
UNIT-13 CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

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13.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Highlight the different characteristics of Weberian bureaucracy
- Discuss the challenges to the Weber's concept of bureaucracy
- Examine the Indian context of bureaucracy; and
- Analyse the need for reforming bureaucracy in the contemporary scenario

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In the recent times, the role of bureaucracy has undergone a lot of change for a number of reasons. The changing role of the State in the contemporary context has brought about significant changes in the profile of bureaucracy. With the opening up of the economy as well as the growing accent on privatisation and rightsizing, there have been attempts to reduce the size of bureaucracy. Also, there have been persistent demands for a responsive, accountable and efficient administration. Thus, in the light of the changing scenario, the bureaucracy must reform itself. There are many perspectives on bureaucracy, but none provides an alternative to the traditional bureaucratic paradigm.

The bureaucracy technically has been an efficient form of organisation but is seen to have exceeded its administrative powers due to its tendency towards self-aggrandisement, permanence in employment, and nearness to the political executive. The administration, which comprises the permanent and political executive, has taken up wider responsibilities with the emergence of the Welfare State; the interests of the citizens are now being accorded priority. The self-seeking bureaucrat is being replaced by the utility maximiser, and the traditional Weberian concept of hierarchic and rule-bound bureaucracy has come in for intense criticism from all sides. This Unit discusses the characteristics of a typical bureaucratic organisation. It highlights

the changing role of bureaucracy in the contemporary scenario. The Indian context of bureaucracy is also analysed with regard to its role of delegated legislation and administrative adjudication.

13.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF BUREAUCRACY

Before discussing the general characteristics of bureaucracy, which have traditionally been Weberian, we must delve into the defining features of bureaucracy. Herman Finer says that bureaucracy is a “Professional body of officials, permanent, paid and skilled”. Arthur K. Davis thinks bureaucracy is an “Integrated hierarchy of specialised offices defined by systematic rules, an impersonal routinised structure wherein legitimised authority rests in the office and not in the person or the incumbent”.

Harold Laski applied the term bureaucracy for a system of government, the control of which is so completely in the hands of officials that their power jeopardises the liberties of ordinary citizens. Marshall E. Dimock identified bureaucracy with institutions and large-scale organisations in society. He describes bureaucracy as the “State of society in which institutions overshadow individuals and simple family relationships; stage of development in which division of labour, specialisation, organisation, hierarchy, planning and regimentation of large groups of individuals either by voluntary or involuntary methods are the order of the day... Bureaucracy is simply institutionalism written large ...”

One perspective views bureaucracy as a generic organisational form. Defined in the Weberian sense, bureaucracy is both public and private. The Bureaucratic Pathology School also makes no distinction between public and private. It believes that bureaucracy stands as the enemy of egalitarian passions and is ridden with pathologies or ills. The second perspective views bureaucracy as public administrative agency. The bureaucracy tends to dissolve into ‘bureaus’ that interact with one another and with other actors. From a third perspective, the bureaucrats are the personnel who constitute permanent government (Rockman, 1992).

In the views of Max Weber to whom we owe the bureaucratic theory, there are three types of legitimation, each corresponding to a particular type of domination namely: Charismatic, Traditional and Legal. His bureaucratic structure could be called the ideal type based on legal-rational authority system. Weber laid emphasis on division of work, rules and regulations, hierarchy, distinction between private and official, written documents and legal authority systems in his description of bureaucratic organisation.

Major characteristics of bureaucracy, in line with Weber’s definition are:

Hierarchy: In a bureaucracy, activities based on specialisation are assigned to specific positions. There is a clear-cut division of work, competence, authority, responsibility and other job components. Each lower office is under the control and supervision of the higher office.

Professional Qualities: All officials possess qualities of merit and are selected on objective criteria. They deal in an impersonal and formalistic manner in their relations with others and also in execution of their official duties. They enjoy a permanent career with reasonable opportunities of advancement with sufficient security of service.

Rules and Procedures: In bureaucracy, decisions are governed by a consistent system of abstract rules, regulations and procedures, which are written, rational and impersonal. A bureaucrat's behaviour is guided by discipline and rules of conduct.

Specialisation: Bureaucratic tasks are divided into functionally distinct spheres, each furnished with the requisite authority and sanctions. There is a functional specific division of labour.

Organisational Resources: The resources of the organisation are distinct from the bureaucrats who cannot use them in their individual capacity. Official revenues and private income are strictly separated.

The Weberian characteristics of bureaucracy have been found to be 'ideal' and hence not strictly implementable. Besides examining the dysfunctions of this bureaucratic model, questions have been raised as to whether 'bureaucracy' fits in with the management requirements of 'development'. Crisis in the State's functioning in terms of 'big bureaucracy' and its consequences for the finances, infrastructure and development goals has called upon the need for reforms. Accent on an efficient and effective delivery of services to the satisfaction of the citizens' has provoked a series of reform initiatives variously known as New Public Administration, New Public Management, Reinventing Government and Good Governance'. These themes are discussed in Units 14, 15 and 17 of this Course. Contextually, Indian administration has to be discussed differently, yet some of the changes of the Western developed States are having repercussions on the Indian administrative scene. Before we discuss the Indian context, let us look at the criticisms leveled against Weberian bureaucracy.

13.3 CHALLENGES TO WEBER'S CONCEPT OF BUREAUCRACY

According to Max Weber, "Bureaucracy is universal social phenomenon and the means of carrying community action to rationally ordered societal action". Bureaucratic organisation, Max Weber argued is the most technically efficient form of organisation. Many find this problematic, as it is possible to identify many anomalies in the Weberian ideal type. Limited and fixed jurisdiction can mean tunnel vision. Hierarchy can mean servile behaviour, as well as communication and information distortion. Knowledge of the files can mean routine and living by the book and so on (Rockman, *op.cit.*).

The Weberian claim of bureaucracy representing the highest extent of rationality did not fit in with the real life administration. The day-to-day administration is not merely guided by rationality but myriad of influences. The ideal paradigm of bureaucracy, as described by Weber, is viewed with some structural dimensions and an achievement of purpose i.e. it is meant to increase the efficiency of an organisation. But at the same time, it has been felt that it has facilitated the growth of capitalism as it helps to carry out special administrative functions. The bounded rationality has been described as irrelevant by the critics of Weber. The post-Weberian view has emphasised on decentralisation and bottom-up approach. The contemporary view is not a rigid model of administration; instead it aims at an administration, which is responsive, responsible, accountable, transparent and result-oriented.

Some of the criticisms leveled against Weberian bureaucracy point out its weaknesses as an organisational form. Its role in development administration has been questioned in this connection. The Weberian model, according to critics, is subject to the dysfunctional consequences of failing to take into account the individual or behavioural aspects of the people who work within the organisation system. It has been pointed out that the 'mechanistic' system of management closely resembles the Weberian model with its stress on division of tasks, hierarchy, role-specificity and vertical communications. The organic system, on the other hand, fits in well with unstable environmental conditions (Bhattacharya, 2003).

Exchange theories (Chester Barnard-Herbert Simon, H. Levinson), Group theories (Elton Mayo, Rensis Likert), Value theories (Chris Argyris, and William Blake), and Situational theories (Douglas McGregor, H. Leavitt) all critique Weber's ideal type and try to evolve different forms of organisations that could provide an alternative to the legal-rational type (Kramer, 1973). Victor Thompson has summed up the negative aspects of Weberian theory with the term 'bureaupathology', a condition resulting from the interplay of Weberian organisational attributes and the need to control that is inherently embodied in the hierarchy principle (Rockman, *op.cit.*). Alvin Gouldner advances the thesis that bureaucratic techniques produce their own reactions. He found that organisational rules tended to define the minimum levels of acceptable behaviour. Robert Presthus is of the view that Weberian model is a product of alien culture, not quite suitable for transplantation in the developing societies (Bhattacharya, 2003, *op.cit.*).

Weber's model is viewed as more suitable for routine and repetitive work. Robert K. Merton feels that reliance on rules in bureaucracy could lead to lack of flexibility and tendency to turn means into ends. Peter Selznick talks of goal displacement resulting out of bifurcation of interest between Central system and decentralised sub-units. The Marxists have been very critical of the Weberian model. Bureaucracy, according to Karl Marx, is the one that works towards private interests and not universal interest. Marx has put forth that bureaucracy with its specific characteristics does not lead to the transformation of particular interest to general interest. Instead of acting as a bridge between the State and the civil society, it leads to privatisation and liberalisation of civil society. Marx has described bureaucracy as a formal structure expressing the will of the State and not the individual. As per Marx, bureaucracy changes knowledge into secrecy and competence into mystery. On top of it, the bureaucracy hinders government opinion from reaching the people.

Another major critique of Weber's bureaucracy has come from the Public Choice theorists. The Public Choice approach deals with the possibility of Institutional Pluralism in the provision of public goods and services. Plurality of government and public agencies is supported on the ground of consumer preferences. Vincent Ostrom, major proponent of the Public Choice approach lays emphasis on a concept of democratic administration. The Approach has questioned the self-aggrandisement nature of bureaucracy. It has demanded the pruning or downsizing or passing on of governmental functions to the private sector. It highlights individual preferences and describes bureaucrats as utility maximisers who first look at their own interests rather than those of the organisation.

The Public Choice approach believes that all bureaucrats are self-interest maximizers. Since the self-interest maximising bureaucrat and the vote maximising politician do not act in the collective interest of the society, the society suffers. The Public Choice approach has sensitised us to the hard fact that public agencies live and function in a

highly politicised environment. It also questions the paradigm of bureaucratically run administration. The pathologies of bureaucracy limited to a single centre and a source of power have been criticised. Public Choice perspective looks at the State from citizens' point of view i.e. if it is the case of production or delivery of public goods, then it should be left to the choice of public rather the administrator - politician combine.

Weberian bureaucratic theory has been criticised by Claus Offe who points out "Efficiency is no longer defined as following the ruler but as 'causing of effects'.... Welfare State's administrative policy becomes dependent on extra-legal legitimations...." Dennis F. Thompson observes, "Many of the values we associate with democracy stand sharply opposed to hierarchy, specialisation and impersonality we ascribe to modern bureaucracy (Cf Bhattacharya, 2002).

A significant post-Weberian development is the impact of Critical Theory on public administration. It seeks replacement of the stifling effect of techno-administrative domination of bureaucracy. It pleads for debureaucratisation and democratisation of administration through free flow of communication. Shah Martin's *Managing Without Managers* is also an important work, as it advocates a strategy of redistribution of 'managing' functions, and an increase in the frequency of doing functions (*ibid.*).

The idea of a sheltered bureaucracy employed for life has itself been challenged. The bureaucratic form of organisation having a monopoly over the provision of goods and services has been questioned, as the role of government need not necessarily confine to being a direct service provider in the globalisation context. The bureaucracy can operate indirectly with non-government and non-state agencies working for a wide range of activities.

Scholars like Warren Bennis, predict that bureaucracy is likely to go out of use, in the wake of new social system. This forecast is based on the evolutionary principles that every age develops an organisational form appropriate to its genius. The vacuum created will be filled up by temporary work-systems. As per Bennis, bureaucracy does not adequately allow for the personal growth and the development of mature personalities, it develops conformity and 'group-think', its systems of control and authority are hopelessly outdated, it does not take into account the informal organisation, and suffers from distorted communication, non-assimilation of Information Technology, non-utilisation of human resource etc. (Cf Bhattacharya, 2003, *op.cit.*). Even though Weber's model has been severely criticised, its major characteristics are still found in the developing countries like India who are yet to find an indigenous bureaucratic paradigm, which suits their context.

13.4 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN INDIA

Bureaucracy thus is a much-criticised concept. All writings on bureaucracy are either in the form Weber's analyses of bureaucratic organisation or a critique of Weber's bureaucratic ideal type. Against this backdrop, the Indian bureaucracy also needs to be analysed. The growing impact of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, increased complexity in administrative problems, influx of Information Technology, and socio-cultural upheavals are bringing in a lot of changes in the complexion of Indian bureaucracy.

Some of the features of bureaucracy in India could be summarised as:

- Strong binding character
- Non-partisan advice to political leadership in the midst of political instability and uncertainties
- Administrative and managerial capacity of services
- Effective coordination between institutions of governance
- Leadership at different levels of administration
- Service delivery at the cutting-edge level
- Provision of 'continuity and change' in administration (Satish, 2004)

Before highlighting the changing complexion of Indian bureaucracy, let us first understand the major role of bureaucracy, especially in the policy process. We have studied about this in our last Unit. Over here, we will mainly discuss the role of bureaucracy with respect to delegated legislation and administrative adjudication. We have read in the previous Unit that certain characteristics of bureaucracy put them at an advantage vis-à-vis the political executive. As a result, policy making is merely drafted in the form of broad outline or framework. The details are left for the bureaucracy to be filled up as per their knowledge and expertise. Thus, legislation has come into the hands of bureaucracy. Let us discuss how and why it is so:

Delegated Legislation

It literally means the exercise of legislative powers by a subordinate authority. Over the years, there has been tremendous growth in the legislative powers of the permanent executive. Bureaucracy has been often described as the backbone of policy-making process. The bureaucracy in theory at least has no legislative function but it carries out certain legislative functions on the behalf of the authority given to it by the legislature. The permanent executive or the bureaucracy acts as delegates and carry out delegated authority. The legislature due to lack of time, pressure of work, and technical nature of policies is not able to provide the public policy with details; hence the rule making power is conferred on the bureaucracy, which is required to fill in the blanks. Though the delegation of legislation is observed in various technical areas, the process of delegation is not just concerned with technique but also the content.

There has been a tremendous growth of delegated legislation as it is inevitable in the modern society. But, it seems to be posing serious problems due to the increasing clout of the bureaucracy. The delegation of certain powers might lead to delegation of unlimited powers as the bureaucrats may begin to overlook what common people want and instead focus on requirements of the influential parties.

The chief argument against delegated legislation is that it may lead to despotism of the administrative authorities by vesting in them the power to legislate. It has been even termed as 'New Despotism', as it is felt that the bureaucrats may prefer administrative convenience over and above the concepts of fairness and justice for the people. Passing on of mere skeleton laws to the bureaucracy could then become detrimental to the general interests of people and the organisational goals. Rule making by bureaucracy may even overlook what is politically feasible and what is required in the view of social justice and equity. Thus, it is necessary to exercise

control over delegated legislation to the bureaucrats in order to eliminate the chances of abuse of power by them. Administrative adjudication is a method to control delegated legislation.

Administrative Adjudication

Just as the power to make rules and regulations under statutory authority is a quasi-legislative power in the hands of the administrative agencies, so is Administrative Adjudication a quasi-judicial power vested in them. Administrative Adjudication is not guided by definite legal precepts but by certain statutory standards of common good and public interest. The adjudicator is predisposed in favour of the policy that he has to apply. He can initiate inquisitorial or regulatory action of his own accord.

The basic reasons for the growth of Administrative Adjudication are the same as that of Delegated Legislation. The greatest safeguard against arbitrariness of Administrative Adjudication is the powers of the judiciary to review. Along with the courts, various administrative bodies have emerged to carry out the function of adjudication. It has been recognised as a device to ensure justice to citizens due to enormous expansion of government functions.

The Administrative Adjudication in India comprises of:

- Administrative Tribunals
- Publicity and Consultation
- Parliamentary Scrutiny
- Judicial Review

i) Administrative Tribunals

The Administrative Tribunals have come up in order to maintain a balance between individual rights and public welfare. They are agencies created by specific executive enactments with the objective of discharging quasi-judicial duties. They help the common person to obtain cheap, fair and impartial hearing when adversely affected by an administrative action. As the powers of the bureaucrats have increased, cases of misuse of power are on the rise. In order to curtail this despotism and build accountability towards people, tribunals have been established. An Administrative Tribunal is empowered to exercise any adjudicating power of the State. The Tribunals help to attain speedy and cheap justice. However, the institution of Administrative Tribunal has been only a qualified success. They seem to be working only in a few areas of economic administration and have not extended their jurisdiction. Plus, they have been criticised for being secretive and protecting the interests of the government.

ii) Publicity and Consultation

The procedure of rule making should invariably provide for consultation with the public and the special interests affected. The techniques that could be used are:

- Obtaining the views of those going to be affected by the rule-making by submission of draft rules to the stakeholders

- Holding meetings and conferences after due notice to the interested individuals and organisations
- Giving public hearings to any interested person or party or stakeholder who wishes to testify

iii) Parliamentary Scrutiny

Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation is also done by Parliamentary Committees such as Parliamentary Accounts Committee, Estimates Committee, and Committee on Public Undertakings etc.

The Delegated Legislation could be laid:

- Before the Parliament with no directions
- In the Parliament subject to annulment of the rules in question by hostile resolution of either house within specified period.
- With the provision that rules shall not be operative until approved by resolution of both the Houses
- In the form of Draft for a prescribed number of days

iv) Judicial Review

The function of the courts is to see that the exercise of the delegated authority is not broader than the terms of delegation. Otherwise, rules made can be declared *ultra vires* and void. Another test applied by the courts to the validity of delegated legislation is that of reasonableness. This confers on the courts a very wide discretion and power of scrutiny extending both to the factual background as well as legal issues involved in the rule making. We will read more on Judicial Review in Unit 18 of this Course.

13.5 CHANGING CONCEPT OF INDIAN BUREAUCRACY

Despite an elaborate system of Administrative Adjudication, bureaucracy in India has been criticised for being authoritarian in outlook and a monopoliser of power. The track record of bureaucratic performance has not been very good in India. Many scholars have pointed out the maladies afflicting it such as red tapism, corruption, hierarchy, insensitivity and insularity. The bureaucracy has been rather slow in adapting to the social, economic and technological transformation in the country.

In India, as has been observed; bureaucracy still seems to be suffering from the hangover of the colonial era. Coming from a narrow social base, bureaucracy is unable to appreciate the problems of development, especially at the rural level. It has generally taken shelter under conservative neutrality (Bhattacharya, 2002). It is believed to be incapable of appreciating the problems of development and is averse to administrative requirements of rural areas. The study by Pai Panandiker and Kshirsagar has brought out some interesting findings about the relationship between bureaucracy and development administration that are relevant even today. It suggests:

- (i) Bureaucracies involved in the developmental tasks at the field level tend to be structurally less rigid and behaviorally more flexible than headquarter bureaucracies.

- (ii) Bureaucracies essentially in a regulatory and other non-development agencies will tend to be structurally more rigid and behaviourally less flexible (Cf Bhattacharya, 2000).

The bureaucracy in India suffers from certain strange paradoxes. It is a combination of rigid adherence to procedure and a low resistance to varied pressures, pulls and intervention. The Indian bureaucracy is characterised by increased self-importance, indifference and an obsession with the binding and inflexible authority of departmental decisions, precedents, or arrangements. The bureaucracy is often described to be 'bloated' and their size is believed to be disproportional to their contribution. It is felt that bureaucrats are a law unto themselves. They hide behind their papers and maintain secrecy on various public dealings. Due to which their misdeeds are never found and if exposed they take shelter behind the committees and commissions.

Unfortunately, bureaucracy in India is struggling to cope with certain maladies that have now inflicted the bureaucracy all around the globe. International studies on the functioning of bureaucracies point out the following problems:

- Endemic overstaffing and ill-equipped service, accompanied by unsustainable staffing expenditure
- Lack of performance culture and inappropriate performance appraisal
- Systemic inconsistency in promotion and empanelment
- Lack of adequate transparency and accountability procedures
- Political interference resulting in arbitrary and whimsical transfers
- A gradual erosion in public service values, ethics and morale (World Bank, 1994, (Cf Satish, *op.cit.*)

The specific maladies of the Indian bureaucracy include politicisation and communalisation of the civil services, dereliction of duty, wastefulness, lack of motivation for productivity. The functioning of bureaucracy has been replete with the failure to eliminate the colonial legacy, the failure to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, and the failure to invoke people's participation and, at the top of it, the failure to eliminate corruption (See: Bava, 1997).

To rectify the situation, there have been many attempts at reforming the system. It was in 1949, when N. Gopalaswami Ayyenger suggested improvement in methods of transaction of government business. It recommended the setting up of an Organisation and Methods (O & M) Division in the Central government. A.D. Gorwala in his Report in 1951 pointed out that clean, efficient and impartial administration was the first condition to the success of democratic planning. He suggested reorganisation of the administrative machinery to ensure greater speed, effectiveness and responsiveness.

Paul Appleby in his Reports in 1953 and 1956 also dealt with reforming Indian administrative system through the setting up of an O & M Division in the government. Asoka Chanda in 1954 suggested ways to remove wastage and delay in execution of projects. In 1964, K. Santhanam Report came up with several recommendations to curb corruption. The Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in 1966 also made recommendations on specific aspects of administration.

The ARC has laid down the following norms:

- The obligation of every bureaucrat or public servant to implement faithfully all policies and decisions of the ministers even if these be contrary to the advice tendered by him
- The freedom of public servants to express themselves frankly by tendering advice to their superiors including the ministers; and
- The observance by public servants of principles of neutrality, impartiality and anonymity

The Economic Administrative Reforms Commission under L.K. Jha (1983) advocated the need for accountability so that greater importance was given to performance than mere adherence to rules and procedures. The objective was to introduce modern techniques of management in the areas of financial planning and human resource management. At the Conference of the Chief Secretaries of States/Union Territories on Effective and Responsive Administration in 1996 and at the Conference of Chief Ministers in 1997, it was recognised that governance has to extend beyond conventional bureaucracies and has to involve citizens at all levels to empower and inform the public and disadvantaged groups so as to ensure service delivery and programme execution through autonomous elected local bodies (Minocha, 1998).

The Fifth Pay Commission (1996) was a clear departure from the ARC, as it made a more thorough analysis of administrative set up by going deeper into the work methods, recruitment, promotion procedures, and pay structures of the civil servants. The Fifth Central Pay Commission gave several recommendations to enhance the work procedures, work environment and administrative structures of the bureaucracy. It suggested that the rightsizing of government and structural reforms of the bureaucracy could get off to a flying start if the government decides to privatise both public sector undertakings as also departmental enterprises within a strict time frame, while at the same time contracting out some of its own activities to the private sector. It laid emphasis on automation and computerisation to reduce paper work. Right to have access to information for all the citizens was also emphasised.

The reform process in Indian bureaucracy has also been precipitated by the Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation scenario. The recent emphasis on New Public Management, e-governance, Good Governance, New Public Service has led to a shift in the thinking process on bureaucracy. The consequences are slowly beginning to show in India. The norms of neutrality and commitment are changing. The neutrality *versus* commitment debate has come to the fore. The neutrality doctrine is being redefined to meet the needs of civil service, where a bureaucrat is expected to combine substantive expertise with commitment. Neutrality, as has been observed, should not mean political naiveté, but a sufficient degree of political awareness and an ability to operate within the system without wearing a party label or party cap. Bureaucrats have to insist on more transparency and accountability in the government (Pinto, 1997).

The concept of commitment, which was introduced by Ms. Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, aimed at rectifying the insensitive attitude of bureaucracy to the developmental issues. The aim was to make the bureaucracy committed to the national objectives and goals with full sincerity. Ms. Gandhi described bureaucracy more as a stumbling block in the progress of the country. It was realised that the progressive goals of the government cannot be realised unless civil servants are fully committed to the demands of the people and political process.

Thus, the point to ponder over is the ‘foci’ of this commitment. Where should it lie? To the ruling party or to their own political ideology or national goals? Should they commit themselves to the views and philosophy of ministers in charge or should they independently focus on the requirements of the people. Commitment has to be identified with the public interest rather than the minister. The drive towards achievement of various socio-economic goals requires a strong commitment from the bureaucrat. The doctrine of commitment aims at diverting the bureaucrats from their leanings towards the politicians and guiding them towards the welfare of people (See: B. Guy Peters, 2001). In reality, however, this has proved to be a myth. Bureaucracy is still interested in feathering its own nest and inflating its own budget. The very premise of Public Choice theory still holds true. Self-aggrandising bureaucrats and self-seeking politicians make a mockery of the very basis of government. This analysis is not unfounded in the Indian context.

As we have read in our introductory Unit, the new trends in globalisation have brought about a major change in the role of the State, which has become a facilitator, enabler, coordinator besides being the provider of the structures and processes responsible for production of goods and services. In fact, the State with its changing role has become functionally loaded. This overload of State has resulted in an ever-growing, self-aggrandising, and self-seeking bureaucracy. But, the bureaucrat who has enjoyed security and anonymity at the cost of transparency, responsiveness and accountability upto now is in for a face-lift. As we mentioned earlier, the scenario around is changing under the rubric of New Public Management (NPM) reforms where more emphasis is on rightsizing bureaucracy by making it transparent, efficient and accountable. We will read more on this in our subsequent Units 14, 15 and 16.

How far this reform package will be effective is the question only time will answer. Nevertheless, the progressive critics of bureaucracy direct their attacks primarily against the bureaucratisation of corporate big business. It is necessary to curb the power of the managerial oligarchy by government action. It is not limited to government. It is a universal phenomenon, present both in business and in government (Sunghun Im, 2001).

Meanwhile, there is a need to improve efficiency, morale, integrity and responsiveness of the civil service through a series of measures, which focus on:

- Agreement with the political leadership on institutionalised systems for stability of tenure and placement of officials
- Comprehensive assessment of various factors which have a bearing on motivation, incentives, productivity and working conditions of the civil services on the basis of recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission.
- Steps to curb corrupt practices, prosecute offenders quickly, and to install a regime of self-regulation through a Code of Ethics for Public Services (Sundaram, 1997).

13.6 TOWARDS BUREAUCRATIC REFORMS

Bureaucracy plays a central role in socio-economic development and nation building. It has been observed that the prototypes of patronage, guardian and caste bureaucracy do not commend themselves for public administration today. We are still faced with the necessity of a basic choice. The choice is between the bureaucrat as a functionary and the bureaucrat as common person. Do we want a bureaucracy that

has the courage of its integrity or do we want a bureaucracy with its ear to the ground? (Rao and Mathur, 1999). This is a major issue that needs deliberation.

The bureaucracy has been the backbone of our system, which is undergoing transformation due to the enhancement of the role of the people in decision-making and the changing role of the State. Bureaucrats are confronted with new inputs from contemporary socio-economic and political scene. It is therefore impossible to adhere to the Weberian rigid, rule-bound, and hierarchical model of bureaucracy. Instead, the need of the hour is transparent and accountable bureaucratic system. The resources at the disposal of bureaucracy are new channels of information, power of decision-making and political support. These need to be directed towards the achievement of organisational and developmental goals.

Modernising the administrative system and reorganising the bureaucratic structure has been the two-dimensional strategy adopted by the political leadership in most developing countries to revamp their bureaucracy. The nature of bureaucracy in a single party dominant rule and in a coalition party system has to be different and contextual. It throws open the relevance of rational bureaucracy in the context of the Third World, as policies may be lost in the thicket of bureaucratic infighting or twisted out of recognition by the bureaucratic apathy, and misunderstanding of opposition. Creating and maintaining a responsive and responsible bureaucracy that caters to the general needs and specified goals of developing societies has thus become one of the most complex problems (Sharma, 1999).

The renewed role of bureaucracy must satisfy the dual requirement of 'capacity' and 'control'. *Capacity* indicates the ability of an administrative unit to achieve its objective efficiently. *Control* refers to accountability due to 'higher authority', most particularly to elected representative in the legislative branch. The Contingency approach, it has been pointed out, seeks to understand the interrelationships within and among the subsystems as well as between the organisation and its environment, and to define patterns of relationship of variables. It recommends a continuous study to find out how changes in external environment are likely to influence the interdependencies among sub-systems and thus their functions (Halachmi, 1980). This approach needs to be explored further in order to draw its benefits for the functioning of bureaucracy.

An alternative to the market model as well as traditional models of bureaucracy needs to be sought. The recent reforms in Hongkong Civil Service could be emulated. In Hongkong, though the bureaucrats are recruited on a permanent basis, their continuation in the job is subjected to verifying the performance indicators from time to time. The performance of bureaucracy thus could be improved by introducing performance measurement, streamlining departmental enquiries, overhauling grievance procedures, linking performance with incentives, implementing Citizens' Charters, bettering service delivery, involving people, implementing a code of conduct, encouraging decentralisation, devolving functions, and strengthening capacity building. The New Public Management and New Public Service approaches, about which you will read in Units 14 and 15, talk about reforming bureaucracy by highlighting these very features.

Fred Riggs had argued that the existence of career bureaucracy without corresponding strength in the political institutions does not necessarily lead to administrative efficiency (Cf Bhattacharya, 2002, *op.cit.*). Thus, what is needed is all round structural, procedural and behavioural changes in the bureaucratic set up so that the

bureaucracy is able to function in a participatory, responsive and sensitive environment.

To make the bureaucracy adapt well to the development tasks, changes are needed both on structural and behavioural fronts. Structurally, de-emphasis of hierarchy has been suggested to get rid of the conventional organisational pyramid, the centralised set up and interpersonal conflicts. Behaviourally, as has been pointed out, the bureaucratic personnel need to be sensitised to the needs of the disadvantaged and weaker sections, motivated to take up new and innovative steps towards administrative reforms, and appreciated for their initiative and zeal. There is a need for development bureaucracy, which is not insular and inward looking in approach. Administrative changes are required to make the bureaucracy goal-centric, results-specific and people-oriented.

13.7 CONCLUSION

Bureaucracy is the backbone of Indian administrative system. Its complexion is changing with the change in the socio-cultural and economic scenario. The globalisation context has thrown open several questions that Indian bureaucracy must address in the right earnest. It must reinvent itself in the light of changing norms of neutrality and commitment, accent on NPM, Good Governance and New Public Service as well as rightsizing and responsiveness. Weberian ideal type has been subjected to severe criticism but an alternative to it is yet to be found. Traces of the traditional Weberian paradigm are thus found in all countries including India, which is grappling with many bureaucratic pathologies. The reform efforts have not been able to bear adequate fruits. The developing countries like India must find their own indigenous models of bureaucracy to meet the needs of their social and economic set up. This Unit discussed some of these issues.

13.8 KEY CONCEPTS

Charismatic Authority

Max Weber described charismatic authority as one of the three major types of authority in his bureaucratic set up. The other two being traditional and legal-rational. Charismatic authority is power, legitimised on the basis of a leader's exceptional personal qualities or the demonstration of extraordinary insight and accomplishment by the leader, which inspire loyalty and obedience from the followers.

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/charismatic-authority>

Self-aggrandisement

An act undertaken to increase one's power and influence or to draw attention to one's own importance.

13.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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13.10 ACTIVITIES

1. Make a list of the reform measures that have been undertaken to bring about changes in bureaucratic set up since independence.
2. Study the structures and processes of any government organisation near your place by interacting with its employees. Try to analyse the impact of privatisation and liberalisation on that organisation.