

## FOREWORD

As the size of the state and the complexities of governance increase, the need for unceasing institutional and professional link between the rulers and the ruled becomes all the more important. Bureaucracy became such a bridge between the two. With humble beginnings in the early phases of history, the paraphernalia of bureaucracy has over the years assumed Himalayan proportions, particularly in the modern state, whether liberal democratic, mixed or totalitarian. Greater the role of the government, firmer became the grip of the bureaucracy. In a number of societies, particularly more centralist and socialist regimes, but to some extent in almost all societies, bureaucracy has maneuvered itself to become an autonomous organ of the state. Instead of remaining an efficient yet neutral link between the rulers and the ruled, it becomes a leviathan, and somewhat a barrier between the governments and their people. What was supposed to be a bridge turned into a gulf! What was designed as a civil service, assisting the rulers and serving the people, became a new class of "real rulers" and "overlords", producing all the scenarios of "yes minister" and "yes prime minister"! Burgeoning administrative power not only led to a kind of de-democratisation but also produced a host of new socio-economic pressures, disorders and distortions, including an explosion of corruption and arbitrary rule. That is why bureaucratic reform has emerged as one of the major challenges of the twentieth and hopefully the twenty first centuries.

Dr Fuad al-Omar has done a very wonderful job by making a scientific and incisive study of the rise, proliferation and reform of bureaucracy in Kuwait and Arab Gulf states. The author has applied the conceptual framework of ecological analysis to the phenomenon of the rise and expected reform of the administration taking place in the GCC countries. Despite heavy theoretical content, the study has a very wholesome empirical dimension. The approach of the author can rightly be described as a judicious blend of the theoretical and the empirical. After surveying the relevant literature he has described the evolution of bureaucracy over the last few decades, focusing on three major phases - the emergence of bureaucracy, its exponential growth (particularly during the phase of the oil boom), and the current period of bureaucratic reform. These phases roughly synchronize with the changing fortunes of oil incomes and global and regional political waves.

In my view a major characteristic of this study is its multi-dimensional approach. The author has tried to study the phenomenon of bureaucratic development in the context of the political, social, demographic and cultural influences. While the distinct power-structure, the institutions of family and tribe and the unique composition of the labour force go to make up the real landscape, the author has tried to examine the role of changing domestic and external factors, particularly the economic, educational and demographic, in the shaping of the emerging societies of Kuwait and other Arab countries of the Gulf. His analysis is informed and perceptive. The model he has developed also succeeds in exposing the weaknesses of the administrative machinery, as it points to the direction of change to face new challenges. He visualizes reduction in centralization, and declining role of the public sector and greater privatization leading to greater economy and efficiency. The role of social and moral values has also been touched upon, although as a peripheral influence. The predictive capacity of the model adds to its strength and relevance.

Bureaucracy, State and Development in Kuwait and Arab Gulf States makes a comparative study of the evolution of bureaucracy over time as well as horizontally within the six Gulf countries. A valuable point that emerges vividly relates to the variety and diversity of the bureaucratic experiences within the region. The study also shows that there is no one model valid for all societies and cultures. The claim that the Western model is the model, to what others must gravitate, fail to come out as the rational choice. While it has certain very useful dimensions, yet every society and culture has its own unique characteristics, problems and prospects. As such prototypes have their limitations. The usefulness of the ecological approach lies in bringing within the model many distinct dimensions alongside certain aspects that are universal.

I congratulate the author on this valuable contribution and hope its publication by the Institute of Policy Studies Islamabad and the Islamic Foundation Leicester, would be a valuable addition to the literature, and this study would be read with interest not only in the Arab countries but all over the Third and Muslim world.