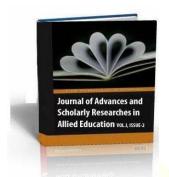# An Analysis upon Various Developmental Challenges and Administrative Structure of Bureaucracy

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ABSTRACT

In review of Indian administrative structure in 1950s, Appleby certified Indian Civil Service to be one of the best in the world. While there is still a lot to commend the civil service for, this article will focus exclusively on the deficiencies that have crept in the services over last few years. This should not be taken to mean that all is wrong with it. The article does, however, attempt to present the critique of the service from the perspective of an insider with a view to rid it of its malaise. Despite its notable achievements, over last five decades, disenchantment with public administration in India has dramatically increased.

Few aspects of economic policy elicit more conflicting opinions than the role of bureaucracy in policy making and implementation. These range from Max Weber's picture of a rule-governed efficient institution, to the "Yes, Minister" caricature of one bound in complex red tape, operating inefficiently and serving the interests of its own officials. In this lecture I attempt a better understanding guided by the economics of incentives and organizations. I emphasize the multidimensional complexity of government bureaucracies - they are answerable to multiple political principals, must handle multiple tasks, have multiple levels of hierarchy, and so on - and suggest some institutional and organizational reforms that seem relevant for India and other less-developed countries that wish to sustain growth and progress to and beyond a middle-income level.

One central function of bureaucracies is to determine eligibility in many federal and state programs. The structure of the organization in which decisions are made may affect whether the organization has a predisposition to be more lenient or more stringent in eligibility determinations. In this paper I compare the determinants of eligibility decisions in Social Security Disability across two different bureaus within the Social Security Administration (Administrative Law Judge offices and state government Disability Determination Services). I test the hypothesis that structural differences between the two units explain why each unit responds differently to signals from the environment, to the ability to gather information, and to cognitive biases created from the ideological environment where decisions are made.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Bureaucracy' lacks a definition that is universally accepted. Bureaucracy is sometimes used in a

disparaging manner to mean unimaginative, rigid and inefficient government administrators. It is associated with red-tapism, delay and wastefulness. Many social scientists however, describe bureaucracy in a neutral way to mean a specific form of social organisation involved in administrative efforts. It is a machine, which is needed to run the government of the day. It is the only tool available to any modern government to administer. We no longer live in simple Greek city-states or tiny Indian republics. Society has become more complex today. Accordingly, the government has become a huge complicated machinery which can be serviced and run only by a distinct group of officials known as bureaucracy. Some scholars have even given bureaucracy the status of "the fourth organ of the government". Therefore, bureaucracy cannot be wished away.

Bureaucracy with such formal characteristics is considered essential for running any large organisation. To quote Max Weber "the decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organisation has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organisation…precision, speed, unambiguity, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs – these are raised to the optimum level in the structurally bureaucratic administration".

Bureaucracies play a central role in making public policy by applying program rules to individual cases. In so doing, they create the public policy that the public actually experiences. An understanding of public policy, therefore, requires an understanding of the determinants of bureaucratic behavior. While the dominant paradigm for understanding bureaucratic behavior focuses our attention on how the incentive structures elected officials create constrain bureaucratic behavior (principal-agent theory), scholars have recently argued that political scientists refocus their attention on the central bureaucratic task of information processing and return to the behavioral approach to understanding bureaucratic organizations. This approach draws from both early work in the behavioral tradition in public administration and the work on social construction and issue definition in public policy.

To best understand why public bureaucracies implement policy the way they do, we should focus on the limited attention span of bureaucracies, the use of heuristics and assumptions to simplify the task environment, and the distribution of issues across different sub-units within the bureaucracy (Workman, Jones and Jochim 2010). Agencies charged with implementing programs are not monolithic black boxes but instead are made up of sub-units all with their own structures and cultures. In order to understand why bureaucracies shape public policy the way they do through policy implementation; we must therefore pay attention to how different units within the bureaucracy respond differently to information in the task and political environment and recognize that information is often ambiguous. Policy implementation by any federal agency should reflect, therefore, how the organizational design of sub-units within the bureaucracy shape how people within that sub-unit respond to environmental stimuli that is filtered through the structure of the sub-unit. In what follows, I use insights from the —Information processing theory‖ of bureaucracy to generate hypotheses about how the organizational structure of different units within the Social Security Administration shape how decision making in the Social Security Disability program in these units reflects various responses to information from the political and task environment.

Few institutions provoke such extreme and contradictory reactions as do government bureaucracies. Weber (1946) offers the most favorable judgment. He characterizes "modern officialdom" as an efficient organization staffed by specially trained people who view their work as a career and a vocation, whose jurisdiction is structured by laws and regulations, and whose duties consist of applying clear general rules to specific cases. At the other extreme, many citizens who encounter officialdom view it as arcane, arbitrary, inefficient, and often corrupt. The British television comedies "Yes, Minister" and "Yes, Prime Minister" depict a brilliant caricature, where the high-ranking civil servants are an elite clique whose main (or only) objective is to protect its own people, privileges, and power, often in conflict with the will of democratically elected politicians and counter to public interest.

The viewpoint was articulated by Abdul Salam (2006) that public administration is an important conditioning factor of the success or otherwise of any developmental policy or strategy of a government An examination of the relationship between development administration and administrative development is thus an attempt to explore the concepts of public administration and management in the context of national development,

leadership role and leadership culture.

Bureaucrats play vital roles in the formulation, implementation, evaluation and review of government policies and programmes, but the frequent incursion of politics into the domain of the public service in India has undermined these roles to an unimaginable extent. Politicians usually embark on retrenchment of public servants for political expediency, and ostensible reorganizational and economic reforms which to an average public servant is frivolous, indefensible and atrocious.

During Obasanjo's administration, there were series of reforms such as privatization, downsizing, monetization, which had serious consequences on the livelihood of some affected civil servants (Oladoyin, 2011). The politics and administration interface does not always produce negative outcomes and consequences. If the interactions between politicians and administrators are better managed, they would likely lead to efficient and effective policy development in government in India (Afegbua, 2013).

Bureaucratic organizations are broken up into specialized departments or ministries, each of which is assigned the responsibility for pursuing a limited number of the government's many official goals and policies which fall within a single, relatively narrow functional domain. The departments or ministries are sub-divided into divisions that are assigned even more specialized responsibilities for accomplishing various portions or aspects of the department's overall tasks; these divisions are in turn composed of multiple agencies or bureaus with even more minutely specialized functions (and their own subdivisions). Bureaucratic organizations always rely heavily on the principle of hierarchy and rank, which requires a clear, unambiguous chain of command through which "higher" officials supervise the "lower" officials, who of course supervise their own subordinate administrators within the various divisions and sub-subdivisions of the organization (Johnson, 2005).

Politics is essentially characterized by struggle for power and influence, disagreement, bargaining or negotiation, reconciliation, resolution and consensus, among others, which albeit in varying degrees. Politics is based on disagreement, that is, where there is controversy, where there are issues, there is politics. Differences between individuals and groups provide reasons for disagreement; such diversities relate to different perceptions of human nature and of his role, and to differences in interests.

Decision-making is another important ingredient of politics. At every instance of conflict, decision must be taken in order to arrive at reconciliation, if not a consensus, of interests. Obviously, in such specific instances, political goals may conflict with values in practice. David Easton was articulating this assertion when he suggested that politics is the authoritative allocation of values within a society, backed by the ultimate use of a monopoly of physical force.

Policy refers to those plans, positions and guidelines of government which influence decisions by government (e.g., policies in support of sustainable economic development or policies to enhance access to government services by persons with disabilities). There are various types and forms of policy. Types of policy include: broad policy which enunciates government-wide direction; more specific policy, which may be developed for a particular sector (the economy) or issue-area (welfare); operational policy, which may guide decisions on programmes and project selection. With respect to the forms that government policy takes, it is reflected most typically in legislation, regulations, and programmes. These are often referred to as policy instruments.

Policy development is the activity of formulating policy generally, which involves research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of information to produce recommendations. It also involves an evaluation of options against a set of criteria used to assess each option. Leadership and management positions include any of the following who may have policy responsibilities: Ministers, deputy ministers, directors, executive directors, coordinators or team leaders. Consultation refers to seeking input (advice, reactions, clarifications etc.) during the policy development process from individuals within and outside government. Bureaucrats are the bedrock upon which the government is seated and balanced. It is the hub for the implementation of the programmes, policies, plans and action of government. More importantly, the bureaucrats are the vehicle for service delivery and good governance. The quality of the bureaucrats largely determines the pace of

development of any nation.

Bureaucracy refers to administration which takes place in a large, complex organization. Such Organisations are typically characterized by great attention to the precise and stable delineation of authority or jurisdiction among the various subdivisions and among the officials who comprise them, with the requirement that employees operate strictly according to fixed procedures and detailed rules designed to routinize nearly all decision makings. Some of the most important of these rules and procedures may be specified in laws or decrees enacted by the higher "political" authorities that are empowered to set the official goals and general policies for the organization, but upper-level (and even medium-level) bureaucrats typically are delegated considerable discretionary powers for elaborating their own detailed rules and procedures. Because the incentive structures of bureaucratic organizations largely involve rewarding strict adherence to formal rules and punishing unauthorized departures from standard operating procedures (rather than focusing on measurable individual contributions toward actually attaining the organization's politically assigned goals), such organizations tend to rely very heavily upon extensive written records and standardized forms, which serve primarily to document the fact that all decisions about individual "cases" are taken in accordance with approved guidelines and procedures rather than merely reflecting the personal preferences or subjective judgment of the individual bureaucrats involved.

Bureaucracy or the Civil Service is the backbone of administration, a vehicle of development and a buffer-system for smooth political transformation in any country today. It involves management of people and so it is rightly called the soul of all management. The system of confidential reports or performance appraisal, as it is called in public administration, is an important tool of management of people. The performance of government, like that of any other organization, is ultimately the sum-total of the performances of the individuals through whom it functions. Government, therefore, is vitally interested in knowing from time to time how well or, for that matter, how badly its constituents function. Without this information, proper servants also need to know from time to time what their strong as well as weak points are. Without this information, they would not be able to plan their own career development properly. The system of confidential reports is intended to satisfy these needs. The system of confidential reports may be defined as a periodical stocktaking of the quality, quantity and style of the present and potential performance of an officer with a view to providing personnel information to government and developmental feedback to the officer concerned. If the system works in the spirit of this definition, it will function to the maximum satisfaction of the government and the government servant and ultimately, of those whom they all serve i.e., the public (Kashikar, 2004).

The following paper deals with the system of performance appraisal followed in Indian bureaucracy in general. Bureaucracy in India has been the largest organization and the biggest employer. It encompasses almost every aspect of human life in India. Its performance ultimately reflects on the success or failure of the government. Therefore, general system of performance appraisal in Indian bureaucracy is taken up as the focal point of study in this paper. This paper is a case study of the system of performance appraisal followed in Indian bureaucracy. For this purpose, the actual system followed in different states was studied on the basis of appraisal forms used in those states. Reports of administrative reform commissions formed by the government from time to time were also analysed so far as they dealt with performance appraisal. Similarly, some important legal documents like the Civil Services Rules (1984), Code of Conduct (1984), Indian Civil Service Rules Discipline and Punishment were also referred while studying the nature and status of Indian bureaucracy.

Eventually, this paper is an attempt to analyses the present nature and shortcomings of the performance appraisal system of Indian bureaucracy in general; to focus on the challenges it has to face in present times; and finally to present some useful suggestions for systemic overhaul of this system in order to make Indian bureaucracy more vibrant, more efficient and development-oriented.

DEFINITION OF THE BUREAUCRACY: NEW POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Bureaucracy is the administrative structure and set of regulations in place to control (rationalize, render effective and professionalize) activities, usually in large organizations and government. Its efficiency is a

function of the environment in which it operates.

Historically, Max Weber is the most important exponent of bureaucracy. He described it as technically superior to all other forms of organization and hence indispensable to large, complex enterprises. The word "bureaucracy" stems from the word "bureau", used from the early 18th century in Western Europe to refer to an office, i.e., a workplace, where officials worked. The original French meaning of the word bureau was the baize used to cover desks. The term bureaucracy came into use shortly before the French Revolution of 1789, and from there rapidly spread to other countries. The Greek suffix - kratia or kratos - means "power" or "rule". Ideally, bureaucracy is characterized by hierarchical authority relations, defined spheres of competence subject to impersonal rules, recruitment by competence, and fixed salaries.

Actually, bureaucracy becomes progressively 'omnipresent' and 'omnipotent' in the management of all the governmental activities both the implementation and, surprisingly, formulation of public policy- a situation which strengthens the bureaucracy and widens its sphere of operation. This observation fully expresses the position that bureaucracy is a form of government, exercised by officials, characterized by tendency to intervene and often to exceed its proper function.

In a situation where bureaucracy is involved in every stage of policy process, there is indeed tendency to behave extra-constitutionally and act beyond ethical framework that guards and guides its official conduct.

The State is a politically and institutionally organized body of people inhabiting a defined geographical entity with an organized legitimate government. It can also be defined as a political association with effective sovereignty over a geographical area. The State is a product of society at a certain stage of development. It can also be defined as a well-defined geographical and sovereign territory with human population and government with an interdependent relationship.3 The State in this respect is autonomous and authoritative, as it secures obedience through its authority and legitimacy. While we know that the state is an outgrowth of the society, which has its origin intrinsically from the society, it is however surprising the upsurge of almost unlimited power of the State. Finally, the State has been considered (Lock, Hobbes, Rousseau) as the product of a contract between the citizens and the government established to serve and develop their interests and ensure their liberty.

As government's activities record an unprecedented range of tasks, state apparatuses have become massive and continue to grow. The complex nature and differentiated functions of government call for the need to have well-trained officials to administer and manage the complexity and differentiation that characterize government's business. To this end, government employs unprecedented numbers of people to deal with an unprecedented range of tasks and specialization. The power of permanent and non-elective officials to apply and even initiate measures of control over national administration and economy has made the bureaucracy central to the life of the state; critics object that it is largely impervious to control by the people or their elected representatives.

Bureaucracy is a concept in sociology and political science referring to the way that the administrative execution and enforcement of legal rules are socially organized. It is represented by standardized procedure (rule following) that instructs the execution of the processes provided within the body, formal division of powers, hierarchy, and relationships. Four structural concepts are central to any definition of bureaucracy: a well-defined division of administrative labor among persons and offices, a personnel system with consistent patterns of recruitment and stable linear careers, a hierarchy among offices, such that the authority and status are differentially distributed among actors, and formal and informal networks that connect organizational actors to one another through flows of information and patterns of cooperation.

ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN DEVELOPMENT

Bureaucracy has become a universal phenomenon. It is a pre requisite of modernization of every society. Most developing countries are engaged in the process of nation building and bringing about rapid socio-economic development, i.e., providing social services such as health, education, infrastructure like roads,

electricity, productive activities in agriculture, industry etc. The complex of such formidable activities connected with the development enterprise is essentially government's responsibility. Here, public administration becomes the key agency of development. Bureaucracy can immensely contribute to development by serving as an adviser, as an inventor, and a decision-maker. It can vitalize administration by building up a social environment emphasizing responsibility by creating incentives, by encouraging healthy competition and self-development, by organizing institutional management under competent and progressive leadership and by delegating authority to lower levels for maximizing development.

Bureaucracy constitutes the apparatus and mechanism through which the state realizes its purposes. It has been rightly said that a country's life is largely shaped by the quality of administration. A plan can succeed only if its administrative implications have been worked out in detail. Hence, a high degree of bureaucratic competence is essential to push through speedy development measures. In most developing countries, the problem is not the inability of the governments to devise rational programmes for development, but their incapacity to carry them out.

BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICS

The conventional view of public administration is based upon the dichotomy of politics and administration i.e. administration and politics should be kept separate. Politics or policy making is the proper activity of the legislative bodies and administration is the proper activity of administrators who carry out policies. It is opposed to any political role of the civil servants. It visualizes the relationship between the administrator and the politician in terms of a neat division of labour – the politician formulates the policy and the administrator executes it. The bureaucrat acts as pure adviser to his political master, presents facts of the case, suggests lines of action and implications of alternative policies. It is the prerogative of the political master to decide the policy. The bureaucrat is expected to implement the policy faithfully, whatever the decision. He is to be anonymous and neutral in the discharge of his duty. He is expected to render impartial advice without fear or favour. The doctrine of neutrality and anonymity has been one of the fundamental tenets of the Weberian model of bureaucracy. It insulates the bureaucrat from any politicization and makes him professional in his outlook.

The planners in India too subscribed to the Weberian ideal of neutral civil service. In our country, the Civil Service Conduct Rules prohibit the government employees from active participation in political activities. Except for the limited right of voting in secret, a government employee cannot participate in any way in any political movement or activity including election campaigns. He cannot join a political party even as an inactive member or contribute financially to its funds; he cannot express any opinion on political issues; and he cannot stand for election to any legislature.

The traditional concept of neutrality, however, has been challenged on many grounds. The earlier concept of separation of politics and administration in watertight compartments is considered no more valid. The role of the Civil Service has been changing from being a mere agent of the political executive to that of collaboration with it. The involvement of bureaucracy in political arena is now widely prevalent.

Weber's model of bureaucracy was found inappropriate to effect the social transformation in many developing countries. In India, it received a good amount of criticism for its failure to meet the growing demands of social legislation. After two decades of independence, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, advocated the concept of committed bureaucracy. Not only did she express her dissatisfaction with the performance of bureaucracy, she expressed doubt about the relevance of the basic assumptions underlying the Indian bureaucracy that of neutrality, impartiality, anonymity etc. and she alleged that the bureaucrats lacked commitment. She disgustingly referred to the administrative machinery as 'the stumbling block in the country's progress' and reiterated the necessity of creating an administrative cadre committed to national objectives and responsive to Indian social needs. She found in 'committed bureaucracy' the answer to the ills of neutrality that crippled the development process in India. She had an earnest belief that only a committed bureaucracy can bring about the desired change.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE

According to open systems theory, bureaucratic organizations interact with their environment. However, how this interaction takes place and what its impact is on bureaucratic decisions is mediated by the structure of the organization. The organizational structure influences what types of stimuli from the environment reaches individual bureaucrats and it sets constrains on bureaucratic decisions and actions. Organizational arrangements determine what types of information is collected by the bureaucracy and who pays attention to it.

The characteristics and goals of the organization predict what types of environmental stimuli are salient. Structure includes the rules of operation, standard operating procedures, bureaucratic culture, levels of hierarchy and a variety of other factors. These factors affect how bureaucracies respond to environmental pressure. Some structures should make the bureaucracy more open to environmental influences than other structures. For example, rules that allow interest groups and citizens to comment on bureaucratic rulemaking make bureaucratic decision-making more responsive to interest groups. Hiring practices and requirements determine which profession most influence bureaucratic organizations, which in turn influences how people within the bureaucracy make decisions (Eisner and Meier 1990; Eisner 1993). In so far as structure mediates the relationship between the environment and the bureaucracy, differences in bureaucratic structure should explain variation in the responsiveness of different sub-units to similar information from the environment.

BUREAUCRATIC RELUCTANCE TO CHANGE

These commentators ascribe two reasons for bureaucratic reluctance to change. First is bureaucratic inertia and lethargy. "One can understand the reluctance of the bureaucracy to accept recommendations that would curb its present manner of functioning, and alter the rather comfortable manner in which civil servants go about their day-to-day work." (Ghose, 2006; 38) The second is their resentment at being perceived as dishonest or incompetent. "One can also appreciate that such reports generate a certain amount of indignation because, contrary to the picture that is sometimes painted of the services, all officers are not a set of dishonest, incompetent people; on the other hand, for the most part, they are people who do their work as best they can, are not dishonest, are fairly efficient, with some being a little more so than others." (Ghose, 2006: 28) A survey of literature suggests that there has been very little attempt to search for alternative reasons for non-implementation of these measures and this seems to be the generally-accepted position. This is despite the fact that the politicization of bureaucracy is commonly acknowledged to be the major source for decline in the performance of civil service.

While there is some truth in the allegation, it is not the complete truth. It is flattering, indeed, to believe that the services still retain adequate power to stall the changes that have been accepted by the popularly elected leaders against their wishes.

RATIONALE FOR REFORMS

The government and bureaucracy, in particular, are expected to give results, rather fast results. In the 21st century, bureaucracy has to maintain pace with the rest of the sectors in society. Far-reaching changes in the global economy, increased global inter-dependence and a sea change in the way governments function have made it all the more necessary to build a competent, well-functioning civil service. The telecommunications and computer revolution offer immense opportunities to bring about efficient delivery of services. Here there also is resistance to simplification of procedures, which is a pre-requisite for introduction of e-governance.

In short, if the civil services are to be relevant and competent to meet the current and emerging needs, nothing short of a mutation will be adequate. With the passage of time, the role of civil society Organisations in governance has increased with demands for better governance. The same can be said of the private sector, which is increasingly providing services in several areas, which hitherto were the exclusive preserve of the public sector.

Consequently, civil servants should view civil society Organisations and the private sector as partners in the process of the country's governance. There is need to shift from pre-eminence of governance to effective governance with a focus on decentralization and citizen-centricity.

Rapid and fundamental changes are taking place in India in terms of rapid economic growth, urbanization, environmental degradation, technological changes and increased local awareness and identity. The response time to adapt to these changes is much shorter than it used to be. As instruments of public service, civil servants have to be ready to manage such change. However, the perception is that they resist change as they are wedded to their privileges and prospects and thereby have become ends in themselves. In the political field, the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution have brought about a major change. Rural and urban local governments have to be enabled to become institutions of self-government.

To bring this about, the existing system of administration at the district level has to undergo fundamental changes. The progress of change at the district level remains very slow and local governments are "local" only in »form«, but are »central and state in content« (Arora and Goyal, 2011).

There are also concerns about the performance of the civil service in the context of realising a results-oriented government. It has been pointed out that the Civil Service in India is more concerned with the internal processes than with results. The systemic rigidities, needless complexities and over-centralization in the policy and management structures within which the civil service functions are too complex and often too constraining. The structures are based on hierarchies and there are a large number of veto points to be negotiated for a decision to emerge eventually. To compound it, the size and the number of ministries and departments have both overloaded the decision-making system and diminished the capacities of the individual civil servants to fulfil their operational responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

In the past fifty years, the performance records of the public bureaucracy is a catalogue of failed policies and failed development projects. The inability of government bureaucracy to deliver the much-needed services to the citizens and the resultant decline the standard of living of the people may be held as a conclusive evidence of a failed Indian state. The peculiarities of the Indian socio-cultural and political set-up have influenced both the content and operation of the new constitution. Uncritical adoption of constitutional practices and conventions developed elsewhere should, therefore, be discouraged. Also bearing in mind that we are operating a new system of government, the operators of the system should meet periodically at workshops. It is expected that this practice will facilitate the emergence of traditions and conventions that will govern the relationship between the political class and the career officers.

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