

UNIT 11 DISTRICT PLANNING

Structure

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11.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to :

- discuss the meaning and importance of district planning
- explain the steps taken to promote people's participation in planning
- highlight the evolution of district planning machinery
- discuss the problems of district planning.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In a vast country like India, with considerable degree of diversity between regions, planning by a sole Central planning agency can even be counter-productive. Therefore, ever since Independence there has been a strong trend in the country in support of democratic decentralisation of the planning process. Broadly, the concept of democratic decentralisation means the involvement of the people at various stages of plan formulation and implementation. Under such a scheme of things planning would have to be done at the Central level, at the state level and at levels below the state, that is at the block and the village levels. It is only then that planning can become truly a national endeavour. But this requires that a suitable planning machinery be established at various levels. It also requires that the tasks of planning at the various levels are clearly and appropriately specified and links are established between various levels of planning. Further, since the ability and the power to decide on economic matters is an essential part of planning, the process of democratic decentralisation has as its core the concept of decentralisation of political, administrative and financial powers.

In this unit we shall study the evolution and functioning of the planning machinery at the district level and in the process discuss the steps taken and the problems involved in attempting to move in the direction of democratic decentralisation and planned development.

11.2 RATIONALE BEHIND DISTRICT PLANNING

The Constitution of India provides for the distribution of legislative and financial powers between the Centre and the states. Further, no political authority is specified in the Constitution for the districts. This raises the important issue of the feasibility of district planning. However, the Constitution can be amended given the necessary will. The important question therefore is regarding the desirability of district planning. Should there be planning at an intermediate level that is between the state and the project level? If so, then what should be the content of such planning under alternative scenarios of decentralisation of political power to the district level?

The case for district planning arises, first, from the fact that a coordinated inter-departmental effort is likely to give greater benefit from the same outlay than the sum total of uncoordinated departmental efforts. Usually, development activities at the sub-state levels are handled by various departments, each having their own hierarchies. Also, non-departmental public agencies like commercial banks, input corporations, marketing agencies, etc. also operate at the district and sub-district levels. Thus development functions get highly fragmented among numerous departments and agencies. Immense benefits can be reaped by integrating and co-ordinating these individual efforts into a consistent regional plan framework. This requires the setting up of planning agency which can benefit from the fact that most departments and agencies have their regional offices located at the district level. District planning is therefore necessary for coordination, consistency and spatial planning.

Another reason in favour of district planning arises from the need to allow for diversity and different levels of development between regions. A single plan even at the state level, it is argued, cannot account for the great diversity in natural resources, terrain, soil and water availability, skills and cultural factors. It is therefore desirable that planning is decentralised at least upto the district level so that effective use can be made of local resources after identifying local needs and problems. To plan at a centralised level would mean either the neglect of diversity or would involve costly collection of data and information from a large area and the processing of such voluminous amount of information to evolve a consistent and integrated plan. Decentralised planning would therefore reduce information costs and allow planning to be of manageable size while at the same time accounting for regional needs and resources.

However, although these arguments related to spatial planning and decentralised planning are undoubtedly important, the emphasis on sub-state level planning in India has primarily been the outcome of political values. The influence of Gandhian ideals of self-managing small communities has underlined many of the efforts at decentralisation of planning. In fact the ideas of "planning from below" or "grass roots planning" have been stated time and again since the inception of planning process in India. People's participation, from the stage of setting up of priorities to the stage of plan implementation, has been propagated not only as a means of effective planning but also as an end in itself. Planning at the district and lower levels has been seen as an input to the process of strengthening democracy in this country. The political ideals of democracy and socialism have been the concepts underlying whatever efforts that have been made to decentralise the planning process. And it is to the study of these efforts and the problems they have encountered that we should now devote our attention.

11.3 ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN LOCAL PLANNING

Planning requires an agency and a process. At the district level the struggle for setting up a planning machinery has been a torturous one. The earliest attempts in this direction was the Community Development Programme and its sequel the Panchayati Raj System. These were attempts of the 1950s to build structures for people's participation in planned development. They laid greater stress on people's participation in planned development rather than on the technical aspects on details of planning as such.

The Community Development Programme was started in 1952 to promote better living for the whole community with its active participation and initiative. The role of the government was to plan and organise the programmes on a national basis and to provide technical services and materials beyond the resources of the communities. As regards the people, community development was seen as "essentially both an educational and organisational process". It was concerned with changing people's attitudes and practices and was designed as nurseries of community action.

However, the Community Development Programmes in its first few years failed to evoke public participation. The Balwant Rai Mehta Study Team was appointed in 1957 to study the Community Development Programme, specially from the point of

view of assessing the extent of popular participation and to recommend creation of institutions through which greater participation could be achieved. The Study Team concluded that "one of the least successful aspects" of the Community Development Programme was "its attempt to evoke popular initiative". At the district level this was due to inappropriate agencies like District Boards being made responsible for planning. The District Boards were too large, lacked expertise, legitimacy and even power due to the fact that some states took over some of the Boards' powers and in many others there was a dual control both by the states and the Boards.

The Study Team therefore recommended that these bodies be replaced by democratic institutions to take charge of all aspects of development work. At the district level such a body was to be the Zila Parishad which was to be an advisory body with the Collector as the Chairman. The members of the Zila Parishad were to be indirectly elected mainly through ex-officio members from lower tiers of the Panchayati Raj institutions. In fact, the Zila Parishad was to be the highest level of the three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions viz., Village Panchayats, block-level Panchayat Samitis and district-level Zila Parishads. The Team's recommendations regarding the establishment of statutory and elective institutions with definite duties, functions, powers and resources received considerable amount of support. By 1961 most of the states established the Panchayati Raj system, sometimes with minor modifications, on lines proposed by the Balwant Rai Mehta study team.

But planning under the Panchayati Raj institutions was not much of a success. Perhaps this was not due to any inherent weakness in the decentralisation process. The main reason seems to be that decentralisation did not go far enough. The Panchayati Raj institutions were never really given a chance to actively engage in local planning. Their operations were severely restricted on account of four principal factors : 1) lack of experience, skill and help in planning; 2) domination by the bureaucracy; 3) inadequate devolution of financial powers, and 4) the subordinate status of these institutions vis-a-vis the state government. We will now briefly discuss these factors.

Lack of Experience, Skill and Help in Planning : The lack of experience and ability meant that the Zila Parishads could hardly engage in meaningful planning. The district plan was drawn up by the officials who in turn lacked the requisite skills. In fact district plans wherever they existed were no more than a compilation of departmental schemes and outlays at the district level with the sum total of block plan providing a statistical summary. Although the post of the District Planning Officer or its equivalent existed in many cases, there were no clear procedures outlined for formulating the district plan. The so-called 'district plan' once prepared was presented before the Zila Parishad almost as a formality and was then passed. The legislative process was rushed through giving little time for elected members to articulate their requirements, make modifications and suggest alternatives. Walter C. Neale reported a case where the Five-Year Plan was placed before the Zila Parishad at ten 10 O'clock in the morning and passed by the same evening. All tasks required in the process i.e. formation of sub-committees, hearing, scrutiny of proposals etc. were rushed through in a matter of hours. People's participation was therefore reduced to a token with Zila Parishads taking the role of mere rubber stamps of official plans.

Domination by the Bureaucracy : The role of the bureaucracy was a factor contributing to the erosion of the influence of the Zila Parishads. The officials prepared their departmental plans and pooled these into a 'district plan' and their primary objective was to get these passed by the Parishad. Since they had more adequate information and were better educated they succeeded in obtaining the Zila Parishad's approval for the proposed plan. The fact that the Zila Parishad members knew little about technical details only helped in confusing issues. The role of the Zila Parishads in planning was therefore only peripheral.

Inadequate Devolution of Financial Powers : The Zila Parishads had little financial powers. Adequate financial powers are really necessary for planning. The concept of a district budget which was voted by the Zila Parishad did exist but the Parishad did not have the right to alter most of the schematic budgets. For example, they could not alter the cost and other specifications of road construction proposals of the Public Works Departments. Estimates showed that the Parishad had powers to alter items accounting for about 10 to 15 per cent of the budget amount. With time, this proportion declined further.

Subordinate Status of Panchayati Raj Institutions : In addition, in most cases, the District Magistrate had the power to veto acts of the Zila Parishads. Thus in matters of planning, the Parishads could not force their views on the administration. The interference by state level politicians (MLAs, etc.) also increased over Zila Parishads reducing the role of local participation. With the introduction of Centrally Sponsored Schemes the powers of the Zila Parishads got further curtailed. The staff under the Parishads would execute the Schemes though the programmes were kept outside their purview. The staff spared by the state to the district also gradually came to consist of officers who were not wanted by the state governments. And finally there was a tapering off of plan allocations for Panchayati Raj institutions and a gradual curtailment of powers of the Parishads resulting from various enactments of the state legislatures. The decline of Zila Parishads was completed with their supersession and the practice of not holding elections. Barring a few exceptions, the initial experiments with democratic decentralisation were not successful.

As far as decentralised planned development is concerned we could not achieve much. To rectify this defect and to improve the working of democratic institutions at the district and lower levels the Government of India appointed a Committee headed by Asoka Mehta in December, 1977. The Committee known as the Asoka Mehta Committee recommended a two-tier structure for Panchayati Raj with the district being the first point of decentralisation below the state. The district level was also to be the basic unit of planning.

Unlike the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, the Asoka Mehta Committee recommended direct elections to the Zila Parishads with reservations for scheduled castes, tribes and women. For planning purposes, the recommendation was for setting up a Committee of the whole Zila Parishad with MLAs (Members of Legislative Assembly), MLCs (Members of Legislative Council) and MPs (Members of Parliament) from the area as ex-officio members. The Zila Parishad was to be the basic unit of decentralisation with a comprehensive range of developmental responsibilities. In fact the Committee went even further by recommending that all developmental functions related to the districts be transferred from the jurisdiction of state governments to the Zila Parishads. The Zila Parishads, to be able to perform the developmental role, were to have all the staff under the supervision of the Parishad. The Parishad was also to have financial powers and earmarked devolution of funds for developmental purposes. In short, the Committee visualised a separate tier of development administration below the state with comprehensive and clearly defined developmental, administrative, financial and legislative functions.

The recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee, although fairly radical, did not find much favour with the state governments. To discuss the Committee's report a Conference of Chief Ministers was held in 1979. The discussions led to the preparation of a model bill to ensure uniformity in the Panchayati Raj system. As things stand today only a few states, most notably Karnataka, has gone ahead and implemented the Panchayati Raj system on the lines recommended by the Asoka Mehta Committee. Perhaps a greater involvements of the Centre in the process, including possibly an amendment to the Constitution to ensure democratic decentralisation upto at least the district level may be necessary. In fact, two Constitutional Amendment Bills (64th and 65th) were prepared one by the Congress and the other by the National Front Government with this broad objective in view. Till now no further action has been taken on these lines and the issue of effective decentralisation on an all-India basis below the state level appears to have been shelved for the time being.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : 1) Use the space given below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the need for district planning.

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- 2) What were the reasons for subdued involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions in local planning?

11.4 DISTRICT PLANNING MACHINERY

In the last section we saw that the ideal of people's participation in plan formulation has had limited success. The attempts at democratic decentralisation has not been very effective. Despite this, the attempts to strengthen the machinery of planning at the district level has continued. Due to the limited success of Panchayati Raj institutions, the attempts at establishing and strengthening of the technical side of the planning machinery has gained momentum. In fact the efforts for strengthening district planning machinery began in the mid 1960s only, this was the period when the weaknesses of district planning had become clearly visible.

As a part of the Community Development Programme the states were asked to prepare district and village plans as early as in 1954. However, decentralised planning got a slightly clearer shape with the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee report in 1957. The Committee stated that local plans under the Community Development Programme was to be the joint responsibility of people's representatives assisted by the development staff. The states were expected to lay down the "broad objectives, the general pattern and the measure of financial, technical and supervisory assistance available". The concept of block and district budgets were introduced. While the Zila Parishad was the forum of people's participation the officials in charge of development departments at the district level were placed under the overall guidance of the District Collector who was to be assisted by an Additional Collector and a District Statistical Officer for planning and evaluation purposes. The District Statistical Officer was to function under the technical control of the Director of Economics and Statistics and the administrative control of the Collector.

A decade after the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee's recommendations, the Administrative Reforms Commission noted that the attempts at district planning have not been effective. According to the Commission this was due to the absence of a clear idea regarding the aims and resource availability for district planning. This was compounded by the fact that "the district had no planning expertise as such". The Commission therefore recommended that an appropriate planning machinery for

the formulation of plans should be provided at the district level. The planning team in the district would essentially consist of a Planning Officer who may be either an administrative or a technical officer capable and trained for coordinating developmental work. This officer would work full time on the planning side. The district level technical officers belonging to sectors such as agriculture, forestry, minor irrigation etc. should be responsible for plan formulation and implementation at their levels. Planning at the district level, the Commission felt, should primarily be in terms of physical planning for the development of local resources. The Commission also felt that since Zila Parishads normally have no representation from urban areas they are therefore not the best agencies for balanced district planning as a whole. The Administrative Reforms Commission therefore recommended that "there should be a District Planning Committee consisting of the representatives of the Zila Parishad, Municipal Bodies in the district, professional talent in the district and with appropriate association of the district officers". It recommended that the District Planning Committee, unlike the Zila Parishads, should be small in size to ensure effective participation by its members. The District Planning Officer should be the Secretary of the Committee which should meet at least once in two months.

The Administrative Reforms Commission recommendations were closely followed by "guidelines" issued by the Planning Commission in 1969. The guidelines stressed the need for decentralised planning and suggested the involvement of government, local self-government bodies and progressive farmers and entrepreneurs in the assessment of available resources and the existing administrative situation and in the fixing of priorities. It suggested that officials of different departments are to be responsible for the preparation of schemes pertaining to their departments for inclusion in the district plan. The task of the planning agency was to integrate these departmental plans into a consistent and comprehensive plan for the district. In this process of plan formulation the planning agency was to consult not only various departments but also lower and higher level agencies and other district level public institutions like banks. Thus the guidelines went into great detail about the process of plan formulation. However, it paid almost no attention to the problem of setting up of an adequate planning machinery at the district level. A suitable planning machinery at the district level continued to be absent even a decade later as the Working Group on Block Level Planning (the Dantwala Committee) observed : "... there are a number of departments located in the district, each with its own vertical hierarchy and separate existence at the state level ... The District Collector performs the role of a coordinator. Even this role is largely undefined and informal and is limited to issues pertaining to implementation".

Thus even in 1978 the Planning machinery at the district level was either non-existent or extremely deficient. Regarding the district planning machinery the Dantwala Committee made the following observations :

"In majority of states, no attempt seems to have been made to improve personnel resources at this level. Even in the case of states which have set up something like 'District Planning Machinery', the composition of the staff reflects that there has been no serious attempt to induct technical skills in planning. The staff who have been appointed in these units perform only routine secretariat functions, assisting the District Development Council under the Collector but do not provide much technical support in the tasks of plan formulation, monitoring, review and evaluation. Thus in many states, the District Planning Cell consists of District Planning Officer assisted by Statistical and Research Assistants and clerical staff who mainly look after the implementation of the district plan somewhat in a routine manner."

The Dantwala Committee therefore suggested the strengthening of the District Planning Cells and recommended that a minimum core staff should consist of, besides the Chief Planning Officer, six other technical officers—viz., i) economist/statistician, ii) cartographer/geographer, iii) agronomist, iv) engineer, v) industry officer, and vi) credit planning officer. In addition to the above core staff, specialists may be engaged according to the needs of the area/programme. The Chief Planning Officer should be a person who can coordinate the work of the planning team with that of the departmental officers. He can be from any discipline and should be the principal aid to the District Collector and second to him on the planning side.

The recommendations of the Working Group (Dantwala Committee) were followed by the first serious attempt by the Planning Commission to set up a competent district planning machinery. In June 1982 the Planning Commission circulated a document entitled "Scheme for Strengthening of Planning Machinery at the District Level—Guidelines". The scheme envisaged the induction of technical personnel with knowledge and skills required for scientific district planning with minimum supporting staff. Half the cost of the scheme was to be borne by the Centre and the rest by the states. The proposed planning team was to consist of a Chief Planning Officer and one economist working with a team of five other specialists chosen from a suggested list of six specialists—viz, area/programme specialist, planning officer (social development), agronomist, engineer, credit planning officer and a geographer/cartographer. The guidelines also laid down in detail the functions of the various specialists and officers of the planning team. It also laid down other details like the status, qualifications and pay of the personnel, the selection of consultants and also gave some suggestions relating to planning procedure. It clarified that only those states which take concrete steps to make district planning a reality would be eligible for financial assistance.

To transform the district planning endeavour from a concept to a reality, the Planning Commission also set up a Working Group on District Planning in 1982 itself. The Working Group which submitted its report in 1984 was headed by Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao. The Working Group was set up with the objectives of defining the scope, content and procedure of district planning and to establish links between planning from the block to the state levels. The Working Group noted that there was some form of District Planning Body in most of the states though they were called by various names like District Planning Board/Committee/Council or Zila Development Board, etc. In some states (Maharashtra, Gujarat, U.P. and Bihar) the body was headed by a Minister of State. In two states there was a non-official Chairman and in Sikkim the body was chaired by an MLA. But in most states the District Collector/Deputy Commissioner was the Chairman. The Working Group also found that purely technical personnel in the district planning bodies in the states ranged from two to six officers, they did not necessarily belong to different disciplines. They were usually on deputation from other departments and did not possess any particular planning qualifications. Thus though by early 1980s district planning machineries had been set up in states their technical competence was poor.

The Working Group, as per its terms of reference, laid down the functions of district planning bodies as follows: a) crystallisation of local needs and objectives, b) taking stock of the natural and human endowments, c) listing and mapping of amenities, d) formulation of district plans, e) formulation of policies, programmes and priorities, f) coordinated implementation, and g) monitoring and review of district plans and programmes. For these tasks the Working Group suggested the setting up of a broad-based District Planning Body comprising of representatives from the Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samities, municipalities/corporations, MLAs and MPs from the district, prominent personalities, workers' and entrepreneurs' representatives, bank representatives, etc. The total membership of the body could be around fifty. In addition to the District Planning Body there should be a smaller Executive Body or Steering Committee with the District Collector as the Chairman, the Chief Planning Officer as the Member-Secretary and other members drawn from important officers of development departments and agencies. The Working Group therefore was a *de facto* group. It favoured the transfer of the planning function to a body other than the Zila Parishad till the time Zila Parishads become effective and active. These non-elected bodies, the Group suggested, may be constituted by an executive order. To aid the District Planning Body in technical matters, the Working Group further recommended that there should be a District Planning Cell/Office headed by a Chief Planning Officer with a status next to that of the District Collector. The Chief Planning Officer should be specially trained in regional/area planning and should be assisted by a team of experts from various disciplines and subject areas. The Group also suggested the strengthening of the Collector's role and clear definition of financial and administrative powers for the distict level government and adequate disaggregation of outlay according to districts. Thus the Working Group made far reaching recommendations on the technical and administrative aspects of district planning.

In 1985, just after the Working Group's report, the "Committee to review the

existing Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes" (in short CAARD) submitted its report which broadly supported the recommendation of the Working Group. More specifically, it endorsed the Working Group's recommendation for setting up District Planning Bodies and the suggestions for decentralisation of financial and administrative powers. However, it differed in one important respect in that it called for the separation of developmental and regulatory activities at the district level and suggested the creation of a post of District Development Commissioner entrusted with developmental responsibilities. The regulatory role was to be performed by the District Collector. The Development Commissioner should be much senior in rank to the District Collector and should possess wide developmental experience. The CAARD also recommended the setting up of a State Development Council (on the analogy of the National Development Council) so that district and state plans can be brought into a common framework. Thus once again fairly detailed suggestions were made to restructure the district administrative machinery in order to handle the gigantic task of developmental planning.

11.5 PROBLEMS OF DISTRICT PLANNING

District planning, despite the fact that its importance has been realised and its need has been stressed again and again, has yet to become a reality. Large number of Committees, Working Groups, Commissions, etc. have squarely faced the issue and made a large number of suggestions. However, very little concrete action has been taken. It is only when the Planning Commission decided to finance a scheme for strengthening the technical side of district planning that most districts were able to have a District Planning Cell. However, these cells have done very little actual planning in most districts although it appears that their role is likely to increase in the near future.

There are various reasons for the relative failure of district planning in India. This unit has tried to highlight them, though certain major problems need to be emphasised. First, there is the basic problem that planning and authority must go hand in hand. Since the district level government is not recognised as a separate tier of government, like the State and the Centre, it becomes virtually impossible for it to set targets, decide on priorities, mobilise resources and decide on allocations. Planning at the district level is therefore reduced to a formality in the absence of adequate autonomy.

The second, and a related obstacle, is the inadequacy of financial powers at the district level. If the districts are provided with adequate resources, they can decide on an optimum pattern of allocation. However, devolution of free resources to districts is small as most planned schemes are either Centrally sponsored or promoted by the state government. The districts have negligible revenue raising powers and no power to borrow resources. Therefore, in the absence of financial resources planning loses its meaning.

Another problem is the absence, in most states, of elected district level bodies to articulate the needs of the people. The process of decentralisation and Panchayati Raj has had only limited success. In the absence of popular initiative planning reduces to a bureaucratic exercise of formulation, sanction and implementation of departmental schemes. District planning requires strong and enlightened Zila Parishads.

Finally, district planning suffers from the inadequacy of trained and competent planning personnel at the district level. The officers of the District Planning Cells are therefore normally engaged in routine work and not in technical exercises. For district planning to be successful a band of competent district planners and a popular and relatively autonomous district administration are being increasingly recognised as the basic prerequisites.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : 1) Use the space given below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the recommendations of Administrative Reforms Commission regarding the strengthening of the planning machinery at the district-level.

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- 2) Highlight the attempts made by the Dantwala Committee and Planning Commission to improve the district planning machinery.

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11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the importance and need for district planning. We have highlighted the efforts that have been made to make the concept of district planning a reality. These efforts have been on two parallel lines : a) strengthening the process of people's participation in development at the district level, and b) building up a competent district planning machinery. Though some progress has been made in recent years in building up District Planning Cells further steps towards their development have been retarded due to inadequate decentralisation.

11.7 KEY WORDS

Agronomist : Person specialised in a branch of agriculture dealing with field crop production and soil management.

Analogy : Comparison or similarity between two things that are alike in some way.

Cartographer : A person whose job is drawing maps.

Dantwala Committee Report : The report of the Working Group on Block Level Planning (1978).

Defacto : Something that is real.

District Planning Cell : The technical unit responsible for formulation, monitoring and often evaluation of district plans.

Spatial Planning : Planning of spaces with the objective of optimal location of services like dispensaries, banks, schools etc.

Vertical Hierarchy : Offices placed in such an order that facilitates issuance of a command from the level above and the compliance of the same by the level below. The structure of such authority can be compared with the different rungs of a ladder.

Zila Parishad : Elected representative body of the district level with legislative and planning functions.

11.8 REFERENCES

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Department of Rural Development. 1985. *Report of the Committee to Review the Existing Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes (CAARD)*; Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India : New Delhi.

Planning Commission. 1984. *Report of the Working Group on District Planning*; Government of India : New Delhi.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- district planning is needed for coordination and consistency in planning
- it is a must for spatial planning
- immense benefits can be reaped by integrating and coordinating the individual efforts into a consistent regional plan
- it is needed for regional development
- a single plan cannot account for the diversity in culture, natural resources and human skills
- it reduces information costs and makes planning manageable.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- lack of experience, skill and help in planning, the officials who drew up plans lacked the requisite skills, the Zila Parishads were not involved in planning
- domination by the bureaucracy, where the primary objective of the officials was to get the departmental plans approved by Zila Parishad, the members of the Parishad did not possess sufficient knowledge
- inadequate devolution of financial powers to the Zila Parishads
- District Magistrate had the power to veto acts of the Zila Parishads
- with the introduction of Centrally Sponsored Schemes the powers of Zila Parishads were further curtailed
- curtailment of plan allocations for Panchayati Raj institutions
- elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions were not held regularly
- the two-tier structure recommended by the Asoka Mehta Committee was not welcomed by all the state governments
- the two Constitutional Amendment Bills (64th & 65th) have not been able to ensure effective decentralisation.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- the ARC recommended that an appropriate planning machinery for the formulation of plans should be provided at the district-level
- it recommended that the planning team would consist of a Planning Officer for coordinating developmental work

- the technical officers should be responsible for formulation and implementation of plans at their level
- planning at the district level, should be in terms of physical planning for the development of local resources
- there should be a District Planning Committee consisting of the representatives of the Zila Parishad, professional talent and municipal bodies in the district
- the Committee should be small in size and should meet at least once in two months.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- Dantwala Committee suggested the strengthening of the District Planning Cells
- it recommended a minimum core staff of six technical officers and one Chief Planning Officer for the District Planning Cell
- in June 1982, the Planning Commission circulated a document entitled "Scheme for Strengthening of Planning Machinery at the District Level—Guidelines"
- the scheme envisaged the induction of technical personnel with knowledge and skills and minimum supporting staff for proper planning at the district level
- the planning team proposed by the Planning Commission was to consist of a Chief Planning Officer, one economist and five specialists
- the Guidelines laid down the functions of the specialists
- only states which would take concrete steps to make district planning fruitful were to receive financial assistance
- Planning Commission set up a Working Group on District Planning in 1982 itself
- the Working Group noted that the technical competence of personnel involved in district planning was very poor
- it laid down the functions of district planning bodies
- it suggested the setting up of a broad-based District Planning Body and a smaller Executive Body or Steering Committee
- it suggested the transfer of planning function to a body other than the Zila Parishad till the time Zila Parishad becomes effective and active
- it recommended the setting up of a District Planning Cell and District Planning Body in technical matters
- the Group also suggested the strengthening of the Collector's role and adequate devolution of financial and administrative powers to the districts.

UNIT 12 GRASS ROOTS PLANNING

Structure

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- 12.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the various steps taken to operationalise grass roots planning in India
- explain the purpose and features of structures like the block and the samiti
- highlight the problems involved in the process of democratic decentralisation
- discuss the recent attempts at operationalising grass roots planning.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Although the ideas of 'grass roots planning' and 'planning from below' have their basis in Gandhian thought, attempts at crystallising these ideals into concrete administrative and political structures have been rather tentative in the post-independence period. The ideas of 'decentralised planning', 'planning from below', 'peoples' participation in planning', 'multi-level planning' etc. have been mentioned time and again in the Five Year Plan documents. However, only a few steps have been taken to turn these concepts into reality. In the 1950s the Community Development Programme and the establishment of the Panchayati Raj institutions were perhaps the first, and until now the most comprehensive attempts at putting the idea of grass roots planning into action. However, these attempts failed and by mid 1960s agricultural growth through improved technology and government support became the paramount objective.

However, the policy of centralised planning with emphasis on growth has thrown up a number of problems. Foremost of these are increasing inequality especially between regions and between rural and urban areas. Centralisation in plan formulation has also alienated large groups of people from the development process while at the same time there has been inadequate use of local resources and specialist manpower.

Another major problem area is that of plan implementation, monitoring and project execution. Decentralisation and peoples' participation, it is now increasingly realised, are essential for planning to remove the deficiencies of inequitable growth, unemployment and tardy implementation. Recent years have therefore witnessed a revival of interest in grass-roots planning.

In this unit we shall study grass-roots planning in its two phases viz., the Community Development phase and the recent phase. The focus will be on 'block level' administration and planning and its chequered evolution.

12.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The block level administrative structure was the product of the Community Development Programme (CDP) launched in the early 1950s. As you read in the

previous unit, the basic philosophy underlying the Community Development strategy was the belief that "all aspects of rural life are interrelated and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt in isolation". It is because of this faith that the Community Development Programme was made multi-disciplinary in character though agricultural development remained the primary concern. However, it was always stressed that the economic aspects of village life cannot be detached from the broader social aspects and that agricultural development is inextricably linked up with a whole set of social problems. Therefore, social change to enable economic development was central to the Community Development strategy.

The Community Development Programme, in its conceptual basis, was a good example of grass-roots planning. The very essence of the programme, as the First Plan stressed, was "people's participation". However, since small communities like the villages had limited technical, material and financial resources, their initiatives had to be supported by the state. This needed the establishment of an extension organisation which would give developmental support to the villagers. Therefore the two key elements of the CDP were people's initiative and participation encouraged and aided by an extension organisation. This, it was felt, would enable the mobilisation of local resources, including manpower, and promote the percolation of modern technology and resources through the extension agencies. To take an example from agriculture, what the CDP meant in practice was that extension would be used to motivate farmers to adopt improved techniques and also to develop the necessary infrastructure through utilisation of rural manpower.

The extension organisation set up under the CDP created the Community Development block as the key unit of the structure. It was put under the administrative control of a Block Development Officer (BDO) who had jurisdiction over an area of roughly 100 to 120 villages, approximately conforming to a tehsil or taluk. The BDO was assisted by a multi-disciplinary team of extension officers for different functional areas like agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation and works, cooperation, social education, village industries etc. It was stressed that the block level set up was a "medium" through which the various developmental departments would function so as to synchronise their efforts and reach the people.

While there were a number of extension officers at the block level, they all functioned through the multi-purpose Village Level Worker (VLW) or gram sewak. The VLW was a crucial link between the villager and the block level administration. The rationale behind this structure was as follows: "The peasant's life is not cut into segments, in the way the government's activities are apt to be; the approach to the villager has, therefore, to be a co-ordinated one, and thus to comprehend his whole life. Such an approach has to be made, not through a multiplicity of departmental-officials, but through an agent common at least to the principal departments engaged in rural work". Although, this may sound alright, in reality this meant that the VLW was expected to do too much as at the cutting edge the entire programme of decentralised development rested on his/her shoulders.

12.3 PANCHAYATI RAJ

The Community Development Programme, as we have seen, had two pillars : people's participation and governmental 'extension'. Whereas the extension agencies—the Block, the VLWs, etc.—were organised fairly early and planned budgetary allocations were made for the CDP, the important aspect of people's participation was tackled only a little later. The most important step in this direction was the establishment of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee to study, *inter alia*, the question of popular participation in the CDP.

The recommendations of the Mehta Committee, brought out under the title "Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Service", were far reaching. The Team recommended the establishment of a three tier structure for Panchayati Raj institutions with elected Panchayats at the village level, an executive body called the Panchayat Samiti at the block level and an advisory body called a Zila Parishad at the district level. These local bodies were to be statutory and largely elected bodies with necessary resources, power and authority devolved on

them and assisted by a decentralised administrative system working under their control. The team also recommended that the basic unit of democratic decentralisation should be located at the block/samiti level.

The Panchayat Samitis, with a jurisdiction co-extensive with a development block, were entrusted all these development tasks which the block was to undertake under the CDP. More specifically, these included development of agriculture in all its aspects, animal husbandry, rural industries, public health, primary education, social welfare and maintenance of statistics. It was also to be an agent of the state government in executing special schemes of development entrusted to it.

To enable them to discharge their developmental functions the Samitis were assigned specified sources of revenue like a percentage of land revenue, cess on land revenue, profession taxes, proceeds from tolls and leases, etc. In addition, the state governments were expected to provide conditional and/or unconditional grants-in-aid. And finally, all Central and state funds spent in the block areas were to be assigned to the Panchayat Samitis to be spent by it either directly or indirectly. The Samitis were to have a budget which was to be approved by the Zila Parishad. Thus the Panchayati Samitis were given resources and assigned developmental functions and were thus expected to formulate block plans on the basis of people's felt needs which their (indirectly) elected composition was expected to ensure. To implement their plans the Samitis were given administrative powers over the technical extension officers who were to be under the administrative and operational control of their Chief Administrative Officers, viz., the BDO.

By early 1960s almost the entire country had been covered by the twin programmes of Community Development through extension and Panchayati Raj institutions. The atmosphere of confidence it created, reflected in Nehru's characterisation of this as "the most revolutionary and historical step". It was unfortunately short-lived.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : 1) Use the space given below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What were the objectives of the Community Development Programme?

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- 2) Highlight the structure and functions of Panchayati Raj institutions.

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12.4 DECLINE OF GRASS ROOTS PLANNING

Committee, had three distinct phases; the phase of ascendancy, 1959-64; the phase of stagnation, 1965-69 and the phase of decline, 1969-77. However, the failure of the grass-roots planning exercise were visible from its very inception. The causes of this failure were several and these should be carefully studied so that future attempts at decentralised planning can be made successful.

- 1) Among the more important causes of failure was the absence of a clear idea and expertise regarding planning at the block level. Indeed expertise and clarity regarding the meaning and content of planning was absent even at the district level as we have seen in an earlier unit. In fact there was almost no planning at the block level as was discovered by scholars like Alice Ilchman: "To talk with assurance about 'the Block Plan' assumes that a plan exists at every block headquarters and is available for examination and use ... In fact, the block plan turned out to be a singularly elusive document ... When it was demanded, various pieces of information emerged ... In any event, at none of the blocks ... was single document which could be copied or photographed as the definite 'Block Plan'." (Quoted in Walter C. Neale's Article on Indian Community Development...)

The Block plans, Watter C. Neale reported, "contained a summation of the information recorded on the scraps of paper that ... VLWs had collected, to which were added the programmes administered from block headquarters". Thus block plans were hardly existent and were no more than some summary statistics and accounts. Block planning never took off despite the creation of an organisation for the purpose and the absence of planning capabilities was a major factor for this.

- 2) The failure is also attributable, in part, to the rigidity in the CDP itself which was the result of the heavy reliance of the programmes on the bureaucracy. This causes continual conflict between the Samitis and the officials. "The history of economic planning and administration at the local level", writes Neale, "has, in many respects, been the history of tensions between the requirements of community development and the traditions and responsibilities of the state and national administrative services". The BDOs role was an unenviable mix of an "extension officer" and a "programme officer". As a programme officer he was expected to implement the government's programmes and schemes. As an extension officer he was to help the Samiti to articulate their needs and help prepare a plan. Faced, with the choice of serving one of the two masters more devotedly, the BDO chose the government and not the Samiti. His choice was reinforced by the schematic budget of the Community Development Programme.

The 'schematic budget' for a block was the fixed budgetary allocation under the plan for the Community Development Programme which the BDO was required to spend on certain specified activities. Though the budget was multi-disciplinary, the bulk of the schematic budget pertained to agricultural development. Not only the heads of expenditures were specified, the BDOs were also given detailed instructions regarding the manner of operating the block budget. This gave little freedom to the Panchayat Samitis and the block officials to plan according to local felt needs. V. Venkatesan refers to a case where faced with waterlogging problem certain villagers expressed the need for a nulla (drain). The BDO was not sure whether his block budget permitted the construction work and hence referred the matter to the state government which, in turn, passed the question on to the Government of India. There have been many instances of conflict between financial accountability to the authority providing funds and operational flexibility required for responding to local needs. How could grass-roots planning operate when for example, the construction of a village drain, required the clearance of the Government of India?

- 3) There were other problems also like the problem of co-ordination, the problem of interference by politicians and officials of the state and central levels and the problem of existing inequalities and vested interests opposed to egalitarian development in rural areas. But the decline of the CDP and Panchayati Raj experiment of the 1950s is directly traceable to the conflict between the urgent economic needs at the national level and the local needs. This was most strikingly thrown up by the serious food problem the country began to experience since the late 1950s and which culminated in acute food shortages during mid 1960s. The food problem manifested itself in outflow of foreign

exchange to buy food and in rising prices. Though food aid helped temporarily, the solution, it was realised, lay in rapidly increasing foodgrains production. Growth in agricultural output through intensive use of inputs like fertilisers, water, high-yielding varieties of seeds became the accepted government policy. This was the 'green-revolution' strategy.

This change in strategy of development at the national level changed the content of the CDP and Panchayati Raj institutions. This major change took the rather silent form of the community development services being asked to drop "nonessential" activities and concentrate on raising agricultural production. "In effect", writes Neale, "these orders destroyed community development as a joint project of experts and villagers and turned it into a system of administering specific programmes of rural credit, loans in kind, subsidies, demonstrations ... and minor social overhead capital works. The BDO became the man who checked on the conduct of these programmes. Instead of making the authorities aware of the needs and attitudes of people at the village level, the BDO started making the villagers aware of the government's plans and policies and the funds available for them. One might say that the "spirit had been taken out of community development. Another consequence of the same cause was to make Panchayati Raj increasingly irrelevant to economic planning and administration When planning became individualised and administration became more centralised, the panchayats' economic functions atrophied".

The decline in the grass-roots planning, it must be emphasised, cannot be dated strictly as it was a gradual process. The change was visible from around 1960s and by the end of the decade the Community Development Programme had lost its spirit. But "at no time was a decision made to replace Community Development and Panchayati Raj nor have they been abolished". They were simply made ineffective through neglect.

12.5 ATTEMPTS AT REVIVAL

By mid 1970s the food problem had eased somewhat. However, it was realised that excessive concern with growth in production has led to the neglect of the goal of equity. Studies showed that during the 1960s, while production increased, the percentage of people below the poverty-line remained virtually constant. Important segments of the rural population, specially the small and marginal farmers and labourers, and large parts of rural India, specially the non-irrigated areas, were bypassed by the green revolution. As disparities grew and discontent mounted, often manifesting in violent movements as in Naxalbari, policy makers gave greater prominence to the removal of poverty ('garibi hatao') and attempted to broaden the base of development. Several Centrally Sponsored Schemes were launched—for example, the Drought Prone and Desert Areas Development Programmes; Hill Area Development Programme; Marginal, Small and Agricultural Labourers' Programmes; and Employment and Rural Works Programme, reflecting the shift in emphasis towards "poverty alleviation". These attempts at broad-basing development about which you have read in Block 2 of this course logically revived interests in grass-roots planning. Since mid 1970s a number of attempts have been made to revive the spirit of decentralised development.

The 'Report of the Working Group on Block Level Planning' (1978) is one of the important attempts in this direction. This report, known as the report of the Dantwala Committee, grew out of the concern for a) generating employment, b) assuring basic minimum needs, c) effective spatial planning for rural socio-economic infrastructure, and d) promoting equity. In fact, the Committee in its report enumerated these, *inter alia*, as the goals of the block-level planning. The achievement of these objectives through planning required technical competence to plan. The Dantwala Committee found that such expertise was absent at the block level. It stated that the "The present staffing pattern at the block is mainly tuned to implementation tasks and not so much towards planning functions. The set-up basically consists of a Block Development Officer who is assisted by five Extension Officers, each in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operation, panchayats and rural industries. The other staff consists of an Overseer, a Social

Education Organiser, a Progress Assistant and VLWs. In the block, there are also Veterinary Stockmen, a Medical Officer, a Sanitary Inspector and a Lady Health Visitor, some of them with the necessary supporting staff. In some states there is also an Extension Officer for programmes relating to women and children. Thus it may be seen that the staffing pattern at the block level is essentially meant for getting the development programmes implemented in the field. There is a Progress Assistant who keeps record of the plan programmes and their progress and assists the BDO in sending regular progress reports. Beyond this, there is no other person assisting the BDO in the planning functions".

However, despite recognising the absence of planning personnel at the block level, the Dantwala Committee did not recommend that such personnel should be inducted at the block level. Realising that planning skills were scarce it recommended the constitution of a District Planning Cell which would be entrusted with the task of formulating both district and block plans: "... we are visualising the planning team located in the district essentially as a peripatetic team, which will move down to the selected blocks and prepare the block level plans in association with the BDO, the Panchayat Samiti, voluntary agencies and other concerned persons at the block level". Thus the Committee was trying to introduce block-level planning without changing block-level administration. It laid greater stress on the technical tasks, like collection of data and assessment of public opinion, to the block administration. This emphasis on the technical aspect of planning led it to underplay the roles of both the administration and the Panchayat Samitis. In the absence of popular involvement, the Dantwala Committee's recommendations fall far short of what is understood by 'grass-roots planning' though its strength lay in its attempt at upgrading planning capabilities at the sub-state levels.

The Asoka Mehta Committee in its report published in the same year as the Dantwala Committee report (1978) endorsed the latter's proposal of locating the technical planning team at the district level. The Asoka Mehta Committee gave primacy to the district as the basic unit of decentralisation which was a fundamental departure from the system that had developed following the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommendations of making the block and the Panchayat Samiti as the key units of decentralisation. The Asoka Mehta Committee assigned practically no role to the block. It suggested a two-tier Panchayati Raj structure comprising the Zila Parishad at the district level and Mandal Panchayats at the sub-block level with a jurisdiction over a number of villages and covering a population of 15,000 to 20,000. The existing block level Panchayat Samitis were to be converted into "non-statutory executive committees of Zila Parishads and when the Mandal Panchayats become active, most of their functions would be taken up by the Mandal Panchayats".

The Mandal Panchayats, the Asoka Mehta Committee suggested, would comprise directly elected members and representatives of Farmers' Service Societies with provisions for representation of women and of members of scheduled castes and tribes. As regards planning, their roles were seen as implementation and promotion. They were to be responsible for implementation of the schemes and projects assigned by the Zila Parishad. They would also "play a promotional role activating community action, build up organisation and project formulation". To enable them to function effectively, the Mandal Panchayats should have "purposive work allocation and transfer of money component alongwith the functions assigned to them for implementation". Thus the Mandal Panchayat was visualised as essentially an implementing authority with clear demarcation of functions and financial resources. Their role in plan formulation was to be supplementary to the Zila Parishad role: "... the Mandal Panchayats ... would have a key role in supplying the necessary information about the various schemes and suggest the potential areas of development as well as their requirements to the Zila Parishad... The Planning unit at the district level should take note of the views articulated by the Mandal Panchayats from time to time".

Although both the Dantwala and Asoka Mehta Committees favoured planning at the district level, the problems of implementation of anti-poverty programmes, sponsored by the central government, simultaneously increased the need for operational planning at the block level. A set of guidelines were issued by the

Ministry of Rural Development which sponsored most of these programmes and these guidelines gradually evolved into the "Operational Guidelines on Block Level Plans for Integrated Rural Development Programme" (1982). This was definitely an exercise in planning to be undertaken at the block level but it was planning for the purpose of implementing a centrally sponsored programme and hence had little of autonomy and people's participation. But it did highlight the important fact that even implementation of a programme requires planning at the grass roots level.

The idea of comprehensive decentralised planning was again taken up by the Hanumantha Rao Committee (Working Group on District Planning, 1984). This Working Group reiterated the earlier recommendation that "block planning should also be entrusted to District Planning Team". The purpose of block planning should be, in addition to the goals of district planning of which the blocks are components, the reduction of intra-district disparities for which the district planners should develop suitable intra-district variation indicators. However, unlike the Dantwala Committee, the Working Group recommended the introduction of planning personnel at the block level also: "There should also be a Planning Officer of BDO's rank at the block level assisted by two Research Assistants and a Typist and a messenger to help the (District) Chief Planning Officer to coordinate the Block Level Programmes with regard to intra-block gaps in development and amenities". To put multi-level planning on a sound footing it also stressed the need for a "single planning cadre for the state comprising the technical planning staff at block, district and state levels". Thus the need for making changes in the block level administration was realised.

This need (of restructuring block administration) was an important recommendation of CAARD (Report of the Committee to Review the Existing Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes, 1985). The CAARD noted that the "block-level set up has lost its original pre-eminent position in development administration ... (and) there has been proliferation of agencies and programmes over the last three decades". The size of the budget handled by the block has increased several fold and the complexities and technical content of the various schemes have also increased. The CAARD therefore recommended that the Block Development Officer should be upgraded and should be headed by an 'Assistant Development Commissioner of the status of a Sub-Divisional Officer'. Though the Committee was of the view that the block should be "the sheet-anchor of the entire rural development process", it was prepared to accept smaller units like the Mandals, as recommended by the Asoka Mehta Committee, as the basic unit of grass-roots planning (in addition to the Village Panchayats). In fact, it left the choice of the appropriate unit of area planning below the district to the state government. Some states (for example, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) have adopted the Mandal as the basic sub-district unit for decentralised planning. But in most states there has been little change and grass-roots planning below the district level remains neglected.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : 1) Use the space given below for your answers.

2) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the reasons for the failure of grass-roots planning.

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- 2) What attempts have been made to revive the institutions at the grass-roots level.

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12.6 LET US SUM UP

Grass roots planning in India, we have seen, has not been made operational though attempts have been made in this direction. The attempts, in their early phase, concentrated on building representative institutions which would reflect the will of the people and would be the structures of local democratic government. At the same time the bureaucratic structure was brought to the level below the district and a significant part of this bureaucracy was entrusted developmental tasks. The aim of these efforts was to allow people to choose their representatives who, in co-operation with officials and experts, would draw up and implement development plans. This attempt had only a limited success due to the paucity of planning skills and the rigidity of the programme.

Recent attempts at reviving grass-roots planning have focused more on the creation of technical competence and has relatively under-played the importance of people's participation. What this may lead to is that the lower levels of bureaucracy may be equipped with planning skills and provide greater autonomy to decide on the implementation and even the planning of a few projects and schemes. Both these are welcome developments but are still not enough. Grass-roots planning, in its very essence, requires people's participation. As more and more of bureaucracy enters the villages for developing rural India, the people may lose their dignity and become mere 'beneficiaries' of development programmes and 'target-groups' for loan-subsidy schemes. The spirit of self-help, so central to the community development concept, is also the key to the process of decentralised planning.

Thus in this unit we have discussed the objectives of the Community Development Programme and the Panchayati Raj structures which were designed to promote grass roots planning. We noted that though important structures were created decentralised planning could not become operational and subsequently declined. The reasons for this were analysed. Finally, we noted the recommendations of various recent committees which have attempted to promote grass-roots planning in India.

12.7 KEY WORDS

Cess : A proportionate fee on land revenue levied for building a fund for some special purpose.

Green Revolution : The strategy, adopted in the 1960s, for rapid growth in agricultural production through intensive use of high-yielding seeds, water and fertilisers.

People's Participation : Involvement of the populace in plan formulation and implementation generally achieved through elected local bodies.

Peripatetic : A peripatetic is a person who travels around and stays for short periods of time in different places, often in order to work in those places.

Poverty Alleviation : Reducing the number of people below the "poverty line" (defined as the income necessary to purchase foodgrains to fulfil a minimum standard of food intake).

Schematic Budget : The block budget under the Community Development Programme fixing the amounts of permissible expenditures under different heads.

Sub-State Level : Level below the state and above the district.

Toll : Money paid for the use of a road, bridge, harbour etc.

12.8 REFERENCES

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12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points :
 - the programme aimed at bringing about economic and social development at the grass-roots level
 - the underlying philosophy of the CDP was that all aspects of rural life are interrelated
 - the key elements of the CDP were people's initiative and participation encouraged and aided by an extension organisation
 - it was stressed that the block level set up was a "medium" through which the various development departments would function.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points :
 - the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended the establishment of a three tier structure for Panchayati Raj institutions
 - these institutions were to have elected panchayats at the village level, an executive body called the Panchayat Samiti at the block level and an advisory body called a Zila Parishad at the district level
 - the team recommended that the basic unit of democratic decentralisation should be located at the block/samiti level, the Panchayat Samitis were entrusted all the development tasks which the block was to undertake under the CDP
 - the development tasks of the Samitis included development of agriculture, animal husbandry, industries, health, primary education, social welfare etc.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points :
 - absence of a clear idea and expertise regarding planning at the block level
 - block plans were mere summary statistics and accounts
 - heavy reliance of the Community Development Programme on the bureaucracy, resulting in continued conflict between the Samitis and the officials
 - bulk of the schematic budget pertained to agricultural development
 - conflict between economic imperatives at national level and local needs
 - community development as a joint project was not successful.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- the attempts at broad-basing development by launching several centrally sponsored schemes revived interest in grass-roots planning
- Dantwala Committee was appointed to develop rural socio-economic infrastructure to assure basic minimum needs and generate employment
- the Committee recommended the constitution of a District Planning Cell
- Asoka Mehta Committee suggested a two-tier Panchayati Raj structure comprising of Zila Parishad at the district and Mandal Panchayats at sub-block level
- Hanumantha Rao Committee recommended that block planning should also be entrusted to District Planning Team
- Rao Committee recommended the introduction of planning personnel at the block level
- CAARD recommended that block should be the sheet-anchor of the entire level development process.

UNIT 13 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Expanding Role of the State and Bureaucracy
- 13.3 Role of Bureaucracy in Policy Formulation
- 13.4 Role of Bureaucracy in Policy Implementation
- 13.5 Review of the Projects and Programmes
- 13.6 Problems of Bureaucratization
- 13.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.8 Key Words
- 13.9 Some Useful Books
- 13.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the expanding role of state and bureaucracy;
- explain the role of bureaucracy in policy formulation;
- describe the role of bureaucracy in policy implementation; and
- highlight the problems of bureaucratization.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The term bureaucracy refers to the body of employees in a large-scale organisation. More specifically, it refers to a body of employees in authority relationship within an organisation. Thus every large business organisation has its bureaucracy; in the government there are civil and military bureaucracies. In the literature of Public Administration, the term civil bureaucracy has a wider connotation than the term civil service. Thus, while employees of autonomous corporations are not counted among civil servants, they are said to belong to the bureaucracy. It is notable that the bureaucracy does not include elected politicians: it consists only of appointed employees. In common usage, the term bureaucracy is sometimes also used to refer to routine and delay in official work. However, in the study of Public Administration, while routine and delay are taken into account, the term bureaucracy is used to refer only to appointed officials.

The term development is generally used to refer to economic, political and social changes such as increase in national income, industrialisation, strengthening of the nation state, urbanisation, spread of education and wider use of mass media such as newspapers, radio and television. The bureaucracy, both governmental and business, participates in bringing about these changes and, so, is said to be an important instrument of development. However, there is a big debate about this conception of development, and hence about the role of the bureaucracy. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi maintains that such development, modelled on Western Civilisation, accentuates selfishness and violence, leads to concentration of power and wealth, and puts emphasis on material needs instead of spiritual development. His ideal society would, therefore, do away with all concentration of power and wealth, and hence also with bureaucracy. Karl Marx is also opposed to concentration of power and wealth. In his view, this concentration reaches its maximum in capitalist society; the supercession of capitalism would in the course of time, do away with the bureaucracy also. Max Weber maintains that the bureaucracy is an efficient instrument for implementing policies of state. But it is also a source of alienation in the society. We thus, note that both, the conception of development and the role of bureaucracy, are highly controversial matters. In studying the role of the bureaucracy in development, therefore, we should be careful to note both the possible achievements and the lurking dangers.

13.2 EXPANDING ROLE OF THE STATE AND BUREAUCRACY

The people in developing societies suffer from a number of problems, such as poverty, unemployment, bad health, illiteracy, corruption and authoritarianism. The state is considered to be the main agency for dealing with these, or, in other words, for bringing about development. Hence the state has to shoulder more and more responsibility. Since the state functions through the government, and the government, in turn depends to a large extent upon the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy's role also keeps expanding. We shall briefly examine the contribution of bureaucracy in the various aspects of development.

i) Role of Bureaucracy in Economic Development

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was believed that the state should restrict itself to the country's defence and the maintenance of law and order, and that it should intervene in the economy as little as possible. This view changed, particularly after the Great Depression of the 1930s, in which millions of people became unemployed the world over. Nowadays, all governments are expected to regulate the economy so as to bring about an increase in production, a high level of employment, moderate prices of commodities, and check over monopolies and unhealthy trade practices. The need for such regulation of the economy is all the more great in developing countries like India due to widespread poverty and unemployment on the one hand, and the great power of monopolists on the other. The government regulates the economy through fiscal policies (by modulating taxes), and monetary policies (by modulating money supply). Planning, which means resource allocation through a centralised administrative process, is resorted to for achieving economic growth. The government develops means of transport and communication. It provides loans and raw materials to industrialists and farmers. All these governmental activities are performed by government departments, nationalised banks and other public undertakings through their officials. Hence the bureaucracy has a very important new role, namely that of functioning as the agent of economic development. More and more economists, statisticians and trained managers are needed for the proper performance of this role.

ii) The Role of Bureaucracy in the Welfare State

In recent times there has been a tendency for entrusting the state with more and more responsibility for social services, such as the provision of education, health care, employment, labour welfare, the welfare of the blind and other handicapped persons, and the welfare of widows and orphans. So much importance is attached to these new functions that the state has been renamed as the welfare state.

The provision of such varied social services requires large numbers of different types of specialists, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, labour officers and social workers. With their recruitment as members of the bureaucracy, the nature of the bureaucracy tends to change: the new role requires a new kind of bureaucracy.

iii) The State and Bureaucracy as Agents of Social Change

In olden days prophets and saints like Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ, Guru Nanak and Swami Dayanand called for changing various social practices, norms and rituals. Nowadays, however, many such changes are sought to be brought about with the help of laws. Thus, untouchability, bigamy, child marriage and dowry system have been declared illegal.

iv) The State and Bureaucracy as Agents of Political Development

The emotional bonds of nationalism are often weak in new nations. However, unless these bonds are strengthened, the nation is in danger of falling apart, as happened, for example, in Pakistan from which Bangladesh broke away. The state and its bureaucracy play an important part in strengthening these emotional bonds. Thus national integration is sought to be promoted through education, radio and television programmes, development of native languages, publication of good quality literature in native languages, cultural and sports activities in which persons from all parts of the nation participate, and so on. These programmes are often conducted by members of the bureaucracy.

In a country where the national bonds are weak, having a bureaucracy which is centrally recruited and whose members serve in different parts of the country, also helps to hold the nation together.

Political development is also promoted by strengthening interest groups, such as labour unions. Legislation which sanctions and supports trade union activity thus helps to bring about political development. Insofar as the bureaucracy participates in the formulation and implementation of such legislation, it has a role in political development.

Political parties also constitute an important part of the political system. In some countries nowadays political parties are provided with election funds by the state. This reduces the dependence of the parties on the rich, helps to curb corruption, and promotes political development.

Elections constitute an important part of the democratic political process. They must be conducted with honesty and impartiality; otherwise the people will lose faith in the system and it is likely to collapse sooner or later. Insofar as the bureaucracy conducts elections honestly and efficiently, it helps to maintain and develop the political system; for, it is through elections that new parties and leaders come to power and implement programmes of social change desired by the people.

13.3 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN POLICY FORMULATION

Till about fifty years ago it was believed that in democratic government while politicians formulated policy, the bureaucracy implemented it. However, research work has shown that this is not wholly true. The making and implementation of policy are so deeply interconnected that it is impossible to separate them. Thus the formulation of new policy requires an understanding of the reasons for the successes and failures in regard to earlier policies. This feedback can best be provided by members of the bureaucracy due to their wide experience and knowledge. In other words, since members of the bureaucracy often stay in their jobs longer than politicians, and since they have more detailed information, their advice on policy matters comes to constitute a valuable contribution. Their role in policy formulation has tended to gain importance also due to the expansion of the role of the state, as discussed above. Thus, now it is well recognised that both in developed and developing countries, the bureaucracy plays an important role in policy formulation. What is notable is that its role in policy formulation is much greater in developing countries than in developed ones. We shall now discuss the reasons for this.

i) Bureaucracy as a Channel of Communication

The society consists of different sections, such as those of farmers, landlords, workers, small businessmen, big businessmen, and so on. Their interests conflict to some extent. It is the function of the state to bring about a balance among their interests, so that the interests of each section are fulfilled as far as practicable in the given economic situation. Hence the aspirations, needs, problems and grievances of each section have to be communicated to the government. This communication between the government and the various sections of the society takes place, to a large extent, through the bureaucracy. Thus, if the farmers in an area suffer from some problem, such as lack of water for irrigation, they generally approach officials like the Deputy Commissioner, who communicates the problem to higher level of the administration: they may make proposals for irrigation facilities in the five year plan and the budget. In this way communication through the bureaucracy may help in the formulation of policy proposals for meeting the needs of the people.

In developed countries there is another channel also. This channel, between the people and the government, runs through interest groups and political parties. An interest group may be an association for putting forward the interests of a certain section. Thus a trade union is an interest group for articulating the interests of workers. After the demands of the various sections have thus been articulated, they are considered and collected together by political parties in their election manifestos. Such aggregation of interests

workers, as articulated by trade unions and aggregated by political parties, have led to labour laws in many countries. These laws contain the labour policies. In this way, communication through interest groups and political parties leads to the formulation of policies for fulfilling the demands of the various sections of the people.

In developing countries, however, interest groups and political parties are often either weak or non-existent. Thus in India, there are hardly any associations of landless labour, or of artisans such as weavers and carpenters. Most political parties exist in villages only in name. In towns also their offices seem to crop up only at the time of elections. Due to such weaknesses of interest groups and political parties, articulation and aggregation of interests is often not possible through them. Hence the bureaucracy often remains the only mechanism for the conversion of demands into policies. In this way, the bureaucracy plays a more important role in policy formulation in developing countries than in developed ones.

ii) The Bureaucracy as a Repository of Information

The formulation of policy requires a lot of information. Thus one needs to know why certain policies failed earlier. For example, suppose the policy of expanding secondary education in villages failed earlier mainly because of poverty, boys and girls had to earn their own upkeep and so parents could not afford to send them to school. This information helps in devising a new policy which combines training in productive work with literary education, so that the youth earn while they learn. The bureaucracy has the advantage of long experience, while politicians come and go. The experience of the bureaucracy makes it a repository of information about the past. Further, the bureaucracy has access to information which is contained in records, such as files. Such information can be much older than what any person can remember. Since officials consult these records often, they know about old cases also. We also need information about differences in the various regions, so that the policy may provide for these. Thus, irrigation facilities in the hills may have to be different from those in the plains. Since officials are transferred from place to place, they come to know about different areas. What is even more important, members of the bureaucracy have access to secret information, it can be information relating to control of smuggling, conduct of foreign affairs and regulation of the economy. Since such secret information is essential for policy formulation, the bureaucracy comes to have an important role. Thus we note that since the bureaucracy has access to often secret information relating to different time-frame and areas, its advice is considered by ministers to be weighty, and thus it comes to have an important role in policy formulation.

iii) Bureaucracy as a Group of Technical Advisers

The bureaucracy comes to have an important role in policy formulation also because of the technical knowledge possessed by it. There are three main reasons for it: (i) growth of science and technology, (ii) expanding role of the state, and (iii) increasing complexity of the administration. The growth of science and technology changes the nature of agricultural and industrial production. Thus agriculture nowadays requires the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides, high yielding varieties of seeds, pump-sets and tractors. The formulation of agricultural policy requires knowledge of these. Such knowledge is possessed by specialists in agricultural science. Similarly, specialists are required in areas like health, education, industry, control of crime, and so on. Hence specialists of almost all kinds are nowadays recruited as members of the bureaucracy and their advice is depended upon in the formulation of policies. The expansion in the role of the state makes for dependence upon economists, accountants, lawyers and others since their advice is needed for regulation of the economy: checking the growth of monopolies, providing employment, controlling prices, and so on. As the role of the state expands, the administration tends to become bigger and more complex. Maintenance of administrative effectiveness and efficiency, then, requires persons having specialised knowledge and experience of administration and management. Thus specialists of various kinds in the bureaucracy come to influence policy formulation.

It needs to be emphasised that policies often take the shape of laws. Thus the sale of high yielding varieties of seeds is controlled through the Seeds Act. Labour policy is contained in laws like the Industrial Disputes Act. The policy relating to income-tax is contained in the Income-Tax Act. Hence giving concrete shape to a policy often

only deciding upon its ingredients but also formulating it in the form of laws. The drafting of laws and rules necessarily requires specialists in the substantive area (such as agriculture, health or economics) and also in law. Hence policy formulation, or giving the shape of laws and rules to policies, is largely done by specialists. It is true that laws and rules drafted by specialist members of the bureaucracy are later examined and modified by ministers and legislators. However, ministers and legislators often do not have understanding of the intricacies of scientific and legal matters. Therefore they have to depend to a large extent upon specialists in the bureaucracy. In this way the bureaucracy comes to influence policy formulation.

iv) Bureaucracy as an Impartial Adviser

The society is made up of several sections, whose interests to some extent conflict. Thus higher wages are in the interest of workers, but not in the interest of industrialists. The government is expected to maintain a balance between these conflicting interests. This is what the government tries to achieve through its policies. Hence the formulation of policies requires the advice of persons who are impartial, or neutral, between the different sections. Members of the bureaucracy are expected to function in this impartial or neutral manner; hence they come to be depended upon for advice relating to policies.

The bureaucracy is neutral in another sense also. Politicians come and go with elections, both as legislators and as ministers. However, civil servants continue to serve governments of different parties. They are expected to serve and advise every government for bringing about a balance between different interests. Hence civil servants are considered to be neutral in a dual sense: between contending interests and between political parties. Their advice on policy is considered to be especially valuable for being impartial.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: | i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What is the contribution of bureaucracy to the various aspects of development ?

- 2) Explain the statement:
“Bureaucracy acts as a channel of communication”.

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- 3) "Bureaucracy acts as a neutral adviser". Discuss.

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13.4 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The main function of the bureaucracy is policy implementation, that is, giving effect to policies after they have been approved by the executive and legislative branches of the government. This function also is performed under the overall control and supervision of politicians in the executive and legislative branches; however, members of the bureaucracy have to bear much of the responsibility for implementation.

Policy implementation has four stages, as follows:

- 1) Formulation of projects and programmes
- 2) Project planning
- 3) Making provision in the five year plan and the budget, and
- 4) Execution of the programmes

We shall now deal with these stages one by one.

1) Formulation of Projects and Programmes

For implementation, a policy has to be broken up into projects, and each project into programmes. Thus, for implementing the policy of rural development, there are projects like that of Community Development. Under the Community Development Project, there are various programmes. Similarly, under the new education policy, there is the project of Navodaya Vidyalaya. Each Navodaya Vidyalaya constitutes a programme. The sizes of projects and programmes can vary: some are very large while others are small. What is notable, however, is that the implementation of a policy requires activities of various kinds. Some of these are chosen and given the name of projects. Again, each project requires action under various heads and at different places. Some of these are chosen and given the name of programmes. Which of these should come first and which later, is decided mainly by specialist civil servants on technical grounds; thus irrigation facilities have priority over fertilisers.

2) Project Planning

Project planning must be distinguished from economic planning. While economic planning refers to allocation of resources among different sectors and areas, project planning means administrative planning for the implementation of a single programme, such as that of malaria eradication in a given area, or the setting up of a hospital. The first step in planning a project is the collection of the necessary information and statistical data from the field. Thus while setting up a hospital or a school, we have to decide where exactly it should be located. This requires information about the concentration of population so that the school is built near the residence of most children; about the roads in the area so that the school may be reached easily; about the utilisation of land in the area so that infertile land, rather than good agricultural land, is used for the purposes of the school; and so on. With the help of such data a study of the feasibility, or practicability, of the programme in the area is made. For example, its cost-benefit analysis is made: in other words, the costs and benefits of different locations, sizes, and functions are calculated and compared. Once the functions, size and locations, sizes, and functions are calculated and compared. Once the functions, size and location have been decided upon, estimates of the cost of land and buildings, of the necessary equipment, of the additional personnel required, and of the time it would take to set up, are prepared. The making of these analysis and estimates requires expert and specialist civil servants. On the basis of these, a proposal is prepared and submitted for examination and approval to overhead agencies, like the Ministries of Planning and Finance.

3) Preparation of Plan and Budget

The economy may be divided into sectors of agriculture, industry and services (such as health and education). It has to be decided how much money and other resources should be spent on the development of each sector. Broad decisions relating to such allocation

of resources are taken for a five year period since many of the projects and programmes take several years. Thus it may take several years to build a dam. Hence a five year plan is prepared for allocating resources among different sectors, and also among different areas, some of which may be less developed than others. More detailed allocation of resources is made every year for each department, project and programme through the budget. The activities of every department are important and each one of them asks for more and more money. However, the total amount at the disposal of the government is limited. Since all the demands of all the departments cannot be met, money is provided for the more important projects and programmes, and the less important ones are left out. This process of selection involves the comparative evaluation of projects, and within each project, of programmes. Apart from such selection, there is the detailed scrutiny of each head of expenditure under a programme. These functions of planning and budgeting are performed by agencies like the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Finance. The activities of analysis, evaluation, comparison and scrutiny of proposed expenditures relating to various departments, projects and programmes requires a lot of expertise and experience. Civil servants, who possess such expertise and experience, are therefore dependent upon for performing these activities and drawing up the five year plan and the annual Budget. It must be noted, however, that they are prepared under the over-all control and supervision of Ministers. Finally, the Plan and the Budget require the approval of Parliament. Members of Parliament and Ministers are elected representatives of the people. They control the preparation of the Plan and the Budget so that these reflect the needs and aspirations of the people. Such control is a condition of democracy. At the same time, efficiency of administration is achieved through the application of specialised knowledge and experience possessed by the bureaucracy.

4) Execution of the Programmes

Execution means carrying a programme into effect. It has to be done in stages. Thus if a school is to be built, the first step is to acquire the land and to construct the building. Then the teachers and other staff members have to be recruited; they may also be transferred from other schools. Some of them may have to be sent for training. The equipment for class rooms and laboratories has also to be acquired. These activities of acquiring land and equipment, getting buildings constructed, and arranging for trained teachers, are all performed by specialised and experienced civil servants. Thus building construction may be the responsibility of engineers in the Department of Public Works, and provision of attendance registers may be the responsibility of officials in the Department of Printing and Stationery. After such basic requirements have been met, officials of the Education Department would arrange for the teachers. Thus civil servants in various departments have to function in a coordinated manner for carrying out various programmes. To ensure such coordination and the execution of programmes within the given time frame, all officials are required to submit reports to their seniors about their achievements periodically. By examining the reports, officers at high levels are able to exercise control over the execution of programmes. Thus execution is mainly the responsibility of the bureaucracy.

13.5 REVIEW OF THE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

To ensure that the objectives of a policy have been fulfilled and there has been no wastage of money and other resources, the implementation of every project and programme is periodically reviewed. Review is done at several levels. Within every Ministry, each programme is reviewed after its completion. At the time of the preparation of the budget, every year, achievements with regard to all programmes are reviewed, both, by the Ministry concerned and the Finance Ministry, at the time of the preparation of the budget. The Comptroller and Auditor General makes a review of all programmes in the course of auditing expenditures. The Planning Commission makes a review of the implementation of all the policies over the past five years while preparing a new five year plan. It also reviews their implementation in the middle of the five year period. All these reviews are made, initially, by specialised and experienced civil servants, who thus help to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

13.6 PROBLEMS OF BUREAUCRATISATION

While on the one hand the use of the bureaucracy leads to efficiency, on the other, it gives rise to certain problems. Thus bureaucratisation results in an emphasis on routine and detail, leads to red tape (delay), and gives rise to complaints of unresponsiveness of the bureaucracy to the people. The bureaucracy has a tendency to expand, so that in the course of time a large portion of the expenditure on a programme goes for paying the bureaucracy instead of meeting the objectives. Thus in a programme for the development of fisheries, the help given to fishermen may turn out to be less than the salaries and allowances drawn by the bureaucracy. Other, more important problems are related to the power of the bureaucracy. The power of the bureaucracy arises from its role in policy formulation and implementation. In developing countries, because of the weakness of interest groups and political parties, the bureaucracy often comes to play an important role. While politicians may be amateurs, they represent the people and have to take into account their needs and aspirations. Bureaucrats, however, are under no such compulsion they often pay more attention to their own interests. Hence it is a condition of democracy that the bureaucracy should remain firmly under the control of the elected representatives of the people. In most developing countries, however, the bureaucracy tends to be too powerful. Indeed, in many of these countries the military and the civil bureaucracy together assume full power, remove the democratically elected rulers and themselves become rulers. Such dictatorships are in existence in many developing countries. The way to deal with these problems is to make the people aware of their rights and power by educating them, organising them in associations and political parties, and to develop bodies of local self-government through which the people can rule themselves with less dependence on the bureaucracy.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.
 ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Discuss the various stages of policy implementation.

- 2) Explain the role of bureaucracy in programme planning.

- 3) Describe the role of bureaucracy in the execution of programmes.

- 4) Critically evaluate the problems of bureaucratisation.
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13.7 LET US SUM UP

The role of the state and its bureaucracy in bringing about economic, social and political development is expanding. The bureaucracy participates in policy formulation by functioning as a channel of communication, a repository of information, as a group of specialists and as an impartial adviser.

It implements a policy by breaking it up into projects and programmes, by planning each programme, by preparing the five year plan and the budget, and by executing the programmes.

The bureaucracy in each Ministry, and also in overhead agencies like the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission, periodically reviews the implementation of each programme.

The problems of bureaucratisation emerge due to the unnecessary emphasis on routine, red tape, unresponsiveness to the people, increasing cost of administration, the great power of the bureaucracy and the danger of dictatorship. These problems can be dealt with by educating the people, by organising them in associations and political parties, and by developing panchayats and municipal bodies of local self-government.

13.8 KEY WORDS

Budget: A statement of financial position (e.g. of an organisation) for a definite period of time (e.g. the following year) based on estimates of expenditure and income during the period.

Bureaucracy: The term bureaucracy has been derived from the word 'bureau' which means an office or post. Hence bureaucracy refers to officials holding a post or office exercising their power to carry on their constitutional duties and obligations.

Navodaya Vidyalaya: Navodaya Vidyalayas (Schools) are spread all over the country. They are organised by an autonomous organisation i.e. Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti under the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Their broad aims are:

- to serve the objective of excellence coupled with equity and social justice
- to promote national integration by providing opportunities to talented children largely rural, to live and learn together
- to develop their full potential and
- to become catalysts of a nation-wide programme of school improvement.

Review: The examination of the implementation of each programme, to find out whether the policy objectives have been fulfilled, and whether the implementation has been done efficiently.

13.9 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

- Almond, G.A. and G.B. Powell, Jr., 1966. *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Amerind Publishing Co. : New Delhi.
- Heady, Ferrel, 1966. *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective*, Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J.
- Jain, R.B. (ed.), 1983. *Public Services in a Democratic Context*, Indian Institute of Public Administration: New Delhi.
- LaPalombara, Joseph (ed.), 1967. *Bureaucracy and Political Development*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J.
- Riggs, Fred W., 1964. *Administration in Developing Countries*, Houghton Mifflin: Boston.

13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Role of bureaucracy in a welfare state
 - Role of bureaucracy in economic development
 - Bureaucracy as an agent of social change
 - Bureaucracy as an agent of political development
- 2) Your answer should cover the following points:
 - Through bureaucracy, communication takes place between the government and the various sections of the society.
 - The channel between the people and the government, runs through interest groups
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Bureaucracy is expected to be neutral between the different sections of the society.
 - Bureaucracy is expected to be neutral between the political parties.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Formulation of projects and programmes
 - Project planning
 - Preparation of the five year plan and the budget
 - Execution of the programmes
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Bureaucracy collects data from the fields
 - Makes a feasibility study
 - Decides about the functions, size and location
 - Prepares an estimate of the personnel and the cost involved.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Bureaucracy acquires the land
 - Gets the building constructed

- Purchases the equipment
 - Arranges the personnel
 - Functions in a coordinated manner for carrying out various programmes
- 4) Your answer should include the following points:
- Bureaucratisation leads to red tape (delay)
 - Unresponsiveness to the people
 - Expansion in bureaucracy leads to increasing costs
 - Fulfilment of its interests rather than policy objectives
 - Dangers of dictatorship.

UNIT 14 COLONIAL HERITAGE OF INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
 - 14.1 Introduction
 - 14.2 Political Heritage
 - 14.3 Classification of Bureaucracy
 - 14.4 Recruitment
 - 14.5 Promotion
 - 14.6 Conditions of Service
 - 14.7 Organisational Heritage
 - 14.8 Procedural Heritage
 - 14.9 Political Heritage
 - 14.10 Cultural Heritage
 - 14.11 Let Us Sum Up
 - 14.12 Key Words
 - 14.13 Some Useful Books
 - 14.14 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
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14.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will examine the features of Indian bureaucracy. After studying this unit you should be able to:

- understand the political heritage of bureaucracy in the form of its continued power and prestige;
 - explain the continuities in certain aspects of personnel administration, namely classification, recruitment, promotion and conditions of service;
 - examine how certain aspects of administrative organisation and procedures during colonial rule have influenced the formation of the bureaucracy;
 - describe the inherited restriction on the political rights of the bureaucracy; and
 - explain the cultural heritage of bureaucracy.
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14.1 INTRODUCTION

India was under British rule for about two centuries. During this period, the bureaucracy was fashioned as a highly efficient instrument of the British power. Its efficiency consisted mainly in serving well the interests of the foreign power and not those of the people of India. Also, the bureaucracy tended to acquire powers of its own. Thus the interests of the bureaucracy were largely different from those of the people of India. Its role during British rule was narrow and objectives were largely negative, rather than positive, that is it aimed at maintenance of law and order rather than improvement of the living conditions of the people. With the coming of Independence, the bureaucracy is expected to play a new, much more positive role of bringing about development. While everyone agrees about the desirability of such a change in its role, the change does not easily come about. There are several reasons for this. One reason is that social change is generally a slow process. The development of new values and attitudes takes time. Secondly, it should be remembered that the transfer of power in 1947 was not accompanied by a social or economic revolution. Even the political change was peaceful. Hence, socially, economically and politically, the society remained, to a large extent, unchanged. Thus many of the social, economic and political institutions did not undergo much change. Since the bureaucracy is merely a part of the society, it could not change much when the society as a whole remained largely unchanged. Thirdly, the organisation and procedures of public administration remained largely the same. Finally, the system of personnel administration, or control over the bureaucracy, itself remained largely unchanged. The Constitution of India provided that the Central

and State governments could make laws to regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of personnel in their public services. Some laws, like the All-India Services Act, 1951, were passed. However, personnel administration, by and large, continues to be governed by rules. Some of these rules are new while others are the old rules that are continuing even after Independence. It is true that no law, rule or order, whose provisions are contrary to those of the Constitution can have validity. Still, since many of the pre-Independence rules continue to have force, personnel administration, to some extent, bears the mark of colonialism.

14.2 POLITICAL HERITAGE

The political heritage of the bureaucracy refers mainly to its continued power and prestige. The power and prestige of the bureaucracy in ex-colonial developing countries like India are greater than in developed countries like the U.S.A. We shall briefly examine the reasons for this

a) Power

The power of the bureaucracy refers to its role in policy-making and implementation. During the British rule, India was governed by the bureaucracy. The British Parliament and ministers could lay down only some general principles: they could exercise very little control while sitting in England. Hence the making and implementation of policy were both largely in the hands of the officials in India. Members of the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) functioned as Lieutenant Governors, members of Governor-General's and Governors' Councils, members of Central and Provincial legislatures, and also as judges of High Courts. They thus functioned at the highest level in all the organs of the government, namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Naturally, the bureaucracy had a firm grip over policy formulation and implementation. In contemporary India, we have democratic government, where elected representatives of the people in the legislatures and as members of Governments at Central and State levels exercise political power. They control the bureaucracy. Hence the bureaucracy now has less power than what it had during the British rule. However, it still has a lot of power. The present power of the bureaucracy is generally due to underdevelopment (as discussed in Unit 13), and particularly due to the weaknesses of interest groups and political parties, and the lack of education and awareness among the people. These factors largely derive from our colonial past. The British rulers on the one hand, did not allow the people to become educated and politically conscious or to form associations through which they might assert themselves. On the other hand, the bureaucracy was able to develop as an efficient instrument of British rule. The result is that even today the bureaucracy is much more developed than interest groups and political parties. Hence the present power of the bureaucracy derives to a large extent from the colonial era.

b) Prestige

The high prestige of the bureaucracy in developing countries like India is indicated by the fact that highly qualified specialists like engineers, doctors and scientists nowadays compete for entry into the I.A.S. and other services. Prestige is, ultimately, related to power. In times of distress, such as those of drought or floods, the people often rush to civil servants such as the Deputy Commissioner for the solution of their problems. In the United States, by contrast, they more often go to their political representatives, such as Senator. Even the Government, in India, has to depend to a large extent upon the civil and military bureaucracy for dealing with recurrent grave problems like those of riots and terrorism.

Ministers often depend upon civil servants to ensure that their constituencies are properly nursed. Decisions made by civil servants, for example, those relating to the grant of licences and permits for raw materials, greatly affect businessmen. Generally speaking, governmental control of the economy gives a lot of power into the hands of bureaucracy. In short, the government tends to acquire a lot of power in a situation of economic, social and political underdevelopment. Also, because of underdevelopment, much of the governmental power tends to be exercised by the bureaucracy, leading to high prestige for it. Thus even after independence, the bureaucracy continues to retain

some of the power and prestige of the colonial era. It is notable here that underdevelopment has basically been the result of colonial exploitation. The power and prestige of the bureaucracy, resulting in turn from underdevelopment, may thus be truly said to be a part of the colonial heritage.

14.3 CLASSIFICATION OF BUREAUCRACY

a) The Rank System: The bureaucracy may be classified mainly in two ways. One way is to classify it according to jobs, posts or positions. It has been adopted, for example, in the U.S.A. The other way is to classify the bureaucracy into services and groups or classes as is done in India. The first one is known as the system of position classification and the second one as that of rank classification. The rank system was introduced in India by the British and has continued since then. In this system every member of the bureaucracy has a rank which is attached to that person. Whatever post a bureaucrat holds, his/her rank remains the same. A State administrative service has a rank lower than that of the I.A.S. In effect, all the members of a State service have a lower rank than that of members of the I.A.S.

During British rule, at the beginning of the present century, the services were divided mainly into two classes: imperial and provincial. Members of the imperial services were recruited in England, mostly from among Englishmen. Members of the provincial services were recruited in India, mostly from among Indians. The rank of members of the imperial services was higher than those of provincial services: this implied that Englishmen were superior to Indians. The continuation of the rank system would seem to imply that we still consider the members of some services to be superior to those of others. In a democratic system of personnel administration, however, we would prefer to impute superiority or inferiority to jobs rather than to persons. Thus while a person joins a subordinate post at the beginning of his career, he often becomes fit for a superior one after gaining experience.

In India, while the rank system continues, the position system has also been superimposed upon it to some extent. Thus while ordinarily a civil servant draws his/her salary according to his/her seniority in the time-scale whatever his/her post is certain posts (like that of Chief Secretary) carry a fixed salary or special pay. Hence we have, in our system to some extent, a mixture of the rank and position systems of classification. Still, insofar as our system continues to be rank based, it has a feature that was more suited to colonial administration than to democratic administration in a free society with higher social mobility.

b) All India Services : In federations, such as the U.S.A., the Federal and State Governments have their separate services. The Indian Constitution also has some federal features. Thus powers of the Union and State Governments have been divided by the Constitution. They have their separate services also, known as Central and State services. In addition to these, there are other all-India services, which are common to the Union and the States, as in other words whose members serve both the Union and State Governments by turns. The Constitution declared the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service to be all-India services. These had been created to take the place of the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police which existed during the British rule. Later, through the All-India Service (Amendment) Act, 1963, three more all-India services were to be created, namely the Indian Engineering Service, the Indian Forest Service and the Indian Medical Service. However, only the Forest Service actually came into being.

The all-India services constitute the continuation of a colonial institution. However, they are considered to have both advantages and disadvantages at our present stage of development. Their members serve at all levels of the administration throughout the country. Thus they serve as Secretaries to Government at the Union and State levels; they serve as Divisional Commissioners at the regional level; and they also serve at the local level as Deputy Commissioners, District Collectors and Commissioners of Municipal Corporations. In a situation when the bonds of nationalism are not yet very strong, the all-India services are said to help in maintaining the unity and integrity of the country. On the other hand some State Governments have complained that members of the all-India services have a dual loyalty to the Union and State Governments—and

have expressed dissatisfaction with their manner of functioning. The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations Constituted by the Government of India in 1983 has, however, expressed a view favourable to the all-India services; it has supported the belief that they help in maintaining the unity of the country.

14.4 RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is the process whereby people are attracted to, tested and inducted into the bureaucracy. Patterns of recruitment is of great importance for the nature and role of bureaucracy; for it is through recruitment that it is decided as to who will be selected and who will be left out, what his/her age and qualifications will be, and so on. In the following sections, we shall consider the aspects of recruitment that originated during British rule but are still with us, and interfere with the fulfilment of our national objectives.

a) Emphasis upon Liberal Education

During British rule members of the Indian Civil Service were chosen by competitive examination from among those who had received a liberal education at a university. By liberal education we mean education which is not professional or technical but is directed to general broadening of the mind. Liberal education has continued to be the base for recruitment to our higher services. Thus for entry into the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, various Central services including the Indian Foreign Service, and also State Administrative Services, mostly candidates with a liberal education, that is with education in literature, or social or natural sciences, appear at competitive examinations. Even for some services whose work may be said to be technical in character, such as the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, no technical knowledge is required at the time of recruitment. After selection, many of them function as Heads of Departments such as those of agriculture or education with responsibilities for the supervision of the work of persons with high technical qualifications. Members of the I.A.S. often function as Secretaries to Government, and as such advise ministers. They participate in the formulation of policy.

With the growth of science and technology, policy making in most areas has become a highly technical matter. Hence it would be better if technically qualified persons function as administrators in the areas of their specialisation. This was the view of the Fulton Committee in England. In India also, the Administrative Reforms Commission in 1966 recommended that persons with technical knowledge and experience of administration in a certain area should hold high administrative positions in that area. Thus those who have studied the science of agriculture in a university and have served in the agriculture service alone should be appointed to higher administrative positions in the secretariat department of agriculture, where they have to participate in the formulation and implementation of agricultural policy at the highest level. This is necessary because of developments in agriculture. The green revolution has taken place in some parts of India because of the use of high-yielding varieties of seeds, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, weedicides, pump sets and other mechanised implements. An administrator must have an understanding of this new technology. The continuation of generalists, with a liberal education, in high administrative positions, interferes with efficient use of new technology. This applies to practically all fields. Even the maintenance of law and order nowadays requires knowledge of criminology and forensic science. The management of relations with a foreign country requires an understanding of its history, society, economy, policy, culture and language.

It is true that an effort is made to provide the elements of the necessary information during the training after recruitment. However, since generalists move from department to department, they need knowledge in a new field every time they are transferred. The acquisition of new knowledge in a strange field becomes more and more difficult due to the fast expansion of knowledge. Hence while the system of administration by generalists might have served the purpose a century ago, it no longer does so. Instead of recruiting high administrators from among those with a liberal education, as was done during British rule, we should now recruit them from among technically qualified persons. The continuation of colonial practice makes for a bureaucracy which is not

fully suited to its expected role of bringing about socio-economic development through the most fruitful use of science and technology.

b) Restrictions on Lateral Entry

In India, recruitment to bureaucracy is made only from among the young, usually fresh graduates from universities. The low age limits constitute a continuation of the practice during British rule. However, in advanced countries like the U.S.A. there is no age limit for entering into the Services. Thus persons with greater knowledge and experience than those in their twenties can also come in. This is a great advantage, since nowadays persons with diverse knowledge and experience are needed in Public Administration. Due to expansion in the role of the State, civil servants are now required to have an understanding of matters with which they would have not been concerned half a century ago. The government is now doing business, mainly through public corporations and companies, in addition to regulating its business activities much more than before. Hence we need persons in the bureaucracy, who have a good understanding and experience of business. Experienced businessmen or managers who join the public sector might serve the purpose better than those without experience of business.

Lateral entry, or entry from the side, would make for greater flexibility in employment in all fields; flexibility, in turn, would make for richness of talent all over. Thus if the entry of experienced managers, researchers and teachers would enrich Public Administration, experienced administrators might make good teachers of administration in universities. Provision for lateral entry would also allow people to change their profession, thus making for greater job satisfaction for those who find themselves to be misfits in a certain profession and would like a change. There is greater likelihood of success of the policy of lateral entry if a beginning is made with the government, since the government is one of the largest employers nowadays, and also has the responsibility for making innovations which function as the seeds of development, but it is our colonial heritage that stands in the way of allowing, or at least experimenting with, lateral entry.

14.5 PROMOTION

Promotion means undertaking higher responsibilities in service usually resulting in higher emoluments. Promotion is of great importance, it benefits both, the employee and the organisation. It is of benefit to the employee because it makes for higher status and emoluments for him. It is of benefit for the organisation because (i) the hope of promotion motivates employees to do better work; (ii) officials for higher and more responsible jobs are made available through promotion; and (iii) promoted employees are more inclined to accept the organisation as their own. However, in the Indian bureaucracy, promotion suffers from certain drawbacks, some of which are a result of our colonial legacy. We shall now examine these shortcomings.

a) Promotion from One-Class or Service to Another

We have mentioned above that the rank system of classification of the bureaucracy, which was adopted during British rule, continues to be used in India. The bureaucracy is divided into a number of services and classes having different ranks. Since new entrants are recruited into particular services, and not for particular jobs, their promotion also is from one class or service to another. This has the disadvantage that the qualifications of candidates for particular jobs are rarely taken into account. However, with the growing diversity of tasks in Public Administration, and the increasing need for specialisation among functionaries, it is becoming more and more important to fit persons to jobs according to their qualifications and experience. The present system of promotion, from one class of service to another, does not permit this. Further, since rank is associated with status and emoluments, employees come to demand promotion as a matter of right without giving importance to qualifications.

b) Rigidity

There would be a lot of flexibility in promoting persons to jobs according to qualifications. A person could improve his/her qualifications, for example by taking a correspondence course and request for promotion to a high level job, involving jumping

of levels, on the basis of his new qualifications. The possibility of faster promotion would also provide a lot of incentive for improving one's qualifications and doing better work. Such flexibility and incentives are absent in the present system. Promotion is largely from one class or service to another, and it is governed by rigid rules. Thus only 33% of the members of a State Administrative Service who have completed eight years of service can be promoted at a time to the Indian Administrative Service. It was pointed out by Paul Appleby about forty years ago that such rules make for unnecessary rigidity. Such rigidity is harmful for both the organisation and the employees. It is harmful for the organisation because if promotion is governed by rigid rules the employees come to take it for granted; it ceases to function as an incentive, leading to a fall in the efficiency. Rigidity is harmful for the employee because it comes in the way of faster promotion even for those who are willing to work harder and give better results. Rigidity of the promotion system, like several other aspects of personnel administration, is a part of our colonial heritage.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What are the reasons for the continuance of the colonial features of Indian bureaucracy ?

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- 2) Why has the bureaucracy continued to be powerful after independence ?

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- 3) What is the main advantage and disadvantage of all-India services ?

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- 4) What are the disadvantages of the system of recruitment?

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- 5) Discuss the disadvantages of the system of promotion ?

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14.6 CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

During the British rule, the bureaucracy was an instrument that was used in the interests of the foreign rulers. The interests of the rulers and the people were basically in conflict. Hence the bureaucracy did not identify with the people, it remained aloof from them. Aloofness of the bureaucracy from the people was necessary because of the great power exercised by it. If bureaucrats had been close to the people, they would have been inclined to grant favours to them. Hence social distance between the people and the bureaucracy was created. At the same time, service under the British had to be made attractive too, this resulted in a ruthless bureaucratic system which was distant from the people. There arose a conflict between the interests of the people and the bureaucracy. This was highlighted by the revolt of 1857, and the freedom movement. In this situation, attraction for the service and social distance from the people were both ensured by giving high emoluments and excessive security to the bureaucracy.

High Emoluments

Attraction for the service and social distance from the people could both be ensured by giving members of the service a high social status. High social status was conferred upon them by giving them higher emoluments in comparison with the incomes of the people at large. The emoluments included, in addition to salary, special pays, allowances, housing, conveyance, medical attendance, and retirement benefits. During British rule the emoluments of the bureaucracy were generally much higher than those in comparable jobs in the Indian private sector. After independence, the growth of big business had led to higher emoluments for business executives. Hence in the higher echelons, civil service jobs are not necessarily more remunerative than those in business; some business jobs are better. However, compared to the average, or per capita income in India, the emoluments of the public bureaucracy are certainly high. These high emoluments also constitute the continuation of a colonial practice. Since the higher civil servants are paid much more than the common people, they are often unable to understand their difficulties and identify with them. Most of the problems of developing countries like India are related to unemployment and poverty. Since the civil servants are far removed from the experience of poverty, they are often not in a position to satisfactorily formulate and implement policies for dealing with problems, such as widespread ill health, lack of education, increasing population, and increasing crime, which are deeply related to poverty. Thus the high emoluments and great power of the bureaucracy lead to social distance between it and the mass of the people; this social distance, in turn, comes in the way of the fulfilment of developmental objectives. Hence the high emoluments and great power of the bureaucracy, which once served colonial objectives, now hamper development.

Excessive Security

During the British rule, excessive security was given to the civil service to make it attractive and to permit unhampered exercise of power by it. In a democracy, however, the civil service has to be responsible and accountable to the people through their elected representatives. Hence excessive security, which comes into conflict with responsibility and accountability, is antithetical to democracy. However tradition dies hard; and traditionally civil servants have been prosecuted against for criminal offences like embezzlement, but rarely for lack of efficiency or non-fulfilment of their duties. As political underdevelopment makes ministers too dependent upon the bureaucracy, undue security is given to the civil service. Disciplinary action against civil servants, is often delayed because of various rules and procedures. Disciplinary action is also often challenged before tribunals and courts. The recent institution of tribunals has certainly helped to reduce the delay involved in litigation before courts. However, for all the reasons mentioned above, higher authorities are still cautious of taking disciplinary action even where it is due. The excessive security of civil servants tends to make them forgetful of their duties. They tend to function in a highly routine and often lethargic manner without being motivated by the hope of rewards and curbed by the fear of

punishments. It is interesting to note that the absence of both rewards and punishments, to some extent, results from excessive security. Thus one of the most important rewards would be quicker promotion. However, giving somebody quicker promotion is likely to be challenged by those who are superseded. Similarly, not giving promotion to an inefficient official is also likely to be challenged, often on the ground of mala fide action by the superior. Hence one of the main causes of inefficiency in Indian administration today is the excessive security which the bureaucracy has had since colonial times.

In advanced countries such as the United States, many jobs in the public bureaucracy are given for three to five years at a time on a contract basis. This makes the employees strive for better performance so that their contracts may be renewed. Such a system lacking almost completely in security, however, is unworkable in developing countries such as India due to lack of employment opportunities. Few competent people are likely to take up jobs on a contract basis for fear of becoming unemployed soon afterwards. This shows that administration of a country is deeply influenced by its socio-economic conditions.

14.7 ORGANISATIONAL HERITAGE

Now we shall deal with certain attitudes and modes of functioning of bureaucracy that developed due to the organisational setting during the colonial rule.

a) Centralisation

One of the most important features of administration during the British rule was centralisation. India was a vast unitary state, with all power concentrated in the hands of the Governor-General. While in England the term Secretary was used for a minister, in India it came to be applied to the civil servant heading each Department. The Secretaries and their assistants were collectively called the secretariat, which became the hub of the administration as a whole. The Governor-General functioned through the Secretariat and controlled the administration in every nook and corner of India. All administrative action throughout India required the sanction of higher authorities, and ultimately of the Governor-General which was conveyed through the Secretariat. There was very little delegation of authority; even if authority was delegated to a subordinate, it was withdrawn if a mistake was made. Civil servants thus developed an attitude of dependence upon superiors; they were afraid to make innovations. These attitudes to some extent, have continued after independence. However, they do not suit democratic administration in which power resides in the people. The spirit of administration now should be that of serving the people rather than of blindly carrying out the command of the superior.

System of Transfer

The bureaucracy exercised a lot of power during the British rule. Therefore there was a fear of misuse of power, it was thought that a civil servant might unduly help or harm someone. The possibility of such misuse was reduced by not allowing a civil servant to stay in one post for a long time, in order to avoid friendly or hostile relations between the bureaucrats and some persons, within the bureaucracy or outside. Hence the system of routine transfer of civil servants after the duration of about three years came into force. Such a system is not needed in a democracy where the bureaucracy exercises less power, and is properly controlled by the elected representatives of the people. The system of routine transfer has some disadvantages also. Every functionary takes some time to understand the problems of a new place, and to establish rapport with citizens whose participation is required in programmes of development. He/she has to make a new beginning every time he/she is shifted; this interferes with his/her efficiency. A transfer also usually upsets things in the domestic front too like the education of his/her children, the job of his/her spouse etc. The system of transfer in Indian administration has been inherited from British rule. Its continuance is associated with that of bureaucratic power. The reason why the system of routine transfer does not exist in developed countries is that their bureaucracies are better controlled and hence less powerful. As our democracy develops and the bureaucracy becomes less powerful, the system of routine transfer is likely to be superseded by that of fitting functionaries to

14.8 PROCEDURAL HERITAGE

During colonial rule there was a basic conflict of interest between the rulers and the ruled. Indian civil servants could not always be trusted to function in imperial interests as against those of the people of India. Hence they were bound by detailed rules and procedures. Even the rules needed interpretation, which was also often handed down from the top. If a case was once decided in a certain manner, it became a precedent which had to be followed in other similar cases. Thus in the course of time a complex set of procedures, rules and precedents developed. Strict observance of these required examination of each case at several levels involving delay. With delay came corruption, since the affected persons tried to get their cases speeded up by bribing officials. Thus paying more attention to rules than to people's interest, delay and corruption came to be prominent features of colonial administration. The continuance of these features to some extent constitutes our colonial heritage. It is to be expected that political development will, in the course of time, do away with them.

14.9 POLITICAL HERITAGE

In a democracy, the public bureaucracy has to fulfil two somewhat conflicting requirements. On the one hand, it is expected not to side with any of the political parties; on the other hand, it should not be the servile tool of the rulers as in a dictatorship. While it is essential that the bureaucracy should not become politicised as happens in a spoils system, it is also necessary that its members should be able to exercise the political rights of citizens after duty hours so far as such exercises does not conflict with their official responsibilities. There has been a tendency in developed democracies for liberalisation in regard to the political activity of civil servants. In England, on the recommendations of the Masterman Committee of 1948, more than half of the civil servants (including all industrial civil servants and most of the minor grades of the non-industrial staff) were freed from restriction on political activity; about one-fifth were permitted to engage in political activities, except Parliamentary candidature, at the discretion of their Departments, only the executive and higher staff remained barred from participation in national political activities. In California, in the United States, the ban on political activity of state servants was lifted about twenty years ago. In India, however, civil servants remain barred from all kinds of political activity, they cannot even go on leave without pay for participation in a political campaign as happens in many democracies nowadays. It is true that in our present state of political underdevelopment, when in addition political parties tend to put all kinds of pressures on civil servants, participation in political activity by civil servants is more likely to hurt the democratic process than to help it. Still, insofar as our political underdevelopment has resulted mainly from colonial rule, the continued denial to civil servants of political rights which are commonly granted in developed democracies, may be said to be part of our colonial heritage.

14.10 CULTURAL HERITAGE

We have discussed above several aspects of the colonial heritage of the Indian bureaucracy. In regard to cultural heritage, which we are going to discuss now, it is notable that this aspect belongs not only to the bureaucracy but to the upper classes in general. Still, it remains true that the individual in the bureaucratic setting is more subject to cultural influences that seep down from the top. Thus it is more difficult for a member of the bureaucracy to avoid adopting Western dress, language and manners than for one outside it.

Western Liberal Education

During colonial rule the bureaucracy was an instrument for the fulfilment of the interests of the foreign rulers. Hence they tried to mould the bureaucracy so that it would identify with them. In other words, it was sought that Indians in the employ of the rulers should come to think, feel and behave like Englishmen, so that they might more easily

participate in the exploitation of the masses. Western liberal education was useful for this purpose. Through this education, Indians tended to develop the same attitudes as those of the English; the study of Western literature, day after day and year after year, tended to infuse into them blind admiration for Western civilisation. Civil servants were recruited from among those who had received Western liberal education; those who had studied only in a *Pathshala* or a *maktab* through the medium of an Indian language were ineligible for government service, although it would be difficult to maintain that such persons who might have studied Sanskrit or Persian literature were uneducated.

After the achievement of independence also, the recruitment of administrators through competitive examinations has been mainly on the basis of Western liberal education, whose influence has thus continued. It is true that Western liberal education has a beneficial modernising influence also. However, the modernisation of our upper and middle classes, including the bureaucracy, has often been only skin deep. Their members have often continued to have pre-modern attitudes of communalism and casteism. They still have belief in superstitions, and also indulge in nepotism. Their Westernisation has not led so much to a broad mental horizon, as to emulation of Western fashions and has thus created a social distance from the lower classes.

Dependence upon the West

Westernisation, in our case, has also resulted in making us excessively dependent upon the West. Many of our best brains find the West more attractive than their own country. As a result of the phenomenon of brain drain, the scientists, engineers, doctors and other intellectuals who have been educated in this country make their contribution in another country. Our administration and industry, have to often depend upon foreign scientists, engineers, consultants and advisers. This dependence upon the West leads to purchase of technology at a high cost from abroad, forced collaboration agreements with foreign firms, and a tendency for the domination of our economy by developed countries through multinational corporations. Thus while the yoke of colonialism was thrown away more than four decades ago, our country now tends to become subject to neo-colonial exploitation. The culture of the upper and middle classes, including the bureaucracy, is deeply related to the growth of neo-colonialism.

Our westernisation also makes us develop more interest in problems of the developed Western countries than in those of developing ones, including our own. This applies to social sciences also like Sociology, Economics, Political Science and Public Administration. Indian scholars often aim at getting their research work published abroad. Hence they have to choose problems which are of interest in the West. Our own problems, which should be of greater interest to us, tend to be ignored. These, then, come to be studied by foreign scholars. Some of the best studies on Indian society, Economy, Polity and Public Administration are by foreign scholars. Creative thinking and innovative theory-building related to our society is done more by foreign scholars than us. Hence we tend to remain dependent upon the West for knowledge concerning our society as well as that of other countries. It should be remembered that most of the universities in India are part of the system of Public Administration, since they are funded by the government. Also, the civil servants are the products of the universities. Hence continued dependency in the field of knowledge affects the whole of the public bureaucracy in government departments, public undertakings, government colleges, and research institutes and universities funded by the governments.

Mix of Capitalist and Feudal Attitudes

During the British rule, Western culture was sought to be superimposed upon our existing, largely feudal culture. Those who received Western education, and particularly government employees, thus developed a mix of capitalist and feudal attitudes. The continuation of these attitudes often comes into conflict with the democratic and socialist ideals enshrined in the Constitution of independent India. Thus one of the values of Western society is giganticism or the attraction for bigness for its own sake. A poor country like India can ill afford big buildings; big organisations that involve undue centralisation. Another trait of Western capitalist culture is consumerism or unlimited attraction for consumer goods. Consumerism interferes with capital formation and therefore with economic growth. The tragedy of our bureaucracy is that while it has inculcated some of the harmful Western attitudes like giganticism and consumerism, it has failed to adopt some of the Western attitudes that would be helpful for development.

Thus dignity of labour and habit of hard work, which are deeply ingrained in Western culture, are not yet part of the bureaucratic culture in India. Here we find a continuation of feudal attitudes. Our colonial cultural heritage, which is thus seen to be a mix of capitalist and feudal attitudes, now comes in the way of development.

Lack of Communication between the Bureaucracy and the Common People

The bureaucratic culture in India is not conducive to communication with the common man. The use of a Western language, namely English, and Western dress and manners obviously come in the way of communication. The gulf between the values of administrators and common people also makes for difficulty. Thus while small farmers might feel satisfied with *kuchcha* wells for irrigation, a high level administrator might feel successful only if he were able to plan and execute a big, time consuming, irrigation project. While the farmers and the administrator might both be right, successful planning would require a meeting point between their differing frames of reference. Ultimately, development is brought about by the work of farmers and workers in fields, factories, mines and other workplaces; administrators help to plan and coordinate these activities. Hence lack of communication between workers and administrators, coming as it does partly from their different cultures, interferes with development. The culture of the bureaucracy, insofar as it is colonial and removed from that of the common people, is thus a hindrance to the national objective of development or growth with justice.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Why was the bureaucracy highly paid during British rule?

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- 2) What are the disadvantages of giving high emoluments and excessive security to the bureaucracy?

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- 3) What attitudes were engendered by centralisation during British rule?

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- 4) What are the concomitants of the procedural heritage of the bureaucracy?

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- 5) What are the various aspects of the cultural heritage of bureaucracy?

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14.11 LET US SUM UP

Thus we read in the Unit that the bureaucracy continues to have certain colonial features due to lack of development of the society, and also due to insufficient change in personnel administration, administrative organisation, rules and procedures. The power, prestige, emoluments and security of the bureaucracy continue to be high, and interfere with its identification with the people, understanding of their problems most of which are related to poverty, and the motivation to solve these. The rank system of classification, all-India services, recruitment of administrators on the basis of liberal education, restriction of lateral entry, rigidity in the promotion system, routine transfers, and restrictions on political activity by civil servants even if they go on leave without pay, are some other features of colonial administration inherited by us.

Certain aspects of administrative organisation and procedures inherited from colonial rule tend to engender in the bureaucracy attitudes of much dependence upon superiors, lack of urge for making innovations, greater attention to rules than to people's interests, acceptance of delay and corruption. The cultural heritage of the bureaucracy consists of admiration for Western civilisation and dependence upon the West deriving from Western liberal education, a mix of capitalist and feudal attitudes which interfere with development and leads to lack of communication with the people.

14.12 KEY WORDS

Colonial : Pertaining to or of the nature of a colony.

Culture : The sum total of way of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another

Forensic Science : Science dealing with scientific aids necessary to examine, compare & evaluate physical evidence in cases of crime which helps in discovery of information about the crime.

Heritage : What is inherited, or received from predecessors

Liberal Education : Education (in arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) which is not professional or technical but is directed to general broadening of the mind.

Position Classification : It is the process of Classification of positions in the organisation into groups or classes on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, qualifications, skills required to perform them. Here duties and responsibilities of positions determine pay and qualification requirement of persons.

Rank Classification : Classification of employees according to services, groups and classes.

Multinational Corporation : A firm with headquarters in one nation and significant operations in one or more other nations,

14.13 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Bhambhani, C.P., 1972. *Public Administration and Practice*, Jai Prakash Nath : Meerut.

Maheshwari, S.R., 1989. *Indian Administration*, Orient Longman: New Delhi.

Misra, B.B., 1977. *The Bureaucracy in India — An Historical Analysis of Development upto 1947* . Oxford University Press : Delhi.

Varma, R.S., 1973. *Bureaucracy in India*, Progress Publishers : Bhopal.

14.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points :
 - Social change is generally a slow process.
 - Many of the social, economic and political institutions have remained unchanged.
 - The organisation and procedures of Public Administration have not undergone much change.
 - Personnel administration continues to be governed mostly by old rules and practices instead of new laws.

- 2) Your answer should include the following points :
 - The bureaucracy has continued to be powerful because of underdevelopment in general.
 - Weakness of interest groups and political parties.
 - Lack of education and awareness among the people.

- 3) Your answer should include the following points :
 - All-India services help to maintain the unity and integrity of India.
 - If the Governments of the Union and a State have been formed by different political parties, the State Government tends to complain about the dual loyalty of members of All-India services.

- 4) Your answer should include the following points :
 - Administrators with liberal education may not be able to fully utilise modern science and technology for policy formulation and implementation.
 - Restrictions on lateral entry come in the way of exchange of personnel between the administration and other fields.

- 5) Your answer should include the following points :
 - Promotion from one class or service to another does not fully permit fitting the individual to the job.
 - Rigidity in the system of promotion is harmful for both the organisation and the employees.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points :
 - The bureaucracy was highly paid for maintaining social distance between it and the Indian people.
 - For making it attractive in the face of the people's opposition to British rule.

- 2) Your answer should include the following points :
 - A prosperous bureaucracy is unable to closely associate with the people.
 - Excessive security interferes with rewards and punishments and leads to inefficiency.

- 3) Your answer should include the following points :
 - Centralisation led to attitude of dependence upon superiors.
 - Lack of motivation for making innovations.

4) Your answer should include the following points :

- Greater attention to rules than to the fulfilment of people's interests.
- Delay.
- Corruption.

5) Your answer should include the following points :

- Admiration for and dependence upon the West, flowing from Western liberal education.
- A mix of capitalist and feudal attitudes which impede development.
- Great differences between the culture of the bureaucracy and the common people.
- Lack of communication between the bureaucracy and the people.

UNIT 15 SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

Structure

- 15.0 Objectives**
 - 15.1 Introduction**
 - 15.2 Social Background of the Bureaucracy**
 - 15.3 Influence of Bureaucracy's Social Background on Administration**
 - 15.4 Ways of making Bureaucracy more Representative**
 - 15.5 Let Us Sum Up**
 - 15.6 Key Words**
 - 15.7 Some Useful Books**
 - 15.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises**
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15.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- describe the various aspects of the social background of bureaucracy;
 - discuss the influence of the social background of bureaucracy; and
 - suggest ways for bringing about a more representative bureaucracy.
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15.1 INTRODUCTION

Studies of the social background of bureaucracy have been made in various countries in recent times. A study of higher civil servants in France by Bottomore was published in 1954, of those in Britain by Kelsall in 1955, and of those in America by Warner and others in 1963, in India V. Subramaniam's *Social Background of India's Administrators* was published in 1971. Research work on the social background of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) was done by L.P. Singh and S.N. Singh. David C. Potter's *India's Political Administrators 1919-1983* was published in 1986. In this book, he dealt with the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Administrative Service and the social background of each of these Services.

One of the objectives of making studies such as those mentioned above may be merely to find out which social economic group do the senior civil servants come from. The researcher tries to answer questions about the section of the society from which most civil servants of a certain category are drawn, their education, whether they lived in villages or cities, their caste, their religion, the extent to which women are able to get in to the services and so on.

A second objective may be to relate the social background to attitudes, or in other words to study the influence of social class, education and such other factors on the nature of bureaucracy, and hence the administration.

A third objective may be to study how far the bureaucracy may be said to be representative of the society in general, that is to examine whether it is drawn from all sections or whether members of a certain class predominate. Representativeness is often considered to be related to responsiveness: it may not be fully responsive to the other classes in the society. Considerations such as these make the subject interesting.

The bureaucracy may be conceived of as having a higher section, consisting of administrators who play a greater role in advising ministers on policy, and in guiding, supervising and controlling the lower section. The members of the lower section are responsible mainly for implementation. In India most of the top administrative posts at all levels are held by the IAS. Thus most of the officers in the secretariats, both Central and State, are drawn from the IAS. Many of the Heads of Departments of State Governments, and Divisional Commissioners also belong to the IAS. At the local level,

most Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners of city corporations also come from this Service. Hence the IAS may be said to constitute the hard core of the higher bureaucracy. That is why most studies of social background have been those of the IAS. In this unit, we will study the various aspects of social background of bureaucracy and the influence of this social background on administration. It will also give you an idea of various ways of making the bureaucracy representative.

15.2 SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE BUREAUCRACY

i) Occupation of the Father or Guardian

The main finding of research studies is that most members of the higher bureaucracy have been drawn from the professional middle class of India, consisting of higher civil and military officers, lawyers, doctors, university teachers and business executives. Thus the father or guardian of about 94 per cent of the direct recruits to the IAS up to 1956 belonged to this class. Very few of the IAS officers recruited between 1947 and 1956 come from families of Zamindars or farmers: they constituted only 4 per cent of the total. The situation with regard to other higher services was basically similar, but the difference between the numbers of those drawn from the professional middle class and from landowning families was less. Thus, of the recruits to the Indian Police Service, about 81 per cent came from the professional middle class and about 16 per cent from the landowning class. Of the recruits to the Indian Foreign Service, 82 per cent came from the professional middle class and 12 per cent from the landowning class. In short, in the first decade after independence, most of the entrants to the higher bureaucracy belonged to the English educated, salaried or professional, upper middle class; there were very few entrants from other sections of the society. Recruitment to the higher bureaucracy was highly biased in favour of the professional middle class, since it constituted less than 10 per cent of the population but more than 80 per cent of the recruits were drawn from it.

During the period 1957-63, the proportion of recruits from landowning families improved somewhat, although it remained low. Of the recruits to the IAS in this period 81 per cent came from the professional middle class and 12 per cent from the landowning class. In the case of the IPS also the direction of change was the same, the percentages of recruitment from the two classes being 77 and 19 respectively. In the case of certain other Central Services also the proportion of recruits from landowning families improved a little, although it went down in respect of the Indian Foreign Service.

In the years 1980 and 1981, 71 per cent of the IAS recruits came from the professional middle class and 19 per cent from the landowning class.

The above data indicates that while the proportion of persons from farming families has been increasing gradually, the vast majority (about 70 per cent) of those joining the higher bureaucracy still come from the professional middle class.

ii) Education

Research studies show that most of the entrants into the higher bureaucracy are drawn from among those educated at exclusive schools and colleges. The phrase "exclusive schools and colleges" refers to educational institutions which charge high fees and hence are generally joined only by children from the upper and richer sections of the society. The medium of instruction in these institutions is usually English only.

What is even more interesting, there has been an increasing role of education at exclusive schools for entry into the higher echelons of the civil service. Of those recruited to the IAS in the period 1947-56, about 15 per cent had been educated at convent and public schools; in the period 1957-63, about 16 per cent had been so educated. There was a big jump by the seventies. Of those who entered the IAS between 1974 and 1979, more than 60 per cent had been educated in such schools. Thus since Independence, the proportion of recruits educated at exclusive schools had gone up by four times.

The significance of education in exclusive colleges has also been unmistakable. More than half of the IAS recruits, 56 per cent in the period 1947-56, and 59 per cent in the

period 1957-63, had been educated in only a dozen well-known colleges in India; all the other colleges put together had contributed less than half. A similar picture emerges when we consider the role of education at the better known universities. About 79 per cent of the IAS recruits in the period 1947-56, and about 70 per cent of those in 1957-63, had been educated at the six universities of Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Punjab and Allahabad. These six universities also contributed 79 per cent of the recruits to the Indian Foreign Service in the whole of the period 1947-63. The trend has undergone a change in the recent years. The students of universities in the North feature more in the services.

While the requirement for entry into the higher bureaucracy is mostly only graduation, most of the entrants have a master's degree. There are some medical doctors, engineers, and research degree holders also. Thus among the 129 recruits to the IAS in 1981 there were 13 with a bachelor's degree and 106 with a master's degree. They included 5 doctors and 17 engineers. There were 10 research degree holders also.

iii) Rural-Urban Residence

The higher bureaucracy in India has been recruited predominantly from the urban areas. There has not been much change in this scenario over the years. Thus of the 1981 recruits to the IAS, 72 per cent had an urban background and 28 per cent a rural one. If we compare these figures with those for 1957, we find a change of only 2 per cent. 74 per cent then had an urban background and 26 per cent a rural one. Thus there may at best be a slight tendency for more rural residents to get into the higher bureaucracy.

iv) Caste

The higher bureaucracy is recruited predominantly from the so called higher castes. People of low caste are also generally poor and cannot afford higher education for their children. To compensate for the age old discrimination against those having a low social status, the Constitution of India provided for "reverse discrimination" in the shape of reservation of jobs for scheduled castes and tribes in Public Administration. For long, however, these quotas were not filled, since candidates of scheduled castes and tribes could often not get qualifying marks in the competitive examination. Government coaching centres were therefore started to help such candidates in preparing for the examination. By the end of 1970s quotas were being filled. Thus while in 1967 only 11 per cent of the recruits to the IAS belonged to scheduled castes, in 1981, 15 per cent belonged to the scheduled castes. Similarly, the percentage of scheduled tribes recruits had risen from 4 to 7. By 1982, 10 per cent of the total number of IAS officers were from scheduled castes and 5 per cent from scheduled tribes. These percentages were, however, still lower than their proportion in the population. In other words, persons of low social status were still under-represented in the higher bureaucracy.

v) Religion

While all the important religions of India are represented in the higher bureaucracy, some of them have fewer members than their proportion in the population. Thus among the IAS recruits in 1981, about 88 per cent were Hindus, only one per cent were Muslims, 4 per cent were Christians and 5 per cent were Sikhs. The representation of muslim has varied between 1 and 6 per cent since 1957 and has been much lower of than their proportion in the population.

vi) Gender

The representation of women in the higher bureaucracy has increased consistently. Among IAS recruits for the year 1957, 1967, 1977, 1980 and 1981, their percentage was about 3, 8, 9 and 12 respectively. While there has been an increase in the number of women getting into the IAS, they constituted only 7 per cent of the IAS officers in 1983. Since women constitute about half of the population, they may be said to be still grossly under-represented.

So far we have studied the social background of the higher bureaucracy in India on the basis of research studies made from time to time. Comparable studies for the lower bureaucracy have not been made, presumably because it is not considered to play as important a role in the political system. However, some comparison of the social background of the two sections of the bureaucracy can be attempted on the basis of available data. M.V. Subbiah Chaudhary made a study of the Andhra Pradesh

bureaucracy and presented it at a seminar in 1989. While the study suffered from certain limitations, it does provide some data for purposes of comparison, as discussed below.

We find that in the Andhra Pradesh bureaucracy, while about 69 per cent of officers in the secretariat came from the professional middle class, 62 per cent of the assistants and 17 per cent of the clerks belonged to this class. Also, while 21 per cent of the officers belonged to farming families, 20 per cent of the assistants and 65 per cent of the clerks belonged to such families. Thus there is a clear contrast in the social extraction of officers and clerks: while a majority of the officers have an urban professional middle class background, a majority of the clerks have a rural, farming, background. It has also been found that while about 76 per cent of the officers came from upper and upper middle classes, 75 per cent of the clerks came from the lower and lower middle classes.

In this study, castes were divided into three categories: forward, backward and scheduled. It was found that 69 per cent of the officers, 53 per cent of the assistants and 41 per cent of the clerks belonged to forward castes. Also, while 3 per cent of the officers belonged to scheduled castes and tribes, 6 per cent of the assistants and 17 per cent of the clerks also belonged to these categories. Thus while the highest proportion of forward castes was among officers, the highest proportion of scheduled castes and tribes was to be found among clerks. This indicates a clear relationship between caste status and bureaucratic status. The distribution of backward castes was also on the same pattern. About 14 per cent of the clerks belonged to backward castes. These data indicate that the higher the status of a person in the bureaucracy, the more likely he/she is to belong to a high caste.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit

- 1) Discuss the social background of the higher bureaucracy ?

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- 2) "The higher bureaucracy is recruited pre-dominantly from the so-called lower castes". Comment.

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15.3 INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF BUREAUCRACY ON ADMINISTRATION

We have noted earlier that our higher bureaucracy is drawn largely from the urban professional middle class. It can at best be said to be drawn from 10 per cent of the society. Hence the higher bureaucracy cannot be said to be representative of the society as a whole. This influences the administration in several ways. We shall deal with these influences one by one.

i) Lack of Communication

There are great differences between the values, norms, feelings, beliefs and information of the higher bureaucracy, the lower bureaucracy and the people. This makes for lack of communication between them.

We have noted above that the majority of members of the higher bureaucracy, or administrators, have been educated in exclusive schools. One view is that such schools develop qualities of leadership and inculcate discipline and good manners among the administrators. The other view, represented by Bertrand Russell, is that the education at these schools is "as destructive to life and thought as the medieval church". According to him its evils arise from two sources: "its perfect assurance of its own rightness, and its belief that correct manners are more to be desired than intellect, or artistic creation, or vital energy". With whichever of these views we agree, the fact remains that the early education of those who join exclusive schools is in many ways different from that of the vast majority of children, resulting in very important and substantial differences in attitudes.

The combined influence of upper middle class homes and exclusive schools tend to inculcate among their children, values such as those of consumerism, giganticism and the hoarding of material goods, and attitudes such as those of lack of empathy for the poor, considering oneself to be superior to others, seeking success at any cost and aping the West. Their very joys and sufferings tend to be different from those of the vast majority. Their upbringing and education at exclusive colleges and schools tend to keep them aloof from those belonging to the lower strata. They rarely ever get an opportunity to live in villages where the vast majority of the people live. Hence their information and understanding of the conditions of living problems and needs of vast sections of the people are little. These differences of values, beliefs and information make for lack of communication between the higher bureaucracy, lower bureaucracy and the people.

ii) Lack of Effectiveness

One of the important functions of the bureaucracy in developing countries is to deal with poverty, its causes and consequences. If the upper section of the bureaucracy, which plays an important role in policy formulation as well as implementation, has little understanding of the nature of poverty in the country, ineffectiveness is bound to result. If the common people are afraid of administrators and can hardly speak a language understood by them, administrators understanding of people's problems remains wanting, and hence policies for dealing with these remain unsatisfactory. Thus lack of communication leads to lack of effectiveness. Lack of effectiveness also results from lack of participation by the people. Due to social distance between the administrators and the people, and differences in their values and beliefs, administrators are unable to enthuse the people and seek their cooperation and participation. Ineffectiveness also results from lack of feedback to the administrators. Due to lack of communication with the people, and their lack of cooperation, administrators are unable to assess the success of programmes, and the problems in the way of their fulfilment properly.

Lack of effectiveness also results from lack of adjustment between members of the higher and lower bureaucracy. B. Mook made a study of the bureaucracy in Tamil Nadu in 1982. He found that the subordinate officials suffered from feelings of insecurity, hostility and isolation. They felt that they had no influence, had to only obey instructions, and stick to rules.

Thus differences in the status and culture of the higher and lower bureaucracy made for frustration, hostility and lack of initiative on the part of the large, lower, section of the bureaucracy whose function was to give effect to policies.

iii) Perception of Injustice

One of the principles of democracy is equality of opportunity. It implies that everyone should have the same opportunity to achieve desired goals, in keeping with his abilities and effort. Since high level administrative positions in our society have a high prestige, large numbers of youth wish to obtain them. However because of their socio-economic background, a large number cannot avail of this opportunity. The vast majority of our people live in villages where they have little opportunity to pursue the kind of education which would make for success at the competitive examination. Many among those who live in cities also cannot afford good quality higher education. Hence the poor, and those living in villages, have the feeling that they are unjustly being denied entry into coveted positions in the administration.

15.4 WAYS OF MAKING BUREAUCRACY MORE REPRESENTATIVE

We have seen earlier that our bureaucracy cannot at present be said to be representative of the society as a whole. This results in ineffectiveness of administration and a feeling of injustice among those who are left out. Hence we have to seek ways of having a more representative bureaucracy without compromising with the principle of selection on the basis of merit. We shall consider these below.

i) Spread of Education

At present only a small proportion of the people in India receive education. Only about 36 per cent of the people are literate. However literacy constitutes just the beginning of education. For getting a job one needs education appropriate to it. The proportion of those who get secondary and higher education is small. Many, of course, never go to school. Even among those who join a school, the majority drop out. Of 100 children who enrol in class I, only 23 reach class VIII. Higher education is limited to only 4.8 per cent of those in the relevant age group. Wider spread of education is required to provide for social justice and also to help in social, economic and political development. Having a more representative bureaucracy is an aspect of development. Spread of education can be improved by having more schools, reducing the cost of education, vocationalising education, providing mid-day meals, books and uniforms to children of the poor, providing for more teachers, improving the method of teaching, and so on. If those who get left out today also get educated, they can compete for the public bureaucracy. This will benefit the administration since the bureaucracy will be drawn from a larger pool, thus tapping the potential of more people; it will also make for a more representative bureaucracy.

ii) Emphasis on Specialisation and Position Classification

In developing countries like India the system of personnel administration also remains underdeveloped. The system of recruiting people for a service, instead of a job, is one aspect of such underdevelopment. This has three consequences: (i) lack of emphasis on specialisation, (ii) rank-in-man instead of rank-in-job, and (iii) recruitment from a limited section of the society. Thus when we recruit people for the IPS, the method of recruitment results in the selection of persons mainly from a small section of the society. This is because the test is for abilities which mainly candidates from the upper middle class have developed. These abilities, however, may not be relevant for all the jobs which IPS officers may have to perform. The result is that while we exclude candidates from classes other than the upper middle class, we still do not select those who are really suited for the work which they have to do. Thus at present the athletic ability of candidates is not tested. While an advisor to the government on security might not need it, a district police officer might be in great need of it. If position classification were there, and we were recruiting district police officers, we might test their athletic ability also. Many boys from the poorer section might have it in greater measure than those from richer ones. Similarly, we might require other specialised qualifications appropriate for particular jobs. In this way we would be able to recruit persons with specialised qualifications and abilities suited to particular jobs, and also with diverse social backgrounds. Hence introduction of position classification and recruitment for specialised jobs would lead to both, personnel who are better suited to their jobs and a more representative bureaucracy.

iii) Improvement in Methods of Recruitment

At present recruitment to services like the IAS, IPS, IFS and IA&AS (Indian Audit and Accounts Service) is made on the basis of a written examination followed by an interview. The examination and the interview, however, do not test all the abilities of a person. According to David C. Potter, cramming also helps some people to succeed in a written examination. An objective type examination has recently been introduced to reduce the emphasis on cramming. However, there is a need for further improvement. According to the Harvard psychologist, Howard Gardner, intelligence is of seven kinds: (i) Linguistic, (ii) Logical-Mathematical, (iii) Spatial, (iv) Bodily-Kinaesthetic,

persons for various jobs we should test these different kinds of intelligence according to job requirements. The interview is called the personality test. However, no scientific personality tests, such as those used in the armed forces, are employed. By testing candidates more scientifically, we would not only be able to select persons more suited to their jobs, we would also be able to spread our net wide. Various abilities may be said to be distributed widely over different sections of the society. Hence if we test for various abilities, instead of mainly that of essay writing, we would be able to get people who are more suited to their jobs from diverse social backgrounds.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) How does the social background of bureaucracy effect administration ?

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- 2) How can we have a more representative bureaucracy without compromising with the merit principle ?

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15.5 LET US SUM UP

The higher bureaucracy in India is drawn mainly from the urban, salaried or professional, middle class consisting of higher civil and military officers, lawyers, doctors, university teachers and business executives. Most administrators have received education at exclusive schools, colleges and universities. Three-fourths of them have lived in cities. About one-tenth of them belong to scheduled castes and about one-twentieth to scheduled tribes. Muslims and women are also under-represented. Such a narrow field of extraction of the higher bureaucracy makes for differences in values, norms, beliefs and orientations between the higher and lower bureaucracy and the people at large. This results in lack of communication, ineffectiveness of administration and the perception of injustice. A more representative bureaucracy, selected by merit, can be had through greater spread of education, more emphasis on position classification and specialisation, and the adoption of more scientific methods of recruitment for testing various abilities and personality traits.

15.6 KEY WORDS

Bodily-Kinaesthetic Intelligence: Process of learning through bodily movements and sensation.

Communication: The imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions or information or knowledge, partaking of ideas and a sense of participating and sharing.

Consumerism: The tendency in the modern age to promote production, consumption

amongst producers to promote their sales with the help of electronic media, attractive package etc.

Education system in the medieval church period: Many of the teachings and preachings of the medieval church laid emphasis on righteousness, this way of thinking does not allow a feeling of tolerance and looking at other people's views and attitudes, resulting in narrow thoughts and values, proving self-destructive in the ultimate analysis.

Norms: An accepted standard of behaviour within a society.

Professional middle class: The group of persons engaged in profession such as those of civil and military officers, doctors, lawyers and business executives etc.

Rank-in-man instead of rank-in-job: Traditionally, organisations like the military and bureaucracy have classified persons as per hierarchy ranks. But in modern times, in some countries like the U.S.A., the jobs are classified and are based on hierarchical ordering of the difficulty and complexity of jobs and not merely the rank of the person.

Representative bureaucracy: A civil service representing proportionately every caste, class and religious groups of population. This type of bureaucracy is expected to be responsive and responsible in relation to the people of the country.

15.7 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Potter, David C., 1986. *India's Political Administrators: 1919-1983*; Clarendon Press:
Oxford.

Subramaniam, V., 1971. *Social Background of India's Administrators*; Publications
Division, Government of India: New Del

15.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Occupation of the father/guardian.
 - Educational background.
 - Area they come from .
 - Caste, religion, and gender they belong to.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Whether the statement is true or false.
 - The caste from which the bureaucracy predominantly come.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Due to difference of values, beliefs and information, there is lack of communication between the higher, lower bureaucracy and people.
 - Lack of communication leads to lack of effectiveness.
 - Perception of injustice.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points :
 - Education facilities to everyone.
 - More emphasis on specialisation and position classification.
 - Improvement in methods of recruitment.

UNIT 16 NEUTRAL VERSUS COMMITTED BUREAUCRACY

Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
 - 16.1 Introduction
 - 16.2 Neutrality
 - 16.3 Commitment
 - 16.4 Assessing Neutrality and Commitment
 - 16.5 Let Us Sum Up
 - 16.6 Key Words
 - 16.7 Some Useful Books
 - 16.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
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16.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning and significance of neutrality and commitment;
 - describe the problems in the way of achieving neutrality and commitment ; and
 - suggest measures for having both neutrality and commitment.
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16.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall consider how far the bureaucracy is, or should be, neutral and committed.

First we shall take up the question of neutrality. Neutrality means impartiality. The significance of neutrality of the bureaucracy in the modern democratic state is great. As has been discussed in earlier units, the bureaucracy plays an important role in policy-making as well as in its implementation. The permanence of members of the bureaucracy helps to provide them with a long-term perspective, while ministers tend to have a short-term perspective related to the elections. The bureaucracy has access to lot of confidential information, which ministers often do not possess since they lack the time to read all the official documents. Bureaucrats come to have long experience of administration, while ministers come and go. Many of the members of the bureaucracy are technically qualified, while ministers usually are amateurs. For these reasons there is considerable dependence upon the bureaucracy in all countries. In developing countries, like India, there are some additional factors making for such dependence. Thus in developing countries, interest groups and political parties are either weak or non-existent, electoral systems are often defective and the traditions and conventions of democracy have often not been well-established. Hence dependence upon the bureaucracy is greater in developing countries, making it more important that the bureaucracy should be neutral.

We shall discuss the neutrality of bureaucracy under three heads: (i) neutrality between classes, (ii) neutrality between cultural groups, and (iii) neutrality between political parties. We will discuss the significance and problems of these three aspects of neutrality and try to find out the ways of achieving neutrality.

Commitment means moral dedication to a cause. The bureaucracy should be committed to (i) human and national values, (ii) service of the people, and (iii) professional norms. Commitment on the part of the bureaucracy is important because while on one hand it is bound by rules, on the other hand it is always trying to find new ways of dealing with difficult problems. This is true in all countries. There are some additional factors in developing countries. The responsibility of bringing about development falls upon the bureaucracy to a large extent. There is widespread apathy, engendered by centuries of poverty and colonial exploitation. In these circumstances people's

participation can be obtained only through committed, and energetic action on the part of the bureaucracy. Serious problems tend to crop up in the process. Thus, the bureaucracy tends to become very powerful so that in most developing countries dictatorship by the civil and military bureaucracy is a common phenomenon. It requires a lot of commitment to exercise power in the interest of others. We shall try to find ways of inculcating such commitment.

While neutrality and commitment can go together, and indeed reinforce each other if properly oriented, they can also become antithetical if not so oriented. Thus, if bureaucrats become committed to one political party, they cannot remain neutral. We will examine such areas of conflict between neutrality and commitment.

Finally, we shall also examine methods already being adopted for having a highly committed and at the same time neutral bureaucracy in certain special areas, and consider the possibility of using these methods for a few more areas.

16.2 NEUTRALITY

The society consists of various sections, groups and classes. Each one of these tries to protect its interests. The various interests often come into clash with each other. It is the function of the government to maintain peace by keeping this conflict within limits. The government achieves this objective by trying to fulfil the just demands of each section. This involves a changing allocation of resources. Thus in most democratic countries there is progressive taxation through which the rich are taxed more than the poor; the resources so obtained are then utilised more for the welfare of the poor. In this way, resources are transferred from the rich to the poor. Thus governmental policy determines the allocation of resources among the various sections of the people. The bureaucracy participates in drawing up the policies for such allocation by negotiating with representatives of the various interests, advising ministers on the pros and cons of alternative policy proposals, and drafting reports, proposals, resolution and legislative measures. In view of such participation by the bureaucracy in policy-making, and also in putting it into effect, it is important that the bureaucracy should be non-partisan or neutral between the various sections. In our society, neutrality of three kinds is important: neutrality between classes, neutrality between cultural groups, and neutrality between political parties. We shall consider the significance and problems of each kind of neutrality; we shall also consider how neutrality of each kind can be increasingly achieved.

i) Neutrality between Classes

The society is made up of various classes such as those of landlords, capitalists, traders and workers. The government is expected to take care of the interests of each one of them, and to allocate resources to them justly. The bureaucracy is the government's main instrument and must be neutral between classes if justice is to be done.

Justice between classes is difficult to achieve because their interests often conflict. Thus if a manufacturer pays higher wages to his workers, his profits get reduced to that extent. Similarly, if a landlord gives a higher share of the crop to his tenant farmers, he suffers a loss. It is precisely because of such conflict that neutrality between the classes is difficult to achieve. It is only if the government and the bureaucracy are seen to be neutral that the conflict can be kept within limits and peace maintained. If, however, a class has the feeling that injustice is being done to it, it may take to the war path. Thus disputes between capitalists and workers result in lockouts or strikes, sometimes there is even violence and bloodshed. Hence the neutrality of the bureaucracy, which is the main instrument of the government, is essential for the maintenance of social order.

The conflict between classes is greater in developing countries like India, than in developed ones. This is because there are greater disparities in developing countries. Thus while a few are very rich, millions continue to starve. What is more, those who are poor also lack of education, social status and political power. In other words, the poor often do not even know how to improve their condition, and even if they try, the richer and more powerful sections often thwart their efforts, because of the conflict between them. Hence the need for a neutral bureaucracy in developing countries.

of the poor and their protection from exploitation. Thus in India, workers are by and large poor, uneducated and unorganised, only about one-tenth of them are organised in trade unions. Due to the prevailing poverty, unemployment and lack of education, the trade unions also remain weak. Hence in the case of an industrial dispute the government often intervenes by requiring adjudication by a Labour Tribunal or Court. Now, a Labour Tribunal or Court performs the function of administrative adjudication: it is a bureaucratic mechanism for ensuring justice to both, the employers and the workers. It is important that this bureaucratic mechanism should be seen as being neutral between the contending parties, if peace is to be maintained. This example indicates the great significance of neutrality of the bureaucracy in developing countries.

The neutrality of the bureaucracy is important also because of its role in helping to bring about development. The government provides loans, subsidies, tax concessions, raw materials (such as steel and cement), and inputs (such as coal, electricity, fertiliser and seeds) to industrialists and farmers. The classes of big industrialists and big farmers have a lot of political and economic power and, therefore, tend to monopolise these gains. However, development requires that small industries and small farms should also prosper: they are large in number and make substantial contribution to the national product. Justice also requires that they should not be ignored. Hence it is important that the bureaucracy, which distributes these facilities, should do so impartially and justly. In other words, just support to small industrialists and farmers requires that the bureaucracy should not be influenced by the power of the big industrialists, big farmers and landlords.

For reasons discussed above, there is general agreement about the need for neutrality of the bureaucracy. However, there are some problems in attaining this ideal. One of these is related to its social background. As discussed in Unit 15, most of the higher bureaucracy comes from a single class. Thus about 70 per cent of the IAS officers come from the urban, salaried or professional, middle class. This indicates that farmers and workers, who constitute the majority of the population, remain grossly under-represented. If the bureaucracy were more representative, it would likely be more neutral. Members of every class tend to be partial to the interests of their own class. If a large majority of members of the bureaucracy come from a single class, the bureaucracy is likely to be partial to this class. This problem can be solved to some extent by making the examination for recruitment more broad based. The present examination gives preference to those who can write and speak English well, and are able to commit facts and formulas to memory. If the examination is diversified, so as to include tests of the various psychological and physical abilities, more persons are likely to be recruited from the families of farmers and workers, thus making it more representative and more neutral.

Another problem relates to the influence of interest groups. A department that serves a certain interest is, in the course of time, likely to become identified with it. It has to come into close and continuous touch with persons having this interest, and it often has to function as the advocate of this interest. Thus the department of agriculture has to serve farmers by providing various facilities, and has to obtain funds for this purpose. In this process, the farmers' lobby and the department of agriculture are likely to become mutually supportive. If the interests of farmers and industrialists clash, as they often do, the department of agriculture is likely to take the side of farmers. Hence such specialised agencies are in danger of losing their neutrality. This problem has arisen in an acute form in the United States in regard to various 'constituency agencies'. In developing countries like India, it tends to arise mainly in regard to agencies dealing with powerful interests, like those of big industrialists and big farmers. The solution to it lies in the development of organisations of hitherto weaker sections of the society. Efforts are now being made in India to help landless labour to organise itself. Similarly, if various interests organise themselves, and demand better political control over the bureaucracy, so as to ensure its responsibility and accountability, it is likely to remain more neutral also.

ii) Neutrality between Cultural Groups

Our society consists of groups based on religion, caste, language and region. While all these groups have many common interests, they also come into conflict to some extent. This has been a feature of our society since ancient times. Thus in the United States

the blacks have remained poor and exploited. In the USSR also there have been ethnic conflicts, for example between Armenians and Azeris. The bureaucracy is required to hold the balance between the various groups. Hence it is important that it should be neutral between them. Since the conflict between cultural groups is generally greater in developing countries, the significance of the bureaucracy's neutrality is also greater in these countries. The way to the achievement of such neutrality, and also to the general reduction of conflict between cultural groups, lies through better education. If the attitudes of the people can be changed through education, so that they come to regard themselves more as belonging to the Indian nation than to a particular group based upon religion, caste, language or region, the conflict between groups can be reduced.

Members of the higher bureaucracy are recruited mostly from among those who have received higher liberal education. If higher liberal education really broadens the mental horizon, members of the higher bureaucracy should be among the most broad-minded people in the society, and hence neutral between cultural groups. To some extent this is already so. Conscious effort at improving the quality of education can further help to modernise the attitudes of the bureaucracy leading to even greater neutrality.

The conflict between cultural groups is often accentuated by socio-economic factors. Thus Muslims in India have generally been poorer than Hindus. Most Sikhs in Punjab have a rural background, while most Hindus have an urban one. Members of the scheduled castes all over India are generally poorer and have a lower social status than others. Many of them are landless labourers. Conflict between cultural groups can be reduced by narrowing the disparities between them. One of the effects of such disparities is that a cultural group having a lower social and economic status has a lower representation in the bureaucracy also. Such a bureaucracy, with higher representation of certain groups than others, is often not perceived as being neutral. Hence the reduction of socio-economic disparities between cultural groups will not only reduce conflict between them, but also make for a more representative and neutral bureaucracy. Programmes aiming at poverty removal (such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme), better health and education services, and loans to small farmers and industrialists, constitute part of the governmental effort to reduce-disparities. Further, if a cultural group suffers from poverty and exploitation and is unable to find adequate representation in the bureaucracy, special measures are taken to help it in getting such representation. Thus, some universities and state institutes run special courses for preparing those belonging to weaker sections for competitive examinations for entry into the bureaucracy. The Constitution of India permits reservation of posts in the bureaucracy for any backward class of citizens under Article 16(4). Under this provision, 15 per cent for scheduled tribes, that is in proportion to their population in the country. For other backward classes the quantum of reservation varies from State to State. Many of the reserved seats, however, remain unfilled due to the non-availability of candidates with requisite qualifications belonging to the weaker sections. Still, these measures are able to help in having a more representative and more neutral bureaucracy.

iii) Neutrality between Political Parties

Competition between political parties is an essential characteristic of a democracy. If there is only one party, the voter can hardly exercise his/her choice. Democracy becomes meaningful only if the voter can choose between candidates of different parties. The exercise of choice by voters at general elections results in the formation of the government by one of the contending parties. Every party that fights an election puts forward its manifesto before the people. If it wins, it is rightly inferred that the people have approved of its manifesto, indeed, it is said that the manifesto now becomes the mandate, or command, of the people to the new government. This mandate consists of policies which the people have approved. Fulfilment of the wishes of the people requires the implementation of these policies. The main instrument of the government for the implementation of its policies is the bureaucracy. Hence it is important that the bureaucracy should be neutral between parties : such neutrality alone can ensure the fulfilment of the wishes of the people.

While the neutrality of the bureaucracy is accepted as an ideal, many problems arise in practice and come in the way of the fulfilment of this ideal. One such problem has been the spoils system, under which the winning party appoints its followers or supporters at different positions in the bureaucracy. Such a bureaucracy, naturally, lacks in merit and

efficiency. Since a new government, formed by another party, throws out the supporters of the party earlier in power, the bureaucracy also tends to lack permanence, knowledge gained from experience in the service and the motivation which the career system might have provided. The spoils system brought home the advantages of neutrality of the bureaucracy. The spoils system tends to arise with democracy but has to be curbed later on. It prevailed in the United States during most of the nineteenth century. The effort to replace it by the merit system, through selection of permanent officials by a Civil Service Commission, began with the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883. In developing countries, where democracy arose around the middle of the twentieth century, the spoils system has often tended to exist despite a Civil Service Commission. Thus if members of the Civil Service Commission themselves are chosen from among the supporters of a political party, the neutrality of those whom they select can hardly be ensured.

In India, the Constitution contains several provisions for the maintenance of the independence of Public Service Commissions. These are as follows:

- i) The Chairman or a member of a Commission can only be removed from his office by the President on the ground of misbehaviour according to the report given by the Supreme Court after holding an enquiry.
- ii) The conditions of service of a member of a Public Service Commission cannot be to his disadvantage after his appointment.
- iii) The expenses of a Commission are charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or of the concerned State.
- iv) A Chairman or a member of a Commission, on ceasing to hold office, cannot get employment under the government except at a higher post in a Public Service Commission.

Another problem which tends to interfere with the neutrality of the bureaucracy between political parties is the development of loyalty towards the politicians in power. Members of the bureaucracy who have been selected impartially by a Civil Service Commission, can later, in the course of their career, shed their neutrality and become aligned with the party, or the individuals, in power. According to the Shah Commission this problem existed during the Emergency (1975-77) in India. Some writers maintain that nowadays also, there is a tendency for the development of such relationships of alliance between ministers belonging to different political parties and senior civil servants in nowadays also in governments of different political parties in India. Thus it is suggested that the problem is not related to any particular party, but rather to the underdevelopment of our political system. The solution, then, lies in political development. Political development requires strengthening and improving the working of the various parts of the political system: interest groups, political parties, the electoral system, mass media, legislatures, the judiciary, and the political and bureaucratic parts of the executive. Thus if interest groups representing the various interests in the society put constant pressure upon the government, it will become difficult for a minister and a bureaucrat to collide for making unjust and partisan gains.

If there is internal democracy in the ruling political party, its leaders also will remain accountable to the rank and file of the party and not try to make selfish gains with the complicity of members of the bureaucracy. If the electoral system helps to elect those who can truly represent the people, elected politicians will tend to be more responsive to the people and are likely to refrain from misusing the bureaucracy. If the mass media (the press, television and radio) are healthy and powerful, they will provide for effective communication between the rulers and the ruled and help to make the will of the people prevail. Properly functioning legislatures will keep both the politicians and the bureaucracy under check and make them behave with realisation of their responsibility and accountability. In short, the growth of democratic consciousness and institutions is likely to deal with the problem of alliance between ministers and civil servants for making selfish gains.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note :** i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Why is bureaucracy needed to be neutral between the classes?

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- 2) What are the provisions for the maintenance of the independence of Public Service Commission ?

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16.3 COMMITMENT

The bureaucratic form of organisation has both, advantages and disadvantages. Its main advantage, as pointed out by Weber, is efficiency. Its main disadvantage, as pointed out by Marx, is alienation. Hence we aim at reducing alienation while maintaining efficiency. This can be done, to some extent, by improving the bureaucracy's commitment, or moral dedication.

Let us examine the need for commitment in some detail. According to Weber, the main characteristics of a bureaucracy are hierarchy, division of labour, specialisation, rules and impersonality. All these factors make for efficiency. At the same time, however, a bureaucracy suffers from alienation. According to Marx, the members of bureaucracy suffer from loss of freedom, creativity, humanity, and morality. Weber agrees that members of a bureaucracy tend to function like "little cogs, little men clinging to little jobs". Other writers have also pointed out the disadvantages, or dysfunctions, of bureaucracy. Thus Merton says that bureaucratic control over officials, requiring that they should strictly follow rules, induces in them "timidity, conservatism and technicism". Hence the problem is how to maintain efficiency while reducing alienation or the dysfunctions of bureaucracy. The solution to this problem lies mainly in improving the commitment of its members. In other words, the bad effects of bureaucratic controls can to some extent be reduced if the employees are imbued with dedication.

Dedication, or commitment is required also because the employees have constantly to deal with complex problems, many of which are new. It is a mistake to think that all bureaucratic activity is routine and monotonous. Developmental activity in particular requires forecasting, planning, risk bearing, breaking new ground and experimentation. Hence, innovations have to be made all the time. The making of innovations, or creativity, requires emotional commitment.

We have noted so far that commitment on the part of the members of a bureaucracy leads to effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness means fulfilment of the organisational objectives, and efficiency means doing so with as little expenditure of resources as possible. Thus effectiveness and efficiency are aspects of the successful working of the organisation. However, the organisation consists of human beings and it is also important that they should be happy. To some extent, monetary rewards can make them happy. Equally important, however, is their need for job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the intrinsic satisfaction which one gets from doing a job. Thus the satisfaction which a painter gets from painting itself, is his job satisfaction: it is quite apart from the money that he gets from the sale of his paintings. It is obvious that job

satisfaction is related to commitment. If one paints only for money, he has little job satisfaction. The more devoted, or committed, he is to painting, the greater is his satisfaction. Thus commitment leads not only to organisational effectiveness and efficiency but also to the satisfaction and happiness of the employees. Hence commitment is significant from both, the organisational and individual points of view.

i) Commitment to Values and Objectives

Of our various commitments, the most important is the commitment to values. In the ethical sense, values are ends in themselves: they are sought for their own sake. The most important of our values are what are called human values, that is those values which are sought in all places and times. Examples of human values are truth, compassion, honesty and courage. While human values are universally sought, there are some values to which importance is attached in only some countries. The latter may be called national values. Important human and national values may be mentioned in a nation's Constitution also. Thus the following four human values are mentioned in the preamble to India's Constitution: justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These may be called human values since in no age or place has their desirability been questioned. Then there are the values of nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism which may be called India's national or Constitutional values, since they find explicit or implicit support in the Constitution. While it is expected that everyone everywhere will attach great importance to human values, citizens of India are, in addition, expected to seek to fulfil the national or Constitutional values. The bureaucracy is expected to attach even greater importance to both these sets of values than ordinary citizens. The bureaucracy acts on behalf of the state or government. If the state and government are to have a human face, that is if they are to be seen as being just and humane, the bureaucracy must show respect to human values. Again, since the constitution lays down the fundamental principles according to which the state is governed, the bureaucracy, as the agent of the state and the government, must accord the highest importance to all the values enshrined in the Constitution.

Apart from human and constitutional values, the bureaucracy must also be committed to national objectives. Some of these may be so important as to be mentioned in the Constitution, while others are stated in laws. Thus Part IV of the Indian Constitution, entitled "Directive Principles of State Policy" mentions objectives such as the following: securing just and humane conditions of work, securing a living wage, provision of free and compulsory education for all children, and the protection of Scheduled Castes and Tribes from social injustice and exploitation. However, the Constitution mentions only a few, paramount, objectives, most other national objectives are stated in laws. Their seed may be found in the demands of interest groups, they are presented to the people for their approval through the manifestos of political parties at election time, and they are adopted as national objectives after their inclusion in laws. The legislature consists of elected representatives of the people, and hence is entitled to declare the national will. Every act of the legislature contains such a declaration: the objectives which the act seeks to fulfil are mentioned at its very beginning. Thus the objectives of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, are to secure industrial peace and to ameliorate the condition of workmen in industry. Once objectives are enshrined in the Constitution or the laws, it becomes the duty of the bureaucracy to faithfully fulfil them by implementing the law. Commitment of the bureaucracy to the objectives stated in laws is thus essential for the performance of its duties.

A problem presents itself, however, if we consider the actual role of the bureaucracy. A law contains not only the objectives which are sought to be fulfilled, but also the chosen way in which this is to be done. This way can be called the policy. In other words, for fulfilling a certain objective there may be several alternative ways, or policies. Thus the objective of free and compulsory education may be achieved in either of two ways: (i) punishing parents of children who are not sent to school, and (ii) giving incentives, such as free mid-day meals, to attract children. Either of these ways may be adopted and enforced through a law: this, then, becomes the policy of the government. Now, while the objectives are, more or less, decided through the interaction of political parties with interest groups and, directly, with the people, policies are chosen on the basis of the advice of technically trained and experienced members of the bureaucracy. The role of the bureaucracy in the formulation of the policy is very important, since often only the bureaucracy knows what will work on the ground. The bureaucracy

informs the minister about the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternative policies, and advises on the adoption of the most suitable alternative. It is then for the minister to choose the policy: he may accept or reject the advice of the permanent official. In case the civil servant's advice is rejected, he faces the problem of faithfully implementing a policy which he considers to be bad, or wrong. Thus, during the Emergency (1975-77) there were, perhaps, some officials who considered the policy of using compulsion for family planning as being a bad one, since it would have achieved the desired objective. Still, they were expected to faithfully enforce the measures for compulsion.

We note, then, that there may be differences of opinion between ministers and civil servants in regard to the policy to be adopted. In such a situation, civil servants are expected to faithfully implement the policy chosen by ministers. In other words, the bureaucracy is expected to be committed to a policy even if it considers it to be faulty. Further, it is expected to become committed to a new set of policies on a change in government. It comes in for criticism if the expected change in its commitment does not come about. Paul Appleby has pointed out that the civil service in Britain is criticised for not being as responsive to policy shifts as it should be.

The justification for expecting the bureaucracy to be committed to the policies of the government of the day is inherent in democracy. It is the elected representatives of the people, and not civil servants, who are thrown out of power, and office, if the policies of the government are not liked by the people. The ministers are responsible to the people, hence they are justified in choosing policies which they think the people want. The function of the civil servant is to advise the minister freely and frankly in the formulation of the policy, however, if the policy is finally chosen by the minister, the civil servant must implement it faithfully. If the policy is proved to be wrong, the minister is likely to be punished by the people at the time of election.

ii) Commitment to Service of the People

The bureaucracy's important role in policy formulation and implementation gives it a lot of power, it participates in deciding who should get what, when and how, and then goes ahead to enforce these decisions. In developing countries, particularly, the power of the bureaucracy is considerable since the other parts of the political system are weak. Hence while the civil servant is, ideally, expected to function as a "servant" of the people, in reality he may turn out to be a master. In countries like India, this problem becomes worse due to be heritage of the colonial past, when the civil servant used to be the symbol and agent of the foreign power. After independence also, a cultural and social chasm has continued to exist between the mostly non-literate and poor people and the higher bureaucrat who often dresses, speaks, and even thinks, like a foreigner. In a democracy, however, the people are expected to exercise real power, and the bureaucracy is expected to remain under the control of the elected politicians, and serve the people. Hence commitment for providing service to the people is essential for the proper performance of the bureaucracy's role.

The bureaucracy's power, derived from its role in policy formulation and implementation, is used also for fulfilling its own interests. In developing countries, the bureaucracy is very powerful, the result often is that the bureaucracy tends to fulfil its own interest even at the cost of the interests of the people. Thus the extra profit (benefits apart from salary) remains high in most public undertakings in India even if they lack effectiveness and run at a loss. High officials play an important role in the determination of their own emoluments, and try to protect their interests by maintaining the emoluments at a high level. Service of the people requires that where there is a conflict between their own interests and those of the people, they should give priority to the people's interests.

iii) Commitment to Profession

A profession is a vocation or calling, especially one that involves some branch of science or advanced learning. Nowadays Public Administration requires persons belonging to almost all the professions, such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, scientists, managers and accountants. Obtaining professional qualifications requires long and arduous preparation on their part. They are considered to have specialised knowledge and excellence and hence have high prestige. Since their contribution to the

society comes from their specialised knowledge, it becomes their duty to keep abreast of the developments in their field of specialisation. They must also maintain the expected standard of performance. Thus university teachers must continue to read the latest publications. These are the requirements of their commitment to teaching as a profession. Similarly, other professionals must also continually update their knowledge and skill, and maintain the expected standard of performance through practice.

The duties associated with every profession required, not only knowledge and skill, but also moral dedication. Hence commitment to a profession involves adherence to its ethics and etiquette. Thus the ethics of the medical profession require that a doctor should attend to a patient even at the risk of infection to himself; its etiquette requires that he should not disclose information confided to him by his patients. Similarly, every profession has its ethics and etiquette. When a professional joins the bureaucracy, he/she must continue to remain committed to the ethics and the etiquette of his/her profession, in addition to his/her commitment to the objectives of his/her organisation. Thus even if his/her position in the organisation confers a high status upon him/her, he/she must not allow it to interfere with his/her professional duties. For example, if a specialist in clinical medicine becomes the director of a medical institute, he/she should not allow the new status to interfere with his/her duty towards the patients. His/her position may also provide him/her with opportunities for selfish gain at the cost of his/her clients. Thus, a specialist in a medical institute may be pressurised for recommending some costly and inferior equipment for purchase. His/her commitment to his/her profession would require refusal to recommend inferior equipment, whatever the pressure.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note :** i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check Your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What are the implications of the commitment to values and objectives?

- 2) Discuss the implications of the commitment to service of the people.

- 3) What are the implications of professional commitment?

16.4 ASSESSING NEUTRALITY AND COMMITMENT

In this section we shall consider (i) whether neutrality and commitment are necessarily antithetical, (ii) ways of achieving neutrality and commitment, and (iii) special devices for important areas.

i) Compatibility of Neutrality and Commitment

In recent years there has been a lot of discussion in India about the nature of neutrality and commitment, and particularly, whether the bureaucracy can have the two qualities at the same time. Obviously, if commitment is taken to mean commitment to a particular political party or to its leaders, it becomes antithetical to neutrality. However, commitment to human and constitutional values and national objectives, to service of the people, and to professional ethics and etiquette, is not antithetical to neutrality between classes, cultural groups and political parties. Indeed, commitment and neutrality reinforce each other if they are of the right type. Thus commitment to the human value of compassion and to the constitutional value of fraternity are likely to induce neutrality between classes and cultural groups respectively. Similarly, commitment to national objectives is likely to induce neutrality between political parties. Hence the effort should be to induce commitment and neutrality of the right kind.

ii) Inculcation of Neutrality and Commitment

Inculcation of desirable attitudes in the bureaucracy requires attention to all aspects of personnel administration. At the time of recruitment and selection of candidates it should be ensured that they have received the right kind of socialisation and education in the family and school. The competitive examination for selection can include tests of attitudes towards human and constitutional values and national objectives on the one hand, and towards classes, cultural groups and parties on the other. Such tests can indicate whether the candidate has properly benefited from liberal education and has a broad mental outlook, or has merely committed materials to memory for passing examinations. After entry, desired attitudes of neutrality and commitment can be inculcated in the members of the bureaucracy through training. Various incentives, such as desired posting, visits abroad and quicker promotion, can be provided for motivating employees to develop the right attitudes. Finally, control by the political executive and the legislature can ensure that they do not deviate from the norms. Institutions like the Public Service Commission, Courts and Administrative Tribunals should ensure that the exercise of control by political authorities is done fairly and justly. Further, in a democracy, the people have the right and the duty to see that all institutions function properly.

iii) Special Agencies and Recruitment Methods

Special agencies and methods of recruitment can be used for important areas requiring a high degree of both neutrality and commitment. One such special agency already in use is the autonomous university. Higher education and research constitute an area in which commitment and neutrality are both of great importance. If commitment is not there, pursuit of knowledge lacks excellence; if neutrality is not there education becomes merely indoctrination. The autonomous university aims at achieving both; it also retains the main advantage of bureaucratisation, namely efficiency, while avoiding the dysfunctions flowing from bureaucratisation due to its autonomy. Max Weber has noted that staff members of a university constitute a bureaucracy. The characteristics of hierarchy, division of labour, specialisation, rules and impersonality are to be found in a university also, and hence it has the efficiency flowing from these factors. At the same time, its autonomy permits its staff members to remain committed as well as neutral, since the rules of conduct applicable to government servants do not apply to the employees of a university.

There may be other areas requiring a high degree of both neutrality and commitment. Perhaps one such area is that of rural development. Much success was achieved by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi in this area by employing a cadre of volunteers who were marked by both commitment and neutrality. The governmental programme of Community Development, which has similar objectives, has, by contrast failed to fulfil our expectations. Some of the deficiencies of the Community Development Programme may be traced to the lack of a committed cadre. Paul Appleby has noted the need for a committed cadre for such new programmes, as follows: "usually it is not possible by the Civil Service process to quickly identify the rare individuals who would be particularly competent at many of the key jobs required for these new programmes. This is especially true in view of the further fact that it is of importance that these new agencies be staffed by people who are genuinely zealous with respect to the new

programme". Appleby has suggested the recruitment of committed cadres on a flexible and political basis for such new programmes, and their conversion later into career bodies. Perhaps this, and similar suggestions, can be experimented with, after introducing modifications appropriate to the country concerned. Developing countries, where the government must play a leading role in bringing about development, can postpone such experimentation only at great peril; for, underdevelopment increasingly tends to be associated with phenomena like widespread disturbances and violence.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

- 1) How can neutrality and commitment be assessed ?

16.5 LET US SUM UP

The bureaucracy comes to have great power due to its role in policy formulation and implementation. Hence it is important that it should be neutral between classes, cultural groups and political parties. The achievement of neutrality is beset with problems; most of these, however, are likely to be solved with development. Also, the bureaucracy has to play an important role in bringing about development. Its role requires commitment to human and constitutional values and national objectives, to service of the people and to professional ethics and etiquette. Neutrality and commitment can both be inculcated through proper education before entry into the service and training after entry, the proper use of incentives, and controls by political and independent institutions of democracy. Experimentation can be made, for example by having a highly committed, flexibly recruited, cadre for a new programme of importance, requiring commitment.

16.6 KEY WORDS

Antithetical: direct opposite or contrast

Commitment: moral dedication to a cause

Dysfunctions: consequences that interfere with adjustment and create problems in the structure.

Ethics: moral principles

Etiquette: conventional rules of social behaviour or professional conduct which restrict professional people from indulging in activities that are detrimental to the interests of people and their colleagues and adversely effect the dignity of their profession.

Fraternity: ideal fraternity is enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution of India. It ensures the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

Pendleton Act: the reform of Civil Services in U.S. began with the Pendleton Act (1883). Its aim was to promote appointment on the basis of merit through open competitive examination and assure the appointees security of tenure. It recommended the establishment of a United States Civil Service Commission. The Act was concerned with classified positions only. Labourers, workmen and persons nominated for confirmation by the Senate were excluded from the purview of the Act.

Values: one's principles or standards, one's judgement of what is valuable or important in life.

16.7 SOME USEFUL BOOKS.

Kothari, Shanti and Roy Ramashray, 1969. *Relations between Politicians and Administrators at the District Level*; IIPA: N. Delhi.

Lapalombara, Joseph (ed), 1967. *Bureaucracy and Political Development*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J.

Verma, R.S. 1973. *Bureaucracy in India*; Progress Publishers: Bhopal.

Journals

Arora, K. Satish, "Political Policy and the future of Bureaucracy" in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 18 (July–Sept 1971) pp. 355-367.

Gupta, V.P., "A Study of Conflict between Political Elite and Bureaucracy", in the *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 1. January-March, 1987.

16.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

Neutrality of bureaucracy between various classes in the society, is required to ensure that

- Feeling of injustice is done away with.
- Social order is maintained.
- Development is achieved.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Method of removal.
- Condition of service.
- Expense of a Commission.
- Other provisions.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Commitment to the constitutional values.
- Commitment to the national objectives.
- Commitment to the policies of the government of the day.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Conflict between interests of the bureaucracy and interests of the people.
- Commitment to the interests of the people.

3) Your answer should include the following points:

- Update one's knowledge and skill.
- Maintaining the standard of performance through practice.
- Commitment to the ethics of the profession.
- Commitment to the objectives of the organisation.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Compatibility of neutrality and commitment.
- Inculcation of neutrality and commitment.
- Special devices for important areas.

UNIT 17 BUREAUCRATS AND POLITICIANS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

Structure

- 17.0 Objectives
 - 17.1 Introduction
 - 17.2 Relationship in the Course of Policy Formulation
 - 17.3 Relationship in the Course of Implementation
 - 17.4 Problems in the Relationship
 - 17.5 Let Us Sum Up
 - 17.6 Key Words
 - 17.7 Some Useful Books
 - 17.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
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17.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- describe the relationship of politicians and permanent officials;
 - discuss the problems of their relationship; and
 - suggest measures for improving the relationship.
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17.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall study the relationship between politicians and permanent officials. Their relationship is important because they together constitute the executive branch of the government. If there are problems in their relationship, the administration does not run smoothly. Problems are likely to be there mainly because of their different roles. Politicians represent the people and take care of their interests; permanent officials, on the other hand, provide expertise and experience. Hence their modes of recruitment are different: politicians are elected while members of the bureaucracy are appointed. This makes for differences in their social background. While most members of the bureaucracy in underdeveloped countries like India are drawn from the salaried or professional, urban, middle class, many of the politicians have a rural, agricultural background. These, and similar, differences in their roles and social background lead to differences in their attitudes also. Hence they sometimes find it difficult to cooperate with each other.

We propose to examine the relationship of politicians and permanent officials under three heads: Relationship in the Course of Policy Formulation, Relationship in the Course of Policy Implementation, and Problems in the Relationship.

Relationship in the Course of Policy Formulation is, further, proposed to be studied under five heads: (i) Communication with the People, (ii) Provision of Information, (iii) Technical Consideration, (iv) Coordination, and (v) Authorisation. Relationship in the Course of Implementation is proposed to be studied under three heads: (i) Rule-making, (ii) Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation, and (iii) Administrative Management.

Finally, Problems in the Relationship are proposed to be discussed under four heads: (i) Interference Complex, (ii) Bureaucratic Power, (iii) Loyalty, and (iv) Collusion.

17.2 RELATIONSHIP IN THE COURSE OF POLICY FORMULATION

It was earlier believed that while policy was formulated by politicians, it was

there is no such separation of functions. This is so in all countries: politicians and the bureaucracy cooperate in the course of both policy formulation and implementation. In developing countries, particularly, it has been found that the bureaucracy plays an important role in policy formulation also. In the following we shall consider the relationship of politicians and permanent officials in the course of policy formulation in some detail.

i) Communication with the People

Public policy results from the interaction between the people, functioning individually and in groups, on the one hand, and the politicians and the bureaucracy on the other. In the course of their interaction, all the three seek to influence each other and communicate for this purpose. Thus the various sections of the people try to articulate their particular interests through interest groups, such as trade unions and associations of farmers, lawyers, doctors, engineers and others. Political parties take note of these various interests and try to satisfy all of them as far as justifiably possible. This is known as interest aggregation. For this purpose politicians remain in close touch with the people. Thus Jawaharlal Nehru worked among the farmers of the Allahabad district. He not only listened to their problems but also helped them to organise for the freedom movement. Similarly, V.V. Giri was a leader of industrial labour. It is notable that in developing countries, where associations of the poor often do not exist, politicians generally have to take the initiative in organising them. Generally political parties depute their important members to organise particular sections of the people. Thus every important political party in India tries to set up its own trade union, farmers' association, women's wing, youth wing, and so on. Hence in developing countries, the role of politicians consists of both interest articulation and aggregation: they become both spokesmen and arbiters. Their leadership function requires that they rouse the consciousness of the people, set collective goals for them, and unite them in the pursuit of these goals. In practice, there are many hindrances, such as lack of education among the people, factionalism within political parties, lack of internal democracy within parties, division of the people, and factionalism within parties, on the basis of caste, religion, language, and so on. Still, the fact remains that politicians play an important role in organising the people and ventilating their demands and grievances. Hence politicians come to be seen as being aligned with particular sections and, therefore, partisan, to some extent. The bureaucracy, on the other hand, is generally seen as being neutral. Also, due to the weakness of interest groups and municipal and Panchayati Raj bodies, the bureaucracy has been the main channel of communicating the felt needs of the people to the government. Hence, while both, politicians and civil servants functions as links in the chains of communication between the people and the government, civil servants sometimes tend to look upon politicians as mere rabble-rousers. On the other hand, politicians tend to believe that bureaucrat are unresponsive and insensitive to the problems and needs of the people. This perception is heightened by the cultural and status differences between the higher bureaucracy and the common people. At the same time the political and bureaucratic channels of communication have to meet at various points. Hence politicians and civil servants have to cooperate at all levels, despite their somewhat different roles and view points.

ii) Provision of Information

Politicians and civil servants are repositories of different types of information, and both these are needed in the course of policy formulation. Civil servants generally have the advantage of longer experience; they also keep their command on organisational memory in the shape of files and other records. Hence they can provide valuable feedback-information about the results of earlier efforts as well as ongoing programmes. Now policy can, then, be formulated in the light of these results: modifications can be introduced to avoid past mistakes or problems faced earlier. Politicians, on the other hand, are more likely to successfully assess the mood of the people; particularly, they are expected to be able to tell what the people will not stand. Thus more, or better, social services such as education and health, would cost money which must come from the people in the shape of taxes. The politician is expected to provide information as to whether the people would prefer better service or less taxes. Once the ruling politicians have given their assessment, civil servants can proceed to give concrete shape to policy proposals in the shape of new programmes or budget proposals. If the assessment of politicians is faulty, they may be punished by the people at the next election.

Politicians are also answerable for mistakes committed by civil servants working under them. Hence it is also their duty to exercise proper control over the bureaucracy.

iii) Technical Consideration

Technical examination of policies and programmes is of utmost importance for ensuring that they fulfil the desired goals at the minimum cost. There are several aspects of technical consideration. The first is the substantive aspect. Thus health policy must be examined by doctors, educational policy by educationists, and so on. That is why specialists of all kinds are nowadays employed by governments. They function in the various departments at almost all levels. Thus in the Health Department not only is the Director a doctor, but doctors are to be found in the primary health centres in the remotest villages. Problems and suggestions of specialists at various levels are considered and lead to new policies and programmes.

Another type of technical examination may be related to feasibility. Thus there may be a question whether a certain policy or programme is feasible or practicable. For example, if the proposal is to teach sewing to destitute women for providing them with employment in a city, it is first necessary to find out whether there is a market for clothes produced by them. If a feasibility study shows that such clothes are not likely to sell, the policy must be modified. Hence administrators must ensure the practicability of policies and programmes through feasibility studies.

Techno-economic analysis constitutes another type of technical examination. Here the attempt basically is to find out whether the technology proposed to be used is economically viable. Technology is related to the requirements of raw materials, personnel, the size of the undertaking, the nature and quantity of the output, and the financial outlay. All these factors have to be taken into account while taking decisions relating to policy and programmes.

Finally, it is important to make a social cost-benefit analysis of every policy, programme and project. This analysis has to include consideration of hidden costs and benefits also. Thus the building of a dam may involve hidden costs in terms of destruction of the environment and the uprooting of people. Similarly, there may be hidden benefits. For example, a road connecting a village with a city may help in changing the attitudes of the village people, apart from leading to economic gain.

The various types of technical examination mentioned above indicate the great contribution of specialists in policy formulation. It is important, therefore, that specialists should be allowed to influence decision-making in the interests of effectiveness and efficiency. In practice, however, political considerations are sometimes allowed to outweigh technical ones. Thus decisions about where industries, roads, hospitals and schools should be located are often taken, not on technical bases, but in the interest of powerful politicians. For example, it may be technically more feasible to locate an industry close to its source of raw materials. However, a powerful chief minister may insist upon its location in his state. Similarly, a powerful legislator may insist upon having a road in his constituency rather than where it is more needed for economic reasons. Powerful politicians often over-rule members of the bureaucracy in their narrow interests. Sometimes members of the bureaucracy also give recommendations which are not justified technically, but which please ministers or powerful legislators. Such deviations from norms hurt the public interest.

iv) Coordination

All policies and programmes are to a varying extent interrelated. Thus agriculture development also requires industrial development for the provision of fertiliser, pesticides, and mechanical implements; it requires educational development so that farmers may be able to read and benefit from new scientific knowledge; it also requires development of farmers' health so that they may be able to work properly. Hence policies of agricultural development have to be drawn up so that they harmonise with other policies. Hence coordination of a high order is necessary. Coordination is needed at all levels and all stages, as Mary Parker Follett has stressed. At the top level it is sought to be brought about through the cabinet. All important policies are reviewed by the cabinet. Here the ministers have an opportunity to examine the implications of other policies for those of their own department. Any inconsistency, gap or duplication is ironed out.

Below the cabinet, there are certain agencies which function on behalf of the government and help in achieving coordination. Staff agencies, such as those for planning, financial administration, personnel administration, administrative reforms, law and public works help in coordinating both policy-making and implementation. Thus the Planning Commission examines the policies and plans of all Ministries and all State Governments. Here specialist and generalist members of the bureaucracy make important contributions to policies and programmes. While detailed examination of a certain policy is made in the concerned Ministry, the Planning Commission takes a government-wide view and suggests modifications. Similarly other staff agencies participate in policy-making. The contribution of the higher bureaucracy is here of paramount importance. However, the bureaucracy necessarily functions under the over-all control of politicians. Final decisions necessarily rest with politicians; civil servants help them to reach these by providing a comprehensive view based upon a mass of data, analytical studies, and expert advice.

Politicians and civil servants have to cooperate at the field level also. Thus a Deputy Commissioner and M.L.A. are both concerned with the various policies related to the development of a certain area. Although district planning has yet to become a reality, district politicians and civil servants do make suggestions which are taken into account by authorities at higher levels. Joint efforts of politicians and civil servants bear more fruit.

Cooperation between politicians and civil servants is essential for the proper functioning of bodies of local self-government like municipalities, and Panchayati Raj bodies. In developing countries like India, however, these bodies are often so weak that they have to depend upon civil servants who are employees of the state government. Hence local politicians often have little control over the permanent officials serving the local bodies. If different parties happen to be in power at the state and local levels, state politicians tend to use the bureaucracy in the field in their party interest. Solution to such problems lies, ultimately, in the strengthening of local-government. This is an important aspect of the required political development.

v) Authorisation

The final stage of policy-making is its authorisation. The legislature authorises or approves policies and programmes usually in the shape of laws. Laws are necessary because without their sanction the government cannot allocate social resources. Thus taxation is the prime method for making resources available to the government. Imposition of taxes requires laws. Thus a law for the imposition of a certain tax may imply a policy for the redistribution of wealth. Approval by the legislature is taken to mean approval by the people, since the legislature consists of representatives of the people. Hence the passage of a law puts the stamp of approval by the people's representatives on the policy contained in it and also empowers the executive to enforce it.

The function of giving legal shape to a policy is mainly performed by the bureaucracy. After a certain policy has been approved by the cabinet a draft of the bill is prepared by the Law Ministry. It is then examined by the civil servants and the minister from whom the proposal emanated. Thus while cooperation between politicians and civil servants is a must, it is important to appreciate the contribution of those who draft the bill. The details of the policy as it is enforced are determined by the legal terminology of the bill. The minister is generally unaware of legal niceties. The result is that the bureaucracy determines the details, some of which can be highly significant.

The significance of the bureaucracy's contribution can be gauged from the fact that sometimes the very success or failure of the policy may depend upon the legal terminology used in the law. Thus the widespread failure of land reforms in India was to some extent due to the loopholes in the laws which sought to enforce the policy. The National Commission on Agriculture noted that, "These legislative measures were full of loopholes which were taken advantage of by the bigger landed interests to circumvent the laws".

Thus while a policy needs the approval of the minister and the cabinet, and it is enforced through a law passed by the legislature, the bureaucracy plays an important part by giving it the shape of laws. Cooperation between politicians and civil servants is, therefore, again a must.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note :** i) Use the space below for your answers.
 ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) "It is the bureaucracy alone which function as channel of communication between the people and the government". Explain.

.....

- 2) What role does the bureaucracy play in technical examination of a policy?

.....

- 3) What part does the bureaucracy have in the authorisation of a policy?

.....

17.3 RELATIONSHIP IN THE COURSE OF IMPLEMENTATION

While in policy-making politicians have the dominant role, in implementation the bureaucracy has a greater role. While a politician only heads a department as a minister, civil servants function at all levels. Members of the bureaucracy at the top level advise ministers and manager the departments, those at the middle level supervise field officials and keep the top informed of the progress, and field officials like policemen, tax-collectors and factory inspectors enforce the law. It would, however, be a mistake to think that politicians have no role in implementation. The minister is the political head of the department and bears responsibility for both, its policies and their implementation. He is questioned in the legislature even on the details of implementation if anything goes wrong. It is the duty of the minister to ensure that civil servants in their department function according to the law and that no injustice is done either to a member of the clientele or the bureaucracy. The minister has to ensure that implementation of policies is done lawfully, effectively and efficiently. The minister deserves criticism if he/she tries to impose his/her will on officials in the performance of quasi-judicial functions, for example as members of a tribunal; if she withdraws delegated powers from officials in particular cases; and if he/she acts in a partisan or selfish manner. Hence responsibility for proper implementation of policies is borne by politicians as well as members of the bureaucracy, the role of the politicians as ministers being to exercise control over the bureaucracy on behalf of the people.

i) Rule-Making

A law as passed by the legislature is in general terms. It does not go into details. Thus a law may prohibit trade in harmful drugs. However, it would not list the drugs, leaving this to be done by the executive. There are several reasons why laws are stated in such general, rather than specific, terms. One reason is that the legislature is busy with a

large amount of business having to do with control over the administration, discussion of policies, and legislation. It does not have the time to go into the details. Another reason is that the legislature consists of representatives of the people rather than experts: their proper role is to protect the interests of the various sections of the society and not to get involved in the intricacies of particular pieces of legislation. Members of the bureaucracy are employed as experts to deal with the details falling within their area of specialisation. Finally, situations keep changing but the law cannot be changed so frequently. Thus new harmful drugs may make their appearance in the market. If the law were to give their names, it would have to be amended every time a new drug appeared. For these reasons the law is stated in general terms.

The function of filling-in details is left to the executive. The executive performs it through the making of rules and regulations. The making of rules and regulations under authority given by the legislature is called delegated legislation. The term legislation is used for the making of rules because they come to have the force of law. After all, rules give effect to the will of the legislature by filling in the details.

While the legislature gives the authority to make rules and regulations to the government, this authority is mainly exercised by civil servants. The reason is that civil servants possess the specialised knowledge, the experience and the detailed information necessary for drawing up the rules. The minister is generally not likely to have either the specialised knowledge or the time for doing this himself; he is busy with his political duties of meeting delegations of the people, looking into complaints, and so on.

The function of drawing up rules and regulations under delegated authority tends to confer a lot of power on the bureaucracy. This is specially so in developing countries where the bureaucracy is very powerful otherwise also. The role of delegated legislation in conferring power on the bureaucracy has been discussed for more than half a century. In England the Committee on Ministers' Powers considered this issue in 1932. The consensus now is that while there is the risk of giving too much power to the bureaucracy, there is no alternative to giving this function to it. Hence it is considered to be important that the rules be laid on the table of the house of the legislature, and that they be scrutinised by members of the legislature. The minister's role in exercising check over the bureaucracy in the drawing up of the rules goes without saying. In short, in this respect as in others, democratic theory emphasises the need for effective political control over the bureaucracy.

ii) Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation

After the notification of rules, implementation becomes mainly the responsibility of field officials like tax-collectors, factory inspectors, doctors in government hospitals, and policemen. Supervision over them is exercised by superiors of the department. This supervision generally remains lax in Indian administration. The main reason is that superior officials have very little real authority for rewarding or punishing their subordinates. Promotion, particularly at lower levels, is based mostly on seniority; nor can a superior give any other rewards. So far as punishment is concerned, the procedure for taking disciplinary action is very cumbersome and it takes a lot of time, sometimes years, before the final decision in regard to punishment is taken. However, another, and more important reason for laxity of supervision nowadays is the protection often given by politicians to civil servants over the heads of their superior. The politicians generally extend such support to civil servants in the hope of getting their help at election time. The patronage of politicians which civil servants thus enjoy results in widespread loss of efficiency, effectiveness, and probity in administration. We shall consider the solution to this problem later. Here we only note that instead of exercising control over the bureaucracy, politicians often are instrumental in eroding even the authority of bureaucratic superiors in our developing society.

The progress achieved in the fulfilment of targets is regularly monitored at higher levels. Various forms are prescribed for submitting periodic reports. Such reports can be of great value if they are properly used. However, they can also come in the way of achievement. Research work has shown that officials who are responsible for achievement have to fill too many returns; this takes away much of the time which should have been spent on the work itself. What is more, the returns and reports are often not even read by superior officials but merely tied up in files to gather dust and

occupy valuable space. The responsibility for this state of affairs belongs to both senior bureaucrats and politicians. There is a need, in every organisation, for constant re-examination of structures and procedures. Thus returns which were prescribed long ago may no longer be needed. Some, perhaps, can be cut down in their length. The initiative for such changes must come from the top through cooperation between high level politicians and civil servants.

Every programme should be evaluated after its completion for ensuring that the objectives have been fulfilled, that the work has been done at minimum cost, and that there has been no dishonesty. Evaluation is made, first and foremost, by superior officials in the department. The evaluation is likely to be more effective if the minister takes interest in it, finds time for seeing evaluation reports, and demands explanation for non-performance.

Overhead (or staff) agencies, like the Planning Commission, also make evaluation of policies and programmes. Thus the Planning Commission prepares a "mid-term appraisal" in the middle of every plan period; it also makes an evaluation of past policies at the beginning of every plan period in the document containing the new plan. The Planning Commission consists of politicians and experts and is assisted by high level members of the bureaucracy. It sometimes uses a special agency, such as the Programme Evaluation Organisation, for making in-depth studies. Evaluation by the Planning Commission carries great weight because of its pre-eminent position. This also provides an idea of the achievement possible through cooperation between politicians, civil servants, and experts who belong fully to neither of these two categories.

Evaluation is also made by the Comptroller and Auditor General who is an independent authority under the Constitution. He examines not only whether funds have been spent only for purposes for which they were provided by the legislature, but also whether the work has been done efficiently and wisely. His organisation provides a good example of how the bureaucracy itself can be an effective instrument of exercising check over administration as a whole—civil servants and also ministers.

However, the Comptroller and Auditor General also functions conjointly with the legislature, which is a political body. His report is presented to Parliament and State Legislatures where it is considered in detail by the Public Accounts Committee. The members of the bureaucracy working with the Comptroller and Auditor General, and the politicians in the Public Accounts Committee provide support to each other for evaluation at the highest level. Cooperation between politicians and bureaucrats can take many forms and for diverse purposes.

The Estimates Committee, of Parliament and of State Legislatures, makes an in-depth evaluation of the performance of a few departments selected every year. The Committee on Public Enterprises, of Parliament and State Legislatures, evaluates the performance of public enterprises. These committees of legislatures, consisting of elected politicians, provide an opportunity to politicians who are not members of the executive to exercise check over the bureaucracy.

The above discussion of supervision, monitoring and evaluation shows that while politicians and members of the bureaucracy must cooperate, politicians are also duty-bound to keep the bureaucracy under control. If the bureaucracy were not kept under control, the government would cease to be democratic. It is true that there may be more knowledgeable people in the bureaucracy than among politicians; however, that does not entitle the bureaucracy to rule over the people, for in a democracy the people wish to rule over themselves through their elected representatives. If politicians allow the bureaucracy to become too powerful they fail in their duty towards the people.

iii) Administrative Management

Administrative management refers to the management of the organisation as a whole. In India the principal agencies for this purpose are the ministries or departments (in the Union and State Governments respectively) of finance, planning, personnel and administrative reform or reorganisation. The Planning Commission, and planning boards in the States, and Public Service Commissions also participate in the function of managing the governmental organisation as a whole. While the management of programmes or projects for fulfilling the substantive purposes of the government are the

responsibility of line agencies like the Ministries of Defence, Industries and Health, administrative management relates to organising, financing, planning and staffing in all the ministries or departments. Effective implementation of policies and programme requires effective administrative management.

The importance of administrative management has not yet been sufficiently recognised, particularly in developing countries. Substantive concerns, such as those for defence, provision of employment and the maintenance of law and order, are so pressing that administrative management tends to be ignored. Administrative management does not receive the attention at the political level which it deserves. Thus many of the recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission have yet to be attended to. It is a mistake to think that substantive programmes can be successfully implemented without providing proper groundwork of administrative management. Thus maintenance of law and order and dealing with terrorism require a well-managed police force. Unless more attention to personnel administration in regard to the police is paid, it is idle to expect that terrorism can be wiped out. There is obviously need for more attention at the highest political level to administrative management. Ministers must become more conscious of their managerial role. They must provide for more support to administrative reform; there is need for a new relationship between politicians and the bureaucracy in which politicians accept more responsibility for management of organisation and procedures.

17.4 PROBLEMS IN THE RELATIONSHIP

So far we have described the relationship that develops between politicians and the bureaucracy in the course of policy-making and implementation. Now we shall try to examine somewhat more closely the problems of this relationship. It is important to realise that most of the problems that arise in countries like India are basically related to underdevelopment. The various aspects of underdevelopment are interrelated. Economic, social, political and administrative underdevelopment influence, and sometimes cause, each other. Hence the solution of administrative problems ultimately lies in development: they can rarely be solved in isolation.

i) Interference Complex

The term "interference complex" has been coined by Fred Riggs to refer to complaints by politicians against what they call "bureaucratic interference" and countercharges by administrators against what they call "political interference". These politicians often complain that the bureaucracy sabotages policies and programmes of progressive social change. The National Commission on Agriculture expressed agreement with this view while dealing with the failure of land reforms. It said, "The question is, who has failed? Is it the legislator or the administrator? In a measure both have failed. However, the major responsibility lies on the shoulders of the enforcement agencies, that is to say, the administrative set up entrusted with the task of implementation." The Commission went on to give the reason that the bureaucracy had been "trained and conditioned to function as the guardian of status quo and the defender of existing property relation." On the other hand, civil servants often say that legislators and ministers exercise patronage through interference with recruitment, selection, transfer and promotion of government employees for obtaining support at election time.

There may be some truth in both these complaints. Most of our higher bureaucracy is drawn from the urban professional middle class. Hence the majority of the population consisting of farmers and workers finds very little representation on it. The attitudes of the bureaucracy may, therefore, not be in consonance with the aspirations of the majority of the people. The solution to this problem, to some extent, lies in the introduction of tests for testing various physical and psychological attributes of the personality of the candidates at the time of initial selection. Hopefully, this will help to recruit a more representative and also more capable, bureaucracy. Changes in education and training can also help to better inculcate in the bureaucracy human and constitutional values such as justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism. Such a bureaucracy is likely to cooperate better in bringing about desirable economic, social and political change, or development.

The problem of political patronage can, to some extent, be solved by strengthening interest groups and political parties. At present some of our best parties also have a substantial non-genuine membership, elections within the parties are sometimes not held for decades, there is a high degree of centralisation in the functioning of parties, they are overly dependent upon a few rich capitalists or big farmers for election funds, there are within them factions owing allegiance to different leaders, there are divisions based on caste, religion and language, and sometimes criminals manage to get important positions in them. Removal of these deficiencies is likely to reduce their dependence upon patronage, as happened in the West.

Improvements in both, political parties and the bureaucracy, are likely to help in bringing about a better relationship between them and in doing away with the "interference complex".

ii) Bureaucratic Power

Writers like Riggs, Weidner and Heady pointed out long ago that the bureaucracy tended to be more powerful in developing countries than in developed ones. The greater the power of the bureaucracy, the more difficult it is for politicians to control it. Hence there is a tendency for dictatorship by the civil and military bureaucracy in developing countries. Democratic administration requires that the bureaucracy should be properly controlled by the elected representatives of the people.

The great power of the bureaucracy is part of our colonial heritage. Indian bureaucracy appears to have the attitudes and behaviour of the colonial bureaucracy but do not seem to have identified themselves with democratic norms of a political system.

S.N. Eisenstadt has pointed out that colonial powers strengthened central institutions of the society but left local ones unchanged. Thus they developed central services but not local self-government. Fred Riggs has pointed out in his book entitled *The Ecology of Public Administration* that the bureaucracy in India has become very powerful also because members of All-India Services hold the highest posts at Central, State and local levels. Thus the highest official in a district has been a member of an All-India Service like the ICS or the IAS and not an elected politician. In developed countries like the U.K. and the U.S.A. local self-government is very powerful. Thus a country is ruled by an elected government headed by a representative of the people as a mayor. The bureaucracy at the local level is employed and controlled by the local authority. In India, by contrast, the Deputy Commissioner is not employed and controlled by the Zila Parishad; the Deputy Commissioner functions mainly as the agent of the State Government and regulates and controls the Zila Parishad and the municipalities in the district on behalf of the State Government. The bureaucracy at the district and block levels is mostly employed by the State Government, and hence is not under the control of local politicians. This relationship between politicians and the bureaucracy at the local level constitutes a continuation of the colonial practice.

Development involves doing away with colonial practices and introducing in their place democratic ones. This requires strengthening local self-government. People in the villages need to be educated and organised, political parties at the grass-root levels activated, and more resources provided to local governments. Once local governments become powerful they can employ their own bureaucracy instead of depending upon the State bureaucracy. Only after local representatives of the people begin to exercise power on their behalf can the felt needs and aspirations of the people be fulfilled through local (village, block and district) planning. Implementation of policies and programmes can also be much more effective if the bureaucracy strictly controlled by local politicians who are on the spot, instead of by those who are far away at the State headquarters. In other words, democratic decentralisation constitutes an important aspect of development.

Democratic decentralisation, however, can succeed only if other types of development also takes place. For example, the spread of corruption at the local level can be prevented by strengthening associations of the people (or interest groups) and political parties. Experience has shown that corruption has been curbed in villages where the people organised themselves. Local political leaders can take the initiative in organising the people. The functioning of political leaders is related to that of political parties generally. The functioning of political parties can be improved by removing their deficiencies (noted in sub-section 17.4.1). The relationship between politicians and the

bureaucracy is merely an aspect of the political system: improvement in it requires development in all aspects of the society, since they are all interrelated.

iii) Loyalty

Members of the bureaucracy are expected to be committed to human and constitutional values and national objectives. They are expected to be neutral between political parties. In the recent past, however, there have been complaints that some politicians in power have demanded from the bureaucracy loyalty for their party and themselves. For example, members of the bureaucracy have stated that they could not express their disagreements with ruling politicians freely during the Emergency. Some civil servants were perceived to have lost their neutrality. The Shah Commission noted, "In some cases the administration and administrators ceased to be insulated from politics with disastrous consequences".

The Shah Commission recommended institutional safeguards to protect civil servants from politicians who make unjustified demands, as follows: "It is necessary to point out the need to provide certain institutional safeguards to look after the interests of the entire run of officials, and particularly those who are involved at the decision-making levels in the various departments of the Government in the States and at the Centre. When unscrupulous and unprincipled politicians and their associates are in a position to harm the public servants refusing to fall in line with wrong and illegal orders, it becomes necessary in the interest of the basic unity and integrity of the country, as also of the fundamentals of the Constitution and the rule of law, to protect the officials who are called upon to function at different administrative levels." Since the Shah Commission reported, administrative tribunals have been established to which members of the bureaucracy can take their complaints.

There have been complaints that some ministers obtain the help of civil servants at election time. While solution to this problem in the short-run lies in strengthening the election law, in the long-run it can be solved by strengthening political parties so that they become capable of providing all the help and support which their candidates need at election time.

iv) Collusion

Sometimes politicians and civil servants cooperate in wrong doing. The Shah Commission noted that, "It is necessary to face the situation squarely that not all the excesses and improprieties committed during the emergency originated at the political level. In a large number of cases it appears that unscrupulous and over-ambitious officers were prepared to curry favour with the seats of power and position by doing what they thought the people in authority desired". After the Emergency also, cases have come before courts showing wrong doing jointly by politicians and civil servants. It is an accepted fact today that the Indian bureaucracy has a vested interest in the industrialisation of India. This explains the easy adjustment between bureaucracy and business and industrial pressure groups in the country. There has for long been widespread public concern with corruption in administration arising mainly from such collusion.

Apart from ordinary courts of law, there is now the institution of the Lok Ayukta in some states. This is the most appropriate institution for looking into complaints of this kind. If wrong doing is found by the Lok Ayukta, prosecution can be launched in courts of law. With the institution of the Lok Pal at the Centre, as now proposed, complaints against Central ministers will also be similarly attended to.

The ultimate check upon both politicians and civil servants lies in a vigilant public opinion. The public is aided by a free press. The proposed legislation for ensuring freedom of information and amending the Official Secrets Act is likely to go a long way in giving even more scope to the press for exposing wrong doing in public interest.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What is the relationship between the politicians and the bureaucrats in the course of implementation of policies ?

- 2) What are the problems of the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats ?

17.5 LET US SUM UP

Cooperation between politicians and the bureaucracy is essential for effective and efficient administration. Both of them function as channels of communication between the government and the people. While politicians assess the mood of the people, civil servants obtain valuable feedback. Civil servants make several kinds of technical examination of proposed programmes. Coordination of policies and programmes is made by politicians mainly in the cabinet, and by civil servants through staff agencies. Laws are drafted mainly by civil servants, but passed by politicians in the legislature. Implementation is done mainly by civil servants, but under the control of ministers. Problems in their relationship can be solved, ultimately by strengthening local self-government, interest groups and political parties, or in other words through development.

17.6 KEY WORDS

Interest articulation: presentation of demands of particular sections of the society by their associations before political decision-makers

Interest aggregation: conversion of demands into general policy alternatives (mainly by political parties)

Feedback: information about results (of programmes)

Feasibility: suitability, practicability

Delegated legislation: rule-making by the executive under authority granted by the legislature

Monitoring: keeping check over achievement

Administrative management: management of the organisation as a whole (for example management of planning, finances, personnel and reorganisation in all the departments of a government)

17.7 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Eisenstadt, S. N., 1969. *Modernization: Protest and Change*; Prentice-Hall of India Private Ltd.: New Delhi.

Heady, Ferrel, 1966. *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective*; Prentice-Hall Inc. ; Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey.

Bureaucrats and Politicians and their Relationship

Kothari, Shanti and Roy Ramashray, 1969. *Relations between Politician and Administrators at the District Level*; IIPA: New Delhi.

Riggs, Fred W., 1961. *The Ecology of Public Administration*; Asia Publishing Co.: Bombay.

Riggs, Fred W., 1964. *Administration in Developing Countries—The Theory of Prismatic Society*; Houghton Mifflin Co.: Boston.

Journal

Arora K. Satish, "Political Policy and the Future of Bureaucracy", in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 18 (July-Sept. 1971), pp. 355-367.

Gupta, V.P., "A Study of Conflict between Political Elite and Bureaucracy", in the *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 1 January-March, 1987.

Subramanian, V. "Role of Civil Service in the Indian Political System", in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. VVII, No. 2, April-June, 1971, p. 238.

17.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- Political parties to constitute the channel of communication.
- Through interest articulation.
- Through interest aggregation.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- Bureaucracy's role in the following :
 - the substantive aspect of the policy.
 - feasibility of the policy.
 - economic viability.
 - social cost-benefit analysis of the policy.

3) Your answer should include the following points :

- Examination of the draft of a bill.
- Determining the details of a bill.
- Giving to it the shape of law.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- Rule making.
- Supervision, monitoring and evaluation.
- Administrative management.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- Interference complex.
- Bureaucratic power.
- Loyalty.
- Collusion.

UNIT 18 ENHANCING BUREAUCRATIC CAPABILITY

Structure

- 18.0 Objectives
 - 18.1 Introduction
 - 18.2 Personnel Development
 - 18.3 Organisational Development
 - 18.4 Procedural Development
 - 18.5 Development of the Society
 - 18.6 Let Us Sum Up
 - 18.7 Key Words
 - 18.8 Some Useful Books
 - 18.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
-

18.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to :

- Identify the factors related to bureaucratic capability;
 - Discuss how the various factors influence the bureaucratic capability; and
 - Suggest measures for enhancing its capability.
-

18.1 INTRODUCTION

Capability means ability to perform. In this unit we propose to discuss how bureaucratic performance can be improved. Our discussion will be in four sections. In section 18.2, entitled Personnel Development, we shall examine how the quality of the employees can be improved. Here we shall see how personnel administration, in its various aspects such as classification, selection, placement, promotion, training and disciplinary action, can be modified to lead to a better quality of personnel. In section 18.3, entitled Organisational Development, we shall examine how changes in the organisational structure can improve administrative performance. Section 18.4, on Procedural Development, deals with the methods of working, or procedures, and how changes in these can lead to better results. Section 18.5, entitled Development of the Society, deals with the relationship of the bureaucracy and the society in general. Here we examine how changes in the society can make the bureaucracy more capable.

18.2 PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A bureaucracy is an instrument which is devised for the fulfilment of certain purposes. As these purposes change, the nature of the bureaucracy should also undergo changes. In most developing countries like India the bureaucracy was originally devised by the imperial power for serving its own ends. Many of the colonial features of the bureaucracy have continued to exist even after the attainment of independence, as discussed in Unit 14. Hence changes in personnel administration are needed for having a bureaucracy suited to democratic administration. Further, the role of the state has expanded; in developing countries particularly, the state has the responsibility of bringing about development. Since the bureaucracy is the prime instrument of the State, it has to be modified and attuned to the new purposes. Hence it is necessary to bring changes in the nature of bureaucracy. The argument that what has served well in the past is likely to do so in the future also, does not hold good. In the following, we shall deal with the various aspects of personnel administration one by one.

i) Classification, Recruitment and Placement

In India, Government employment have been classified on the rank system into services, classes and grades since colonial times. A person may move from one job (or position) to another, and yet his rank can remain unchanged. Obviously, this system of classification is not suited to a bureaucracy with a diversity of positions having varying functions and responsibilities required by the large number of developmental activities. The system of position classification, in which jobs rather than persons are classified, is more suited for our present needs.

In the system of position classification, each job has its functions; the qualifications for recruitment are fitted to these functions. Hence recruitment is for particular jobs. In this way, persons, who are most suited to the jobs (which they have to perform) can be recruited. Naturally, such a bureaucracy is likely to be much more efficient than one recruited in bulk without much thought about the functions which the individuals have to perform.

If recruitment were for particular jobs, we would be more careful about the special qualifications of each candidate. Specialised knowledge tends to become more and more important in the modern world. Members of the bureaucracy have to perform various jobs requiring highly specialised knowledge. It is true that at present also there are various kinds of specialists in the bureaucracy. However, they are often recruited as members of service rather than for particular jobs. Hence many members of the bureaucracy do not possess the knowledge required for the jobs which they hold. Thus many managers of public undertakings do not possess knowledge of managerial sciences; private business, by contrast, nowadays generally appoint persons trained in management.

In recruitment for public services, generally there continues to be too much emphasis on the "cultivated person" with a liberal education, rather than on the specialist. Even for services requiring specialised knowledge and particular abilities, we often tend to recruit those with a general, liberal education, and do not test for the necessary abilities. Thus accounting and auditing require specialised knowledge; it takes several years for one to become a chartered accountant. However, recruitment to the prestigious Indian Audit and Accounts Service continues to be made from among graduates with a liberal education who may have no knowledge of accounting. Much of the expenditure incurred by the Government on training those recruited to this Service can be saved by recruiting from among those having some knowledge of accounting. Similarly, for the police we need persons with special knowledge and abilities. Criminology and forensic science nowadays tend to be developed disciplines. Police officers also need certain psychological and physical abilities, such as those of courage and endurance. High officers who have to deal with gangs of dacoits or terrorists need such knowledge and abilities. However, recruitment to the Indian Police Service does not take these into account. Recruitment to the armed forces, by contrast, is based on tests of various psychological and physical abilities. It is obvious from these examples that the capability of our bureaucracy can be greatly increased by basing the selection on tests of psychological and physical abilities and of specialised knowledge required for the jobs for which the recruitment is being made.

The capability of the bureaucracy can also be enhanced by paying attention to the aptitude and interest of an officer while making the placement (or posting him to a particular place). This is specially important so long as we recruit people to services and not to jobs. Thus members of the Indian Administrative Service have different kinds of knowledge, interest and aptitude. All graduates are eligible for entry into the Service; still, they have different educational backgrounds. While some of them have studied arts, others have studied sciences; while some have studied engineering, others have studied management. Their interests also vary. While some of them may be interested in managing governmental business undertakings, others may be more interested in programmes for the welfare of women and children. Similarly, the aptitude also varies from member to member. Aptitude means the natural ability to acquire a particular type of knowledge or skill. Thus one may have an aptitude for policing, while another may have more of an aptitude for helping farmers to increase production. Obviously, the performance of the bureaucracy would improve if the knowledge, interest and aptitude of officers were taken into account while posting them in different places. At present

this is done only in a few, special cases. By and large, members of generalist services are treated like standardised parts of machines which can be fitted without reference to their differences. However, the science of psychology lays great stress on individual differences, that is variations or deviations from the average of the group, with respect to mental or physical characters. While parts of machines are sought to be made more and more similar to each other through quality control, the development of human beings requires the unfolding and growth of their particular talents. Hence a policy of personnel development must be associated with recognition of their special interest, aptitude, knowledge and skill. This would lead to greater motivation and job satisfaction on the part of employees and also better fulfilment of programme objectives.

ii) Promotion and other Incentives

Everybody's performance is dependent upon his/her motivation, that is the extent to which he/she has been stimulated to achieve certain goals. Motivation results from rewards and punishments. Modern psychological theory puts greater emphasis upon rewards than upon punishments. Rewards are positive in character and can lead to an unlimited improvement in performance. Punishments, on the other hand, are negative and tend to lead to the minimum acceptable performance. Hence rewards are of greater significance than punishments for improving performance.

In Indian personnel administration there is very little scope for giving either rewards or punishments. Thus one of the most important incentives is promotion. Promotion can be attractive for two reasons, first it can imply recognition of an employee's contribution, and secondly it means a higher salary and status. At present, however, promotion is mostly based on seniority. It is true that according to the declared policy, merit at higher levels is more important than merit at lower levels. In practice, however, it is only rarely that anyone is promoted out of turn. This is mainly so because if any such out of turn promotion is made, there is a lot of heart burning among those who are superseded. As a result, while the performance of the promoted employee may go up, that of all those who are superseded goes down, leading to a net fall in performance. Hence in Indian Administration at present promotion is based mainly upon seniority. However, if promotion is based upon seniority, it ceases to function as a reward; instead it comes to be treated as a "right". We thus find that while promotion could function as the most important reward, in our present situation it no longer plays that role.

In order to make promotion function as a reward, greater mobility in the public bureaucracy is required. In other words, there should be more opportunities for all for moving up, sideways to other departments and in and out of the bureaucracy. This requires economic development in the first place, so that there are more employment opportunities. Within the administration, however, it requires greater flexibility, or less rigidity. Flexibility can be increased by doing away with the colonial classification into services, classes or groups, and grades, and introducing in its place position classification coupled with open competition for all jobs. Age restrictions would also have to be reduced so that qualified and experienced persons in all walks of life could take up jobs at all levels in the public bureaucracy. In the colonial period, the civil service functioned as if within a shell, with little possibility of entry or exit in the course of one's career, since Indians at that time were not trusted enough to hold high office unless they had been tested for a lifetime. Such distrust has no justification now. Introduction of greater flexibility and mobility will lead to an improvement in performance all over.

If promotion is to function as a reward, it must be based upon objective criteria. The present system of annual confidential reports leaves much to be desired. Employees often perceive that their evaluation is subjective, that is based upon the whims of the superior officer, and that factors of sycophancy and relationship, caste and creed have a significant role in it. A satisfactory system of performance evaluation would be one which the employees themselves perceive as being based upon objective criteria. The criteria would preferably be evolved in advance jointly by persons whose performance is to be evaluated and those who do the evaluation. They would also be quantifiable as far as possible. Thus targets could be agreed upon and performance could then be judged against them.

While promotion can be given only once in a while, other incentives can function more often. The most important of incentives is job satisfaction or the satisfaction which the

employee gets from the work itself. Such satisfaction can be increased through job enrichment, that is providing greater opportunities for achievement, responsibility, recognition, growth and learning. Each one of these factors can take various forms. Material incentives can become more effective if they function in combination with non-material ones. Thus monetary rewards, such as increments in salary, can be better motivators if they are seen as constituting recognition of good work done.

iii) Training

Training of personnel is of increasing importance due to the continuous and great expansion of knowledge. The use of science and technology makes it possible to immeasurably increase productivity. Thus the green revolution, or great increase in agricultural productivity, has come about in Punjab, Haryana, and Western U.P., through the use of high yielding varieties of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and mechanical implements such as pump-sets and tractors. Hence it is important to impart this new knowledge to functionaries of agriculture departments of all State Governments in the country. Similarly, other employees must also update their knowledge like the doctors, engineers, architects and managers.

Training is necessary also because the adoption of new technology tends to render those trained in the earlier technology useless. Hence re-training of those trained earlier is constantly needed.

To make training attractive for employees it should be associated with advancement, or promotion. Thus selection for training should be made from among those who show promise; those who do well at training should be rewarded. Promotion should be made as a reward for those who give the best performance as a result of their training.

At present, officials who have made a nuisance of themselves are often sent away for training so as to get rid of them at least for a short while. Trainees also often tend to regard the training period as one of holiday. This situation can be remedied by evaluating what each employee has learnt in the course of training, and making the evaluation report a part of the record of his performance.

Training, at present, is not sufficiently related to the work which the employee has to perform. Often the posting of officers after training does not take into account the new expertise they may have acquired. Hence much of the expenditure on training tends to be a waste.

Training methods also need change and improvement. The lecture method, which is commonly adopted, is not the most suitable one for teaching techniques and skills and for inculcating judgment and understanding. Other methods, such as those which make use of cases, business games and workshops, need to be adopted keeping in view the content (such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes), and the level and maturity of the employees.

iv) Disciplinary Action

We have noted earlier that Indian Administration suffers from a lack of use of reward and punishment. We have also noted that reward is more effective than punishment for influencing performance. What we need, therefore, is a system which combines rewards and punishments. The possibility of punishment must be there, for it is required by accountability.

Punishment of Civil Servants is governed by Civil Services (classification, control and appeal) Rules, which were originally made under the Government of India Act, 1919. They provide for punishment in case of breach of conduct prescribed under rules of conduct relating to the Service to which the employee belongs. These Rules provide for the following punishments in the ascending order: censure, withholding of increments, reduction to a lower level, recovery of Government's loss from pay, suspension, removal (which does not disqualify from future employment), and dismissal. However, Article 311 of the Constitution provides that a civil servant cannot be removed or dismissed by an authority subordinate to that which appointed him; it also provides that no dismissal, removal or reduction in rank can be ordered unless the civil servant has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of the charges brought against him.

These provisions require the framing of specific charges with full particularity.

considering the civil servant's answers to these charges, and following the rules of natural justice.

In practice it has been found that the process of disciplinary action takes a long time, and often involves the Government and the superior officer in litigation. Hence disciplinary action is taken rarely; it is taken where breach of the law can be easily established but not for poor performance. In effect, the Government of India does not function like most other governments, and employers in general, who would not tolerate poor performance. Civil servants in India tend generally to feel that no action is likely to be taken against them (except perhaps transfer) even if their performance is poor.

The situation can be remedied through various measures, such as expediting the process of disciplinary action, amending the rules of conduct, and making short-term contracts with employees. The protection, so often given to erring employees by politicians, would also have to be curbed.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1) What changes can be brought in the classification, recruitment and placement of personnel for enhancing their capability ?

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- 2) How can promotion and other incentives be used for enhancing bureaucratic capability ?

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- 3) What is the role of training in enhancing bureaucratic capability ?

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18.3 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

So far we have discussed how the personnel can be developed for enhancing their capability. Now we propose to examine how the organisational structure can be developed. The distinction between the system and the individuals who constitute the system, is important. Thus in a dictatorship, large numbers of individuals may be prevented from doing, or even saying, that which they consider to be right. Hence a political system which provides freedom to the individual is better than one that does not. Similarly, the quality of an administrative structure is dependent upon the extent to which it allows the utilisation of the potentialities of its members. A structure is a set of relationships. Most contemporary organisational structures are too restrictive in nature. According to Douglas McGregor, many more members of organisations are able to contribute creatively to the solution of organisational problems than do so at present.

the potentialities of the average person are not being fully used. This is specially so in ex-colonial developing countries like India. In the following sections we shall examine ways in which the structure needs to be reformed.

i) Decentralisation

J. Ramsay MacDonald, who later became the Prime Minister of England, described Indian Administration under British rule as follows :

The tendency has been to centralise the working....The machine of Government has become a thing apart, and by separating itself from the organic life of India it has over-emphasised the fact that India is ruled by foreigners. The evolution of such a system is inevitable.... Secretariats become all-powerful; not a sparrow falls but is recorded, reported and re-recorded, docketed, initialled and minuted; not a suggestion emanates from below but is regarded with suspicion or hostility as something of a foreign origin; not a thing is done without involving the whole machine in the doing of it.

Centralisation continues to be one of the prime features of the Indian Administration. It has various aspects and ramifications; however, its most important indicator is the secretariat — a citadel of bureaucratic power such as does not exist in any developed country. The interposition of the colonial institution of the secretariat between the minister and the executive head of the department interferes with both, proper political control over the bureaucracy and adequate participation of specialists in decision-making.

It is important to bring the minister into closer touch with the executive agency consisting of specialists. At present control over specialists is exercised by bureaucrats in the secretariat in the name of the "Government". This makes for great power for the generalist officers in the secretariat. Executive agencies function under the restrictive control of these generalist officers who often have little understanding of the technicalities involved. Since the so-called heads of departments (such as the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Public Instruction, and so on) themselves function under the stringent control over officials in the field. What is more, field officers function under dual control, they are answerable to the office of the head of the department for performance, but in matters like transfer, promotion and disciplinary action they are not dealt with by the secretariat. As a result, functionaries in the field often feel that they do not have the autonomy necessary for effective functioning.

The Administrative Reforms Commission in its Report on the machinery of the Government of India and its procedure of work in 1968 recommended doing away with the distinction between the secretariat and the executive departments at least in some cases. Enough action has not yet been taken to implement this recommendation. Indeed, the passage of about a quarter of a century is likely to have made the recommendation more widely applicable than conceived by the Commission.

ii) Enhanced Role of Specialists

The role of modern science and technology cannot be over-emphasised when dealing with development administration. While many specialists are employed by the Governments in India, they often do not have a role which would make a sufficient impact upon the policy and its implementation. An impact on policy would require keeping close contact with the minister. However, the main advisers of ministers are the generalist officers in the secretariat. It is true that heads of departments are asked to comment in writing on policy proposals; however, they do not have a sufficient role in initiating policies. This would require more authority and personal interaction with the minister. It is notable that the minister and the secretary are both generally amateurs in the sense of not having specialised knowledge, and hence may not be able to think of new measures for dealing with difficult problems. Nor can a Planning Commission do all the policy-making, since situations differ so much from place to place and time to time. Hence close association between specialists and the minister is essential. The Administrative Reforms Commission, in its Report on Personnel Administration, recommended that officers in the secretariat should come from among specialists. This recommendation has not been implemented by the Governments. The least that should be done is to induct more specialists into the secretariat, so that the minister can hear them as well as the generalists.

An interesting new experiment is nowadays being made of appointing junior ministers from among scientists. This does indicate the desire to bring influence of scientists to bear on the administration. However, with the explosion of knowledge there tend to be so many different disciplines that the inclusion of a few scientists as ministers is not likely to provide the full benefits of science and technology.

iii) Reorientation of Staff Agencies

Agencies which deal with planning, financial administration, personnel administration, administrative reform, law making, and central purchasing and building activities, are known as staff agencies. Examples of staff agencies are the Planning Commission, the Finance Ministry, and so on. Staff agencies are said to be advisory in nature, but as Simon pointed out, in reality they exercise control on behalf of the cabinet. The controls which staff agencies exercise are, to some extent, necessary. Thus having a single coordinated plan for the government as a whole requires a planning agency: its advice to the government relating to the size of the plan for a certain ministry, implies some controlling power over that ministry. However, if the staff agencies in large organisations like a State Government go beyond laying down broad policy guidelines, and tend to deal with details they can hamper the fulfilment of governmental objectives by the executive ministries. In India, staff agencies were used during British rule for exercising checks over the executive or line agencies (such as departments of education, health and so on) in the interests of the foreign power. Thus ministers of provincial governments under the Montague Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 complained that the finance department did not provide them with money for developmental programmes like those of roads and education. This restrictive nature of the staff agencies became enshrined in rules and precedents. Hence staff agencies have remained restrictive partly due to their colonial heritage.

Paul Appleby, in his reports on Indian Administration submitted about forty years ago, pointed out another important reason why the staff agencies tend to become restrictive unless preventive action is taken. As the functions, number of personnel, expenditure, and general size of an organisation increases, the staff agencies must restrict themselves more and more to giving general policy guidelines. If they continue to make as detailed an examination as before, they tend to be over-burdened with routine work while the functioning of the line agency being regulated tends to become more and more constrained due to the closeness of control. This, says Appleby, has happened in India. The size of the administration has grown many times in India. However, the rules contained for example in the budget manual remain much the same; the exercise of as minute a control over a large organisation as was exercised over it when it was much smaller, greatly hinders its functioning and retards performance.

A third factor making for too restrictive a control by staff agencies is their large number. Appleby puts it pithily in the statement that there are several brakes but no accelerator in Indian Administration. Thus for a programme for the control of an epidemic, the health department of a State Government would need the approval of the Union Planning Commission and the State Planning department for its inclusion in the five year and annual plans, that of the State finance department for its inclusion in the budget, that of the law department for the necessary legislation, that of the public works department for the necessary buildings, that of the State Personnel agencies in regard to the personnel, and so on. Thus the line agency has to deal with too many staff agencies. What is more, the functioning of these coordinating agencies is itself uncoordinated. Differences between them cannot be resolved by the line agency, but it is the work of the line agency which is hampered by such differences.

Various steps need to be taken to deal with the above mentioned problems. The staff agencies should be reoriented to function at their level; they should restrict themselves to giving policy guidelines. The line agencies should develop their own staff offices for looking into the details of their plans, budgets, and so on. Once such staff offices have been developed in the line agencies, the staff agencies should delegate more authority to them. The coordination of coordinating agencies (or staff agencies) can be improved by combining the various staff functions in one or two of them, as is done in advanced countries.

iv) Delegation of Authority

Delegation means conferring authority from one administrator or organisational unit to another in order to accomplish particular assignments. Thus a State Government can

delegate authority in a certain matter to the Deputy Commissioner. The administrator who delegates authority continues to have his original authority and responsibility even after delegating it.

Delegation is essential in every large scale organisation. Officers at lower levels mainly exercise delegated authority. If there were no delegation in a corporation, its chairman would have to manage it alone.

One of the important faults of Indian Administration is a general lack of delegation. During British rule, Indian officials were not trusted. Hence ICS officers directly exercised authority as far as possible. If authority was delegated to Indian officers and any mistake was made by the officer to whom it had been delegated, it was withdrawn. Rules thus came to provide a low delegation; subordinates were required to take prior sanction for every little thing.

Low delegation could continue during British rule since the functions of the administration were limited. Maintenance of law and order and tax collection did not require the exercise of much initiative or innovations. However, in developmental activities field officials must exercise initiative and make innovations; they need to be given more authority for fulfilling the objectives of development. Hence there is a need to review the rules and regulations for enhancing delegation.

Financial matters call for special attention in this regard. As prices rise, there is a need to increase the financial powers of officials at various levels. Otherwise their authority gets reduced in real terms.

v) Reduction in Number of Levels

Hierarchy is considered to be an essential element in an organisation. However, if the number of levels in the hierarchy is large, the chain of communication between the field and decision-making levels tends to become so long that communication ceases to be effective. Lack of effective communication means that those at lower levels are unable to understand the changing objectives of administration, and those at higher levels are unable to comprehend the needs and problems in the field.

In Indian Administration there are too many levels. For example, even within the Secretariat, where all the civil servants sit in the same office, there are the following levels in the ascending order: clerk, assistant, superintendent, assistant secretary, under secretary, deputy secretary, joint secretary, additional secretary and secretary. In other words, a certain matter may have to be considered by nine civil servants before the minister gives his decision. The larger the number of levels, the longer is the time taken. Hence both effectiveness and efficiency tend to suffer due to the multiplicity of levels. There is a need to review the structure so as to bring the number of levels down.

18.4 PROCEDURAL DEVELOPMENT

The colonial heritage of Indian Administration also results in procedures which are underdeveloped. During the British rule, the administration was carried on according to rules made under laws made by the British Parliament. After Independence, laws made by Indian legislatures, and rules made under them, should have taken the place of the old provisions. However, in most cases the old rules have been allowed to continue. This interferes with the fulfilment of values and objectives of the present administration and hence leads to ineffectiveness; it also leads to delay and frustration and hence to inefficiency.

Let us take the case, for instance, of procedures relating to personnel administration. The Constitution provides that "Acts of the appropriate legislature may regulate the recruitment, and conditions of service of persons appointed, to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of any State" (Article 309). In practice, however, instead of passing laws under this constitutional provision, old rules have been allowed to continue. Some of the old rules were originally made about a century ago and have only been tinkered with from time to time. Thus the Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules were made under the Government of India

Act of 1919, but continue to govern classification and punishment. The spirit behind such rules can hardly be in consonance with that of the Constitution.

The conflict between the spirit of the old rules and the new Constitution is apparent in every field of administration. Thus the old police manual provided for the handcuffing of every person who was arrested. However, the Supreme Court has now laid down that handcuffing should be done only in certain special cases. There is, thus, a clear conflict between the old rules and the new law as laid down by the Supreme Court. The ordinary policeman reads the police manual, but hardly ever judgements of the Supreme Court. His behaviour is, therefore, guided mostly by the manual and often goes against both the spirit and the letter of the law.

The above discussion has brought out the need to make new laws and new rules. In Europe, most countries have a single law for regulating personnel administration. If such a law were made by the Indian Parliament also, the present dependence upon a large number of scattered rules would be done away with.

Apart from the old rules, Indian Administration is, to a large extent, governed by precedents also. This is related to the general lack of delegation and decentralisation. Officials at lower levels have remained bound by rules. However, there can be several interpretations of a certain rule. To avoid making a mistake in interpreting a rule, they tend to depend upon earlier interpretations, or precedents. Hence they are hindered from finding new solutions to difficult problems, making innovations and generally exercising their initiative.

Officials at lower levels have to send various reports and returns to higher authorities. The expansion of governmental functions requires changes in the forms and periodicity of many of these. Hence there is a need for frequent re-examination of the required reports and returns.

Record-keeping needs to be improved in most government offices in India. The records are often tied up in files and put one on top of another. Hence it is often difficult to find them, thus making much of the effort involved in record keeping almost useless.

The above discussion has shown that defective procedures can greatly interfere with effectiveness and efficiency. Hence it is important to improve and develop them for enhancing bureaucratic capability.

18.5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY

Public Administration constitutes merely an aspect of the society. Other aspects of the society — economic, social, political, cultural and educational, constantly interact with the administration. Hence enhancement of bureaucratic capability requires changes in the social environment.

So long as the majority of the people remain poor, uneducated and unaware of their rights and duties, they cannot properly participate in programmes of development. Import of high technology cannot deliver the goods in a situation of general economic backwardness. Thus if the data received from the field are defective (say because of lack of means of transport and communication), the processing of the data on a computer by highly trained specialists is of no use. In short, economic development is a pre-requisite of administrative development.

Political development is also required for administrative development. For administration to become democratic and participatory, as against colonial, the development of interest groups, political parties, the electoral system, and mass media is essential.

Social and cultural development is also an important aspect of modernisation. Superstition and the exploitation of people of so called low caste, women and children, interfere with the attainment of health, education and productivity.

In short, the various aspects of the society are, necessarily, interrelated. Development in one requires development of all others. Enhancement of bureaucratic capability, therefore, requires development of the society generally, even as administrative development helps all-round development.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note :** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) “The organisational structures need to be reformed” explain.

2) How can improvement in procedures help to enhance bureaucratic capabilities ?

3) How is administrative development related to development of the society in general ?

18.6 LET US SUM UP

Enhancement of bureaucratic capability requires development of personnel administration, organisational structure, procedures and the society as a whole.

In personnel administration there is a need to move towards position classification, recruitment for jobs rather than ranks, placement in accordance with interest and aptitude, the use of promotion and other incentives for rewarding performance, training for enhancing capability and disciplinary action for punishing for poor performance.

The organisational structure can be improved through decentralisation, enhancing the role of the specialists in decision-making, restricting the staff agencies to giving policy guidelines, delegation of authority, and reduction in the number of levels.

Improvement in procedures requires making new laws and rules in place of old ones, reducing dependence upon precedents, re-examination of forms for reports and returns and adoption of new methods of record-keeping.

Effective enhancement in bureaucratic capability can be achieved only with economic, political, social and cultural development.

18.7 KEY WORDS

Aptitude: natural ability to acquire general or special types of knowledge or skill.

Censure: expression of disapproval, reprimand.

Delegation: Grant or conferment or giving of authority, or a part of work or responsibility to some one else so that they can act on your behalf.

Incentive: motive for acting in a certain way.

Staff agency: Staff agency refers to any individual, officer or unit which provides help, assurance, advice and information to the chief executive.

18.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Bhattacharya, Mohit, 1987. *Public Administration: Structure, Process and Behaviour*,

The World Press Ltd.: Calcutta.

Maheswari, S.R., 1986. *Indian Administration*, Orient Longman Ltd.: New Delhi.

18.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- The system of position classification.
- Recruitment on the basis of specialisation.
- Placement of personnel, according to the interest and aptitude.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- Promotion, on the basis of merit.
- Promotion, on the basis of objective criteria.
- Greater opportunities for achievement, responsibilities.
- Greater opportunities for recognition, growth and learning.
- Increments in salary in recognition of good work.

3) Your answer should include the following points :

- Helps to keep pace with the expression of knowledge.
- Orients the officials to work.
- An incentive to further promotion.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- Decentralisation.
- Enhanced role of the specialists.
- Reorientation of staff agencies.
- Delegation of Authority.
- Reduction in number of levels.

2) Your answer should include the following points :

- Formation of new rules.
- Formation of new laws.
- Finding new solutions to problems rather than depending on precedents.
- Improvement in record-keeping.

3) Your answer should include the following points :

- Interrelation of the various aspects of the society.
- Development in one requires development of all others.

UNIT 19 CONCEPT OF DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION

Structure

- 19.0 Objectives
- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Concept of Decentralisation
- 19.3 Need for Decentralisation
- 19.4 Aspects of Decentralisation
- 19.5 Democratic Decentralisation
- 19.6 Hindrances to Democratic Decentralisation
- 19.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 19.8 Key Words
- 19.9 Some Useful Books
- 19.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

19.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to :

- explain the meaning of decentralisation;
- discuss why it is needed;
- explain the meaning of democratic decentralisation; and
- discuss its hindrances.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

We are aware that almost all the developing societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America achieved independence from the colonial rulers during the present century. These societies have undergone the trauma of exploitation and neglect by the colonial rulers. At the time of their independence, they have had the experience of inheriting poverty in all aspects of the society. More than two-third of the people live and die under a state of misery.

Centralised planning systems have failed to provide for fair distribution of the benefits of economic growth among regions and groups within developing countries. Decentralisation has often been put forward as a remedy against the concentration of power and as a means of ensuring that the needs and expectations of the common citizen are respected.

It is necessary to remember that all the developing societies are mostly agrarian in nature and they depend heavily on agriculture for any marked increase in national income. There is a great potential in agriculture which can be utilised to assist the overall development. Moreover, increased industrial production is possible by the promotion of rural and village industries. And this is possible in an atmosphere of decentralised planning process.

Several of the developing countries are rich with natural resources like fertile soil, plenty of water, minerals. In many of these countries, the government is the only agency to meet the challenges. It was realised that an active involvement of the communities in the developmental process would certainly have positive results. A sense of participation would make people aware of their rights. And voluntary organisations, which are being formed with a particular purpose, would be able to achieve their goals. India is a country with great diversity in culture, language, caste groups and economic stratification. There is a great need for many programmes which would lead to eradication of poverty, diseases, ignorance, prejudices. All these require massive effort. Therefore the tasks demand greater participation of people at different levels.

19.2 CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION

The term of decentralisation is being used interchangeably with terms like deconcentration, devolution and delegation. But these concepts are different degrees or forms of

i) Deconcentration

Deconcentration implies the transfer of authority in geographical term, from headquarter administration to field administration. For instance, the district collector in Andhra Pradesh has been made head of every development department at the district level. Deconcentration involves the redistribution of administrative responsibilities. And in deconcentration, accountability is upward. That is, the district collector is accountable to the headquarter administration.

ii) Delegation

Another form of decentralisation is the delegation of decision-making and management authority for specific functions to organisations that are not under the direct control of Central Government ministries. Often the organisations, to which development functions are delegated, have semi-independent authority to perform their responsibilities and may not even be located within the regular government structure. Public corporation and regional development authorities have been used extensively in developing countries to execute development schemes.

iii) Devolution

Devolution has political and legal connotation. It implies transfer of authority from Central/State government to local governments (for instance the Panchayati Raj institutions). In devolution, the accountability is both upward and downward—upward to the Central/State governments and downward to the local people who elect them.

If deconcentration and delegation have administrative connotations, devolution has political and legal, then decentralisation covers all aspects—political, legal/administrative. It is the decentralised mode of policy and programme implementation which can involve people in the development process. It is this process whereby centralisation is reversed, so that power of decision-making is shifted from central, political and administrative bodies to a multitude of quasi-autonomous bodies, concerned with the formulation and application of policy in particular regions and in answer to local requirements.

19.3 NEED FOR DECENTRALISATION

It has been proved in the past that the centrally controlled national planning has severe limitations. The central planning systems have been unable to provide for equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth among regions and groups within developing countries. It was realised that development, being a complex and uncertain process, cannot be planned and controlled from the centre. The decision-makers at the centre would not be able to understand the needs of heterogeneous regions and groups.

When functions and authority are being transferred to the local levels, or to the persons concerned with the problems and needs, they take more interest in the work. It is the sense of participation in development planning and management that encourages them.

The central government official's knowledge of local problems and needs also can be increased. They become more sensitive to various problems at the local level when they are being reassigned to local levels. When there is closer contact between government officials and the local population, better information can be obtained. And with better information, more realistic and effective plans for projects and programmes can be formulated.

In central planning and management, there is over-concentration of power, authority and resources at the Centre. Thus, red-tape and highly structured procedures are its inevitable characteristics. The developing countries have to achieve developmental goals within a target period. It is decentralisation which can cut through red-tape and highly structured procedures.

Decentralisation can lead to the development of greater administrative capability among local governments, thus expanding their capacities to take over functions that are not usually performed well by central ministries.

Decentralisation can also provide a structure through which activities at various central government ministries and agencies involved in development could be coordinated more effectively with each other and with those of local leaders and non-governmental organisations within various regions.

Decentralisation would lead to creation of alternative means of decision-making. Thereby, the local elites, who are unsympathetic to national development policies and insensitive to the needs of the poorer groups in rural communities, would not be able to have control over development activities.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What is meant by Decentralisation?

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2) Why is decentralisation necessary?

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19.4 ASPECTS OF DECENTRALISATION

In this section, we will discuss about various aspects of decentralisation.

i) Political Decentralisation

Political decentralisation leads to the creation of local government organisations, with public representatives as members of these bodies. They are assigned the responsibility of developmental tasks, at that level. Thus here, decentralisation takes the shape of devolution. Devolution to local self-governing bodies is an attempt to set up autonomous governments at the local level. These local self-governing bodies, which are elected locally to determine local policies and implement them are, in a fundamental way, detached from the central/state government. If these local self-governments cannot exercise autonomy, devolution will remain more in theory.

ii) Administrative Decentralisation

Administrative decentralisation is motivated by efficiency criterion. Through a process of deconcentration, field administrative units are being set up. Thereby, field level decision-making is made possible which leads to prompt problem-solving. Here, field units of government (for example district administration) are connected organisationally to central/state government. In this process, administrative units might come up at many levels between the locality and the central (state) headquarters.

iii) Non-governmental Organisations

Involvement of non-governmental organisations such as farmers' association, cooperative societies, women's organisations, organisation of various other interest groups is the third aspect of decentralisation for rapid development. It is the will of the people which brings them together and motivate them to form an organisation. Through these organisations they try to improve the standard of living of the people. And this is done by action oriented participatory programmes. These programmes have significant influence on a variety of people, encompassing diverse areas, like health, education, agriculture, small industries, women, children, fisheries etc. Thus, the government shares responsibilities with these organisations that represent various interests in society and that are initiated and operated by members of those organisations. We would discuss the role of voluntary organisations in detail in Unit 23.

19.5 DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION

It was J.S. Mill who had stated about democracy that it is “the only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state, where the whole people participate.”

People's participation forms the basis of democracy. When people's participation in the operation of their own government in a country is larger, continuous, more active and constructive, it is said to be nearer to democracy as a political ideal. The idea of decentralisation is inherent in democracy. It is democratic decentralisation which aims at associating people with the government to the maximum possible extent. The word “democratic” in front of decentralisation emphasises the purpose of decentralisation. The purpose is to provide a larger, greater and closer association of the people with the work of their own government, at all levels, national regional and more particularly local. In a democratically decentralised system, people have got the right to initiate their own projects for local well-being and they have the power to execute and operate them in an autonomous manner.

Democratic decentralisation is a centrifugal movement. Power moves from the central to the regional and local areas. It aims to entrust local organs created in local areas with powers, local in character. Thus there is devolution of authority from the higher levels of the government to the lower levels. The process of democratic decentralisation is vertical rather than horizontal.

This devolution of authority assumes the form of autonomy to the people at lower levels to take political decisions, to formulate ways to execute it, to manage and control the finances required for it and ultimately to guide and control its administration.

The authority thus decentralised should be managed by the people directly or indirectly through their representatives.

The institutional machinery of democratic decentralisation is necessarily elective.

Democratic decentralisation is thus a political ideal. And local self-government is its institutional form. In India, it is the panchayati raj institutions which are the institutional form of democratic decentralisation. In subsequent units, we will know panchayati raj institutions.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What is meant by political decentralisation?

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2) What is meant by administrative decentralisation?

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3) “People's participation is the hallmark of democratic decentralisation.” Explain.

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19.6 HINDRANCES TO DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION

There are many problems which are being faced in the developing countries, problems which pose obstructions in the way of democratic decentralisation.

i) Problem of Coordination

The purpose of democratic decentralisation is to provide more discretion at the local level to meet unique local needs, and to generate innovative solutions to development problems. For this, proper coordination between and among different units is essential. This way, the effort and material resources invested would not go waste, leading to an integrated development without any friction, overlapping and duplication.

ii) Problem of Perception

If democratic decentralisation is to be effective, the central administrator's perception of their roles has to undergo a change. They should understand that their task is to provide support and facilitate the work process. But many a times, they feel that their task is to control. And thus, friction arises.

iii) Unit of Administration

The basic problem of democratic decentralisation is with regard to the unit of administration. A number of factors such as geographical area, population, resources, level of development etc. have to be taken into account while deciding about the unit of planning and development. It should not be too big leading to unwieldy situation, nor too small which would result in defeating the very purpose for which it was set up.

iv) Communication

An analysis of the patterns of communication shows that in most of countries, the communication system happens to be top down. One way communication network appears to be the most dominating practice. Absence of the involvement of grassroot organisation in the upward communication is weak in most of the developing societies. And this leads to unrealistic policies and unattainable targets. The problem of red-tape, overlapping, duplication are generally there in most of the developing countries.

v) Leadership

Leadership is another important variable which can make significant difference to the developmental process. An examination of the type of leadership in most of the developing countries indicates that this has been one of the major limitations on their effort for development and decentralisation.

Further it reveals the following characteristics : 1) The bureaucratic leadership is strengthened and perpetuated. 2) Wherever political leadership is involved, they strengthened either the traditional leadership or the traditional leaders stepped into the new roles emerging from the developmental effort. 3) The leadership at the higher levels of organisation is strengthened while the leadership at the lower levels did not receive much attention. An assumption that those who occupy key positions at higher levels are more competent than those working at lower levels appear to be dominating the elite thinking. 4) Adequate opportunities have not been provided for the emergence of new leadership. Since the local organisations are not strong, there do not appear to be many opportunities for the emergence of new and committed political leadership.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) How does the problem of coordination hamper democratic decentralisation?

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19.7 LET US SUM UP

A discussion on different organisational patterns under democratic decentralisation leads us to a few broad conclusions. These conclusions can be used as guidelines in devising or improvising the organisational structures for development. The following parameters are suggested to judge the effectiveness and suitability of an administrative structure for rural development.

One of the most important parameters in institutional arrangement in the modern times is to build the system on the foundations of decentralised power. A report by one of U.N. agencies stated that "It is generally recognised that too great a concentration of problems upon the central guidance cluster causes delay, increases costs, reduces efficiency, limits initiative, discourages innovation and causes the cluster itself to become a bottle-neck in the process of development." Further, over-centralisation leaves the various government units, without the authority that is necessary for efficiency and innovation. Eventually, a centralised form of administration must move more and more towards decentralisation and delegation of authority.

The discussion on various aspects to decentralisation suggests that the decentralisation of power should be more political than administrative. The transfer of authority to the lower levels of administrative units cannot be considered as real decentralisation of power. Such a decentralisation might facilitate flexibility and quick decision-making but cannot qualitatively alter the nature of a system nor can ensure public participation. This should inevitably ensure supremacy of political institutions over administrative institutions. This leads us to another vital question namely what attitude the national elite in power adopts towards decentralisation. The political elite who are committed to decentralisation alone would part with their power and create a participative system in which the energies and talents of the people can be harnessed for the developmental purposes. However, the experience of the developing countries indicates that decentralisation of power is possible in a system which is stable and led by an ideologically committed leadership.

In addition, the decision-making centres should be very close to the people. This can be achieved only through well-organised local institutions located close to the people. It can be proposed here that the nearer the organisation is to the people, the more is the effectiveness of the organisation to tackle the problems. All the developmental efforts should be concentrated on a unit which is accessible to all the people. This type of arrangement would not only avoid multiple contact points but help them in understanding the development process. This would also add to their political awareness which is an important variable for development.

The local organisations should enjoy sufficient autonomy in order to be able to respond to the varied local needs and demands. Further, they should be endowed with adequate powers, authority, finances and competent staff. Such a local organisation should be considered as an indicator of a sound structure for development.

The unification of administrative institutions at various levels has to be achieved, for developmental effort has to be economised. This can be achieved by establishing harmonious and effective linkages both horizontally and vertically. Further, the purpose of this should be to reduce conflict in the organisation to the minimum. Thus, unification of administrative institutions with minimum conflict is another indicator of a sound organisation.

The administrative and political structures devised for the new tasks should be innovative. The traditional and obsolete structures, instead of delivering the goods, tend to be

dysfunctional. The structures should be dynamic enough to adopt themselves to the constantly changing demands. Therefore, innovativeness of the structure is another indicator of development.

The entire development aims at enlisting people's cooperation and stimulating their participation in decision-making. It is being increasingly realised that no development is possible without massive involvement of the people. It is observed that maximum progress depends on maximum participation, a situation in which all members of the society have a stake in that progress and contribute to it. This participation has to be achieved by devising suitable structures, encouraging new leadership and politicisation of the masses.

19.8 KEY WORDS

Equitable distribution : Just distribution. When benefits of economic growth are distributed among region and various groups in an impartial manner.

Heterogeneous : Composed of diverse elements. For e.g. in India, existence of groups based on caste, language, religion etc.

Top down communication : When there is communication from the top level to the down level.

Traditional leadership : Leadership which is obtained by tradition. For instance, the evil practice of caste leadership.

19.9 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Chauhan, D.S., 1977. *Democratic Decentralisation and Local Government Administration*; (In S.K. Sharma (ed.) *Dynamics of Development : An International Perspective*); Concept : N. Delhi.

Cheema, Shabbir G., Rondinett A Dennis, 1983. *Decentralisation and Development*; Sage Publication : N. Delhi.

Dandekar, V.M., 1968. *Democratic Decentralisation*; Harold Laski : Institute of Political Science : Ahmedabad.

Journals

Atthreya, N.H. 1978. "A Note on Decentralisation in Administration : A citizen's point of view", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*: Pages 859-61 : Volume 24.

Datta, Abhijit, 1985, "Decentralisation and Local Government Reforms", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*: Pages 561-577 : Volume XXXI.

Dutta, Vijay Ranjan, 1982, "Decentralisation and Political Development in India—A Gandhian Perspective", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*: Pages 1-9, Volume XXVIII.

Joshi, B.M., 1989, "Evolution and Practice of Decentralised Planning in India", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*; Volume XXXV.

19.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Section 19.2
- 2) See Section 19.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Section 19.4
- 2) See Section 19.4
- 3) See Section 19.5

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See Section 19.6
- 2) See Section 19.6

UNIT 20 EVOLUTION AND ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

Structure

- 20.0 Objectives
- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 Ancient Period
- 20.3 Rural Local Government between 600 BC to 600 AD
- 20.4 Kautilya's Arthashastra
- 20.5 Moghul Period
- 20.6 British Rule
- 20.7 Development after Independence
- 20.8 Role of Panchayati Raj
- 20.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 20.10 Key Words
- 20.11 Some Useful Books
- 20.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

20.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to :

- trace the evolution of Panchayati Raj in India,
- explain the meaning of the concept,
- understand the importance of its practice; and
- explain its role in the rural development.

20.1 INTRODUCTION

Panchayati Raj in India is a system of local self-government by which the people in rural areas have taken on themselves the responsibilities for their socio-economic and cultural development. Basically, it is thus an arrangement of participation of people in the administration of local affairs.

Information on the evolution of Panchayati Raj is not easily available. Historians have been able to trace some of the details from a close study of the inscriptions of the past and a few stray references to Panchayati Raj, found in literature. From these studies, we infer that ancient India did possess local self-governing institutions. And the local bodies enjoyed a large measure of freedom from the state control. In this context, we recollect the statement made by Metcalfe. He had written that "the village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves and (are) almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts, dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolutions.... The union of village communities continue each forming a separate little state in itself. It has contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered. And is in a high degree conducive to the happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence." It is also understood that the village communities exhibited vigour and vitality in their functioning. Although, the picture portrayed by Metcalfe may have been an idealistic one, but all accounts of village panchayats in ancient India do point to the fact that there existed village panchayats which attended to the needs of the people living in the villages. Later, they fell into disuse. The early British rule led to their disintegration. Therefore, it is argued that it is possible to restore its health and prosperity if these institutions are revived and revitalised with suitable encouragement and assistance to meet the challenges of modern times.

20.2 ANCIENT PERIOD

Vedic literature has provided some references to an organised system of rural local self-government institutions. However, it is difficult to connect different references into a

coherent account of how rural local bodies functioned in vedic times. It is mentioned that the vedic state was essentially a country state, with the village as the basic unit of administration. An important functionary of the village was called "Gramini". He was a respectable official who played a crucial role in the coronation ceremony of the king. There were references to Samiti (Assembly) and Sabha where discussions took place mainly concerning with agricultural problems in which the king also participated.

Organisation of Sreni (Guilds), religious organisations, caste organisations etc., was another sphere of activity of the local self-government institutions. Some of these had direct representation in all the popular bodies of the state.

When we look into the great epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, we find some explicit references to village institutions. There are references to the assembly of elders of a hamlet (Ghosh) village (Gram) and headman of the village (Gramini). The headman (Gramini) was responsible for collecting the state dues, keeping village records, settling disputes, controlling crime etc. The council of elders used to exercise control over the headman. We are not certain, whether the office was elective or by appointment. But in the post Mahabharata period, he was nominated by the king and was accountable to his next highest authority, "Gopa" of the village. Five to twenty-five villages were under the charge of "Gopa"

20.3 RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT BETWEEN 600 BC TO 600 AD

S.C. Jain in his book "Community Development and Panchayati Raj in India" has given a detailed account of the Village Panchayats in the ancient period. According to Jain, the period between 600 BC to 600 AD witnessed the rise and fall of religious orders like those of Mahavira and Buddha and the rise and fall of the empires of the Mauryas and the Guptas.

According to Jatakas, villages were classified according to the size and mode of habitation. The Jain and Buddha literature explain several aspects of village life. Jataka tales contain instances of villages, joining together to build reservoirs, roads etc. The villagers put in collective labour to meet their common services. The religious orders, founded by Buddha and Mahavira, observed highly democratic procedures in arriving at decisions. It appears that there were rules and regulations regarding the working of these institutions. They enjoyed freedom in the conduct of their own affairs. There is no known instance of interference by the state in the internal affairs of the religious orders. Similarly, the guilds and castes enjoyed high status and autonomy in their internal affairs.

20.4 KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

Arthashastra provides an exhaustive account of the system of village administration prevailing at that time. Kautilya prepared an exhaustive account of the statecraft and it is said that the another narrated his experiences in the Arthashastra. As we are mostly concerned with village panchayats, we shall try to confine ourselves to this subject matter. Kautilya outlined the ideal size of the village, its demarcation, distance between one village and another, and grouping of villages for purposes of posting police force and other state officials.

The villages had a number of officials, such as headman (Adhyaksha) Accountant (Sankhyaha) etc. All of them enjoyed property rights over certain areas of land, without right of alienation, in lieu of their services to the state. The village headman exercised several duties and performed innumerable functions in the village.

The next higher official was the "Gopa" who had between five and twenty-five villages under his charge. He was also entrusted with several responsibilities such as registration of land, census, maintenance of records of temples, irrigation works etc. Several other functions were entrusted to the "Gopa". At the district level, the Rajukas were entrusted with several functions mostly in relation to survey of land and settlement of land revenue. They also performed certain judicial functions.

All the above mentioned authorities were nominated by the king. However S.C. Jain comments that the political links, through which village interests were represented at the highest level, seemed to have broken down as a result of the ascendancy of towns and cities, growth of imperial ideas and bureaucratic practices. All these gradually restricted the areas of rural self-government. The system which had evolved during the ancient period, did not change under the Guptas. However, there were certain minor changes mostly in the nomenclature. During this period, the rulers in South India introduced several administrative units such as provincial (Mandals), districts (Nadu), sub-districts (Kottams) group of villages (Kurram) and village (Gram). These bodies were mostly responsible for management of land, temples, educational institutions, irrigation works, etc.

Another interesting aspect of the evolution of Panchayati Raj in India relates to the description of rural local government by Hindu Law Givers of the smriti period. Manu has given a detailed account of the organisation of the country-state and the role of local self-government institutions. All the writers of smriti period had a broad agreement on the basic structure. The system ultimately led to a centralised bureaucratic control with the king as the final authority.

The anarchic conditions created during the period of struggle for political ascendancy (AD 600 to AD 1200) after the collapse of Gupta Empire led to a climate of uncertainty. This has led to several phases of disturbed conditions in the working of local self-government institutions. However, the village system remained intact and if we look into the epigraphic records, particularly of South India, we find evidence of the Constitution and functioning of village government. It is argued that during this period the state was paternalistic in character.

There are three aspects of the village administration of the ancient period which deserve mention. One is the community spirit which prevailed among the people. Another is the kind of public functionaries who were concerned with its administration and the third is the nature of public bodies through which the inhabitants participated in the management of its affairs.

There were two factors which fostered and strengthened unity among the people. One was the self sufficiency of the village and the interdependence of different groups within the village which resulted from it. The other factor was the isolation in which each village was located. This strengthened the spirit of collective effort among its people.

There were a number of administrative functionaries such as Ayagars, Karnam, Talari, Brahmin etc., who performed respective administrative duties as per the custom. Thus the village was not only a compact economic unit but also an administrative unit with its full compliment of public functionaries. All of them were servants of the village community and not of the state government.

Thus, we find village self-government was more real in the past than what we have today. One reason for this is that the present day Panchayati Raj owes its existence to legislation enacted by the State Government. It is created by the state and can be abolished by the state. This was not the case with village self-government in the ancient period. It owed its existence to the customs and traditions. And no ruler, however, despotic he might be, had the courage to interfere with what the custom laid down. This gave to the village institution an unique stability and permanence. In this connection, it is necessary to mention that it was an accepted theory in ancient India that all institutions derived their authority from Dharma. Even the state and its rulers were subject to it. Their duty was to uphold it and not to interfere with it. Dharma, of which custom was a part, ordained that every village should have its own self-governing institutions and that it was not right for the rulers to interfere with them. This resulted in the decentralisation of decision-making power to the village communities.

Further, due to the isolation of villages, it was not possible for state officials to visit villages and interfere with the administrative matters by exercising control over the village authorities.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Write a short note on rural local government between 600 BC to 600 AD.

2) Briefly discuss Kautilya's description of rural local government.

20.5 MOGHUL PERIOD

From about the twelfth century onwards, we find that village administration, its functioning, its autonomy, entered a period of decline and it might be said that it even disappeared from most of the villages. The establishment of Muslim power in India signalled a political change which had a much deeper significance than the political changes caused by the struggle among the medieval Hindu kingdoms. Although, the disorder and political instability, prevailing during the long period of decay hampered growth, yet the fundamental principles of central local relationships did not change much with the change of kingdoms. Muslim rule in India, brought in several ideas which were new to the soil. The new rulers had different ideas and customs. There were marked differences in regard to the management of land, taxation. India, a land of variety, has enriched by this experience. However, it is necessary to mention that the local institutions still continued to function. The hands of the administration reached only the district level. The village communities continued to exist.

20.6 BRITISH RULE

During the British rule, the isolation of the village communities was completely broken and with that, the age old economic self-sufficiency. The community spirit received a severe blow. There was development in the means of communication such as roads, railways, motor traffic, telegraphic and telephone. Therefore, there was no need for the villager to remain self-sufficient in the supply of his economic needs. Commercial goods were developed at a rapid pace. There were contacts with outside world. Production for the market took the place of production for consumption in the village itself. Village craftsmen and artisans lost their importance. They had to go out of their villages in search of gainful employment. The other villagers no longer depended on them for the supply of the various articles they needed. They could purchase them at a cheaper rate from the nearest town or market centre. The village ceased to be an economic unit for production purposes. The only tie that kept the villagers together was their residence in the same locality. Thus economic interdependence within the village gradually lessened in the villages.

The Britishers, being outsiders, adopted certain administrative policies which further strengthened the forces of disintegration of the village communities. One prominent feature of British Rule was the establishment of a direct connection between the central and provincial governments on one side and central government and the individual inhabitants of the village on the other. For instance, Ryotwari System of land tenure was one such feature. Under this system, the government dealt directly with the individual cultivator and not through the village panchayat. In addition, the government took the responsibility of construction and maintenance of irrigation works, roads, schools, payment of grants to them. Other activities such as regulation of agricultural credit and relief to the people during natural calamities were also undertaken by the central government. All this meant that much of the work, which for ages had been associated with village authorities, was taken over and carried out by official agencies from outside. A psychological change took place as a consequence of this extreme and unprecedented centralisation. It made the villagers look for more and more help from the district, provincial or central government. The village

elders became dysfunctional. The villagers ceased to feel their need to the extent they had in former times.

The judicial system, introduced by the British, also led to the same result. Disputes, which for ages, were settled by elders in the village in accordance with custom and usage were now referred to the courts outside the village and decided in accordance with statutes enacted by the alien rulers. Naturally, this system cultivated the habit among the people to look to institutions away from their villages for the redressal of their grievances.

Another landmark of the British administration which dealt a blow to the rural areas was the change which the British introduced in the position of village officials such as the headman, karnam etc. These public functionaries, who had been regarded throughout the ages as the representatives and spokesmen of the village community, were now made the salaried officials of the government. The villagers naturally began to look at them as the agents of an outside authority who could not be expected to serve them or be trusted. It deprived them of their natural leaders and cracks in the community spirit began to appear.

The educational system, introduced by the British, was another feature which also produced a similar effect. Under the new English education, the educated people began to migrate to towns in search of employment. Rural areas were thus deprived of enlightened leadership. The effects of Western civilisation, the Christian missions, weakening hold of custom and tradition without any other bond also contributed to a great extent to gradual erosion in the village community. Greater attachment to material values of life and growth of a spirit of individualism was a contributing factor that brought change in the outlook of the villager and by the end of British rule, the situation in the village was not what it had been in earlier times.

It is necessary to mention that the different steps taken by the British government to introduce a few measures to strengthen rural local bodies did not result in any success. The colonial rulers selected the district as the chief administrative unit in preference to the village. It was only after the submission of the report by the Royal Commission on Decentralisation that the importance of the village came to be recognised. And it was only about the year 1920 that a serious attempt was made to establish village panchayats and revive the old community through them. The process adopted for the purpose was very slow and it was subject to numerous limitations. By then, the village community was practically broken up and conditions became hostile for the successful working of the new panchayats.

It is also necessary to note that all the reports on the working of panchayats after 1920 make reference to several factors which were responsible for decay in the system. They mention the influence of village factions, caste and communal divide, apathy of the villagers, and reluctance of the people to contribute to the organisation. In fact all these are the characteristics of the villages in a state of decadence brought about by the changes introduced into the system of administration by the British. Centralisation was the key factor to all these changes. Centralisation and local self-government cannot exist side by side. They are antithetical. It is centralisation that is responsible for the decline and disappearance of Panchayati Raj as it existed for years in the villages of India.

20.7 DEVELOPMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The development of Panchayati Raj in India, after the country became independent in 1947, took a crucial turn and did not occur in isolation. It was part of a wider movement which affected the entire nation. In fact, the real meaning and implications of Panchayati Raj can be understood only in relation to the wider movement. There have been several factors which were responsible for the birth and growth of Panchayati Raj in India which led in course of time to a new structure, much different from what it was in the days of the British rule. Four major factors deserve mention. They are the teachings of Gandhiji, the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Five Year Plans with their emphasis on popular cooperation and the Community Development Programmes. It can be safely mentioned that to a large extent, the present day Panchayati Raj in the country is the outcome of the influences of these factors. The factors are discussed below :

i) Influence of Mahatma Gandhi

The influence of Mahatma Gandhi, on the people of India, was profound. His approach to the problems of India, particularly of the rural areas, is well-known. He advocated a

philosophy of ruralism, as distinguished from urbanism. The keynote of Gandhiji's philosophy was the revival of the village community, with all its self sufficiency and minimum dependence on the outside world. Back to the villages, was his main message. He called upon the people to focus their attention on the reconstruction of village life which was neglected during the British regime. It was his conviction that the cities were responsible for immense damage to village economy and that the only way of saving them was by making them self-sufficient in as many essential needs of life as possible. He pleaded that agriculture, supplemented by cottage industries, would provide enough employment and help in achieving self-sufficiency. A self-sufficient economy would also be highly decentralised. It would be completely free from all control exercised by outside agencies.

Mahatma Gandhi felt that the village should be self-sufficient not only economically but also in political and administrative affairs. He was not in favour of people always looking to the government for anything and everything. He suggested that all the affairs in a village should be administered by a panchayat elected on the basis of adult suffrage. As far as possible the state and central control should be brought down to the barest minimum. The impact of Gandhi's ideals influenced to a large measure, the political executives after independence. There is no doubt that the impetus came from Gandhi. Hence, the State Governments entrusted several development functions to the Panchayati Raj bodies and if democratic decentralisation has become their watchword, much of it has to be attributed to the influence of Gandhi's thoughts.

ii) The Directive Principles of State Policy

The second major factor, which deserves mention, is the provisions of Article 40 in the Constitution. There was considerable debate in the Constituent Assembly when the draft bill was discussed. The draft bill did not provide any reference at all to villages as a unit of self-government. In fact, Dr. Ambedkar spoke disparagingly about the situation in the Indian Villages. There were several others who supported Ambedkar. They said correctly that greater decentralisation does not imply greater democracy in the villages, it is the people belonging to so called higher castes, who would gain more power and would apply that power more ruthlessly against the poor.

However, there was a very strong section who pleaded forcefully in favour of village panchayats. They argued that villages could not be ignored and that democracy should not be restricted only to governments at higher levels but should be extended to living units at the bottom. As a result of support from numerous members, Article 40 came to be incorporated in the Constitution in the provision entitled the Directive Principles of State Policies. This Article calls upon the state "to take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such power and authority, as may be necessary, to enable them to function as units of self-government." This principle has been broadly interpreted by the Union as well as state government so as to provide not only self-governing institutions but also democratic institutions at different levels in the rural areas.

iii) The Five Year Plans

The third factor which deserves mention for the growth of Panchayati Raj institutions is the planned economic and social development undertaken by the government. In the implementation of the Five Year Plans it became necessary to secure the active cooperation and involvement of people in the rural areas. Active involvement became necessary particularly in respect of schemes of agricultural development. It was recognised that the transformation of the traditional methods into modern techniques, involving the use of latest improvements, could not be brought about without the willing cooperation of the farmers. The official machinery was not suitable for this work. Further, experts could not approach each individual farmer in this task. The First Five Year Plan recognised this difficulty and suggested that "as the agencies of the state government cannot easily approach each individual villager separately, progress depends largely on the existence of an active organisation in the village which can bring the people into common programmes to be carried out with the assistance of the administration." One result of this view led to the creation of Panchayats through which Five Year Plans have sought to enlist the cooperation of people in their execution. In fact the First Five Year Plan observed that "many in the administration realise that official machinery by itself cannot carry out these developmental programmes, which call for a great deal of initiative and participation on the part of people themselves."

The Second Five Year Plan had identified two broad groups of functions—administrative and judicial. A long list of administrative functions had been prepared. The list is formidable. It

clearly shows the attitude of government towards the role of Panchayati Raj bodies in the reconstruction of national life.

iv) Community Development Movement

The fourth factor which has been to a large extent, instrumental in the origin and growth of Panchayati Raj is the Community Development movement which was inaugurated on October 2, 1952. It had a direct impact on Panchayati Raj, which, in essence, implies a new approach to the nation building activities. The emphasis of the Community Development movement is on the all-round development of local community — a village, a group of villages, a district. The philosophy of community development is to create an opportunity for the people to take initiative and identify their needs and find out the methods to meet them. It is not an outside agency that defines the needs of the community and how those needs have to be satisfied. Further, it is observed that in the Community Development Movement, the community is prepared to find resources of its own to carry out the projects which it has decided to undertake.

The community development programme was first started under official guidance. Although there were a number of voluntary bodies of non-official nominated members associated, it was found out that such bodies were not of much use in creating enthusiasm among the people in securing their participation. The problem was thoroughly examined by the Balvantray Mehta Committee. It was on its recommendations that the advisory bodies have been abolished and statutory bodies were created to undertake the work of Community Development. Thus Panchayati Raj has been ushered in the country as a people's programme with officials participating in it on account of their technical knowledge and guidance.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What were the changes which took place during the British rule?

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2) What was Gandhiji's view on decentralisation?

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20.8 ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

After tracing the evolution of Panchayati Raj in India, it is necessary to analyse the role of the Panchayati Raj institutions. There is no doubt that Panchayati Raj has become a powerful movement. All the states in India have adopted it. It is no more an experiment. It is being accepted to be important in the democratic process. It is more than a political slogan, more than an administrative device. Panchayati Raj in India has come to stay. There is no alternative to it :

i) Political Consciousness

The first and foremost aspect in the study of role of Panchayati Raj relates to its role in awakening the political consciousness of the rural population. It has enabled a large number of people to acquire leadership at local levels. The quality of this leadership will ultimately determine the success or failure of Panchayati Raj. It is no exaggeration to state that the

Panchayati Raj bodies have provided political education, preparing the citizens for responsible living. In fact the Panchayati Raj bodies have developed leaders who could take control of democratic institutions at state and national level. The prediction of Ripon that "it is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly designed as an instrument of political and popular education" has been realised to a large extent. Panchayati Raj has become a powerful tool where caste and local interests interact, clash, compromise and arrive at common understanding on various issues. The experience gained by the new generation of leadership in democratic management has raised the quality of legislative debates and working of other higher level institutions. It has provided opportunity for the circulation of political elite which is very essential for maintaining democratic forms in their true spirit.

ii) Planning and Development

The Panchayati Raj institutions have been designed to play a crucial role in planning and development. A number of studies indicate that as units of planning and development, be it at the district or lower level, the Panchayati Raj institutions have contributed substantially. In Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal and several other states, local level planning has been successfully formulated and implemented by these institutions. Ultimately to what extent the local bodies have the necessary autonomy and financial resources to take up developmental activities, depends largely on the state government.

There is yet another point of view according to which the Panchayati Raj Institutions have become the connecting link between the Parliament and State Legislature on the one hand and local bodies on the other so that the respective members can exchange views on the objectives of a plan and its priorities. The local members talk about the local needs, urgencies and difficulties in the implementation whereas the members of Parliament and State Legislature can explain the possible solution since they decide national priorities and at the same time they are financially in a better position to help the rural bodies. This two way link has served the dual purpose of modifying the state policies at points of maladjustment as well as communicated the message from centre and/or state to the remote corner of the rural society. Thus, the Panchayati Raj bodies have come to play an important role in the sphere of planning and development.

iii) Executive Institution

To what extent the Panchayati Raj bodies act as units of self-government requires a closer look into the functions performed by these bodies. Certain civic functions such as rural sanitation, public health, street lighting, drinking water supply, maintenance of village roads, culverts, management of primary and secondary education, etc., have been carried out by the Panchayati Raj bodies.

In several states all the developmental functions have been divided into three categories : the central sector, the state sector and local sector. The Local Sector Schemes have been devolved to Panchayati Raj bodies for planning and execution, they include subjects such as agriculture, minor irrigation, rural health animal husbandry, rural roads, social welfare, cooperation, cottage industries, rural housing etc. In all these fields the Panchayati Raj bodies have played an important role.

Finally, we should remember that the Panchayati Raj bodies are the creations of the State Government. They have no inherent powers and functions of their own. They do only what they are authorised by the state. Now the time has come to think aloud about preparing a local list and incorporate the same in the Constitution. It depends on our political maturity and perhaps we need some more time to bring in such revolutionary change in this country.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What role does Panchayati Raj play in planning and development?

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- 2) How does Panchayati Raj institutions bring about political consciousness of the people?
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20.9 LET US SUM UP

The evolution of the system has shown that village communities have always existed in India. Several changes they have undergone — but the basic structure is there. During the British rule, the village communities no longer remained isolated, due to the development in the means of communication. Centralisation was the key factor of the British rule. After independence, an attempt has been made to revive the local self-government. In the following units, we would be discussing the emerging patterns of Panchayati Raj institution in India and the problem and prospects of Panchayati Raj.

20.10 KEY WORDS

Epigraphic record : Record by inscription.

Guilds : A guild is an organisation of people who do the same job or who have the same interest.

Smriti period : The period in which knowledge was transferred orally.

20.11 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

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20.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Section 20.3
- 2) See Section 20.4

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Section 20.6
- 2) See Section 20.7

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See Section 20.8
- 2) See Section 20.8