



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2347-6710

IJIRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in
SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 10, Issue 12, December 2021

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.569

9940 572 462

6381 907 438

ijirset@gmail.com

www.ijirset.com



Role Of Bureaucracy in Indian Democracy

Dr. Khamosh Meena

Associate Professor, Govt. Girls College, Kishanpole, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT: The civil service system, or bureaucracy, originated during the British colonial era in India. Through the Government of India Act, 1858, the British gained complete control of India's Government. This was the start of the British Empire's authority over India through a committee of authorized specialists. Within less than a century, the British had developed a proficient administration composed chiefly of Indians who pledged loyalty to the British Government.

This administrative body might very well be described as the sine qua non of British Rule in India. Following India's independence, and at a period when third-world countries were seeking to develop skilled and competent professional services, India's top bureaucracy took a firm and unique stance. It provided and continues to provide India with autonomy and continuity that have remained unshaken even throughout periods of political instability and shaky political control at the national and state levels.

KEYWORDS: bureaucracy, Indian, democracy, government, independence, authority, political

INTRODUCTION

The separation of powers of the government is made by distribution of power among three major branches of government namely, the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary but it's all in the past. Now our structure still prevails the same though the executive body has escalated considerably and today, not only do we treat the executive as an important branch, but also, we see them as a branch with numerous employees and departments.[1,2] In a democratic state, the ministers are generally elected and re-elected periodically and there is a chance that after every election the state may experience a new government. Hence, for this very reason, the ministers have little knowledge about the administration of a state and can't be considered as mature administrators. So, there arose a need to have a permanent administrative body that helps the ministers to run the state. This permanent body consists of people known as civil servants or bureaucrats. The civil service system or bureaucracy has its origins rooted in the times when the British were ruling over India. The British took complete control of India's administration through the Government of India Act, 1858. This was the beginning when the British ruled over India through a group of appointed experts. Within a span of less than a hundred years, the British had nurtured a capable body of administration that comprised mostly Indians who owed their allegiance to the British Government. This administrative body could be very well called as the sine qua non of British Rule in India. After India gained independence, at a time when the third-world states were struggling to build qualified and capable career services, the stand of India's senior bureaucracy was strong and exceptional. It gave and is still continuing to give India an autonomy and continuity that has not been shaken even at times when there is uncertainty and unsteady political control at the National and State level.[3,4]

Bureaucracy means arranging a lot of people who are required to work together. Bureaucracy means "rule by offices". The bureaucrats assign government policy to consider the laws made by the elected officials and do it practically. These consist of permanent professional people who are part of the government's executive. The main job of these people is to facilitate the working of government departments. Though they work under the ministers. The civil servants hold perpetual positions in government offices. They generally join their administrations during their young people and keep on functioning as government servants till the time of retirement which is normally 58 to 60 years.[5,6]



There are 6 main characteristics of bureaucracy. They are:

Specialization & division of labor

In bureaucracy each person has their own job. In that particular part they are masters and experts. Here different people are assigned for various works. One single component of work is broken down & given to different people to perform or do their part. Together they combine their works. This is done so that the work can be done properly and one person will not have all the burden on him. This also does more work in less time.

Hierarchical authority structures

Bureaucracy has a chain of work. Each person has given their own work in the chain and each one's work will be observed by their senior one. In a hierarchy, the power flows from the top and approaches the bottom. This is organized properly because work can be done in a better way and communication will be easier.

Rules and regulations

The standard procedures are clear, formal and written in the instruments at each level of the hierarchy. The workers will communicate among themselves to go with a flow and see who is lagging behind. Without these rules, nothing can perform systematically. Due to these rules and regulations, things can be made over-controlled.[7,8]

The idea of technical competence

The bureaucracy has many offices but it takes specific works on the basis of their rules. The bureaucracy is impersonal. People working there don't know each other properly. You have to hire someone who has adequate qualifications. Once you are hired, your activity will be monitored. And this idea is technical competence.

Impersonality and personal indifference

It doesn't matter who you know, what you know, who you are, you are always different, unique. This is the reason a uniform way is followed by everyone. Bureaucracy does not discriminate. No special treatment is given to anyone. You have to do it in the same way as others do. This is the idea of impersonality.

A standard of formal, written communication

Bureaucracy prefers written communication more as compared to actual in person. This communication depends on the briefs made, emails sent, paperwork, etc, but needs to be done in written format. Here everything is systematic & documented. Every small detail also needs to be done through written communication not face to face.



Government policies

Once a government that is elected takes decisions on policy, bureaucracy gets the responsibility of implementing those policies. The political executive heads the policy-making but they need bureaucracy for its formulation. Hence, after bureaucracy plays an important role in forming those governmental policies.[9,10]

Bureaucrats give necessary feedback regarding the effects of the policy to the ministers. It gives all the positive as well as the negative impacts of the policies. They also formulate alternative policies and then the minister can execute or adopt the policies that are made.

II.DISCUSSION

However, aloofness from ordinary people and indifference to their day-to-day problems characterize not only by the IAS officers but administrators generally. The bureaucrats have acquired the habit of treating elected politicians with outward respect. The politicians seem to have undivided interference in the work of the civil servants. The Bureaucrats mainly came from the upper of Upper-middle-class families. They are influenced by western education, experience, and the concept of development. This encourages their administrative visibility, and so our administrators have interpreted development and economic growth without caring for distributed justice. There are several reasons for the change of styles of Bureaucracy in the present context – The top administrators generally come from urban families who enjoy a western standard of living and have some elements of a western outlook. The need for proficiency in English makes the service underrepresented as it was in the British days. The separate services in different departments with their wide disparity in pay scales have become rigid and self-conscious. This has been stimulated by jealousy and resentment. The prevalence of formalism has served to stifle Bureaucratic initiative and imagination. Procedures involve the hierarchical movement of paper. Unwillingness to accept responsibility even for minor decisions. Red tapism has become a way of self reservation and respect for traditional form is matched only by attachment to a strict routine and pre-occupation with questions of accountability.[11,12] There is a continuous conflict between scientific thinking and worldview blurred by political correctness. There is the tendency of domination by the majority strata of the population in bureaucratic administration. There is a one-sided, oversimplified, and mainly dismissive account of the dynamics of religion, caste, and gender in the Bureaucratic scenario. Only 19.14%percentage of women are employed as the IAS, IPS, IRS, IFS of the country. The Indian society and the Bureaucratic structure has dealt with much systemic discrimination and cruelty which leaves the less privileged, Dalits, women, etc narrowed for life and throws open a number of questions that demand our governments and societies' responses to the evils that persist within the service. As a writer, I understand that this is a form of human injustice that needs to be narrated. The discrimination catered against this subject is one of the most brutal modes of Hierarchical social organization that human society has ever known.

To compound the problem Bureaucracy should not be colour coated. The Civil service of today has to cultivate wider social awareness and responsiveness, apart from the traditional virtues of integrity functional efficiency, and zeal of Fairplay with impartiality. Its emphasis should be thoroughly shifted from maintenance of law & order to social welfare. The allotment process should be transparent in nature that inhabits the service with people from all sections of the society. The day Bureaucracy in India can adapt to these changes, I am pretty certain that the people of the country will be ready to co-exist. It is not a fairytale but it sure is a democracy where there is no difference between “U” & “I”. [13,14]

III.RESULTS

Politicization of Bureaucracy

- Over the years, whatever virtues the IAS possessed – integrity, political neutrality, courage and high morale – are showing signs of decay. Some civil servants are deeply involved in partisan politics: they are preoccupied with it, penetrated by it, and now participate individually and collectively in it.
- One of the main reasons why systemic reforms have not been taken up earnestly by the states is the lack of stable tenure for IAS officials.
- Transfers have been used as instruments of reward and punishment, as tools for controlling and taming the bureaucracy. There is no transparency, and in the public mind transfer after a short stay is categorised as a stigma.
- Officers who are victimised are not in a position to defend themselves. Internally the system does not call for any reaction to explain one's conduct, while externally public servants are debarred from going public to defend themselves.
- A high degree of professionalism ought to be the dominant characteristic of a modern bureaucracy. The fatal failing of the Indian bureaucracy has been its low level of professional competence.
- A civil servant spends more than half of his tenure on policy desks where domain knowledge is a vital prerequisite.
- However, in the present environment prevailing in the States there is no incentive for a young civil servant to acquire knowledge or improve his skills. There is thus an exponential growth in both, his ignorance and arrogance.
- For instance, it is said that in the house of an IAS officer one would find only three books – the railway timetable, because he is always being shunted from one post to the other, a current affairs magazine because that is his level of interest, and of course, the civil list – that describes the service hierarchy!
- An important factor which contributes to the surrender of senior officers before political masters is the total lack of any market value and lack of alternative employment potential.
- Of late, some senior officers are being hired by the private sector, not so much for their professionalism, but for their ability to influence government in favour of the hiring company.
- Bureaucrats remain busy in tadbir management instead of trying to improve their capabilities since party "loyalty" and strength of tadbir are the only requirements for getting promotion.
- The most threatening thing is that thousands of brilliant civil servants have been penalised from time to time in the name of "loyalty." Such a situation will certainly discourage qualified and talented graduates from competing for the civil services.[15,16]

IV.CONCLUSIONS

The Indian bureaucracy today is an enormously complex system. It consists of the

- All-India services,
- State services,
- Employees of the local governments, and
- Technical and managerial staff running public sector undertakings.

The makers of our Constitution were aware of the importance of the non-partisan and professional bureaucracy. They also wanted the members of the civil services or bureaucracy to be impartially selected on the basis of merit. [17,18]



Barack Obama's comments on Rahul Gandhi in his recently released book made headlines. But there's another indictment that should be a cause for discussion in India. Obama writes of the country's bureaucracy as an impediment in its progress: "Despite its genuine economic progress, though, India remained a chaotic and impoverished place:[21,22,23] largely divided by religion and caste, captive to the whims of corrupt local officials and power brokers, hamstrung by a parochial bureaucracy that was resistant to change." This assessment of governance in India is shared by others who get to take a peep into our system. A foreign diplomat recently told me he was hassled to see how difficult it was to sell his car in Delhi. Another foreign diplomat told me about the paperwork harassment at the airport due to Covid: "I had to fill forms affirming that I had filled forms, which affirmed that I had an RT-PCR a negative test."

Nobody, not even a strongman leader like Narendra Modi, is able to make the Indian bureaucracy reform its ways — reduce the number of needless steps in their perfect SOPs, and make people's lives easier. The bureaucracy seems to exist to make people's lives tougher, because each cog in the wheel is only trying to be faithful to its own desk. Nobody looks at the larger picture and there is little accountability. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was supposed to make indirect taxation easier and simpler.[19,20] That is what it has done in many countries. Why wouldn't it achieve the same result in India? Enter Indian bureaucracy. The complaint about GST, especially in its initial roll-out, was that it was too complex. Only the Indian bureaucracy can complicate a measure meant to ease something.[24]

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