



## INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury

Interviewer: Andrew Schalkwyk

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Innovations for Successful Societies, Bobst Center for Peace and Justice  
Princeton University, 83 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey, 08544, USA  
[www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties](http://www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties)

SCHALKWYK: Today is the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, 2009, I'm with Mr. Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury at the BRACNet (A joint venture ISP) office in Dhaka, Bangladesh. I'd like to talk mainly about the role you've played in civil service and civil service reform in Bangladesh. To start, could you tell me about your career within the civil service and your experience with civil service reform, and perhaps a little bit about what you currently do?

CHOWDHURY: *Well, I joined the civil service in Pakistan in 1967 through an open competitive examination. I joined the service, which was then known as the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP). The examination was conducted by the Central Public Service Commission of Pakistan. Twenty of us were selected for this cadre from all over Pakistan that year, out of several thousand who took the written and oral examinations. We had a year-long training, foundation training, or basic training at the Civil Service Academy in Lahore. Thereafter, we had another year of on-the-job, kind of practical, training. We were posted probationary officers to various districts which is the basic unit of administration in the countries of this subcontinent and were attached to a district officer called the Deputy Commissioner, or in short DC.*

*That one year was to initially observe the DC's work from very close quarters. In fact, be his constant companion and associate and see him work. Then gradually he would assign some work. So, this one year was a kind of breaking-in period for the probationary civil servants. Thereafter would go through his postings at various levels. In the civil service in what was then Pakistan, and now Bangladesh, the officers are required to spend a good part of their career in assignments in the field basically dealing with law and order administration, magistracy, land administration, development administration, relief and rehabilitation work resulting from natural and other calamities, assist the Election Commission in holding elections to local bodies as well as to the national parliament. This is part of one's career as a civil service officer till one would move up to the policy level by stages.*

*I must hasten to add that contrary to general perception, civil service at that time meant only one particular cadre of service. We now have more than 30 cadres in Bangladesh Civil Service, in short BCS, such as BCS police, BCS customs, BCS income tax, so on and so forth. But in those days those were known by functional names such as Pakistan Foreign Service, Pakistan Taxation Service, Pakistan Police Service, etc. There was only the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) consisting of officers who were generalists and would, after first few years, move across the government and hold administrative and policy-level positions in government departments, corporations and ministries which were not open to any other service. Other cadre officers mostly spent their entire service life in their own department, unless someone qualified to come into what was known as Economic Pool. All posts in the provincial and central secretariats belonged to the CSP cadre.*

SCHALKWYK: That's now administrative—.

CHOWDHURY: *That's called the Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) or BCS (Administration) now. But the special position of the cadre has been lost to a great extent. I did my share of field postings. One of the first postings that I did was in a district. In those days each district was divided into subdivisions, and a junior officer used to work more or less independently under the Deputy Commissioner (DC) who was the principal representative of the government in*

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*any district. These junior positions were known as Subdivisional Officers (SDO). So, we started off as SDO in one subdivision of a district. Districts had two or more subdivisions. That was quite a bit of responsibility, doing almost everything on behalf of the DC but under his supervision and control. SDO was the head of the magistracy and was responsible for law and order administration including criminal justice system in a subdivision. One had to deal with natural calamities by conducting relief and rehabilitation work, supervise and coordinate development works of all departments, conduct elections under the control of the Election Commission, and attend to visits by high officials, ministers and foreign dignitaries. These were all part of routine duty. But in 1984, subdivisions were abolished as an administrative unit and all subdivisions were upgraded into districts headed by Deputy Commissioners.*

*Then one gradually moved up and became a Deputy Commissioner in about eight years. I joined the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1967 and was appointed a DC in 1975. I worked as a DC for five years in two districts. I was DC of Faridpur district and after 2 1/2 years, was made DC of Dhaka district, which includes the capital city of the country.*

*DC's job in Bangladesh is very peculiar in a sense that he represents the government in almost everything. One may find some similarity with that of a Prefect in some countries. DC administers innumerable laws, regulations, on all aspects of life, trade and commerce, owning and carrying of firearms, motor vehicle registration, etc. These days, issuing of passports within a district is done by the DC's office in many districts, on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Passports where they do not have their own office. Development work of the government agencies are coordinated by the DC. The main focus of the DC's job is land administration, oversight on maintenance of law and order, development administration, rural development, poverty eradication, dealing with disaster preparedness and management of relief operations and post disaster rehabilitation. DC acts on behalf of the Election Commission in conducting various elections.*

*In the field hierarchy there is another position, which is called a Divisional Commissioner. There were only four Divisions in Bangladesh till the late 90s of the last century, but the number has increased to six at this time through reorganization of the field administration. Every civil servant doesn't hold such field assignments since it is somewhat selective on the basis of past performance. I was Commissioner of Chittagong division for two years in 1984-86. The Commissioner's job is to oversee the work of the DCs within his charge and coordinate the work of DCs. Commissioner is also appellate authority in many administrative matters including matters relating to land administration which is a very important function in the context of a country which still depends a good deal on agriculture and land is the principal asset of the vast majority of people. The Commissioner's job is more oversight and mentoring the DCs and hearing appeals. Commissioners also inspect the offices of the DCs and related institutions within their jurisdiction to ensure effective management and administration.*

SCHALKWYK: So how many deputy commissioners would you be overseeing?

CHOWDHURY: *When I was a Commissioner, there were four Divisions, and I had 15 DCs within my jurisdiction in the Chittagong Division at that time. Subsequently two more divisions have been created raising the number to six for administrative convenience in view of increased population and other complexities. Chittagong*

*division has been bifurcated into two divisions. There are demands from the people for creation of more divisions and the matter is under consideration of the government.*

*In one's career, a civil servant may opt to specialize in some specific area of governmental management such as financial management, agricultural development, trade and commerce etc. But many end their careers as generalists. My specialization was kind of general management, including crisis management. Often, I was given assignments where problems were faced by the government, and those needed fixing. My assignments thus have been varied and I was never bored by monotony.*

*I was Director General of an Institution responsible for research and training. It is located in the northwest of the country and is called the Rural Development Academy (in short RDA), Bogra. It has its own campus ten miles outside Bogra city. Its job is to train civil servants and other government officials in rural development, and also train local government officials and elected public representatives of local government setups in management and development administration. The academy conducts action research and runs pilot projects in poverty eradication and rural development. It does not give any academic degree or diploma, but runs short training courses. I held this interesting position for three years from 1986 to '88.*

*I've also been involved in training from '81 to '83 when I was the Director of the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), which was set up during the Pakistan days under US assistance for training of mid-level officers of the government and autonomous bodies. Director was the number two position under the Director-General of NIPA. That was also quite interesting and gave me an opportunity to interact with large number of mid-level officials of various departments and agencies, broadening my understanding of management issues across the government.*

*I have worked in land administration at various levels. I was the Director General of Land Records and Surveys responsible for preparation of cadastral maps and land records (called Record of Right or RoR) for every plot of rural and urban land for the entire country. This department is also responsible for demarcation of international boundary of Bangladesh.*

*Bangladesh is a riverine country and a lot of changes take place through erosion as well as land formation by alluvial action of rivers in this country. Villages (called mauzas) form the basic unit of survey for preparation of cadastral maps and RoRs. In colloquial terms, village denotes a rural settlement, but each village is not a mauza in the context of the Land Records and land administration. Mauza maps are prepared through field survey and collection of ownership information on a plot by plot basis in the mauza itself to reflect the latest situation. This is a very long drawn and costly exercise as such a mauza passes through this process after two to three decades. Land disputes are plentiful in this country in the absence of a system to continuously update maps and land records. Computerization of land records and digitization of maps is the need of the hour, but the government is yet to deal with this. Twice I have been involved in recommending modernization of land record preparation and the management, but so far, nothing has happened. In 1989, I was the Chairman of a government committee, which has come to be known as Muyeed Committee. We recommended major changes in the land management system. Again in 2007, as a member of the Regulatory Reforms Commission, I headed a committee set up*

*by the Commission to recommend reforms of the land management system. We have recommended immediate computerization and digitization of the maps and records, and a changed system of management for continuous updating of changes in plots through subdivision and/or amalgamation, and also in ownership.*

*I have retired from the government in July 2000 on attaining age of superannuation, which is 57 years in Bangladesh. At this time, I have a part-time, pro bono assignment as a Member of The Regulatory Reforms Commission set up by the government about a year and a half back. I have already told you about the committee set up by the Commission and our recommendations regarding modernization of land administration through the use of ICT. If the government implements these recommendations involving the private sector under government control and supervision, then we would have a very modern land record and management system. This would eventually facilitate online access of the citizens to land records and maps. Our recommendation is for proportionate recovery of costs from landowners, so that the government is not required to incur huge budgetary expenditure on this account. Such a major nationwide system would create a strong digital capacity in Bangladesh.*

*The government in the late 1980s decided to strengthen the fight against narcotics. We didn't have an apparatus, a proper one. I was appointed Director General in the President's Secretariat and given the assignment of preparing a draft law for narcotics control in Bangladesh. We prepared the first draft, which went through legal vetting by the Ministry of Law and then the governmental approval process to become law. I was also asked to design a department to administer that law. It is very rare for a civil servant to be involved in drafting a new law, designing a department to administer that law, and to be the first head of that department. I was very fortunate to do all three things. I was the first Director-General of the Department of Narcotics Control in Bangladesh in 1990-91. That was a very interesting assignment.*

*I did another very interesting assignment as the Managing Director and CEO of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, known in short as Biman. The government always appoints the CEO since this is a state owned corporation. I worked there for about 2-1/2 years from 1991 to '94. My tenure spread over three fiscal years and I successfully turned around a loss making public entity, and made operating profit every year. This is a matter of great satisfaction and pride for me.*

*I finally rose to the highest level in the civil service hierarchy when I became a Permanent Secretary to the government in 1994. This is the highest civil service position in a Ministry or Division where a Ministry has more than one division. Some countries call this position Vice Minister and some call it under-secretary. I was a permanent secretary from 1994 until 2000, when I retired.*

SCHALKWYK: In what ministry?

CHOWDHURY: *In different ministries. I was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Land, Ministry of Food, Jamuna Bridge Division of the Ministry of Communications, and Internal Resources Division (IRD) of the Ministry of Finance. Some ministries have more than one division, each headed by a Permanent Secretary reporting to the same minister. Jamuna Bridge Division was created only to implement a mega project costing slightly less than a billion (US\$950m) dollars. It is a 4.8 km bridge with 31.66 km new approach roads (14.74 km on eastern side and 16.92 km on the west) on both sides. At the time of construction, it was reportedly the*

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*11<sup>th</sup> longest bridge in the world. That was a complex civil engineering project and I was thrilling to be involved in such a mega infrastructure project. I'm a student of history with administrative and management experience, but was given the responsibility of the prestigious project where the government could have appointed a civil engineer to that position. I was responsible for making both engineering and management decisions with the help of consultants and a panel of experts. When I took over the project in April 1996, it was facing several problems and the most optimistic prediction was that instead of October 1997, the project could be completed in 1999. We successfully pulled things together and opened the bridge to traffic on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1998. The fact that this mega project was successfully completed with slight time and less than 10% cost over-run in a third world country was greatly appreciated by one and all, including the donors. We had long term soft loan funding of US\$ 600m from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and OECF (now JBIC) of Japan, where each gave US\$ 200m. The rest of the money was provided by the government of Bangladesh.*

*Bangabandhu bridge, as it was named after the father of the nation by a resolution of the Parliament, links the northwestern part of Bangladesh, which was totally detached from the rest of the country by two major rivers of the world—one is the Ganges, we call it Padma in Bangladesh, and the other is Jamuna, whose upper stream in India is called Brahmaputra. That was a very challenging but interesting assignment. After we completed it, it was hailed as a very successful mega civil engineering project of the world. The Institution of Civil Engineers, UK recognized me by making me a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers (FICE). It was a very satisfying experience for me and I am proud of the fact that I had a role in meeting the hopes and aspirations of my countrymen by building this dream bridge.*

*My last assignment, in the Ministry of Finance, was very different. We have three divisions in the Ministry of Finance - the Finance Division, which deals with the preparation of the budget and control of expenditure. The Economic Relations Division, or ERD, deals with economic relations with the bilateral and multilateral donors. The Internal Resources Division, or IRD, is responsible for all matters relating to administration and collecting of taxes. Secretary IRD is the ex-officio Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and head of the customs, income tax and VAT administration of the country. IRD is also responsible for other minor duties and taxes. In United States and many other countries, direct and indirect tax administrations are different, but in Bangladesh two different branches merge at the level of the National Board of Revenue (NBR). I retired on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2000. Retirement age in Bangladesh is 57 years.*

*After retirement from government, I was approached by BRAC (considered to be world's largest NGO) to join it as Executive Director. I accepted and worked for six years and then decided not to work on whole time basis anymore. So, I terminated my contract in 2006. BRACNet is a BRAC initiated Internet service provider company in Bangladesh. A US-based company named gNet-Defra bought shares in this company in 2005 through my initiative. Thus, it has become a joint venture company with foreign direct investment. I was nominated Director of this company by BRAC, and later elected Chairperson of the Board. We provide broadband connectivity. I'm also involved in a couple of other things.*

*BRAC has also nominated me to the Board of Governors of the BRAC University established in 2001. But right now, with a group of investors, I am in the process of setting up a tour operating company named Tiger Tours Limited, to promote*

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*Bangladesh as a global tourist destination. There are a lot of things to see, a lot of things to do in Bangladesh. Our river system, consisting of three major rivers and more than 700 branches and tributaries, make us a special country in the world for river tourism. Our grass roots development and poverty alleviation models are worth seeing. It is true that many tourists would not necessarily be interested in such things, but we can attract a lot of people through successful marketing using ICT. So this is something, which I'm doing on my own. I'm investing some money myself and am in the process of setting up this company now.*

SCHALKWYK: In this interview, I'd like to focus on attempts to reform the civil service. [end of tape 1]

This is part two of the interview with Mr. Chowdhury. Could you talk to me about your experience in administrative reorganization, in particular starting with your chairmanship of the Muyeed Commission?

CHOWDHURY: Committee.

SCHALKWYK: Committee.

CHOWDHURY: A commission is a much bigger thing.

SCHALKWYK: Okay.

CHOWDHURY: *It was a committee set up by the government in 1989 and I was made Chairman of the committee. The government at that time, felt that we had many departments and organizations and agencies, which possibly we didn't need or didn't need them in the size and shape they were in at that time, or we could merge several of these departments to deliver the services that needed to be delivered at that point in time. Those were the terms of reference of the committee. We had a whole-time member secretary and part-time members. We worked on that for I think, about four or five months. I have forgotten the exact timing.*

*We produced and a submitted our report to the government, not a big report, since ministries and divisions were not within the purview of this committee. In Bangladesh, a department is something subordinate to the ministry unlike in the United States or UK, where a department means the ministry such as the Department of Trade.*

*We reviewed a large number of organizations. We also went out and visited some field areas to see their works to finalize our report. We recommended abolition of some departments and organizations and merger of a few others. I remember one department that we had recommended for abolition was the Coal Controller's Office. Their job was to issue permits for the import of coal and to administer the law and regulations appertaining thereto. We felt that such a regulation of a commodity was unnecessary beyond the normal import procedures. Anybody should be able to import coal without a permit. If there is a demand for coal in the country, only then any company or businessman would import and sell coal. There was no need for having a department and waste public funds and also create opportunities for graft. Because any system of license/ permit means opportunities for grafts, rent seeking and windfall gains through collusive creation of shortages.*

*Similarly a few other organizations, I don't remember the names right now, were also recommended for abolition. Some of these were accepted by the government, and those departments were abolished. There was one very powerful organization, which was called The Coordination and Control Cell for National Security. It was headed by an army general and manned by personnel of other ranks from army, navy and air force, along with some police officers. Essentially, they were running a so-called anti-corruption outfit and interfering in administration on that pretext, rather than doing anything relating to national security. There was a separate Bureau of Anti-Corruption or BAC with offices in all districts, so there was no justification for another entity. In our committee, we noted that the government had reorganized BAC and strengthened it by bringing it under the direct authority of the President's office. In such a situation, there was no need for another agency. It was unnecessary duplication of work at the cost of taxpayers' money. We recommended its abolition, the President accepted it, and so the department was abolished.*

*I just mentioned two but there were several. I took advantage of that committee to recommend modernization of land administration. We have a very complicated process and kind of dual control over land transfers, registration, and record preparation and maintenance. So, we recommended reorganization of the arrangements and systems to streamline land administration. Strictly this was not abolition or merger of departments. It was more of restructuring; still we decided to include the recommendation. This has not been done so far, but any discussion or attempt at land administration modernization always refers to our recommendation.*

SCHALKWYK: Why did you choose land administration particularly?

CHOWDHURY: *That is because Bangladesh is a rural and agricultural country. Land is a very scarce resource now. Per capita availability of land in this country is very small and we have a very large land-less population. Those who own land, however small the holding may be, it is a very, very precious possession for them. For some people, land is the only capital they have. With such big increases in population, land is increasingly and progressively becoming scarce as more and more land is going under habitation for various purposes, including for constructing homesteads and other facilities and infrastructure. Cultivable land is diminishing, and as a result, there are very serious problems and complications relating to land ownership and title. The archaic land management system has opened up opportunities for various criminal activities. It is estimated that about 70% of all civil and criminal cases originate from land disputes.*

*A few studies have established this. In fact, one of the first such studies was initiated by me, when I was Director General of RDA, Bogra. I engaged two of my colleagues to do a very small study to find out the percentage of criminal and civil litigations instituted in a sub-district, which owed their origin to land disputes. We were aghast to find that close to 70% owed their origin to land disputes. This was my gut feeling from experience of work in the field, and my conclusion was that the system of land management was responsible for such a situation. This view is now shared by most people interested in good governance in Bangladesh. That is why I thought that a recommendation on land management would be something worthwhile, to bring a burning issue to the notice of the government, since there was an opportunity to do so.*

SCHALKWYK: So how many of the recommendations with regards to the land administration were carried out by the government?

**CHOWDHURY:** *There was a package of recommendations to restructure and change. It has not been fully implemented until now. But bits and pieces of that have, over the period of years, been adopted to streamline the registration process for land transfer through sales. But these changes are only palliative, without dealing with the main problem. This time, the report from the Regulatory Reforms Commission is more comprehensive, it is for total modernization of the preparation of land records and maps, management of these records, and also changes in the functioning of the agencies after restructuring of the responsibilities amongst several departments so that eventually the land information and records are available on-line.*

**SCHALKWYK:** I'd like to get back to the Regulatory Reforms Commission a bit later in the interview. Just to go back to the start of the committee, who in government decided to establish the committee, was it the Prime Minister?

**CHOWDHURY:** No.

**SCHALKWYK:** Parliament or—?

**CHOWDHURY:** *It was the President. We had a presidential system at that time.*

**SCHALKWYK:** And it came from the President's office. What prompted thinking about the number of departments and why do you think ministries were left out?

**CHOWDHURY:** *I'm afraid I really don't know why, but definitely the President didn't look at a crystal ball to come to this decision. He must have—through his interactions with his cabinet colleagues, members of Parliament, and also with the civil society at large, particularly the business community—he must have concluded that there was a need to review this whole gamut of departments existing in Bangladesh.*

**SCHALKWYK:** Do you have a sense why the ministries were left out?

**CHOWDHURY:** *Beg your pardon?*

**SCHALKWYK:** Do you have a sense of why the ministries were not under the purview of your committee?

**CHOWDHURY:** *Possibly the President wanted something fast and that's why he chose this option. I'm not too sure, but this is my guess.*

**SCHALKWYK:** How many of the recommendations were carried out after you submitted your report? How many of the departments that you suggested were abolished?

**CHOWDHURY:** *I don't really have a count of that. All I know is that some of the recommendations were accepted and implemented. I would say very roughly, on the basis of what I can recollect, maybe about thirty to forty percent of the recommendations were accepted and implemented. Others were not rejected, but then change of regime, change of perspective overtakes such processes in any country. You have a new administration in the United States; it's different from the previous one. There is a new administration in South Africa, so things will be different in many ways.*

**SCHALKWYK:** All right, so when was the next change after your report?

CHOWDHURY: *Well, after '89, in 1991 we had a major political change. We moved back from presidential form of government to parliamentary form of government.*

SCHALKWYK: Who else was on your committee and what other types of people were on the committee?

CHOWDHURY: *These were all civil servants of various denominations and different backgrounds.*

SCHALKWYK: Could you tell me a little more about how you went about doing the review?

CHOWDHURY: *Well—?*

SCHALKWYK: Did you have any outside help, any international help?

CHOWDHURY: *No, no. We did it all by ourselves. It was a purely Bangladeshi exercise. There was no international involvement, nor financing. We did things—we were all getting our salaries. Whatever expenses we needed specifically for this work and matters ancillary thereto, such as preparation of the report and printing it, were provided for. Otherwise, there was no extra money spent by the government for this. For the field trips, all of us were entitled to make field trips, even in our respective assignments, and there's a budget line for traveling allowance and everything. It was done—I think when you ask me this question and I look back, I think it was done pretty cheap. The cheapest one can expect to bring about some kind of reform or reorganization in any country. But this earned me a lot of notoriety as the Chairman, since this report led to the abolition of entrenched positions and relocation of surplus people to new work environments.*

SCHALKWYK: Was there resistance from people whose departments you suggested should be cut?

CHOWDHURY: *Yes, yes, obviously. But in a presidential system—and the President of the day was a former army chief and chief martial law administrator. At that time, he stopped being the chief martial law administrator since martial law had been withdrawn and we had a parliament in place after a general election under a military dictatorship. Still, he was powerful enough to take such decisions and implement them.*

SCHALKWYK: Then you mentioned that you also worked on a similar committee in 1994, 1995. Could you tell me about that?

CHOWDHURY: *That's called the Nurunnabi Committee. Mr. Nurannabi Chowdhury is also a civil servant, or rather was a civil servant at that time. He too, is retired. He was eight years senior to me. He was a Permanent Secretary to the government at that time. I was also a Permanent Secretary, but junior to him. That committee was set up, I think after the parliamentary form of government came into being in 1991 and—.*

SCHALKWYK: Do you know what year this committee was set up?

CHOWDHURY: *I think it was 1992. Most probably towards the end of 1992, or early 1993. I'm sorry I don't recollect that.*

SCHALKWYK: That's okay.

**CHOWDHURY:** *I was made—no, it can't be 1992. It must have been in 1993 because I was made a member of the committee in 1995, a part-time member of the committee. There were some whole-time members and there were some part-time members. I was one of the part-time members. I forget the total number of members. But then the entire government was within the purview of the committee. This was a full-fledged committee with its own secretariat and budget and worked for several years to complete its work. We have a very large number of ministries in Bangladesh. Even now, I think there are more than fifty ministries and divisions. We very consciously discussed and debated this in the committee and ultimately recommended something like 23 ministries, 22 or 23 ministries, because we felt that having so many ministries leads to unnecessary conflict of interest, duplication of effort, and also less coherence in governance which is badly needed. We recommended that the Ministry of Land, Food, Agriculture and I think Forests at that time, should be merged into one ministry so that there could be an integrated look at the need for food, availability of land and the need for forest cover. All these things can be looked at in one place rather than scattered where you don't really get the full picture. That was the process of our thinking.*

*We have a Ministry of Commerce, a Ministry of Industries, a Ministry of Textiles, and a Ministry of Jute. We recommended merging these into one. We, for the first time ever, recommended the creation of a separate Secretariat set under the Chief Justice, and to hand over the administration and management of the judicial officers of all levels to him, to bring about a meaningful independence of the judiciary in Bangladesh.*

*None of these recommendations have been implemented by the government because the committee report was sent to a Ministerial committee for examination on behalf of the political leadership of the government, but they could not undertake that work within their tenure. The committee was set up after a year or so of coming to power by the government, and although the committee could finish this gigantic work in about three years, the government did not have enough time to review and take decisions. Moreover, politicians generally avoid unpleasant decisions nearer to the time when they have to face the electorate. Reorganization and restructuring is always hard and unpleasant since this process creates a large number of unhappy and affected people. But in the earlier case we submitted the report to the President who immediately started the process for implementation after examination of the report by his office.*

**SCHALKWYK:** What was the motivation for starting the committee?

**CHOWDHURY:** *The motivation is—see, in developing countries, a new government comes in and wants to show that they are very serious about reorganizing the government. So, an administrative reorganization committee is often set up and there is also a pay and services commission. This is done to tell the electorate the government is serious about improving its functioning to better deliver services and also to tell the bureaucracy that the government wants to improve their lot with higher pay and better facilities. Right now, a pay Commission is working to review the pay structure for the services. It was set up by the immediate past government.*

**SCHALKWYK:** That was the caretaker government?

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**CHOWDHURY:** *The caretaker government. This government is continuing with that pay commission. But the general feeling of people, and I also feel that, a stand-alone pay commission doesn't really serve the purpose. It is best to have a pay and services commission so that the service structure can also be reviewed. Also, without reviewing size of the government, talking about pay in isolation is adding to the state budget, since any pay commission set up after a lapse of five or more years has no choice but to recommend pay hikes. This is so because in Bangladesh, the government does give annual pay adjustments to employees on the basis of cost of living index. However, prefixed annual salary increases in time scale normally operate*

*One problem that I see is that in countries like ours, the private sector is not yet developed. As a result, the major employer is the government. So, the political government kind of feels beholden to that issue, creating employment, providing employment. But if the private sector is developed, more jobs will be available in the private sector then obviously there will be a lot more justification for reducing the size of the government.*

*The justification exists even now; at least I personally think that we have too large a bureaucracy. We don't really need that big a bureaucracy. But the political governments feel obliged not only to continue with that, but also increase the size on various pretexts. A section of the bureaucracy also happily goes for empire building. This gives political leaders an opportunity to distribute favors, especially during fresh recruitments at lower levels of government. Then sometimes some issues come up, for example women and children. We have created a separate ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. It is true that an exclusive ministry may appear to give more emphasis on women and children's issues, but if the government believes in those issues, then they can be appropriately dealt with without a separate ministry.*

**SCHALKWYK:** With the Nurunnabi committee, when it was set up, what was the purpose of the committee? What exactly was it supposed to do?

**CHOWDHURY:** *Well this was exactly the same thing, to revisit the size of the government covering all ministries, departments and corporations and autonomous bodies. In Bangladesh, martial law was promulgated by the Chief of Army Staff, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, now a Member of Parliament with his own political party, and state powers taken over from the elected President, Justice Abdus Sattar. Such unconstitutional governments always blame political governments for mismanagement and corruption. He was the President in 1989 when I was the Chairman of that committee. Immediately after taking over power, the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) suspended the constitution and set up a committee in 1982, headed by a Brigadier General. The members, as far as I remember, were from the defense services. It goes by the name of Enam committee, after its Chairman.*

*That committee reviewed the structure of every ministry and agency and every department of the government. They did a very useful job by preparing effective organograms for every governmental institution, though in the process they reduced the size of almost every institution through abolition of posts. A good part of that exercise was useful in streamlining the bureaucratic machinery. Before that, it was not possible sometimes, even for an organization, to say exactly how much manpower, not necessarily employed, but number of positions it had. They prepared agency-wide, department-wide autonomous body-wide, ministry-wide organograms, then printed and published those in separate*

*permanent volumes. This made it possible to know the number of organizations and agencies, including corporations and autonomous bodies, in the government. This would never have been possible under a political government. There was strong resentment among the civil bureaucracy for the very high-handed nature of the exercise, but under a martial law environment, people had to accept the outcome. The report laid down entitlements of equipment and transports, and the government issued a detailed guideline about the use of government transports and enforced these strictly, even after martial law was lifted and an elected government headed by the former CMLA-turned-President continued until 1990. This was definitely a harsh, cost-saving exercise and people didn't like it, but personally, I think something like this was necessary to rein in government expenses. However, the same spirit was not clearly visible in the defense services arena.*

SCHALKWYK: Why not?

CHOWDHURY: *Because it cut down the size, reduced the availability of transports and other things. There was a lot of resentment, I would say. But when I look back, I think the exercise was very useful.*

SCHALKWYK: If you come back to the Nurunnabi Committee and its recommendations, how many of those were carried out by the government?

CHOWDHURY: *As far as I recollect, nothing. For the simple reason that the government set it up, and its work, I think, continued for almost two years. By the time the work was completed and the report in several volumes were submitted, the tenure of the political government was coming to an end. Maybe if the same party had come back to power after the general election, then they would have implemented some of the recommendations acceptable to them. But at the end of the five-year term, almost four years gone, political government wouldn't do such things. I think in the United States, the President did a lot of things even a few days before he ended his term, important appointments and things like that. A set of the Nurunnabi Committee report was available with the Chairman, and at my request, he has recently handed these over to the National Archives as none in the government at the present time has any interest in this report. It is very sad, but that is the ground reality in my country.*

SCHALKWYK: They were resistant to doing anything before the elections?

CHOWDHURY: *That was the main reason. They were too engaged in politics and upcoming elections.*

SCHALKWYK: Those elections were in?

CHOWDHURY: *1996. And the party in power, BNP, lost. Awami League came to power in 1996.*

SCHALKWYK: I'm sorry, who came to power?

CHOWDHURY: *The present party in power, Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina, came to power in 1996.*

SCHALKWYK: The Awami League.

CHOWDHURY: *In 1996, the Awami League. That was another thing. I don't know how it happens in other countries, but in Bangladesh, a new government prefers not to own almost anything done by the previous government.*

SCHALKWYK: So, the recommendations are essentially cast aside.

CHOWDHURY: Yes.

SCHALKWYK: Did the new government attempt?

CHOWDHURY: *Nurunnabi Committee discussed my proposal for separation of judiciary, and we had proposed a totally separate secretariat for the Chief Justice, so that the judicial service would move away from governmental control to direct control by the Supreme Court. We designed a secretariat setup and included it with our proposal in the report.*

SCHALKWYK: How did the new government react to that?

CHOWDHURY: *I don't think they touched it or looked at it to review and find out if some of the recommendations could be implemented.*

SCHALKWYK: But they implemented their own—?

CHOWDHURY: *They set up another committee. It was called the Shamsul Haque Committee.*

SCHALKWYK: That was in 1997, correct?

CHOWDHURY: *Yes, it should be 1997 or late-1996. I think they also prepared a full report covering ministries, departments, and corporations. The committee was headed by a former civil servant, Mr. Shamsul Haque, who again is a senior colleague of mine. The scenario was more or less the same in that, by the time the committee's work was completed, the government was already preparing for the next elections. They lost and BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) came back to power. They could have examined the Shamsul Haque Committee report, as well as the Nurunnabi Committee report, to quickly bring some needed administrative and structural reforms, but they did not do that. They did not set up any other committee for this purpose.*

*The Shamsul Haque committee had been supported by some donor funds as well as expatriate consultants, but that, too, was a waste of time and money.*

SCHALKWYK: From what you can remember, how different were the recommendations of these reports?

CHOWDHURY: *I'm afraid I haven't had time—they are volumes—only someone with a research interest would really look at these things now, and that is if one can trace these reports and access them.*

SCHALKWYK: One question I have about the civil service and the public administration in Bangladesh, is typically there's a distinction between political and nonpolitical positions or career civil servants, you referred to it earlier—how does that play out in Bangladesh?

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**CHOWDHURY:** *Well, in Bangladesh the civil service positions are all nonpolitical. These are all career civil servants. There is no spoils system, as in the United States. The highest position in civil service in each Ministry is the Permanent Secretary. These are all civil service positions, people who rise up in their career. Any political government would have the right to choose officers from amongst the available Permanent Secretaries, and if there are not enough, then promote required number from amongst Additional Secretaries, the immediate lower tier. A government may choose X to be a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of say, Agriculture, or the Ministry of Finance, or the Ministry of Industries. That choice, the government would have. Those choices can be on the basis of political likes or dislikes. This happens a lot.*

**SCHALKWYK:** Do you think that compromises the nonpolitical nature of the—?

**CHOWDHURY:** *It does, it compromises and my personal feeling is that in such a situation, not necessarily the most suitable officer is picked up for a particular position. In civil service of developing countries, I think administrative neutrality—competence and neutrality together, can play a very important role. My own feeling is that this is compromised when you are picking a person because you think he is closer to you politically, or would be willing to do things as per your biddings. When you do that, you are also simultaneously compromising competence. It is not in all cases, but in a good number of cases.*

**SCHALKWYK:** Are there safeguards that exist that are supposed to protect civil servants?

**CHOWDHURY:** *I'm afraid in a unitary state, like Bangladesh, it doesn't exist. My feeling is in a federal state, like India, to some extent possibly. I'm not too sure, but I get a feeling that possibly, someone is in a state—that is, the civil servants are assigned to the states and if the state political apparatus is not "behaving" appropriately, then that civil servant can be withdrawn to the center. So, there is a remedy through the bureaucratic channel. He can approach his senior colleagues and say what's happening to him in the provincial setup. Sometimes, someone can be sent out from the center to the province. Moreover, in India, often many state governments are controlled by political parties or alliances different from the Federal government. That also, is a redeeming feature to my mind. But in a unitary state, everything happens here and so it's tough going for civil servants. Many people end up as Officer on Special Duty, or OSD, whenever there is a change of regime. This means no work, no office, and no personnel staff even though pay is protected. This is a punishment, which is debilitating for the service. This is happening all the time in Bangladesh, whatever political party is in power. This has become a serious matter ever since only two major political parties, Awami League and BNP, have been able to establish themselves in the political arena as the only option for the electorate.*

**SCHALKWYK:** Could you talk a little bit about your experience on the Regulatory Reforms Committee? Could you start on that?

**CHOWDHURY:** *The last military-backed caretaker government that was in power decided to set up a Better Business Forum, or BBF, headed by the Chief Adviser, or Head of the Government himself, and a Regulatory Reforms Commission. For the first, there was no separate secretariat but for the latter, a full-fledged office with staff and budget was provided. This was an outcome of the interactions between the Government and the fairly vocal and activist business community, represented by their Chambers, and Associations led by the Federation of*

*Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries, commonly known as FBCCI. The government was trying to encourage the business community and support economic growth activities that created an opening for the business leaders to tell the government that bottlenecks needed removed and many laws, regulations, and procedures needed changed, to promote business in Bangladesh and to also attract Foreign Direct Investments. The multilateral and bilateral donors have been saying this for a long time. They also strongly supported such moves. The International Finance Corporation, IFC of the World Bank, has submitted reports on this to the government. A lot of studies have been undertaken to support changes.*

*So, the caretaker government decided to heed and thus these two organizations, Better Business Forum and the Regulatory Reforms Commission, were set up. The business leaders from various groups were fully represented in both. It was a proper public-private mix. A former civil servant—he was also a Cabinet Secretary, a classmate, batch mate and a good friend of mine—Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, was made the Chairman. He was also an advisor of the Caretaker government for sometime in 2006. It still exists, but is in limbo with the change of government. I am one of the members. I think BBF and RRC will also wither away under the political dispensation.*

*The Regulatory Reforms Commission invited written proposals for reforms from society at large, but specifically from the business community through newspaper advertisements and by writing letters to the various Trade Associations and Chambers of Commerce and Industries. The objective of regulatory reforms is business development and economic growth—that's why this line. We have taken on board recommendations of the IFC, too. On the basis of all that, we have submitted some recommendations to the caretaker government to streamline things. We decided not to compile a big report after a long period of time. Instead, we examined proposals or issues and finalized our recommendation, immediately submitting that to the government. Some of those have already been implemented. One such concerns statutory regulatory orders, or SROs, which lay down processes and policies of the government in various areas. It is very difficult for people to keep track of these. RRC has recommended that all these should be put on a web page. There is a something called the Government Gazette, which is published on a weekly basis by the government from the government press. Sometimes it is very difficult for people to even know that a SRO has been issued and published in the gazette. So, to make it transparent and easily searchable, we have recommended setting up a web page where these should be mandatorily published. This recommendation was accepted by the caretaker government, and the implementation process has started. This will be something useful. This is a valuable reform of the process, which will improve things greatly for business people in Bangladesh.*

*I told you about the land because for business, and industry also, land is very critical in Bangladesh. The complicated land management system, the record system, acts as a hindrance for business, and more so, for industrial ventures. It is very difficult to buy land in Bangladesh and to be sure of titles. Many industrial initiatives have been stalled and abandoned even after making substantial investments and works, only because of litigations relating to land that did not surface or could not be detected at the time of purchase of land. Because of my work experience and earlier recommendations about changes in the land management system, people treat me as one genuinely interested in the matter. Some call me an expert, which I am not, but because of my general interest in improving the land administration. So, I was made Convener of that committee*

*and we have prepared our report. I think it is very focused, only on land. The record preparation system, management system, mutation system and to have everything digitized and computerized, and transparently made available to the public, is the thrust of our report.*

*This was approved by the RRC and the report was submitted to the Chief Adviser, or head of the caretaker government, who accepted and sent it to the Ministry of Land to start the implementation process. We recommended formation of a committee to take this process forward. That committee has been set up, with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Land as the Chairman. So, I would think that the caretaker government had accepted it for implementation. Now we'll see what the present political government does to take this forward.*

SCHALKWYK: To go back to the civil service and the administration of Bangladesh in general, what do you think the major challenges facing the Bangladeshi civil service are at the moment?

CHOWDHURY: Can you repeat that please?

SCHALKWYK: What are the major challenges facing the Bangladeshi civil service at the moment?

CHOWDHURY: *Well, we have to understand the historical perspective to understand that. First and foremost, we declared independence in March 1971, and then liberated the country after a nine-month War of Liberation against the Pakistani occupation forces. A province became a nation state, but our administrative system, infrastructure, and economy was destroyed during the war in a calculated manner by the Pakistan regime. They wanted to hold on to the territory and its potential through barbaric methods, and a program against Bengali nationalism including decimation of the intellectuals. Thus, liberation meant a total transformation, because a provincial setup overnight became the setup of a national government when the Pakistan army surrendered on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971. The government in exile had to take over a war-ravaged country and economy with a whole lot of urgent issues and problems, and on top of everything, millions of returning refugees with no home and hearth. Before 1971, the national government of united Pakistan was in Islamabad. So, the new and first government of Bangladesh had to deal with mountains of problems and decided to quickly reestablish the administrative machinery and more. In the districts and subdivisions, which had to bear the brunt of actual rehabilitation, millions of war-displaced people were returning from India, or from safe areas in some parts of Bangladesh where geographical barriers protected them from the atrocities of Pakistan army. Millions of people were killed by the occupying forces and their cohorts, and there were helpless families of widows and orphans, and abandoned women who were molested and tortured by the marauding occupation forces. So, to provide succor, relief rehabilitation was a major effort in terms of human and cash resources. Under UN auspices, a special joint effort named the United Nations Relief Operations for Bangladesh, or UNROB, was set up by donors. But Bangladesh had to have its own manpower, and set up at all levels, to deal with these matters.*

*The government felt obliged to immediately, and on a top priority basis, recruit a large number of civil servants. As far as I remember, the number was 350. That was done very hastily. The selection process under a newly set up Public Service Commission was limited to a viva-voce, eliminating the long drawn and time consuming written examination. Understandably, the process was short but was*

*definitely heavily influenced by the political leaders of the day. Quality was generally compromised in the process, though I have found some of the recruits doing well as public servants later in their career because of intrinsic merit and urge to learn. The recruits were immediately harnessed without required institutional and on-the-job training. They were assigned to deal with the burdensome relief and rehabilitation operation. That took its toll in terms of poor quality, exposure to rent seeking, and disproportionate links with the political system. That process continued for quite some time. In 1982 to '83, the military government under CMLA, Ershad, decided to introduce a system of subdistrict councils. Personally, I support subdistrict council as a very good initiative in local governance. But this overnight introduction of a new system all over the country necessitated the hurried recruitment of 650 officers. The government deviated from all norms for this by relaxing entry age limit to 45, from then prevailing 25 years. This, too, was a short-circuited recruitment and involved very short training. Qualitative issues can be easily guessed and need no elaboration. This is only one cadre, Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration), which I have told you about. Similar expansions have taken place in other cadres with officers working at district and subdistrict level.*

*Another issue is the general deterioration of academic atmosphere in educational institutions, including public universities. In the latter case, academic sessions are frequently interrupted by incidents of violence resulting from political strife amongst student wings of major political parties. This was not the situation previously. In many cases, the teachers are also politically aligned and obviously divided like the students. Students now get caught in session jams finishing a four-year degree in 6 to 8 years. Overall, the situation is anything but satisfactory. This, too, is taking its toll.*

*Another issue is the growth of the private sector in Bangladesh. While there is need of much larger private sector growth, what has happened so far, has given an option to brighter students to choose other careers, so civil service is not the first choice anymore for many of the brightest, as was the pre-1971 situation. Coupled with this, opportunities for studying and working abroad, including jobs with multilateral agencies like the World Bank, UN agencies, etc. have also reduced the availability of meritorious candidates for the civil services.*

*The situation has improved somewhat on the training front, but for almost two decades, civil servants were harnessed without the full run of an institutional training program and on-the-job training under a mentor. So, the present day civil servants are being asked to deliver in more difficult times and environment than their predecessors, without the lengthy training to prepare them for the jobs. There are built-in inadequacies that need to be addressed in a serious and methodical way through political consensus, which neither exists, nor is likely to emerge in the near future. An environment of confrontational political environment is prevailing in Bangladesh, since 1991, where the leaders of the two main political parties do not even talk to each other. This sharp confrontational divide at the leadership-level has gradually divided the entire population and has made the life of civil servants very difficult. As I said, in 1991 the BNP came to power, in 1996, Awami League. Then in 2001, BNP, and again in 2008, Awami League has come to power. So, the civil servants are caught in a seesaw situation. That is a major problem.*

*In fact, I think the politicians have forced civil servants into a situation where inaction, or a path of least risk, has become the order of the day, seriously compromising the capacity of the government to deliver. Because if one is*

*serious about his job and enthusiastically works in one regime, he becomes a pariah in the next regime run by the other major party. That causes a lot of mental agony to the civil servants, and harassment at the hands of the next group who comes to power. This is happening with every change of regime. This is a very serious strain that civil servants go through.*

SCHALKWYK: Does the civil service think that it needs to be reformed?

CHOWDHURY: *Yes, definitely. A very large number of civil servants believe there is a need for reform. My own experience has been that every single servant can do a lot of small reforms, wherever he is posted. But sometimes those reforms last as long as you are there. But those are reforms of the processes and practices. What we need is a well thought-out reform of the service structure, including the process of recruitment training, positing and promotion, including enhancement of the age of superannuation. Pay and service conditions also need urgent reform, befitting the present needs and times. Yesterday, I was at a reception hosted by the head of the United Nations Development Program, or UNDP, in Bangladesh. I met several of my junior colleagues who mentioned process and procedure reform measures that, in my humble way, I tried to do at various times in my various assignments. This was very flattering indeed, after more than ten years of my retirement.*

SCHALKWYK: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

CHOWDHURY: *No, not really. I think that I have covered a lot of ground. I have spent 33 years in the government. I can't remember everything that I have done, every detail. But I think broadly, there is a need for reform. We have too many rules and regulations that hinder progress. This is, of course, a kind of a confession, that the bureaucracy loves rules and regulations because that makes bureaucracy powerful. Personally, I have never liked it. I have always worked in the best interest of the people or at least tried my best. I have always done so with an intention to improve the quality of life for people. Rules and regulations sometimes are impediments. So, we can change a lot of things.*

*I get invited by training institutions to speak to various levels of government officials. I often I ask them, how many would like to immigrate to the United States, to the United Kingdom, to Australia and other developed countries, if they get an opportunity? Sometimes a few say they would like to. Then I ask them why they want to do so, why it is better and attractive, as compared to our own country for which we have fought a war and earned our freedom. Then I try to tell them that life is more secure, and services such as education, and health care, and such other basic services are much better than ours. I then lead them to discuss why ours is unsatisfactory, and why civil servants should try to, and can, improve things even though the political system is not congenial.*

*I will finish off with a very interesting, from my perspective, story, which I share with the participants when I go to deliver a lecture. I went to the US in 1980 under the Fulbright program for one academic year. I was at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. My scholarship was for a non-degree program, but at my request, USICA, as USIS was named at that time, agreed to enroll me in the MPA program. My intention was to do a second Masters in the USA, if I could obtain study leave from the government of Bangladesh and also funding for my extended stay in the USA. Unfortunately, it did not work out satisfactorily even though the University offered me a graduate assistantship with a tuition waiver.*

*That was not enough to maintain myself, since my wife and my one-year-old daughter were with me. So, I had to come back after the original nine months.*

*I was getting US\$ 505 per month under the Fulbright program. My family was not covered by the program, and as such, I had to arrange travel costs and health insurance for my family in addition to some maintenance funds. A graduate assistantship at UT, Knoxville at that time was only \$220 per month. So, there was no option but to return.*

*We were staying in a married students' apartment on campus. When I joined in the fall of 1980, I went to get a telephone from the Bell Telephone Company who had set up a stall at the university center. I'm sure you've gone through the same process as a student yourself. I joined others, picked up a token and when my turn came, I reached an agent who gave me a form to fill out. She said that as an international student, I would have to give a security deposit of \$2000. I asked her why it was needed. She told me that many foreign students make long distance calls home and then they don't pay their bills regularly, or go away. So, the company policy was to take an interest bearing security deposit, which would be returned with profit after a few months, during which time the company would review the phone use status and payment habit of the subscriber. I didn't have \$2000 with me, so I said in that case I could not take a phone.*

*She called her supervisor and explained my situation. The Supervisor came up to me and reiterated that this was a requirement. But then she asked me how much of a deposit I could manage. I had a thousand dollars to buy the return air ticket for my family, which I offered as a deposit. She readily accepted that and authorized my subscription. That's something one would never be able to do in Bangladesh. I often mentioned this to my civil service colleagues when taking classes to explain the flexibility of the system in your country, which makes life easier. The supervisor had taken the decision on the spot once she understood. But then, the reason this much of discretion is not provided in Bangladesh is because at least some people will use that discretionary power to make money, because there are more people than availability of services and products.*

*The second thing I mention, also relates to the telephone. When I was returning to Bangladesh, I called the telephone company to make arrangements for them to disconnect the service and collect the set. I also wanted to know as to how I could settle my last bill. The customer care person at the other end said that if I could get another telephone subscriber to give a letter accepting the responsibility for the bill, that would be acceptable to the company. As for the set, I was given two options: to leave the set in the apartment for them to pick up later, for which there will be a charge added to the last bill, or to remove the set, and hand it over to their agent who would be available at the University Centre every day for a week to collect sets from departing students. I was also told that in the latter case they would give me a ten-dollar rebate in my last bill. The cash incentive made me opt for the second choice.*

*The service was disconnected the day before I was to leave, and at a time determined by me. I heard a tinkle and I knew that my telephone had been disconnected. I removed it from the connection plug, put it in a shopping bag and went to the University Center. I found a Bell Telephone van in front of the University Center, and the agent/driver resting with his feet against the steering wheel and a cap pulled on his face. I knocked on the vehicle door.*

*He woke up from his stupor and asked my purpose. I said I wanted to hand over a telephone. He picked up a clip board from the seat beside him, wrote down my name, address and telephone number on a paper attached to the board, took the phone from me and put it on the seat, and immediately pulled his cap on his face and went back to his rest. Being a person from a third world country, I was confused as to how I could return a telephone set without a receipt from him. So, I said, "You didn't give me a receipt." He looked at me with surprise and said "Receipt? What receipt?"*

*I told him that I expected a receipt for the telephone set surrendered by me a minute ago. He did not know that I came from a country where if I give a telephone set and don't obtain a receipt, then I am likely to be served with a claim that this telephone has not been returned. We are used to taking receipts. He realized that I was not familiar with US practices in this matter so he tore a corner of the paper on his clipboard and wrote, "Received telephone," and gave it to me with an initial. By that time, I understood that the Bangladesh system was archaic and was not the way such things are done in the US. I left the place with that torn piece of paper, which I threw away in a garbage can on the way back to my apartment. That's another story that I share with my colleagues everywhere to highlight our own system and mentality. We lose so many man-hours and money on such redundant tasks.*

*This is how civil service at any level should work, because the purpose of a department or an organization is to provide service. Yes, enforcement is the function of the police. Enforcement in another sense is the function of the judiciary. And in certain departments, there will be enforcement, like the Department of Narcotics Control. But facilitating citizens' life, and leaving and generally improving the quality of that life, is the basis of the existence of most other departments. Unless that kind of attitudinal change can be brought about in the civil servants, then progress cannot be made.*

*Next, rules and regulations need to be replaced or modified to suit the needs of changing times. I don't think a genuine improvement in quality of life can take place in developing countries, because we are still living in a world of enforcement in everything. That's a major problem—matching aspirations of the people and the capacity of the government to meet those aspirations. Okay?*

SCHALKWYK: Yes, thank you very much.