a social science and we have to be careful to prevent the pitfall of being stuck in the same groove of the dominant discourse. The term has its origins in France sometime in the middle of the 18th century and it is attributed to Jacques Claude Marie Vincent de Gournay, who combined the word 'bureau' i.e, desk or office, with the Greek word 'kratos', or political power. In English, it was used first in 1818 (Lady Morgan Sydney) and like in French, the sense was pejorative, i.e, "beuracratie or office tyranny". (Merriam Webster Dictionary). A century later, when the growth of industrialisation and urbanisation made the management of public affairs more pronounced and much more in demand, the term 'bureaucracy' acquired a less negative meaning and it referred only to the administration by "non elected career officials".

5.   Though others have theorised on the rule of non-elected officials, it was Max Weber who laid the keel of the academic discourse on the phenomenon of the bureaucracy in the 1920s. He contended that the impersonal rule-bound nature of the bureaucracy was indeed a bulwark against individual oppression and favouritism that characterised monarchic, oligarchic or even imperfect emerging democracies. But, as the urban/welfare states expanded the sphere of state or legitimate intervention over human affairs, the real nature of the control or hegemony of bureaucracies became

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more apparent. Public, political and academic condemnation of the tyranny of non-elected and seemingly non-accountable officialdom was voiced in no uncertain terms, even before the Second World War. Ludwig von Mises (1944), the Austrian commentator, for example, insisted the term bureaucracy was "always applied with an opprobrious connotation". For several years, the known part of the world was obsessed with the march of super efficient bureaucracy-driven challenges that the Axis behemoths represented and defensive unquestioned bureaucratisation became inevitable even in more open societies. After all, optimum efficiency and patriotic response were the needs of the hour. Arguments about the negative aspects of bureaucracy were, thus, heard only within the secluded cloisters of universities and colleges and in left or liberal debates.

6. The post-War reconstruction of devastated countries and the critical needs of the newly-liberated but underdeveloped former colonies called for disciplined administrative, and if required, quasi-authoritarian structures but the pangs of democratic aspirations had also started manifesting themselves. This paradox could be 'managed' for about a decade or two, as nationalism and even patriotic fervour repressed other urges, but by the late-1950s we find sociologists declaring that the term "bureaucrat" had become an epithet for overbearing behaviour (Robert Merton, 1957). For the purposes of streamlining the present discussion, we would seek to explain the most obvious facet of bureaucracy in terms of a "mindset" or "attitude". To that extent, we would need to move away from Max Weber and the universal application of his criteria for some time, to make this subject a little more concrete. The coverage of the present exercise is on bureaucracy as a phenomena, whether it exists in public or private organisations, but its prime inspiration is drawn from the study of public officialdom. It also seeks to draw its sustenance from certain aspects specific to the Indian bureaucracy, but it will also draw parallels and examples from other systems of governance as well.

7. Two others who have also described the bureaucracy in the mid 19th century before Weber arrived also deserve our attention. The first is Karl Marx to whom we

shall be referring later mainly through his follower, Gramsci, and the other is John Stuart Mill. Writing in the early 1860s, John Stuart Mill theorised that successful monarchies were essentially bureaucracies and he found evidence of their existence in Imperial China, the Russian Empire, and such regimes of Europe. Mill referred to bureaucracy as a distinct form of government, separate from representative democracy and he believed that bureaucracies had certain advantages. The most important one was the accumulation of experience in those who actually conduct the affairs of the State. Nevertheless, he thought bureaucracy as a form of governance compared poorly to representative government, as it relied on appointment rather than direct election. Mill wrote that ultimately the bureaucracy stifles the mind, and that "A bureaucracy always tends to become a pedantocracy." Another theorist, who wrote around the same time as Weber, Robert Michels also ventured into the academic conceptualisation of the bureaucratic phenomena. According to him, "The modern State needs a large bureaucracy because through it the politically dominant classes secure their domination" (Etizioni-Halevy 1983). Michels followed a pro-Marx interpretation but what is most interesting is that he felt "in every bureaucracy we may observe place-hunting, a mania for promotion, and obsequiousness towards those upon whom promotion depends; there is arrogance towards inferiors and servility towards superiors". This is one of the first places in Western academic analysis where one comes across the specific subject of arrogance and obsequiousness as being an inseparable part of the inbuilt behaviour of bureaucracy.

8. It may be relevant to take a look at what exactly Weber had to say on the subject, because it is he who leads the prevailing discourse and he is quoted most profusely. Weber developed several ideal-typical forms of public administration, government and business in his 1922 essay The Nature, Conditions, and Development of Bureaucratic Herrschaft that was published in his journal 'Economy and Society'. (Weber 1922). He popularised the term and its study in politics, governance, public administration, sociology and the allied disciplines of the social sciences. Weber built his description on the classic, hierarchically organised civil services of the

Continental type, what is called "Weberian Civil Service". This trend, in fact, reaches its height in the nameless but ruthlessly organised civil service of the European Commission stationed at Brussels. Max Weber saw bureaucracy as the most efficient and rational way of organising human affairs, as distinct from the capricious rule of monarchs and 'leaders'. To him, it was the key part of the rational-legal authority and as the key process in the ongoing rationalisation of the Western society. Weber has often been mistaken as an admirer of bureaucracy which he certainly was not, and all he insisted was that bureaucracy constituted the most efficient and (formally) rational way in which human activity can be organised. As a rational analyst, he did not let his value judgements cloud his focus on bureaucracy which he considered as something that is indispensable in the modern world.

9. According to him, "Bureaucratic administration fundamentally means domination through knowledge". Weber's ideal-typical bureaucracy was characterised by hierarchical organisation; there were delineated lines of authority in a fixed area of activity; action was taken on the basis of and recorded in written rules; bureaucratic officials acquired expertise through training; rules are implemented by neutral officials and that career advancement depended on technical qualifications judged by organisation, not by individuals. Weber specified that both the public and private bureaucracies are to be based on specific competencies of various offices. These competencies had to be specified in various rules, laws, and administrative regulations. Max Weber argued that bureaucracy constituted the most efficient and rational way in which human activity could be organised, and that systematic processes and recognised hierarchies were necessary to maintain order, to maximise efficiency and to eliminate favouritism. Weber, however, also felt that unfettered bureaucracy was a threat to individual freedom, in which an increase in the bureaucratisation of human life can trap individuals in an "iron cage" of rule based, rational control. But Weber did not elaborate on why or if bureaucracy is hegemonic by nature or had to act domineering in the interest of its task, though he was quite comfortable with such hegemony as long as it served a purpose. Max Weber's

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principles of bureaucracy are applicable throughout, for both public and private sectors. Even though Weber's writings have been widely disputed, they continue to grip the bureaucratic discourse.

10. Just to recapitulate some more details, let us go over the six major characteristics of the bureaucracy that Weber had noted:

(a) A Formal Hierarchical Structure: Each level controlled the level below and is controlled by the level above. A formal hierarchy was established on the basis of central planning and centralised decision making.

(b) Management by Rules: Controlling by rules allowed decisions made at high levels to be executed consistently, by all lower levels.

(c) Organisation by Functional Specialty: Work was to be done by specialists and people are to be organised into units based on the type of work they did, or the skills they had

(d) An "Upfocussed" or "Infocussed" Mission: If the mission was described as "up-focussed," then the organisation's purpose was to serve the stakeholders, the board, or whatever agency empowered it. If the mission is to serve the organisation itself, and those within it, e.g., to produce high profits, to gain market share, or to produce a cash stream, then the mission is described as "infocussed."

(e) Purposely Impersonal: The idea was to treat all employees and customers equally, and not be influenced by individual differences.

(f) Employment based on Transparent Recruitment and Appropriate Qualifications: he extolled the role of impersonal selection and the primacy of technical qualifications rather than influence or lineage.

11. We have touched upon Weber for the primary purpose of trying to ascertain whether his literature focused at all on the issue of the inevitable and unavoidable hegemonic behaviour that we have stated in paras 1 and 2. Basically, Verstehen or the sociology of Max Weber means in German "to understand, perceive, know, and comprehend the nature and significance of a phenomenon". Weber conceived of Sociology as a comprehensive science of social action and his initial theoretical focus was on the subjective meaning that humans attach to their actions and interactions within specific social contexts. In this connection, Weber distinguished between four major types of social action:

(1)   Zweckrational, or technocratic thinking

(2)   Wertrational, or value-oriented rationality

(3)   Affective action, based on the emotional state of the person
<div align="right">(Coser 1977)</div>

(4)   Traditional action, that is guided by custom or habit.

12. According to Weber, bureaucracies were meant as goal-oriented organisations, designed according to rational principles in order to efficiently attain their goals. Some have seriously misinterpreted Weber and have claimed that he was personally fond of the bureaucracy and that he believed that bureaucracy was an "ideal" organisation. Others have pronounced Weber "wrong" because real bureaucracies do not live up to his list of "ideals". But Weber described bureaucracy as an "ideal type" in order to describe its growth in power and scope in the modern world more accurately. The bureaucratic coordination of the action of a large number of people has become the dominant structural feature of modern societies, mainly after Weber had moved on. It is only through this organisational device that large-scale planning and coordination, both for the modern state and the modern economy, become possible. For this part of the discussion, we will be relying a lot on the work of Frank Elwell of Rogers State University as his descriptions of Weber's outlook appears to be the simplest to convey. Weber's discussion of authority-relations also provides

insight into what is happening in the modern world. On what basis do men and women claim authority over others? Why do men and women give obedience to authority figures? Again, Weber uses the "ideal type" when he begins to address these questions.

13. Weber distinguished these three main types of "authority" where bureaucracy was concerned and to him, authority to carry out its mandate was a sine qua non :

(a) Traditional Authority: that is anchored in impersonal rules that have been legally established and this type of authority has come to characterise social relations.

(b) Rational-legal Authority: that is not codified in impersonal rules but is usually invested in a hereditary line or invested in a particular office by a higher power.

(c) Charismatic Authority: that rests on the appeal of leaders who claim allegiance because of the force of their extraordinary personalities. (Aron 1970)

14. We are not going into further elaboration and subtleties, as that would weigh us down. In spite of Weber's comprehensive explanation of the bureaucracy and why modern societies are so dependant on such impersonal formal organisations, the inescapable fact even in Weber's time was that any bureaucracy tended to undermine both human freedom and democracy in the long-run. While government departments are theoretically responsible to the electorate, this responsibility is almost entirely fictional, as neither Parliaments nor political executives have the time or patience to get "into the kitchen and check how the systems". Government departments have also grown so numerous and so complex, that they cannot truly be supervised in any effective manner. The factual position in the modern world, however, is that those on top of bureaucratic hierarchies can command vast resources in pursuit of their interests and this power is often unseen and unregulated. This gives the elite at the top of these hierarchies vast social, economic, and political power. The problem is further compounded by huge corporations, economic bureaucracies that have tremendous impact over our lives and it is an impact over which we have lesser

control than we have for public bureaucracies. The crash of Wall Street and the economic devastation that followed it only proves how secretive and manipulative private sector bureaucracies are. To quote Peter Blau on this topic: "The most pervasive feature that distinguishes contemporary life is that it is dominated by large, complex, and formal organisations. Our ability to organise thousands and even millions of men in order to accomplish large-scale tasks-be they economic, political, or military, is one of our greatest strengths. The possibility that free men become mere cogs in the bureaucratic machines we set up for this purpose is one of the greatest threats to our liberty". Before we get on to the next section that deals with a critique of Weber and his relations with Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci, it may be repeated that while Weber did appreciate the inevitability of a domineering bureaucracy, in his scheme of things he believed that an impersonal bureaucracy was/is the best safeguard against capricious rulers. It appears, therefore, that to Weber the 'domination phenomena' was inevitable and inescapable. (Elwell 1999).

15. Weber's critics also do not appear to have focused on the genetic propulsion of the bureaucracy towards inescapable hegemony. Earlier, Woodrow Wilson had advocated that bureaucracy "is a part of political life only, as the methods of the counting house are a part of the life of society; raised very far above the dull level of mere technical detail by the fact that through its greater principles it is directly connected with the lasting maxims of political wisdom." Wilson also felt that "although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices." Even when Weber was explaining the virtues of bureaucracy vis a vis capricious regimes, Carleton K. Allen was decrying the phenomenon of "Bureaucracy Trimphant" as early as in 1931. In his 1944 work "Bureaucracy", the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises was highly critical of all bureaucratic systems but even he did not touch upon any programmed compulsion within the bureaucratic set-up that could help understand its compulsive interfering nature or its propensity to stymie the best of initiative. Robert K. Merton expanded on Weber's theories of bureaucracy in his work Social Theory and Social Structure, published in 1957 and

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he did agree with certain aspects of Weber's analysis but he also considered the dysfunctional aspects of bureaucracy. He attributed these to a "trained incapacity" resulting from "over-conformity" and he saw bureaucrats as more likely to defend their own entrenched interests than to act to benefit the organisation as a whole. He also believed that bureaucrats actually took pride in their craft, which led them to resist changes in established routines. The spoof series in the U.K, called Yes Minister! regaled audiences for decades on the stiff opposition of the bureaucracy to any change by any minster in power, but it revealed in jest what were considered to be its stratagems. Merton can, therefore, be considered to be one of the earliest theoreticians to point out to the inevitable urge of the bureaucracy to expand and dominate.

16. One can hardly expect to discuss state structures without touching upon Karl Marx, one of the best works in this regard is a work by André Liebich entitled "On the Origins of a Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy in the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (Sage 1982). Hegel had supported the role of bureaucracy, though he never used the specific term, because he considered the development of a governmental apparatus to regulate human affairs to be a natural counterpart to the emergence of private corporations that made their presence felt in the 19th century capitalist world. Marx's position was that the bureaucracies of private capital and the government appeared to be in some oppositional position but they relied on each other for the survival of the class that governed the capitalist society. On this point, it may be more interesting to state what the Marxist Antonio Gramsci had to expound through his very important contribution, i.e, the concept of 'hegemony'. Both Marx and Weber were active and working in what has been described as the age of transformation from a civil-bourgeois society to a mass society, though the two never met. That their social examinations came to widely differing conclusions is, no doubt, based on the values they both brought to their respective tables. In Karl Marx's words, "The bureaucracy is a circle from which one cannot escape. Its hierarchy is a hierarchy of knowledge. The top entrusts the understanding of detail to the lower levels, whilst the

lower levels credit the top with understanding of the general, and so all are mutually deceived." Franz Kafka's "The Trial" (1995) remains one the most eloquent testimonies of an incorrigible bureaucracy.

17. When comparing Weber's legitimate domination and Gramsci's hegemony, one finds there are other affinities, as well as differences. Gramsci's historic but castigatory elucidation of the term "hegemony" in social science compares with Weber's definition of "domination" that was relatively benign. It was the most important element of social action and to Weber it was more of a conscious facet of State power, in order to compel obedience. "Domination in the most general sense is one of the most important elements of social action and he felt that "Without exception, every sphere of social action is profoundly influenced by structures of dominance" (Weber, 1968). The State "lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence" (Weber, 2004: 33). However, he saw that for domination to be legitimate it had to be willingly accepted. (Parkin, 1982). "The merely external fact of the order being obeyed is not sufficient to signify domination in our sense; we cannot overlook the meaning of the fact that the command is accepted as a 'valid' norm." (Weber, 1968).

18. Gramsci had a similar conception of the state like Weber, but he viewed the state as "hegemony armoured by coercion" (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1980). Gramsci saw hegemony as the supremacy of a social group(s) as ideological domination. Gramsci never gave an exact definition of hegemony, though it is clear that Gramsci meant a socio-political situation, or an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant (Williams in Sassoon, 1980: 232). Bates described Gramsci's concept of hegemony as "political leadership based on the consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularisation of the world view of the ruling class." (Bates, 1975: 352). Though Gramsci's concern was primarily with the Communist Party and not with the bureaucracy as a socio-political phenomena, we have quoted him as he is the philosopher of the concept of "hegemony" for his statements are Published:http://www.epaper.eisamay.com/Details.aspx?id=15425&boxid=1275967113

rather wide-ranging. "The bureaucracy is the most dangerously hidebound and conservative force; if it ends up by constituting a compact body, which stands on its own and feels itself independent of the mass of members" (Gramsci, 1975: 211). This is the nearest that Gramsci comes to what we have described as "hegemonic genes" that pervade all other characteristics. To return to Gramsci's main concern, ie, the growing tendency towards a hegemonic bureaucracy within the Communist Party, we find it as an interesting example that a non-State bureaucracy also develops the same traits as the bureaucratic arm of State power. Basically, it is the structure, functioning and powers that engenders hegemony in any comparable situation and as long as the first two elements are driven by the third the initial objective, whether it be service to the people or revolution for creating an egalitarian society, get crushed under the inexorable roll of the wheels of power and dominance. They thus assume the status of being an end unto themselves and ideology or stated purpose if simply relegated to powerful sloganeering.

19. Gramsci's hegemony also took effect in civil society, the area in which Weber's status groups acted, where they would use social closure to create their legal, ideal and moral monopolies. Weber however treats civil society with the same definite distinction from the State as many in the liberal tradition. We may recall that Weber had an ambivalent attitude towards bureaucracy and believed the modern techniques of bureaucracy were superior to previous autocratic forms and that in some ways he approved of the morals, Gramsci was ab initio wary of bureaucratisation. but it would be futile to expect either Weber or Gramsci to be focusing on the limited area of how hegemony or dominance constitutes an integral part of the DNA of the bureaucracy and becomes an unavoidable aspect of its relationship with its clients and citizens. We have traversed the literature in search of certain elusive remarks that would point to the fact that either Weber or his followers or detractors would be really interested in grasping or explaining the phenomenon. This aspect of the bureaucratic phenomenon needs to be studied on a 'stand alone' basis, instead of allowing this concern, which operates on an oppressive mode every day, to be subsumed under

theoretical premises that relate to the wider phenomena of bureaucracy as a whole. It is in this limited domain that one seeks to labour an essential feature of the system that has not received adequate attention in the past.

20.One of the only writings that one could come across which focuses specifically on the topic of Bureaucracy and Social Hegemony (Sen: 1976, PP 677 ff) states that "the progressive popular content of the legislative measures comes to be negated in the course of their bureaucratic implementation. Sen argues that the hindrance of bureaucracy is usually traced to the functions and dysfunctions of public officials." There can be three different basic positions in this regard:

(a) that officials are enjoying too much power and there is need for the delimitation of the same;

(b) that the ever-growing power of bureaucracy is necessary and unavoidable and concern should therefore mainly be with the wise exercise of such power;

(c) that power necessarily accrues to bureaucracy and that we should look for methods whereby its services might be dispensed with altogether." (Sen:1976)

21. Sen's arguments spin off on a predictable Marxian line and he quotes extensively from Gramsci, which we already have. To connect the innate hegemonic nature of the bureaucracy (that operates almost on genetic prompting) with "class interests" that is destined to serve the ruling class is not fully acceptable, because most ruling parties and groups irrespective of political colour have expressed their total distrust of the bureaucracy and repeatedly accuse it of not implementing their programmes. Therefore, to insist on a "close collusion" appears to be a bit stretched. We have strained to explain that bureaucracy as a hegemony instrument has operated in different political and class system, right from the monarchic to the feudal and up to the early stages of "bourgeois democracy" (i.e., not fully participative) and to a large degree, it serves its own cravings first and then takes on the political master's wishes. Sen suggests "the awakening of civil society and mass action" as a necessary correction to keep the bureaucracy in check. On this score, he has been proved to be

correct three decades later, when both these forms of resistance came out in full bloom in India through Anna Hazare's agitation and others. But one must complement Sen being one of the early scholars to recognise this phenomenon though it may have served a clearer academic purpose, if he could extricate himself from predictable and often dogmatic Marxian theorisation.

22. Having traversed such a wide territory, we need to come and amplify this concept of "genetic trait of domination" a little more clearly. My statements are based on observations for 4 decades and I would submit that these 40 years within the system provided unique opportunities for observing this behaviour at close quarters as I had no major involvement in the 'guiding ethos' or any great belief in the hereditary values or virtues of bureaucracy. I would submit that this approach that I said is fairly neutral. One must recall that this is a very difficult domain for any social scientist, because the respondents refuse to answer questions on the subject. Thus, any external observations without internal knowledge of the terrain and 'psyche' renders any analysis ineffective and prejudiced. Within this caveat, I would try to submit a chain of behavioural systems that outline, characterise and describe the "genetic hegemonic traits" of the bureaucracy, along with some amount of reasoning.

23. Let us look at some of the issues mentioned below:

(a)   From day one, most new recruits into a profession are instilled with a pride of belonging, but in the case of civil servants of every category, it is much more than a pride of "dedicating one to a public service". It becomes the bedrock of hubris on which all subsequent actions, responses and behaviour depends.

(b)   This means that even the lowest category of public servant anywhere in the world is convinced that he is innately 'superior' to any other citizen, by the simple virtue of the fact that he alone can work under the

protection of the "lion symbol" in India or the eagle symbol of the government of the United States.

(c) Inane it may sound, the prompting of this genetic hegemony emanates from this in-built pride of being part of the sovereign power. It also assures a certain degree of 'fraternity' and some real or imagined 'immunity' within the system especially with law enforcing agencies.

(d) The new entrant is indoctrinated into the virtues of the national task and how it makes one completely different, almost racially from other fellow citizens, who are not endowed with this unique ethereal radiation.

(e) The terms of engagement of public servants are quite different from any other comparable categories and there are certain intrinsic disadvantages to which bureaucrats have to submit daily, almost as an exercise in flagellation, like vulnerability to severe criticism every day by people, politicians, press, judiciary, etc, that needs to be 'compensated' by equally inconsiderate behaviour at the first opportunity possible;

(f) this perverse attitude to the entire world is further buttressed by the fact that unlike private citizens, even honest bureaucrats have to live in constant tension and dread of the Central Bureau of Investigation or the State Anti-Corruption Department or the Vigilance Commission, etc.

(g) the ordeal of operating under very rigorous Financial Rules and strict Service Conduct Regulations that others do not need to suffer, confers upon the 'public servant' the status of being 'a different tribe' altogether that can now take it backless on hapless citizens.

(h) Let us also not forget that the bureaucracy as an apparatus of civil administration had roots that went back to the military as in the case of East India Company's combined services, which instils almost

unquestioned obedience towards seniority, which is the hall mark of the armed forces.

(i) The deadly instrument of annual assessment of juniors by seniors and the fear of transfers and postings to stations or ranks has ensured the almost-complete obedience to superior ranks within the civil bureaucracy and it is this genre of inconsiderate behavior that is simply transferred by the civil servants on to the general public as a genetically programmed response

(j) The most painful fact that cankers the public servant is that he has to accept a package of emoluments that is considerably lower than many comparable packages, almost throughout the globe, except in tiny city states like Singapore and Hong Kong, and this acute deprivation leads to a perverse feeling of superiority

(k) It bestows auras like those instilled by traditional Indian brahmanical virtues like "high thinking and plain living", a failing that academics shared until the last two Pay Commissions compensated them, and this aura leads to scorn for all others who are better off.

(l) The cumulative effect of these pains confers a paradoxical vanity of surviving within these asphyxiating restrictions, almost like some 'yogic power' i.e, that reinforces that its possessor is obviously higher than normal humans.

(m) This 'disability' converts itself into some sort of an institutional jealousy aimed at more fortunate humans, who have to be taught to understand the value of such 'suffering' within the public system.

(n) The 'pay back time' for citizens comes at the 'delivery counter' where he accosts a terribly cold, indifferent or annoying reception, with no iota of sympathy to even listen to his problems, and it is same all the world over, whether it be at any public office in India or say at the

Immigration Counters in the US, where the reception is barely short of downright hostility.

(o) This is power to dispense or withhold or penalise the applicant that constitutes the core of the transaction and as a misbehaving officer would put it, "if you don't like it, don't take it".

(p) Any bureaucratic system is at its heart a 'closed one' that, despite intenal bickering, closes rank the moment any threat is perceived, styming any attempt at dispassionate or external enquiries.

(q) It is genetically more sensitive to 'threats' than to 'expectations' from it and decides on its own whether a behaviour or a response is unacceptable and the Rules hardly ever permit those who pay for the bureaucracy: which explains the gigantic number of ineffective complaints, enquiries and why punishments are so little as to never cross even 0.5% to 1% of the total number in any bureaucracy,

(r) Though the focus is on government or public bodies, it is the same for autonomous bodies like a municipal corporation and applies across the board to private bureaucracies of the corporate or service sector, to prove which all we have to do is witness the very miniscule number that was penalised for the excesses that led to the financial crash in the West.

(s) One may also note that there is an inherent inadequacy in any bureaucracy to meet all demands from the public, which brings in a certain selectivity in response which is construed as refusal by those demanding service or is taken as a domineering behaviour by those who are paid to deliver. Though this is the most prominent behavioural aspect of the bureaucracy that citizens have to bear with, for ages, this is bound to continue as long as demands and resources remain mismatched.

24. The cumulative result of all these issues or characteristics is that it manifests itself through "rude, inconsiderate or repulsive" responses. The inability to enforce any accountability by external authorities, that are either impossible or so negligible ensures that the system continues as before. The manipulation of the political system by the permanent executive is brought out quite elaborately in Chandler, et all (2011) in their "Backstage In A Bureaucracy", referring to evidence before the American Congress. But what about corruption, that has often been stated to be one of the motivating reasons for this near hostile behaviour? It is generally believed that smiles and, better service can be obtained through 'side payments' but as studies have proved this is only partly true. The urge to make best of one's position and monetise one's power is not confined only to public service, though it is certainly much more prominent in other systems, like in municipalities and none can say that the private sector is any less, though this aspect harms lesser number of citizens. Corruption is more visible in less developed countries, or under more regulated conditions or where both apply. The temptations to monetise a part of the huge gap between a high voltage of power and a low pay package, as in the case of an Inspector, is indeed very real. The stifling vigilance and control systems that have been mentioned earlier do not appear as impediments, as it is a fact that investigating agencies are not above board and some are quite purchasable or amenable to political pressure. Besides, as mentioned, the inbuilt defence mechanism within the system ensures that punishment is ridiculously low. What actually further aggravates the problem is the fact that the more upright the regulating officer or manager is, in upholding the propriety of the organisation and its principles, the more likely is it that he would create a system of "perfect checks and balances". In their bid to ensure that every possible eventuality of misuse is thought out and checked, the resultant system that they establish is so convoluted and cumbersome, that it serves only the purpose of those who can "manage" it. It has been proven through the "permit control raj" that a bureaucracratic system of perfect checks and balances actually breeds groups of "systems manipulators", who alone can negotiate through its labyrinthine and convoluted procedures. It is reiterated that this is, paradoxically enough, aggravated

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by the "honest core" that prescribes confusing procedures, in their keenness to anticipate every possible abuse that the system could breed. This has deteriorated over the decades, as more and more areas of human activitiy or more commercial relations are covered by regulation and governed by newer and newer regimes, under public pressure. On a lighter vein, one could say that Harshad Mehta claimed he had carried a suitcase of one crore rupees for the PM in 1993, but at present this amount would not satisfy even a lowly corrupt Inspector.

25. It may be pointed out again that hegemonic behaviour is not a monopoly of governmental or public systems only and there are several corporate or private organisations, where such behaviour is resorted to, with the same degree of impunity. One has to simply witness the reception one gets at an overcrowded service centre of a private utility concern or a private service provider, that is hamstrung with an excessive number of demands and relatively lesser manpower. The issue here is the same as for public bureaucracy: that service or delivery depends largely on capacity to do so and very often the number in demand is far more than the resources at the disposal of the concerned unit. We are assuming, of course, that it has the willingness or 'genetic make up' to be helpful. Monopoly status also creates its own justification for inconsiderate domineering responses, irrespective of whether the bureaucracy is private or public.

26.Why is that open-ness and increasing transparency do not improve matters beyond a point? Where public systems or even large corporate ones are concerned, every crisis or public criticism generates an introspection which leads to further tightening of the regulations governing their delivery. Rules are made and unmade by officialdom and every attempt to enforce greater transparency and accountability appears to be producing just the opposite results. There is an interesting chapter entitled "Bureaucracy Under Siege: On Information, Collaboration and Networks" by Janet Kallinkos in Stewart Clegg's "Managing Modernity: Beyond Bureaucracy (2011) about the recent changes. In fact, one of the favourite methods employed

under the present system, when almost every public or government noting or decision is open to the RTI (Right to Information) is to keep two parallel sets of notings. One is the official noting that remains on record for possible RTI and the other consists of "stick on slips" or "pin up slips" of paper that can be detached from the main note, which actually convey the desired course of action. Once the decision is taken, these removable notes are taken away and the official record remains. Besides, every revelation or "scam" leaves in its wake of embarrassment, a trail of more promises or demands to further harden the system. As hinted, the harder and more complicated the system, the easier it is for the system manipulators to meander their way through, with nimbleness while all others are stonewalled. The consequent image of the service delivery is that it is open to lubrication, even though in reality, this many not be factual. Where the public or citizens are concerned, the resultant unacceptable response from "the other side of the desk" creates an impression of inappropriateness that is not conducive to the very purpose for which the set up was created.

27. Why cannot the honest cure some of the ills, especially as they are selected through a rigorous process? It is not that they do not keep trying but the modification of rules or working procedures is so cumbersome and dilatory that before any reasonable success is reached, transfers take place. Those who thrive on the power of harassment or corruption or both rise up in unison and train their guns on the reformer, through a political process that just looks for an opportunity to fish in troubled waters. As files are in the custody of the junior establishment, any scrutiny and fault-finding of bold decisions can be analysed with cunning, so as to make the slightest deviation appear to be a cardinal sin that the senior has committed. Open opposition to reforms and reforming seniors are usually spearheaded by subordinate ranks that are more homogeneous groups united through the fear of losing their power, privilege or additional sources of income. Either large numbers are mobilised to express disgruntlement against change, usually on the ground that the exchequer will suffer, or the Unions are brought into play. The net result is that most clean officers decide not to rock hornest's nests, or just look away from disgusting

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oppression on applicants by his own juniors. Some seniors know that the efficient ones who "deliver" and thus save the reputation of his department are either dishonest or torment applicants, but he has to tolerate them as the others are either disinterested in their work or are thoroughly inefficient. Soon enough, a large section in the bureaucracy, both honest and dishonest, realises that their immunity is inviolable and their accountability is almost zero, so why toil, because the more one does, the more one gets into problems? So vicious is the power of corrupt babus who occupy mainly the middle and lower layers of the machine, as the seniors are either apathetic or are interested only in "really big deals" that they have developed a habit of hounding honest officers out of the premises in disgrace, and proudly recount their "victories". Even Anna Hazare's Lokpal Bill does not seek to touch these cutting edges of dominance, misbehaviour and corruption. It is thus left to just a few lone crusaders who carry on their efforts to cleanse the system, nevertheless, and most do not receive their due promotion owing to some vexatious charge made against him that will take several years to be decided. In their work on Bureaucracy Versus Creativity (1965), Dyer and Dyer have explained how creativity or imaginativeness are crushed under the bureaucratic Juggernaut.

28. Sadly, where most political persons in power are concerned, their response in situations when the recalcitrant bottom three-fourth of the bureaucracy revolts against reform, is one of sheer expediency and aimed at expanding the politician's own support base. Cold decisions are taken against reform, couched appropriately in obfuscating bureaucratic jargon, which in effect favour those layers that manage the selective delivery of limited resource. After all, it makes better sense to depend on the favour of those actually administering the desks, the resources and irrespective of who is the Head for the given moment. The faceless and nameless bureaucracy thus continues with its selective and repulsive attitude that simply cannot be rectified by good wishes or political theorists. One of the most depressing facts in this whole exercise is that every time a "head" or a "political master" is positioned with legitimacy to alleviate the situation, he is made to feel as the most important

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beneficiary by the bureaucracy, that he has set out to control. It is repeatedly emphasised to him that any loosening of the system would dilute its own position, and he realises soon enough that this proposition may actually be true. The reverse would not be inimical to him as many "heads" feel that the more convoluted and more constricted the system is made by the bureaucracy, the more is his chance of gaining favour of his clients, by selectively facilitating their case." Greece captured her captors" it was said and something similar occurs when new ministers, especially the first-time ones enter the spider's parlour of bureaucracy. In a very recent paper, Michael McDonnell (2015) has done, over the issue of Bureaucracy and Civil Society, he describes as "from despotism to the crisis of the Welfare State".

28. So, are we to end on such a helpless note of despair ? It is not despair because we submit that the bureaucracy is just too genetically programmed to be hegemonic. The solution perhaps lies in more computerisation where a lot of success has been reached in many services like telephony and journey booking that were disastrous during the regulated regime of India in the last century. In fact, if the management of railway bookings (a monopoly) were handed over totally to the private sector, it would remove whatever discretion and corruption that may still exist, but the private operator needs an Ombudsman or else it would also deteriorate. Competition has proven to be a great leveller in most societies but cartels and oligopolies need to be nipped in the bud. Does decentralisation of powers help curb hegemony? No, it only increases the number of practitioners, who continue to treat the delegated power as a right to dominate applicants. As Sharma (1997, 65p) explains, the best practices of the Central government may have helped in more effective and responsive administration, but this is not coterminous with decreasing degrees of domination over citizens. But greater supply, competition and really-impersonal computerisation can only succeed if one is prepared to pay more for goods and services, which is where the catch lies. This paper does not pretend to deal with solutions or on speculative exercises in reforms. It simply states categorically that it is pointless to ponder over how to tackle the domineering behavior of bureaucracy, because it is

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inherently a part of the package deal that comes with every bureaucratic formation. Weber found his solution to capricious monarchy or oligarchy by relying on an impersonal bureaucracy, but since then, there has been several explosive expansions: in the number of citizens, their expectations, their minimal or compulsory requirements, the gigantic bureaucarcies all over, public expenditure, modes of transparent revelation through digitally-caught corresondence and so on. It is time to stop considering hegemony as just a personalised response of most in the bureaucracy, because it is much more than that: it is the hard core of the soul of the bureaucracy.

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