

ISSN 0019-5561

THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Quarterly Journal of
THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



EDITOR
S.P. VERMA

APRIL-JUNE 2000
VOL. XLVI NO. 2

**MAKING INDIAN BUREAUCRACY RESPONSIBLE,
ACCOUNTABLE AND RESULT ORIENTED**

SURES CHANDRA JAIN
Chief General Manager (Market)
Madhya Pradesh Laghu Udyog Nigam Ltd.
(Government of Madhya Pradesh Undertaking)
Bhopal

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Indraprastha Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi- 110 002 (India)**

THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

VOL. XLVI

APRIL-JUNE 2000

NO. 2

SUBSCRIPTION:

Inland: Annual—Rs. 120.00; Single Copy: Rs. 40.00
Special No. (for Non-subscribers): Rs. 100.00
Abroad: Annual—\$ 50.00 or £ 20.00; Single Copy: \$ 14.00 or £ 6.00
Special No. (for Non-subscribers): \$ 28.00 or £ 12.00

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Editorial	v
Articles	
Weberian Model of Bureaucracy: The Best Fit/Misfit for Development Administration ANURADHA BALARAM	153
Effectiveness of Bureaucracy JASPAL SINGH	160
Reinventing Public Administration for 21st Century SOFI ALI AND ANITA RAO	169
Contracting Out of Public Services A.B. VILLANUEVA	189
Governance, Policing and Human Rights T.N. DHAR	199
Assessing Moral Values for Higher Civil Service Selections in India MANOJ PANDEY	219
Official Corruption and Underdeveloped Markets: Africa's Economic Policy Dilemma S. NII-AHELEH MENSAH	230
Notes	
Administering Water in India in 2050 AD RAKESH HOOJA	248
Making Indian Bureaucracy Responsible, Accountable and Result Oriented SURES CHANDRA JAIN	257

	PAGE
Book Reviews	
Development as Freedom (Amartya Sen) SANTOSH KUMAR	266
Village Voices: Forty Years of Rural Transformation in South India (T.S. Epstein, A.P. Suryanarayana and T. Thimmegowda) L.N. SHARMA	271
<i>Bhartiya Rajya: Utpatti Aivam Vikas</i> (Indian State: Evolution and Development) (Sushma Yadav and Ramavtar Sharma) M.K. GAUR	272
Social Change in Modern India (Rajkumar Pruthi and Rameshwari Devi) P.C. SIKLIGAR	274
Insurgency or Ethnic Conflict (with Reference to Manipur) (S.C. Sharma) KRISHNA MOHAN MATHUR	275
Culture, Socialisation and Human Development: Theory, Research and Applications in India [T.S. Saraswathi (ed.)] SUSHMA YADAV	277
Organizational Ethnography: An Illustrative Application in the Study of Indian R&D Settings (V. Suchitra Mouly and Jayaram K. Sankaran) P.C. BANSAL	281
Public Administration: Emerging Perspectives (Essays in Honour of Prof. S.P. Verma) [Pardeep Sahni, Alka Dhameja, Uma Medury and E. Vayunandan (eds.)] SUJATA SINGH	284
Poverty and Employment: Analysis of the Present Situation and Strategies for the Future [K. Raghavan and Leena Sekhar (eds.)] K.D. GAUR	285
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: Relevance to Contemporary World [S.R. Chakravarty and M.C. Paul (eds.)] SUDHIR KUMAR SINGH	286
Management of Internal Security and Related Issues (Krishna Mohan Mathur) SHIKHA KUMAR	287
Empowering Conditions in the Decentralisation Process: An Analysis of Dynamics, Factors and Actors in Panchayati Raj Institutions from West Bengal and Karnataka in India (George Kurian) L.N.P. MOHANTY	290

MAKING INDIAN BUREAUCRACY RESPONSIBLE, ACCOUNTABLE AND RESULT ORIENTED

SURES CHANDRA JAIN

Pointing out major shortcomings of Indian bureaucratic system, the author ventures to assess empirically the need for making the system result oriented through establishing personal responsibility and accountability of the functionary concerned. He laments that the urgent necessity of reforms has been persistently evaded. In support of his argument, he cites extensively from the Sixth (Central) Pay Commission Report to show how useful recommendations made therein on administrative reforms have remained neglected till today.

IN THE task of socio-economic development, bureaucracy is required, among other things, to display accountability, and dilute inefficient, dilatory and cumbersome work procedures, which are the universally known banes of Indian bureaucracy. Innovations in general procedures of bureaucracy and administrative structures require thematic unity which is just not seen in Indian bureaucracy.

With liberalisation of Indian economy since 1991, thrust has been on linking the economy of India with that of the rest of the world. This requires privatisation, contracting out and shifting the work from government to non-government executive agencies. The role of bureaucracy in linking the economy of India with world economy is, therefore, very critical and significant. For doing so, we need to address the common problems being faced by common people while dealing with bureaucracy.

SHORTCOMINGS OF BUREAUCRACY

For example, some of the major shortcomings bureaucracy in India, are discussed in following paras.

No Time Limit for Case Disposal

The entire bureaucratic structure of India, officers and employees alike, belonging to any class, category or position, may keep the file just as long as they wish according to their whims and fancies. For there is no effective

provision of time limits as to how long an officer or an employee could take to dispose the case in hand. In this regard, Nani A. Palkhiwala noted as follows:

The administrative techniques pursued by the government are the same as were cast in a concrete mould more than a century ago. Files and minutes still go perpetually from official to official and from ministry to ministry. In the result, nothing moves except the river Ganges. ... Today the situation remains unchanged — only the number of files has increased a thousand fold. Millions of man-hours are wasted every day in copying with inane bureaucratic regulations and a torrential spate of amendments.¹

Freedom to Raise Even Inconsequential Query

Any officer or employee, due to selfish interest or being incompetent, can conveniently raise any inconsequential query and delay case disposal. There is practically no effective action against such erring officers or employees. Regarding protecting the rights of the common citizens, the Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission recommended as follows:

At the very least, the citizen is entitled to a good explanation or an apology. In many cases, he should have the right to demand redressal and compensation. This would also imply the coverage of all governmental services under the Consumer Protection Act.²

Problem of Transfer of Personnel

Any officer or employee could be transferred from any post to any post, and from any place to any place, regardless of the fact whether that officer has specialized in the subject or not, whether that officer might hardly have been there for a few months in that post from which he is being transferred. S. Subramanian writes about this tyranny of transfers:

Policy guidelines exist in all departments spelling out the principles to be adopted while effecting transfers. ... In the past few years, all these guidelines have been flouted by politicians and at their behest by senior officers, to use transfer as a tool of punishment to tyrannise upright officials and to break the will of non-compliant and non-cooperative ones.³

No Powers for Disciplinary Action

In most of the bureaucratic layers, no single officer or employee is empowered to take direct disciplinary action against his immediate subordinates, nor is there any provision for any officer or employee to directly reward his immediate subordinates. This lack of empowerment of officers and employees makes the chain of command very weak and ineffective indeed.

¹Nani, A. Palkhiwala, *We the Nation: The Lost Decades*, New Delhi, UBS, 1994, p. 6.

²India, *Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission*, Government of India, New Delhi, January 1997, Vol. I, p. 211, # 24.14 (g).

³S. Subramanian, "Tyranny of Transfers", *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, February 10, 1996, p. 12.

MAKING INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

In this regard, M.N. Buch wrote as follows:

I state with some authority that no senior civil or police officer in this country today enjoys any genuine control over his subordinates because they have found dated lateral and parallel links outside the official hierarchy, through which they have their work done and which they exploit to cover their own wrong-doings. Therefore, far from having an excessively powerful and obstructive bureaucracy, we now face a situation in which the bureaucracy as a delivery system has virtually disintegrated.⁴

No Direct Responsibility and Accountability

Just about every case in the bureaucracy moves right from the dealing clerk to the Section Officer, from Section Officer to Under Secretary, from Under Secretary to the Deputy Secretary, from Deputy Secretary to the Joint Secretary, from Joint Secretary to Additional Secretary, and finally, from Additional Secretary to Secretary (the ultimate head of the Department). This movement of cases and files from (pillar to post) ensures that there is no direct responsibility and accountability of any single officer or employee in any single case. To rectify it, Fifth Central Pay Commission recommended as follows:

Office procedures prescribed in government organisations at present are very complex, cumbersome and time consuming. Such procedures often lead to a greater emphasis on observation of the prescribed norms rather than maintaining productivity. Procedures in all government offices need to be simplified and made less tedious and time consuming. ... There has to be layering in order to reduce levels and (allow) level-jumping in order to reduce delays.⁵

Official Secrets Act Obstructs Transparency and Permits Malpractices

The British colonial government had initiated and implemented the so called Official Secrets Act, 1923, which has, by and large, been kept intact during these last 50 years of Independence. Provision of this Act literally makes it impossible for any member of the public to know what is happening in government files about any case, whether of personal interest or of larger societal concern. The cover of secrecy encourages potential wrong-doers to indulge in malpractices of various sorts. Regarding this phenomenon, an Editorial in *The Hindustan Times* noted as follows:

The people have a right to ask the government whether laws like the Official Secrets Act, the Postal and Police Acts, essentially meant to be used as repressive instruments by an alien regime against the people of this country, have any relevance in modern times. ... The Official Secrets Act is an ugly manifestation of the psyche of rulers in dealing with the ruled.⁶

⁴M.N. Buch, "Bondage of Bureaucracy: On Politician's Role", *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, February 10, 1996, p. 13.

⁵India, *Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission*, New Delhi, Government of India, January 1997, Vol. I, p. 145, # 11.22 and Vol. III, p. 2056, # 6.

⁶"Review Secrets Act", *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, May 16, 1995, p. 11.

SURES CHANDRA JAIN

No Participation of People in Implementation and Formulation of Rural Development Programmes

Several thousand crore of rupees are being spent on various rural developmental programmes every year in India. The implementation of these programmes is left to the bureaucracy in the district without any participation of the rural people for whose welfare these programmes are meant. Consequently, despite pumping of so many thousand of crore of rupees in rural developmental programmes, the net result has been a dismal failure, which is evident from any segment of village life just about anywhere in the country. Regarding the failure of programmes of rural development, S.S. Gill noted as follows:

... We inherited from the British an elaborate administrative system with in-built, organic continuum from a village-level Patwari to the Prime Minister. For obvious historical reasons, it was designed as an instrument of regulatory administration. But being a nation in a hurry, we decided to use it as a delivery system for economic growth and social change also. Inevitably, the developmental tasks which required to be performed by the people's participation and initiative, were assigned to bureaucracy for implementation. Thus, a unique opportunity for harnessing the titanic energies of our masses in the cause of national development through participatory democracy was lost...⁷

Most of the planning for the upliftment of rural areas and most of the programmes of socio-economic development for rural areas are planned from top, without any effective feedback from the rural people for whom these programmes are designed. The approach of the Planning Commission in India has clearly been from top-to-bottom, with hardly any input from bottom-to-top. Consequently, most of the programmes of socio-economic development, planned by the Government of India for implementation in rural areas, have: (a) Generally been unsuitable and irrelevant for the people they are designed for, or (b) Not been implemented effectively due to lack of participation and cooperation from people in rural areas. An Editorial in *The Hindustan Times* noted as follows:

Whatever be the arrangement, the effort should be to ensure people's participation in the planning process from the Gram Sabha to the Zila Parishad level.⁸

MAKING BUREAUCRACY RESPONSIBLE ACCOUNTABLE AND RESULT ORIENTED

For effective implementation of economic reforms which are being initiated in India since 1991, structural reforms in the existing organisational

⁷S.S. Gill, "The Mechanics of Decentralization", *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, June 4, 1998, p. 8.

⁸"Planning from Below", *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, August 25, 1988, p. 11.

MAKING INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

structure of bureaucracy are, therefore, essential so that: (a) Human resources in bureaucracy could be utilized efficiently on the one hand, and (b) Economic reforms, being initiated in India since 1991, could be effectively implemented. While describing dysfunctional consequences of bureaucracy, Stephen P. Robbins wrote "bureaucracy is attacked most frequently for encouraging goal displacement—the displacement of organizational goals by sub-unit or personal goals".⁹ This is really true of Indian bureaucracy.

It is so because there is no personal responsibility and accountability of the officers in bureaucracy as the administrative structure is more process oriented than result-oriented.

Empirical Assessment of the Need The Methodology

The Sample

The author carried out an opinion survey of 111 persons, chosen from different professional groups, including doctors, advocates, professors, industrialists, traders, representatives of the associations of *udyog-vyapar mandals*, and social workers. With a detailed structured questionnaire, the author personally interviewed them of Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh. Break-up of the sample is as follows:

Sl. No.	Particulars Respondents	No. of Persons Interviewed
1.	Advocates—Total number of respondents of this group was (identified as Respondent Number 1-to-7)	7
2.	Office-bearers of various Industry-Trade Associations—Total number of respondents of this group was (identified as Respondent Number 8-to-34)	27
3.	Respondents actively associated with social service institutions—Total number of respondents of this group was (identified Respondent Number from 35-57)	23
4.	Industrialists and Traders (Other than those associated with Industry-Trade Associations)—Total number of respondents of this group was (identified as Respondent Number from 58-to-78)	21
5.	Professors and Intellectuals from Colleges—Total number of respondents of this group was (identified as Respondent Number from 79-to-100)	22
6.	Doctors and Medical Practitioners—Total number of respondents of this group was (identified as Respondent Number from 101-to-111)	11
Total:		<u>111</u>

⁹Stephen P. Robbins, *Organizational Theory*, New Delhi, Prentice Hall, (3rd Edition) 1999, p. 314.

SURES CHANDRA JAIN

Categorisation of Respondents

For convenience in analysis, the respondents were grouped in two broad categories of professionals and businessmen and others as shown below:

<i>Professionals</i>	<i>Number</i>
Advocates	
Doctors	
Professors	40
<i>Businessmen and Others</i>	
Industrialists	
Traders	
Social Workers	71
Total	<u>111</u>

Questions Probed

The interview schedule comprised two main questions on: (1) Need for establishing personal responsibility and accountability of officers, and (2) Need for making our administrative system result oriented. Both the questions were probed on a three-point scale of: (i) Agree, and (ii) Partially Agree, (iii) Disagree, and to measure their responses.

Analysis of Responses

Responsibility and Accountability

On the question of need for establishing personal responsibility and accountability of officers, the response of the group of professional was 100 per cent as all the 40 respondents gave their response. However, from the group of businessmen and others, out of their total of 71 only 67 responded which brought their percentage of response to 95 per cent. Putting response of both the categories together, 97 per cent of the respondents gave their response to the question. Details of their responses are given in Table 1.

Result-Orientedness

On this question two, the response of the group of professionals was 100 per cent as all the 40 respondent gave their responses. However, in the case of businessmen and others, again, there was a shortfall as only 65 out of the total 71 gave their response, taking response percentage to 92 and that of the total sample to 95.

Details of responses on this question area given in Table 2.

Discussion

As seen from Table 1, 94 per cent of the respondents agreed that individual responsibility and accountability of the dealing officers should be fixed to control and check deliberate injustice being done to the common people. Similarly, it is seen from Table 2 that 95 per cent of the respondents agreed that the emphasis in bureaucracy should first be on result orientation and than on procedures to be followed. For effective implementation of economic

MAKING INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

reforms being initiated in India since 1991, efficient utilisation of human resources in bureaucracy is essential, requiring minimisation of dysfunctions prevailing in bureaucracy. For removing poverty from rural areas, the participation of masses in planning and implementation of the programmes of socio-economic development is necessary.

TABLE 1 NEED FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF OFFICERS

Group of Respondents	Agree (All unconditionally)		Partially Agree		Disagree		Total Number of Respondents (2+4+6)
	No. Per cent		No. Per cent		No. Per cent		
	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
<i>Professionals:</i>							
Advocates/ Doctors/ Professors	38	95	2	5	-	-	40
<i>Businessmen and others:</i>							
Industrialists/ Traders/ Social Workers	65	97	2	3	-	-	67
Total :	103	96	4	4	-	-	107

NOTE—Counting errors due to rounding-off.

TABLE 2 RESULT-ORIENTED ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Group of Respondents	Agree (All unconditionally)		Partially Agree		Disagree		Total Number of Respondents (2+4+6)
	No. Per cent		No. Per cent		No. Per cent		
	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
<i>Professionals:</i>							
Advocates/ Doctors/ Professors	36	90	4	10	-	-	40
<i>Businessmen and others:</i>							
Industrialists/ Traders/ Social Workers	63	97	2	3	-	-	65
Total :	99	95	6	6	-	-	105

NOTE—Counting errors due to rounding-off.

SURES CHANDRA JAIN

Fifth Central Pay Commission's Recommendations on Bureaucratic Response

The Government of India had set up Fifth Central Pay Commission which submitted its report in January 1997. As its name suggests, the report was essentially to revise the existing pay scales of the employees of the government. But in addition to revising the pay scale, the Pay Commission in its report also paid substantial attention for reforms in bureaucracy under the chapter, "Public Systems Management". This is the irony of the inefficiency prevailing in bureaucracy that the Government of India and all the State Governments accepted the recommendations of the Pay Commission to revise the pay of employees but paid no attention to the recommendations on reforms in bureaucracy.

The Pay Commission, in the massive three volume report, containing 2144 pages, has, under its *Part II: Public Service Management*, devoted 220 pages on the subject covering the following aspects:

It has now been proved in country after country that an honest, professionally sound, contented bureaucracy is a critical element of any programme of economic resurgence.¹⁰

The entire machinery of government has got to be reinvented. This is a mammoth task.¹¹

There has to be delayering in order to reduce levels and (help) level-jumping in order to reduce delays.¹²

A shift has to be made towards accountability in the positive sense wherein a greater emphasis will be laid on achieving the end result rather than a mere adherence to rules and procedures.¹³

In this country, the work of the government is shrouded in mystery and the Official Secrets Act gives furtiveness a legal sanction. What is required is a Right to Information Act, under which citizens have a right to find out exactly what is going on, at least immediately after a decision is taken. Transparency also means that all decisions are reasoned ones and contain an innate justifying logic.¹⁴

Any premature transfer before completion of the prescribed tenure should be based on sound administrative grounds which should be spelt out in the transfer order itself. The transfer order must, therefore, contain detailed reasons for the transfer.¹⁵

In order to ensure transparency in reporting and to serve the intended objective of providing a feedback to employees to improve their performance, partial openness may be desirable. For this purpose, the

¹⁰India, *Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission*, New Delhi, Government of India, January 1997, Vol. I, pp. 102-103 # 5.21.

¹¹*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 127 # 9.1.

¹²*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 2056, # 6.

¹³*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 145, 11.23.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 2056, # 7.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 217, # 25.9.

MAKING INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

final grading of employees, as recorded in the confidential reports, should be conveyed to them.¹⁶

Performance appraisal is another area of reform. If we develop better methods of appraisal, which are linked to actual performance in quantitative and qualitative terms, and link promotion and other incentives to such objective appraisal, we would be creating best motivation for higher productivity.¹⁷

At the very least, the citizen is entitled to a good explanation or an apology. In many cases, he should have the right to demand redressal and compensation. This would also be the coverage of all governmental services under the Consumer Protection Act.¹⁸

Wherever discretionary powers have to exist, these should be exercised by a group of officials with disparate backgrounds. In such cases, there should always be a recorded decision giving full justification for the stand taken. These groups should never be headed by ministers.¹⁹

SUMMING UP

Certain selected extracts from Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, January 1997, on "Public Services Management", *i.e.* "... General Policy which Government ought to pursue in the area of Civil Service Reform²⁰ ..." which have been neglected are cited above. These recommendations on Public Services Management have, by and large, not even been considered either by the Central Government or any of the State Governments. Had these recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission Report been also implemented by the Government of India and the State Governments, the face of bureaucracy in India would have changed.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 185, 21.14.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 144, # 11.14.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 211, # 24.14 (g).

¹⁹*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 152, # 13.9.

²⁰*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 83 # 2.2 .