

# BUREAUCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Adi H. Doctor

The term bureaucracy in the context of a discussion on development may be said to refer to the personnel who are occupying policy making and supervisory positions in the administrative system, what in administrative language we call the "Middle" and "top" management. Max Weber<sup>1</sup> portrayed a model of bureaucracy which is highly impersonal, where authority is exercised by administrators only by virtue of the office they hold and in accordance with clearly defined rules and regulations. Now it is a moot question whether bureaucracy is ever so neutral, impartial or passive. The classical theory of Neutrality of the civil service was based on a complete dichotomy of policy making (politics) and policy implementation (administration). Such a dichotomy is however no longer seriously held by political scientists. It is now acknowledged that in practice bureaucracy, functioning as the adviser to the minister, participates in policy making and that the socialisation process of the bureaucracy does influence and shape its values and the advice it gives to the ministers. As Paul Appleby, a noted American expert on administration points out, the old concept of administration being a mechanical art which a technician could perform with efficiency and accuracy, irrespective of the fact whether he is interested or disinterested in the objectives of the policy, no longer holds good. Appleby makes a distinction between "partisan political activity" and "programme activity" and asserts that a civil servant has "full internal freedom" with regard to programme activity. Vallabhai Patel has such a civil service in mind when he stated "if you want an efficient All India Service I advice you to allow the services to open their mouth freely". Patel deplored the tendency to say, "No, you are a serviceman, you must carry out orders".<sup>2</sup>

In other words, if we want a development oriented civil service, the first thing we must insist on is that the old dichotomy of the politician making policy and the civil servant passively but faithfully, carrying it out, be abandoned. What we should insist on a programme oriented civil servant who will tell his minister, when necessary, that he sincerely believes that the ministers policy is likely to diminish welfare rather than increase it.

### **Indian Bureaucracy and Development orientation**

When we talk of bureaucracy having a development orientation, we must be clear in our mind what exactly we mean by this term.

The term development essentially implies change in a specific direction. The most crucial indicators of sociopolitico-development would be, firstly, bringing about change of identity from the religious and ethnic to the national, accompanied by a change in political participation from elite to mass; and a change of distribution from status and privilege to achievement. Secondly, bringing about economic development based on the real needs of the people vis a vis the available resources.

Bureaucracy can bring about socio-politico-economic development by bringing about the above mentioned desirable changes. The fact that Indian bureaucracy's penetration (both direct and indirect) is deep and wide and on the increase, makes it particularly suitable for this role. The bureaucracy can help nation building and promote national integration through administrative policy and action. It must do everything possible to release forces making for increasing mobility and inter-dependence for it is in direct proportion to the growth of mobility and inter-dependence than a nation emerges.<sup>3</sup>

India's first prime-minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his Deputy, Sardar Patel, were both agreed that there should be an All India Civil Service above parochialism. In 1957 when the states were re-organised on a linguistic basis, parliament unaimously approved the policy that at least half the cadre posts in the IAS or IPS in any state should be reserved for direct recruits

from other states. But this salutary rule came to be circumvented in many ingenious ways. Thus the promotion quota of state service came to be raised from 25 % to 35 %. Of the rest another third could be from the state concerned. Simultaneously, the practice developed of sending half of the non-locals on deputation to the centre. Finally as Sakesna notes, posts came to be upgraded or down-graded at will to favour the local" and "as a result the IAS and the IPS are now exposed to strong parochial and casteist pulls and the two all India services have ceased to be worthy of that name."<sup>4</sup>

If the Indian Administrative Service is to be rebuilt to serve the goals of nation-building and development, it is time to think of raising the percentage of non-local officers from among direct recruits in every state. The argument that they will not be proficient in the local language is over-played. After all if foreign service officers are expected to obtain a working knowledge of the language of the state they are posted in, it should not be difficult for an Indian administrative officer to master a local Indian language.

Not only must the all Indian services be "national" (as opposed to parochial) in composition, they must also in their policy and actions be national and development oriented. The bureaucracy can contribute immensely to nation building and development through the proper performance of such of its legitimate functions as the even handed administration of public policies and programmes; giving without favour or fear professional advice to the political leadership; introducing increasing professionalism, and carrying out needed structural reforms within its own rank in order to perform rapidly diversifying (development) tasks more competently.

In the 1970s V. A. Pai Panandikar and S. S. Kshirsagar made a study of selected civil servants engaged in development.<sup>5</sup> They picked up two agencies engaged in agricultural development and two involved in industrial development. The survey tried to study four essential characteristics required of development administrators viz. a) change orientation, that is, concern to bring about desirable changes. b) result-orientation, that is, concern to

achieve certain specific programmatic results c) citizen orientation, that is, citizen centredness displayed by civil servants, and d) commitment to work.

The findings of the researchers with regard to the above four criteria (or "dimensions of adaptation") are listed below :<sup>6</sup>

	Ranking of respondent			
	High	Moderate	Low	Not reported
change-orientation	215 %	61.4 %	15.9 %	1.2 %
result orientation	51.0 %	46.5 %	21.5 %	1.0 %
commitment to work	27.6 %	58.9 %	13.4 %	0.1 %
citizen participation orientation	17.5 %	50.9 %	30.5 %	1.1 %

The researchers conclude from their study that "civil servants are moderately adapted to their development role" in terms of the above four criteria, that is about 55 % to 64 % of civil servants are so oriented. A significant finding is that a "little over one in every five respondents" showed a low degree of result orientation, while a large proportion of respondents showed "moderate degree of result orientation". The above findings as the researchers indicate "point to the relatively poor prospects of developmental personnel being able to show particularly satisfactory results in their work".<sup>7</sup> Another disturbing finding is that "as many as seventy percent of the respondents are moderately or poorly committed to their work". Obviously, with a such civil service it is not very surprising if our priorities in developmental work are frequently upset and their realization unduly prolonged.

Panandikar and Kshirsagar's study also indicates a moderate or poor change and citizen-participation orientation from which they conclude that the civil servants do not consider it to be very much their job to bring about changes in the values and attitudes of the citizen clientele"<sup>8</sup>

Another study sponsored by the Nebraska University also indicated that the Indian bureaucracy's commitment to modernization is neither very deep nor wide-spread. The study revealed that 42.5 % of the IAS officers interviewed held views unfavourable to democracy and 56.25 % thought that administration is better off without politics and offending politicians. Another interesting finding of this study was that 68.75 % liked "routine clerical work or strict adherence to rules and regulations". Thus, what emerges from this study too is that the civil service is anti-democratic and lacks innovativeness and is staffed by a cadre with a narrow clerical bent of mind.

J. B. D'Souza in an insightful essay in the Economic Times gives examples to drive home the point that development requires a certain sensitivity to the poor and their needs and this our bureaucracy weefully lacks. Thus he blames the bureaucracy for suggesting and or supporting such callous policies as spending the tax-payers money to make thousands of automobiles the first place, and then spending again from tax-payers money (they all pay at least indirect taxes) on building expensive flyovers and freeways to help these cars to travel faster than the buses and bicycles we should have made in larger numbers, which could have served our numerousspoor,...<sup>10</sup>

In addition to developing a sensitivity to the needs of the poor, Indian bureaucracy also needs a positive development orientation which would enable it to rise above its obsession with procedures and "the negative aspects of the regulations they quote so facilely." As D'Souza so tellingly puts it. "Ask the civil servant in retirement what he has accomplished during his career, and the odds are that he will tell you how successfully he thwarted this Minister or that, or prevented some useful outcome that infringed a petty regulation. Seldom will he take credit for tangible and positive benefits delivered to the people he was paid to serve."

A development oriented bureaucracy should help the people's representatives to formulate policies based on the needs of clients vis a vis the available resources. K. K. Khanna, writing in the Economic Times writes, "at present the bureaucracy has no

suitable method for determining the needs of the clientele. For that matter the Indian bureaucracy does not seem to possess the skill or the wherewithal for such an exercise." Policies, says Khanna tend to swing like a pendulum. Some times there is emphasis on prohibition, family planning, recruitment of backward classes and naming of city streets, to such an extent that employment, education and other more urgent requirements of life e. g. supply of drinking water may be totally neglected."<sup>12</sup>

### **Recruitment and Development**

If we desire to have a bureaucracy which is development oriented, we will first have to take a close look at the procedure for recruitment to see whether it is geared to give us the right personnel. The British system of recruitment was built on two principles — the principle of patronage and the principle of merit. The aim of the former was to recruit loyal subjects with vested interest in the continuance of British rule. Patronage was at first the more important principle governing recruitment and came only slowly to be challenged and replaced by the system of merit selections.

Today in free India recruitment is (except for reservation of seats for scheduled castes & tribes) on merit through an open competitive examination. This system of recruitment comprises of a qualifying test, followed by the main competitive examination made up of written papers and oral examination (interview).

The present system of recruitment is very academic in the sense of favouring and rewarding examination minded persons at the cost of those who have the capacity to execute. The examination system does not test techniques of thinking, moral character, bent of mind etc. It is indifferent to the "contents of the mind", to the commitment to carry out welfare and development programme, it does not provide a place for persons especially enthusiastic about programme. The result is all too obvious. Many recruits are misfits who either impair efficiency or make their own lives miserable. It may be worth considering having written examinations only in a few relevant papers such as economics, sociology, political science and public administration,

etc. The inclusion of technical subjects with no cultural value like Prime Movers and Applied Mechanics can only succeed in drifting the scarce and much needed technical man-power into the already saturated field of administration.

In favour of the present system, it is argued that a) the exclusion of graduates in technical subjects would be undemocratic and b) technical men would bring with them "something of special value to the services". However, the correct course to adopt here would be to have separate recruitment for technical services with attractive salaries and work conditions.

An oral or Viva Voce examination provides a fine opportunity for testing and determining the development orientation of candidates. Unfortunately, dissatisfaction with the Viva in India is quite old.

As early as 1955, Mr. Pant, the Union Home Minister felt that the Viva test was not very reliable; and that it tested manners, etiquette and command over English and therefore invariably went against the rural and backward class candidates. In 1957 the Ministry of Home Affairs abolished the compulsory passing in the Viva Voce examination since out of every three rejected in Viva only one had done well at the written examinations. The UPSC was unhappy because it felt that students did well in written examinations by mere cramming. Today the ranking of candidates for the interview is done on the basis of the marks they obtain in six papers of 300 each. Of these two papers are on General Studies and four papers are on any two optional subjects selected from a long list of optional subjects ranging from literature and language to social and physical sciences. After the interview they are selected for the various services according to their preference and rank based on the total marks secured in the six papers and the interview.

But even today the Viva does not test qualities particularly suited to development administration, like capacity for team work leadership, ability to co-operate, alertness in grasping the facts of a given situation, persuasiveness in presenting a point of view

etc. It is time we seriously consider adopting the British method of psychological and objective tests, also called "situational" and "projective" tests since they help a candidate project his personality<sup>13</sup>. In 1951, A. D. Gorwala, in his report on Public Administration urged that the Viva be gradually replaced by the British type psychological tests which help probe into the candidate's mental and emotional make-up.

In 1952, the Chairman of the UPSC went to U. K. to study these tests and reported that they do give a better insight into the personality qualities. But except for a few steps such as extending the time given for the interview and introducing an element of debate, very little was done to test the "development orientation" or capacities of candidates. The emphasis still seems to be on finding the candidate's technical competence in a specific subject than the candidate's individual qualities of leadership and initiative. Some attempt in this direction seems to have been made lately as can be gathered from the interview given by the former UPSC chairman, Dr. A. R. Kidwai, to Mr. Satyaroao of Sunday Standard.<sup>14</sup> Mr. Kidwai, indicated how the Commission asks the rural candidates questions like what changes he saw in his environment in the last ten or fifteen years, and how these changes affected the rural community in which he lived. What we need is more such questioning which seeks to probe into the candidate's "development orientation". After all what we are searching for is talent in the form of general mental cultural and intellectual training, and not for specific knowledge. But for this purpose the UPSC must first acquire an adequate number of trained personnel to man its new recruitment programme.

In November 1976 while inaugurating the Conference of Chairmen and members of public service commissions, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, then the prime-minister said that the recruitment to the civil services should become more rural oriented with people who would go out and develop rural areas being given "a better chance". The people selected, she said, should have not only the requisite qualifications but also a commitment to the people's urges and aspirations and show promise for learning and future development. She rightly suggested that the recruitment

system should also seek to test such qualities as the candidate's sensitivity to other people's sufferings, how reliable he would be under stress and how he would develop in future. She correctly laid stress on the importance of team work, adjustment and adaptability, saying, "You cannot have a play in which everyone is the hero".<sup>15</sup>

In our country bureaucracy will not be able to contribute to development unless it develops a rural bias. E. N. Mangat Rai, a retired ICS officer in his book "Commitment My Style",<sup>16</sup> narrates how he toured the Hissar district in 1940 : In all I had covered by railway 1,701 Kilometers, by camel 1070 Kilometers by bus 2758 kilometers, by horse 1219 kilometers, by cycle 1930 kilometers and by car 3711 kilometers". And all this the Officer did cheerfully, enjoying his work and not with distaste. This is in sharp contrast to our present IAS officers who by and large dislike rural assignments and seek transfers to urban areas at the earliest possible. The staff correspondent of the Times of India reporting from Bhopal Observes, "The M. P. (Madhya Pradesh) government is somewhat dismayed by the tendency among young IAS officers to shun positions to backward areas. According to authoritative sources, it has been the unhappy experience of the administration that no sooner order for transfer to backward districts are passed than pressures begin to work for their modification, if not cancellation. This is all the more surprising as the concerned officers are mostly young, unmarried and without family responsibilities like children's education. The usual excuses are 'old father' or 'ailing mother' ... The sources say that the young recruits seem to bring with them a measure of built-in cynicism and strive hard to chose soft options instead of the thrills and adventures involved in meeting the challenge posed by development problems in the backward areas"<sup>17</sup>

Similarly Hugu Tinker reports how one official told him " I do not like to spend a night in the village. I have nothing to say to the villagers nor have they to me".<sup>18</sup> Obviously such attitudes would not be there if our recruitment was more broad based and imaginatively drew talent from all other sectors and disciplines.

After having tried to recruit the personnel with the correct rural cum development bias and orientation, we should also take

care to see that life is not made unduly hard for our urban youth who fired with a zeal to uplift and change the rural scene, may opt for rural postings. One reason for the reluctance of our young recruits to take up pioneering work in poorly developed areas, is the lack of reward or compensation. Positive incentives like increased allowances, liberal leave facilities etc. should be provided for work in difficult areas.

### **Training for Development**

If Indian bureaucracy has to play its proper role in regard to development, not only must there be the correct recruitment of personnel but also their proper training. Over the years Indian bureaucracy has become less and less concerned with securing results and more and more obsessed with procedures and the negative aspects of regulation.

Increasingly concerned with the diffusiveness of public administration training programmes, the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration (IASIA) in 1974 established a working group on curricular development. The group set forth basic components of the training programme which hold good for a developing country like ours. First, the knowledge component viz. knowledge of cultural, legal, economic, social and political institutions, processes, analysis, implementation and review, organization behaviour, methodology. Second, the skills component viz. skills for providing leadership, problem solving, management, communications, research and evaluation. Third, the behaviour component viz. understanding of behavioural sciences like psychology, socialization of individuals, of behaviour modification and individual adaptation. And fourth, the value component viz. understanding of the ethical and value systems within which public managers must operate' development of personal and social values such as responsibility, integrity, loyalty and commitment to work. <sup>19</sup>

One thing is clear : the training of civil servants should not be a mere extension of university education. The aim of training should be to impart the relevant information ( which is different from imparting knowledge ) and the development of requisite skills. The information imparted for a country like India must

necessarily include knowledge of problems concerning industry and commerce since they have a vital bearing on the economy of our developing country. Training must also make them aware of the importance of public relations in a democratic developing society. Trainees must not only be made aware of the crucial importance of framing a development programme but also of monitoring details of its progress and in assessing its implications for the larger organization and country. The central challenge of social transformation is how to build into our large bureaucratic organization a capacity for "innovative learning", for identifying and articulating alternative development plans or schemes, for management of systems (rather than management of specific projects), for continuous self-monitoring and rapid self-control over mere formalized planning and evaluation methodologies. In short our training schemes must aim at producing "Managerial administrators"<sup>20</sup>

Finally, it will not do to merely impart proper initial training. Fresh IAS recruits, who to begin with, may be good, deteriorate rapidly once they cross 40/45 years and occupy key posts. Once crossed this age, to their store of knowledge while their spirit of public service has almost vanished. Hence a rigorous mid-career training combined with appropriate evaluation of work, is necessary. Those who do well in such mid-career training cum evaluation must be rewarded by granting them a higher retiring age.

---

#### Notes :

1. For Weber's concept and its evaluation see Martin Albrow, 'Bureaucracy, Macmillan, 1970.
2. Cited in S. R. Maheswari, Indian Administration, Orient Longmans, Delhi, 1974, P. 264
3. Vide K. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government (2nd ed.) Free Press, New York, 1966.
4. N. S. Sakesna, " Why IAS and IPS are in Poor Shape ", Times of India, Bombay, 27-12-79.
5. V. A. Pai Panandikar and S. S. Kshirsagar, Bureaucratic Adaption to Development Administration, in S. K. Sharma

(Ed.) Dynamics of Development, Vol. 1, Concept Publishing House, Delhi, 1977. pp 309-337.

6. Ibid pp 311-312
7. Ibid P. 332
8. Ibid P. 333
9. Fharat Karnard. Mentality of the IAS cadre, Sunday Standard Bombay, 27-8-78, p. 8
10. J. B. D'Souza, Social Change : Can bureaucracy deliver the goods?" Economic Times, Bombay, 21-7-'980 p. 4.
11. Ibid.
12. K. K. Khanna, " Indian Bureaucracy : the pitfalls of politicisation ", Economic Times, Bombay, 28-2-80
13. For the British method of recruitment see, S. R. Maheswari, Civil Service in Great Britain, Chs V and VI, Concept Publishing House, Delhi, 1969
14. Vide " Facing the UPSC interview ", G. Satyarao, Sunday Standard, Bombay, 11-3-79.
- 15, Vide Samachar report " PM for rural bias in recruitment policy " in Times of India, Bombay, 16-11-76 p. 13
16. E. N. Mangat Rai, Commitment My Style, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1973.
17. Vide "Young IAS men avoid backward areas" by staff correspondent, Times of India, Bombay, 26.11.76.
18. Hugh Tinker, 'The Village in the Frame work of Development' in Ralph Braibanti and Joseph Spengler, Administration & Economic Development in India'', Duke Univ. Press, 1963.
19. Vide Ernest A. Engelbert, The Education and Training of Public Managers for Development Administration'', in S. K. Sharma, Dynamics of Development, Vol. I, same as in Note 5, pp 545-546.
20. This was the main theme of the Asian colloquium held in November-December 1976 which in general felt that no country in Asia has as yet organised a managerial cadre to man its public enterprises with the marked exception of Japan where the civil servicers have historically been an important "breeding" ground for public enterprise managers. Vide The New Managerial Order in Asia, Ed by p. k. Basu, Macmillan, Bombay, 1980.