

Development of India's Administrative system "Striving for good governance".

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Abstract: *This paper is concerned with a review and evaluation of the efforts and strategies adopted in India for bringing out administrative development for good governance and points out some directions of reforms, which are needed in Public Administrative system. Over the period of more than sixty years, while evolving a consensual framework of a democratic government, the leadership in India has also from time to time attempted to devise strategies for good governance, which is associated with an efficient and effective development-oriented, citizen friendly and responsive administration committed to improvement in quality of life of the people. However, it should be remembered that no amount of planning and thinking in country development would be useful unless the government is capable enough to take hard decisions and has the will and capacity to implement and continuously monitor and evaluate their impact. The processes of modernization of state and administration need an active and consociational association of people at all levels of the governmental structure in order to realize the goals and objective that the society sets for itself.*

I. Introduction:

After independence in 1947 India embarked on the experiment to constitute itself into a sovereign, republic and modernize the state and its administration through the adoption of a parliamentary democracy, not many scholars and analysts in the world had believed that India will survive as a democratic nation, negating John Stuart Mills contention that democracy is next to impossible in linguistically divided countries, as well as Robert Dahl's belief that widespread poverty and illiteracy are anathema to stable democracy a concept that is supposedly linked with the level of socio-economic development¹. However, these early forebodings and later predictions that adds are almost wholly against the survival of freedom and the issue is, in fact, whether any Indian State can survive at all have not been proven wrong, but India's existence as democratic State since the last decade's of its independence has compelled scholars to evolve a new consociational interpretation of the survival of democracy in deeply divided societies.

Over these years, while evolving a consensual framework of a democratic government, the leadership in India has also from time to time attempted to devise strategies for good governance, which is associated with an efficient and effective development-oriented, citizen friendly and responsive administration committed to improvement in quality of life of the people. This paper is concerned with a review and evaluation of the various efforts and strategies adopted in India for bringing out administrative development for good governance, and prints out some directions of reforms, which are needed in Public Administrative System.

II. The Rise of New Corporate Millennium, Growing Stakes for Good Governance.

The decade of 1990 has been a decade of exceptional changes in the theory and practices of good governance. Three important movements that have made important strides during this decade in meeting the challenges of this transformation have been reinventing government, the New Public Management and a call for the Downsizing of Public bureaucracies. However, it would be helpful to review what particular steps have been adopted in India for achieving some positive goals of these alternative precepts in Public Management.

A Restructuring Economic Administration:

During the 1990, after adopting policies of economic liberalization and structural adjustment, a number of expert committee's such as the Raja Chelliah Committee on Tax Reform, the Rangarajan Committee on Foreign investment, and the Goswami Committee on Industrial Sickness and Corporate Restructuring were appointed to study and make recommendations on various policy measures related to economic reforms. Despite the recommendations of the above committee and the emergence of a somewhat deregulated industrial system, clearance and approval of investment proposals still takes time because of powerful component in the decision making process and with this red-tapism is as much a consequence of the system of rules as their interpretation and application by it. At the same time the new breed of politician has emerged see the bureaucracy as needless obstacle in the achievement of their political goals which has lead to frequent conflict in the relationship between the political leadership and the permanent executive. The conflict of interests between them has further led to

increased politicization of bureaucracy and the emergence of a nexus between the politician, bureaucracy and the criminal, thus seriously corrupting the body politics, and major issue of Public service integrity, and loss of ethics in Public life².

B. *Efficiency and Accountability:*

In the face of continuing challenges of globalization and corporatization, the Govt. of India Department of Administrative Reform had in 1997 organised a national debate on the issue of making administration responsive, accountable and effective and assuring its adherence to constitutional principles. The conference resolved that the Centre and the State Government would work together to concretise the action plan dealing with

- (i) Accountable and citizen friendly Government;
- (ii) Improving the performance and integrity of the Public service.

As a follow up, several measures have been taken to make the administration accountable. For instance, in order to make public agencies more responsible to citizen needs, a number of citizen charters have been instituted by a number of Central Department agencies and State Governments³.

Despite some other reforms being undertaken by the Government such as creation of facilitation of counters, establishing a code of Ethics for Public services, tackling corruption and cleansing the administration, and ensuring stability of tenure and a scheme of civil service boards the one areas in which the government's efforts have not borne any fruit has been the downsizing of existing bureaucracy. Many of the PSU (including Public sector Banks, have however, initiated measures for voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to shed their surplus flab⁴.

C. *Redefining the Role of the State:*

The fifth Central Pay Commission had strongly advocated reduction in Government through dismantling of excessive control, disinvestment in the public sector, privatization and contracting out of many services that are presently being performed by the Government. It emphasised that the government role will be more in evolving the policy of governance and less in the actual governance itself. New regulations will have to be evolved and enforced so as to provide a level playing field as between the public and the private sector enterprises, as also between domestic and foreign companies. The administrative mechanism will have to be replaced by mechanism based on market determined prices. The residual role of the state would have to be confined to the many areas, as a facilitator of economic activity, as a developer of infrastructure, an investor in social services and as promoter and implementor of poverty alleviation programmes⁵.

III. Evaluation Of Administrative System:-

Mapping the political and administrative history of India over a period of six decade is indeed a difficult exercise. Obviously, there have been changes in administrative institutions structures, style and cultures in post-independent India and some distinct changes do carry the mark of the political leadership than in power. This, administrative development has been an uneven process, and it can best be understood only in the context of the totality of politico-administrative environment.

The first ten years of the republic represent a period of remarkably smooth change and adaptation from the British Raj to a democratic parliamentary system, during which a bold attempt was made by the political leadership to change the character and values of the administrative system, while preserving its essential characteristics of an effective framework to cope with new problems and situations.

It was, however, after 1967, that one witnessed the beginning of erosion of most of the fundamental values of the administrative system that were consolidated during the earlier years of the Republic. The administration and the administrators reached the lowest level both in performance and efficiency at the time of the heightened crisis posed by the imposition of the nation wide emergency in 1975. The post emergency period also did not help to restore the standard and morale in the public services.

There seems to be at present a strong reaction and suspicion against the power of the bureaucracy, and the constant hammering that it has received at the hands of politicians, has earned it the name of a villain in the Public eyes who regard it as a big impediment in the attainment of the socio-economic millennium promised to them by politicians. The ethical values of politicians, businessmen and the bureaucrats have gone down so low that there is no aspect of public life today which is free from the incidence of corruption or black-money. People in authority seem to have acquired dual personalities, their private action ill match their public pronouncements⁶.

Political interference, influence peddling, growing nexus between politician, criminal and bureaucracy, pervading corruption in all walks of public life, muscle-flexing through the unions have made even the most legitimate means of control and accountability meaningless in the administrative parlance. The emerging

administrative style and culture of India does not seem to provide any positive orientation to help the ordinary citizenry⁷.

The changes in the style and culture of administration in India observed to be pessimistic. However, it is not meant to undermine the achievement and the performance of the administrative system. It has been a fine machine, capable of rendering some excellent performances in the sphere of policy-making and implementation. It has over the year sustained the working of the most politically conscious people. There has been an absolute growth in terms of literacy, education, scientific and technical knowledge and even relative prosperity. The bureaucracy in India has responded well in times of crises and particularly when it was given clearly defined objectives and unambiguous priorities. All these give a ray of hope for further improvement in the style and operations of administrative system in India⁸.

Given the political will, therefore, the need of the hour in India at present seems to be adopting a normative model of good administrative approach towards Public administration. This should include:

- (i) A more strategic or result oriented (efficiency, effectiveness and service quality) orientation to decision-making.
- (ii) Replacement of highly centralized organizational structures with decentralized management environment integrating with the new Panchayati Raj and Municipal institutions, where decisions on resource allocation and service delivery are taken close to the point of delivery.
- (iii) Creating of competitive environments within and between Public service organization.
- (iv) Strengthening of strategic capacities at the center to steer government to respond to external changes and diverse interest quickly, flexibly and at least costs;
- (v) Greater accountability and transparency through requirements to report on result and their full cost;
- (vi) Service wide budgeting and management system to support and encourage these changes;
- (vii) Breaking the growing nexus of bureaucrats, politicians and criminals to restore public confidence in Public Administration amongst the citizen;
- (viii) Adapting of innovation and evolving suitable mechanism to eliminate corruption at both political and administrative level and strengthen citizen grievance redressal system;
- (ix) Downsizing of bureaucracy and improving the system of delivery at the cutting edge of administration by replacing the existing archaic bureaucratic procedures by absorbing some appropriate precepts inherent in the philosophy of new Public Administration;
- (x) Effectively utilising the fruits of technical revolution and the information management system for an effective and quick Public Service delivery system; and
- (xi) Making improvements in the working atmosphere of the government institutions and offices to reflect a new work-culture and a changed administrative behaviour incorporating the principle of transparency, responsiveness, accountability, participative and citizen friendly management.

IV. Concluding Observations:-

In conclusion, however it should be remembered that no amount of planning and thinking in country development would be useful unless the government is capable enough to take hard and implement decisions and has the will and capacity to implement and continuously monitor and evaluate their impact. At the same time, the political leadership has to demonstrate its strong determination to undertake reforms by first cleaning its own system from corrupt and criminal influences, and setting ethical standards of good governance both at the political and administrative levels. The processes of modernization of state and administration need an active and consociational association of people at all levels of the governmental structure in order to realise the goals and objective that the society sets for itself. Given the present political milieu, can the present government rise to the occasion-is a big question?

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