



INDIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT: POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

M. SHAFI BHAT

Government Degree College
Anantnag J&K
smsbhat789@gmail.com

Abstract:

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. All 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. The present 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 points out some further directions of reforms, which are immediately needed in public management system in order to meet 6th challenges of the advent of the 21st century.

Keywords: Administrative development, Good Governance, Democratic Government, Parliamentary democracy.

Introduction:

At independence, India inherited from the British a monolithic, strictly hierarchical administrative structure, with the line of command running unimpeded from the Viceroy and Governor- General in Delhi to the farthest village, but with certain well established traditions. The purpose of such a system was to keep the interest of the British power in India dominant, make sure that the government got the revenue it needed and in terms of peace & security, maintain law & order.¹

The system of administration that had evolved in India during the 18th century from the time of Warren Hastings and Lord Cornwallis from imperial rule until independence had five distinguished features:²

- i. The District as the basic unit of administration and the office of the District Collector as a prototype of a District Maharajah, the alter ego of the vice- regal authority controlling, directing & coordinating all administrative activities in his district.
- ii. Centralization- as the recognized principle of administration both territorially and functionally and centralization of decision- making in almost all policy- areas- public finance, legal and judicial systems, education, health and even public works.
- iii. The steel- frame of administration- strong institution of a single dominating civil service, occupying the top position among other allied and subordinate services down the levels of central and provincial hierarchies.
- iv. A system of elaborate rules & regulations designed by the British as means of maintaining control over the decision- making power of their large number of Indian subordinates, who had varying levels of training, outlooks, and goals and who were dispersed far from the administrative centres, and
- v. A system of Secretariat and Executive offices- a split system prevailing at both the central & provincial levels, ostensibly separating questions of policy from those of administration.



Such a system of administration suited the British. This was the status quo regime. It maintained and preserved broadly the structure of society in India as it then existed, particularly the large proportion of rural society. It did not concern itself with any radical or specific socio-economic changes.³ The impact of the administration on the large proportion of Indian citizens was minimal. Thus when the time of transfer of power came in 1947, the administrative system was not appropriately prepared to handle the massive developmental and post-independence tasks.⁴

Impact of Independence

The period since independence has witnessed most changes in the administrative system. The attainment of independence brought in its wake momentous problems, simultaneously needing multiple revolutions: first the transition from a colonial system of administration to a full-fledged parliamentary democracy with a federal structure of government and commitment to a welfare state; secondly the transformation of a semi-subsistence economy into a modern industrial economy to solve the problems of poverty, unemployment and want; thirdly a social revolution changing a caste-ridden stratified society into a progressive community oriented to social justice and fourthly a technological revolution to shine the light of modern science on the crusted traditional ways of a conservative people.⁵

The broad strategies adopted by the Indian leadership, to usher into a new era, were a) the political integration of the country b) the framing of a new Republican Constitution c) the adoption of adult franchise d) a policy of rule of law and independent judiciary e) a policy of mixed economy and democratic socialism for agro-industrial growth f) a policy of equal opportunity and protective discrimination to further social justice g) a policy of non-alignment in foreign affairs. Since then all these strategies have led to a number of veritable changes in the policy process & the administrative system. But some of the old problems still persist in one form or the other, while the processes of modernization and socio-economic changes over the last five decades have given rise to a new set of problems pertaining to policy and administration.⁶

The new set of problems that have arisen in the modern times relate to various issues such as i) the empowerment of the women and the downtrodden and the social upliftment of the poor & the backward ii) growing incidence of social and political violence due to terrorism, communalism, regionalism, linguistic & group conflicts iii) environmental security and sustainable development iv) challenges of globalization, liberalization and market economy and world capitalism v) constraints of the emergence of a civil society, and vi) the challenges of the revolutions in information, communication and other technologies.⁷

The Public Management System in India has had to respond to these continuing problems and challenges faced by the polity from time to time and it did so by first establishing a constitutional framework of a republican democratic government. The pattern of administrative development in India was thus largely guided by the imperatives of the Republican Constitution, which came into force on January 26, 1950. The structure of colonial administration not only had to adjust to the system of democratic parliamentary government and the principle of federalism enshrined in the Constitution, but was also expected to implement the new policy goals inherent in the Preamble and a number of its provisions relating to socio-economic dispensations.⁸

Federalism: The Administrative Implications

Indian Federalism has retained the earlier principle of centralization of the British era in the structures of administration; it has vested imposing powers and responsibilities in the Union



Government. The emergency powers contained in the Indian Constitution enable India, under certain circumstances, to transform itself into a unitary state. Under emergency provisions, the Union Executive & the Parliament can direct a state government in the use of its powers or assume all of its powers, the Union Executive acting for the state executive and the Union Parliament enacting legislation as if it were the state legislature.⁹

Apart from the fact that the central government has the constitutional right to modify the distribution of powers between the centre and the states under certain circumstances, the central government also has vast powers over the collection & distribution of revenues, which makes the state heavily dependent on the central government for the financial support. However, despite these centralized trends, each state has a personality of its own and can no longer be treated by the central government as merely a piece of territory for administrative purposes.¹⁰

Evolution of Panchayat Raj System

To achieve the goal of participatory democracy, the Government of India embarked upon a series of experiments with community involvement & participation at the grassroots. The first experiment in the 1950s was the Community Development System in which each district was divided into blocks & Panchayats of villages. Both the Block Development & Panchayati Raj System received a big boost in 1993 when the 73rd Constitutional Amendment revolutionized and transformed the representativeness of democratic institutions in India.¹¹

The 1993 amendment brought the Panchayats under the jurisdiction of the “Justiable part of the Constitution”. Now, its elections are mandatory at a regular interval and state legislatures have been directed to endow sufficient power and authority necessary for its functioning. Further Panchayati Raj Institutions are to be involved in preparing and implementing developmental plans for: agriculture, land improvement, soil conservation, fisheries, Khadi, village and cottage industries, poverty alleviation programmes, education, health and sanitation, family welfare, woman and child development, social welfare, welfare of the weaker sections (in particular SCs & STs) groups, etc.¹²

Fundamental Rights & Directive Principles of State Policy

The Constitution of India is committed to providing fundamental changes in the socio- economic order through its provision on Fundamental Rights & Directive Principles of State Policy. While the Fundamental Rights guarantee for each citizen certain substantive and procedural protection against the state, the DPSP, although not enjoying legal force through the courts, provide direction to thje nation “to promote the welfare of people by securing and promoting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life”.¹³

Public Services

Perhaps India is the only nation whose public services have been accorded constitutional status and their rights and privileges have been safeguarded. Article 311 of the Constitution provides a safeguard to a public employee's right to be served with a notice to show cause notice before he can be dismissed from the service on charges of misconduct, inefficient or corruption.¹⁴

Policy of Planned Economy & Administrative Development

In pursuance of the objective of a welfare state and rapid economic growth, India had adopted five years plans as a major instrument of public policy and the principle of “mixed economy” as

the guiding ideology for planned developmental efforts. The planning objectives and social premises were derived from the Directive Principles of State Policy set out in the Constitution.¹⁵ Attempts to formulate and implement developmental plans have been accompanied by a vast expansion of various administrative planning institutions and agencies and phenomenal growth of public services for developmental purposes. In the process, administration has become more and more hierarchical giving rise to problems of coordination at the horizontal level. Although the various plan documents also provide directions and strategies for developing administrative capabilities and effecting administrative reforms to meet the challenges posed by the policy of planned socio- economic development, efforts to achieve greater administrative decentralization and a larger measure of planning have not been able to bridge the large and ever- growing gap between planning & implementation.¹⁶

The strategy of planeconomic growth and the consequent formulation and implementation of plan policies have got tremendous strains and responsibilities on the administrative system. The success of developmental plans and policies depends to a significant degree upon the effectiveness & capability of the administrative machinery.¹⁷

The structural and organizational problems of administration, posed by planning , start with the establishment of the planning machinery itself; determining its location; defining its powers, functions, and responsibilities; defining its work vis a vis the other administrative departments; effective channels of communication with the political organization; establishing units for supervision and evaluation of plan implementation; establishing relations with the states and their administrative units, the private sector, interest groups, trade unions, cooperatives and so on.¹⁸

Framework of Planning

The new institutions that have come into existence as a result of the adoption of the system of economic planning are The National Planning Commission (now NITI Ayog), an expert advisory body at the center responsible for formulating plans, assessing resources, providing for all technical and statistical details needed in planning activities, determining the nature of machinery needed for implementation of plans, and appraising the progress achieved in the execution of plans in each state from time to time and The National Development Council, a kind of super cabinet consisting of the Chief Executives of all the states of the Indian Union along with the members of the Planning Commission, which has emerged as an apex body to promote national cooperation between the center and the states.¹⁹

Further in almost all the central government ministries and organizations, planning cells have been established to assist in the formulation of plan projects and targets in each substantive area. Similarly, planning boards and state planning departments have come into being at the levels and various state governments for the preparation of state plans and their integration in the national plan.

Administrative Development through Five Year Plans

The formulation of Five Year Plans for planned economic development did realize the imperatives of change and improvement in existing administration system if the goals of planning were to be realized. To this extent, every plan document has contained a specific chapter outlining suggestions for improving the administrative machinery. Thus in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56), in a separate chapter on "Reform of Public Administration", it was laid down that the principal objectives of administrative changes were to secure integrity, efficiency, economy & public cooperation.²⁰



Suggestions for changes in the Prevention of Corruption Act 1947 and the machinery for departmental enquiries were made to secure integrity. Similarly, proposal for changes in methods of work and organization and the establishment of an Organization & Methods (O&M) Division; a system of intensive training in economic field and grounding in development administration for the IAS and constitution of industrial management cadre were made to increase efficiency. A system of adequate participation, systematic evaluation and a practice of reward and punishment for securing results for large scale projects was proposed for financial control and economy in developmental projects.²¹

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) also emphasized the importance of integrity, provision of incentives, continuous assessment of personnel- their training and speedy, efficient and economic methods of work and recommended the establishment of a "Vigilance Office" in every Ministry and Department. Proposals were also made to establish O&M directorates in the state administration. It also urged the creation of an Industrial Management Service for the administration of public sector enterprises.²²

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) also contained a chapter on "Administration & Plan Implementation", which emphasized the importance of reduction in construction cost, improvement in maintenance and simplification of work procedures and the need for a line of communication between the planning for the country as a whole and for each district, block 7 village, preserving the broad national priorities while adapting the plans to conditions and needs of each area and each community.²³

Noting the increasing gap between planning and implementation, the Fourth Five Year Plan urged the need for constant appraisal of economic policies and performance so that gaps were noted with sufficient precision, integration of plans for production, imports and exports, improvement in the system of reporting and information, introduction of performance budgeting, economy in construction of projects through pre- planning, program management, avoidance of short tenures and frequent transfers and emphasis on quality of performance.²⁴

The Fifth Five Year Plan documents pointed out that planning, implementation and evaluation should be looked upon as an integral process and need for the strengthening particularly in the state, district and block levels. It suggested the projection of the anti- poverty program and the strengthening of district administration by appointment of district development officers and strengthening of the national information centres for data storage, retrieval and processing.

Similarly the Seventh Five Year Plan suggested the decentralization of planning from the state to the district and block levels and a scheme of effective functioning and financial decentralization, establishing appropriate budgeting and reappropriation, making district officers accountable to district planning body and establishing data and information centers at district levels. It also laid emphasis on responsiveness in the administration of public enterprises involving questions of autonomy, accountability and coordination between different sectors of government, ensuring speedy resolution of controversial issues. The management and administrative systems have to be improved to eliminate inefficiency, cynicism and lack of integrity.²⁵

The Eighth Five Year Plan (1991-97) took into account some of the changes expected to come about due to the liberalization of the economy. The Ninth Plan envisages a basic change in the new era of people- oriented planning wherein, not only the central and state governments, but also the people at large are expected to participate in the planning process. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments are expected to pave the way for the flourishing of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the Municipal Bodies. In this new era of participatory planning process, the Ninth Plan attempted to accelerate economic growth, along with equity and social justice.²⁶

**Conclusion:**

The effective functioning of governance is the prime concern of every citizen of the country. The citizens are ready to pay the price for good services offered by the state, but what is required is transparent, accountable and intelligible governance system absolutely free from bias and prejudices. In the present era when India is progressively moving towards development and prosperity, there is a need is to reformulate our national strategy to accord primacy to the Gandhian principle of 'Antodaya' to restore good governance in the country.²⁷ In such circumstance, when the nation/state machineries become more efficient and accountable, the citizens can enjoy higher per capita income, wide spread literacy, adequate health facilities with longer average life.²⁸

The good governance in the country can thrive only when every Indian citizen would ignite themselves in the flame of patriotism adhering to truth, peace and non-violence as means to perceive India of our dream. At this movement, every Indian should swear that the moral principles of our life should never be waved out by the money and muscle power.²⁹ Let our moral strength succeed over material strength. Let's learn from our past Indian heritage. Being responsible citizens of the country it is our foremost duty not to pledge a vote for deviants to ruin our nation rather to vote for the honest and upright citizens who can be good administrators and reformers to bring positive transformations and can lead our nation under their dynamic leadership.³⁰

References

1. Arora Dinesh; *Good Governance: A Study of the Concept in Indian Context*, International Political Science Association (IPSA), p.57
2. Das P.G; *Fundamentals of Public Administration*, New Central Book Agency Kolkata, 2014, pp.90-91
3. Devi Banasree, "Good Governance and its Working: at the Indian Context", *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science Society and Culture (IJIRSSC) Vol: 1, Issue: 2, (December Issue), 2015, p.10*
4. Ranjan Rajesh; "what causes judicial delay? Judgments diluting timeframes in code of Civil Procedure worsen the problem of Adjournments." *Times of India*, August 2016, p.78
5. Sampath G.; "Why everyone loves good governance", *The Hindu*, July, 2015, pp.78-79
6. Satpathy Chinmayee; *Initiatives and Challenges of Good Governance in India*, Yojana, January, 2013, p.20
7. Singh Balmiki Prasad; "The Challenge of Good Governance in India: Need for Innovative Approaches", *Yojna*, January, 2013, pp.52-53
8. . Tiwari K.C; *The Challenges of Good Governance in India, in the era of 21st Century*, *Abhinav National Monthly Refereed Journal Of Research in Commerce & Management*, pp.67-68
9. Uke Lokesh; "Demonetization and its effects in India", *International Journal Economics and Management Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 2 February, 2017, p.12
10. *International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Document August, 1999.*
11. *Indian Express*, 18.12.2007
12. *Times of India*, 12.12.2007, New Delhi
13. Mishra Rajalakshmi, 'Good Governance and Changing Role of Bureaucracy in Developing Countries: The Indian Experience, in *Globalization and Good Governance*' 204.p.90
14. B.Sengupta, *India: The Problem of Governance*, New Delhi: Konark Publications, 1995, p.vii
15. *ibid*, p.12
16. R.S.Tiwari, *Good Governance: Populist Democracy to Quality Democracy*, *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, October- December 2002, Vol.XLVIII, No.4, pp.584-585
17. Bata Dey, *Defining Good Governance*, *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol.XLVIII, No.3, 1998, p.420
18. *Chandigarh Tribune*, November 7, 2003
19. R.C.Sekhar, *Ethical Choices in Business*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, p.34
20. *Journal of Rural Development*, Vol.16, No.4, 1998, p.2
21. Ashok Kumar Saha, *Poverty Alleviation in Developing Countries*, *Journal of Rural Development*, NIRD Hyderabad, Vol.21, No.2, April- June 2002, p. 273



22. Anil Dutta Mishra (Edited), *Gender Perspective Participation, Empowerment and Development*, New Delhi: Radha Publication, 1999, p.78
23. G.Narayan Reddy, D.B.Rao, *Empowering Women through Self- Help Groups and Micro Credit: The Case of NIRD Action Research Projects*, *Journal of Rural development*, Vol.21, No.4, October- December, 2002, p.515
24. Girish K.Mishra, *Empowerment of Women in Urban Local Bodies for Good Governance*, *Nagarlok*, Vol. XXXIV, October- December 2002, No.4, p.51
25. Dharma Vira, *Citizen Participation*, *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, Vol. I, p.102
26. Renu Khosla, *From Disempowerment to Empowerment*, *Shelter*, Vol.III, No.4, Human Settlement Management Institute, New Delhi
27. *Shelter*, Vol.III, No.4, October, 2000, p.111
28. V.Suresh, P.Jayapal, *Towards an inclusive city in the New Millennium*, *Shelter*, Vol.II, July- October, 1999, p.9
29. Krishna Gowda, M.V.Sridhara, P.Raj Mamatha, *Planning for the 21st Century: A Case Study of Bangalore*, *Shelter*, Vol.3, No.1, HUDO Publication, 2000, pp.7-8
30. UN- Habitat, *The Rural Dimensions of Sustainable Development*, *World Urban Forum*, HSP/WUF/1/ORG/Paper 1, 2002