

6. Bureaucracy

District Collector orders curfew.

Municipal Commissioner presents the budget.

Finance Secretary resigns.

Divisional Commissioner will review the revenue collection.

In the above box, a few posts like District Collector, Municipal Commissioner, Finance Secretary, and Divisional Commissioner are mentioned. These are civil servants in the government's administrative system. You might be thinking, what are their functions?

In the chapter which explained the role of the Union Executive we learnt that the Prime Minister and his Council of Ministers make proposals for new laws and also decide upon policies. 'Bureaucracy' is the administrative system which works under the Union Executive and has the responsibility of actual implementation of government's policies. In this chapter, we will understand the importance of bureaucracy.

In any country, the government carries out two fundamental types of functions.

(1) To defend the country from external aggression and internal threats and to ensure safety of citizen.

(2) To provide various services to citizens and ease their daily lives which will enable them to develop themselves and the society.

The first function is to ensure security of the country. This is carried out by the service called the defence forces. The role

of internal security is carried out as aid to civil services. For the second function, an administrative system is developed. We call it the 'civil services'. The system of civil servants is also known as bureaucracy.

In the Parliamentary democracy, representatives elected by the people and the ministers have the responsibility of administration. The functions of government are discharged by various departments. Every department has a minister who is the political head of that department. As a representative of people the minister has to carry out the work of the department by giving priority to public welfare. The minister may not be expert in a particular subject but he/she is conscious of broad public interest. The Secretary of the department gives expert advice to the ministers. The secretaries are appointed from the civil service. The aspirations of the people and administrative expertise are thus put in harmony in the parliamentary system.

Characteristics of Bureaucracy

Permanent mechanism : Tax collection, environment protection, maintenance of law and order, provisions regarding social security are certain important tasks that have to be consistently undertaken by the bureaucracy. This is possible because bureaucracy is a permanent mechanism. The Prime Minister and their Council of Ministers change after every election but the bureaucracy under their control remains constant. It is permanent in nature.

Political neutrality : The bureaucracy is politically neutral. This means that regardless of the political party in power, the bureaucracy is supposed to carry out

the implementation of their policy decisions with the same efficiency and commitment. In this regard, the civil servants should abstain from taking a political stand or act according to their political views. If a political party fails to win elections, it has to leave government and another party that wins elections comes to power. The new government may change some policies of the earlier government. Even in such case, the bureaucracy is expected to remain neutral while discharging its duties.

Anonymity : Anonymity means that a civil service should not be held directly responsible for any success or failure of policy. It is the Minister who is responsible for the efficient and smooth functioning of the concerned departments. It is the minister who, as the head of that department, is accountable for any inefficiency. Civil servants are never publicly criticised. The Parliament holds the Minister responsible for malpractices. In such case the Minister bears the responsibility and protects the bureaucracy.

Significance of Indian bureaucracy

The structure of the Indian bureaucracy is extensive and complex. Several important reforms that were introduced during the post-independence period have been effectively implemented by the bureaucratic structure. Today we see many positive social changes reaching to common people. These changes have been brought by the Indian Bureaucracy by implementing the policies made by the Government. Bureaucracy gives stability to the political system. Water supply, transport, electricity, public cleanliness, health, agricultural reforms, prevention of pollution and such other services are every day needs of the people and need to be consistently provided to them. This brings stability in the day-to-day life of

the people.

Secondly, it is important to understand that bureaucracy is an important instrument of social transformation. The laws enacted by the government for empowerment of women, child security, plans for the marginalised sections are implemented by the bureaucracy. Social change is brought through the implementation of such policies.

The Bureaucracy also plays an important role in the democratisation of society. Marginalised sections of society have been brought into mainstream by implementing the reservation policy. Their participation has been increased in the process of decision making. Democratisation of society not only requires progressive laws and policies it also needs the effective participation of bureaucracy.

Types of civil services : In India, there are three main types of civil services

All-India Services : They include the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFS).

Union or Central Services : They come under the Union Government. They include Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Revenue Service (IRS) etc.

State Civil Services : They come under the State Government. They include Deputy District Collector, Block Development Officer, Tehsildar (Executive Magistrate) etc. They are recruited through competitive examinations held at the State-level.

Indian constitution has established autonomous institutions like the Public Service Commissions to ensure that the civil servants are selected on the basis of criteria of merit and efficiency. The Union

Public Service Commission (UPSC) conducts examinations for recruitment and appointment of candidates for All-India Services and Central Services. The Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) selects candidates through competitive examinations and recommends them to the government to be recruited in the state administration.

In order to provide opportunities to all sections of society to enter in bureaucracy and civil services, there is a provision for reservations for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Women, Other Backward Castes and specially-abled. This provision ensures that weaker sections of the society are not left out of civil services due to social inequality.

Minister and Civil Servants : The

efficiency of a particular government department depends upon the inter-relationship between the Minister and Department Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries. The decisions relating to the department are made by concerned minister but necessary information to make such decisions is given by the civil servants. Civil servants, meaning bureaucracy, has complete control over information. It is the civil servant who knows the financial provisions for a particular scheme or plan. Civil servants are aware of the history of successes and failures of policies. Hence, ministers are dependent upon the civil servants. If ministers maintain a dialogue with civil servants and develop mutual trust and transparency, it will help the departments.

Exercise

1. Identify if the following statements are correct or wrong and rewrite the wrong sentences in their correct form.

- (1) In a parliamentary democracy, representatives elected by people and ministers bear the administrative responsibility.
- (2) Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) recruits candidates for civil services in Maharashtra.

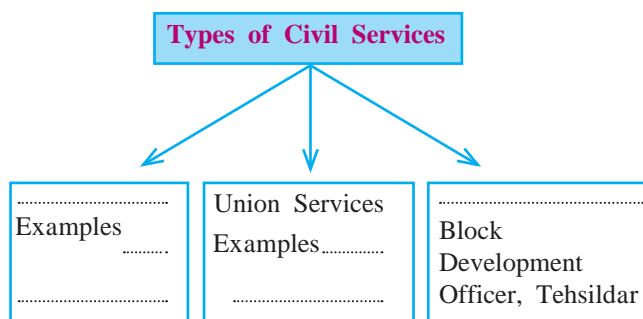
2. Explain the following statements with reasons.

- (1) Reservation policy is followed even in civil services.
- (2) It is necessary for civil servants to be politically neutral.

3. Answer the following in 25-30 words.

- (1) Explain the role of the ministers and civil servants in the efficient administration of the department.
- (2) Explain how the bureaucracy provides stability to the political system.

4. Complete the Concept picture.



5. Discuss characteristics of bureaucracy.

Project

Prepare a questionnaire and interview a civil servant in your locality

