

## ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS COMMITTEES IN INDIA - A STUDY

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### *Introduction*

Independence opened up new and bigger challenges before the country as it was under a solemn obligation to bring about social and economic improvement which was an all-round improvement in the lives of the people of the country. The government is irrevocably committed to the DPSPs enshrined in the Constitution, which directs it actively to work for the economic and social well being of the people, refer to importance of DPSP - Also, to achieve this apart from reforming administrative machinery, there was a need to reform the attitudes of the Civil services as well from a colonial hangover of domination and non transparency to sub servient to the people of India as envisaged in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution that begins with 'We, the people of India'.

The first reform in Public administration since Independence began with the introduction of the Parliamentary form of government based on Universal Adult Franchise which consequently transformed the civil services to an instrument/tool in the hands of the popularly elected government for implementation of its policies and programmes and a service provider to the public.

The next step in administrative reforms was the establishment of the All India Services, Central services and State services machinery.

After that came the decentralization reform where Constitutional status was conferred upon local self governments in rural and urban areas which enhanced the arena and functions of Public administration.

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One must note that when the Constitution was being framed, the Constitution founding fathers did not pay much thought to the type of administrative machinery required for an Independent India as they felt that the inherited one was doing its job well, and, perhaps they also felt that Constitutional and political changes were of major consequence that would automatically make its tool which is public administration undergo the requisite transformation under its impact.

However, such an interlink never really happened, and with the onset of the Planning Commission and its development Plans the painfully inadequate and weak administrative system was discovered. Thus, the first Five Year Plan called for reforms regarding the same.

So, the Staff Reorganization Unit was setup in 1953, later renamed the Staff Inspection Unit under the Ministry of Finance to review staffing in government agencies with a view to achieve economy in staff consistent with administrative efficiency. This Unit is still in existence and doing useful work but is not directly or immediately related to administrative reform.

In 1954, the establishment of the O & M agency in the govt. located in the Cabinet Secretariat, to begin and sustain administrative efficiency in all branches of public administration brought in some hope for real administrative reforms. Its location in the Cabinet Secretariat enabled it to get cooperation and collaboration from all other Ministries and departments and direct them to achieve the same and keep them accountable. Refer to O & M in detail in this post

### ***Meaning of Administrative Reforms***

Reform - The word 'Reform' means to make something better, to improve something or to remove the faults of something especially by changing its behaviour or structure. Reform is an inherited feature of Public (govt.) Administration because of the constant growth of its functions for catering to the ever increasing demands of society and to remain relevant in the changing times.

A single definition of Administrative reform has not been come to, however, there are two ways/approaches to understanding it:

- i) Reform of Administration as a complex rebuilding of it.

- ii) Reform to be a particular change within administration or just a modernizing or improvising of administrative procedures.

### *Need For Administrative Reforms*

The distinguishing characteristic of modernized social system is its ability to deal with continuous systematic transformation. Society has to change in order to free itself from the shackles of traditionalism, cope with the changes in environment, adopt fresh innovative culture, adopt new knowledge and technology and crave for a new order through elimination of the old structures and system.

Administrative reforms are but a part of the University of this Change, for administration is nothing but a sub-culture, a social sub-system reflecting the values of the wider society. Administration must also correspondingly change to be in step with the outer modernization process. Or else, disequilibrium would set in, resulting in imbalances, dysfunctional ties, maladjustments and goal displacement.

### *Types of Administrative Reforms*

Administrative reforms, according to Gerald E. Caiden can be of four types

1. ***Reforms imposed through political changes:*** Administration is shaped and influenced by political forces. The change in political scene also affects administration. Structure and working of administration is affected by political changes.
2. ***Reforms introduced to remedy organization rigidity:*** Bureaucratic structures have to change to be flexible. The rigidity in the structure of administration has to be removed. The changes can take place in the form of restructuring, reinvention, realignment, rethinking and reengineering.
3. ***Reforms through the legal system:*** Laws pertaining to administrative reforms can lead to significant changes in administration. Legislation is normally preceded by consultations and deliberations in several forums such as committees, commissions, press etc.
4. ***Reforms through changes in attitude:*** Human beings are an important part of any organization. Change in their attitude will help in bringing reforms. No legal structural

and political change can lead to desired reforms unless and until these are appreciated and accepted by the people working in the organization.

5. ***Administrative Reforms in India since independence:*** The government adopted the ideology of welfare of the people through socio-economic development, which led to a greater proliferating of tasks and functions. To take up the welfare programmes and challenges, the administrative machinery, which was inherited from the colonial regime and rendered weak by erosive circumstances and stressful situations accompanying independence, had to be revamped and reinforced. Administration, as the instrument for designing and implementing all the developmental programmes had to be restructures, reformed and renewed.

Various measures were taken up by the government of India in administrative reforms. An account of the measures is discussed below.

1. **Secretariat Reorganization Committee, 1947**

The Government of India set up the Secretariat Reorganization Committee in 1947, which was headed by Girirja Shankar Bajpai? The Committee enquired into the matters of personnel shortages, better utilization of the available manpower and improvement of methods of work in the Central Secretariat.

2. **Sheri N. Gopaldaswamy Ayyanagar Report, 1950**

Sheri N. Gopaldaswamy Ayyanagar conducted a comprehensive review of the working of the machinery of the Central Government, which was presented in his report on 'Reorganization of the Machinery of Central Government'. He was a minister without portfolio. He said union ministries should be reorganized and grouped in four bureau (Bureau of Natural Resources and Agricultural, Bureau of Industry and Commerce, Bureau of Transport and Communication and Bureau of Labour and Social Service) and place a limit on the number of department in the Ministry.

***Recommendations:***

- a) The Central Secretariat should be divided into 37 primary units, 28 departments, 8 central administrative offices and a Cabinet Secretariat.

- b) A part from the 20 ministries controlling the entire machinery of the government, each ministry should have three categories of ministries, namely, a Cabinet Minister, a Minister of State and a Deputy Minister.

3. *A. D. Gorwala Committee, 1951*

In July 1951, a committee headed by Sri. A. D. Gorwala in its Report in Public Administration underlined and need for having a clean, efficient and impartial administration. He submitted two reports, namely, Reports on Public Administration and Report on the Efficient Conduct of State Enterprise. While the first report was more general in nature, the second was restricted to public undertakings. In his first report, Gorwala highlighted the faulty relationship that existed between the administrative heads of departments working under it and the relationship between the administrative ministries and the Finance Ministry.

***Recommendations:***

- a) The delegation of certain financial powers to the administrative ministries and heads of departments.
- b) It said that there was a lack of harmonious relationship between the minister and the secretary and stressed the need for a harmonious relationship between them.
- c) Further, it emphasized the need for proper recruitment, training and organization methods for the civil services.
- d) In his second report on the public enterprises, Gorwala said proper measures should be taken which include “evolution of suitable forms of control, direction and management; new devices in a relatively untied sphere by the state and different in aspect from ordinary governmental administration”.
- e) The delegation of certain financial powers to the administrative ministries and heads of departments.
- f) It said that there was a lack of harmonious relationship between the minister and the secretary and stressed the need for a harmonious relationship between them.
- g) Further, it emphasized the need for proper recruitment, training and organization methods for the civil services.

#### 4. Paul. H. Appleby Report, 1953 and 1956

In continuation of these efforts, the Government of India invited an American expert, Mr. Paul. H. Appleby to suggest reforms in Indian administration. Appleby submitted two reports. His first report namely "Public Administration in India: Report of a Surver" 1953, dealt with administrative reorganization and practices. His second report namely, 'Re-examination of India's Administrative System with special reference to Administration of Government's Industrial and Commercial Enterprises', 1956, dealt with matters pertaining to streamlining organization, work procedures, recruitment, training in these enterprises, etc.,

#### *Recommendations:*

- a) The establishment of a professional training institute, namely the Indian Institute of Public Administration for promoting research in public administration.
- b) Setting up of a central office to provide leadership in respect to organization, management and procedures. As a result, an Organization and Methods (O&M) Division was set up in March 1954, in the Cabinet Secretariat for improving the speed and quality of the governments business and streamlining its procedures.
- c) O&M units and work study units were set up in the Ministries / Department. The focus was on improving the paper work management and methods.

#### 5. Committee on Plan Projects, 1956

In 1956, the Planning Commission set up a 'Committee on Plan Projects' to evolve organization norms, work methods and techniques, with a view to achieve economy and efficiency in the implementation of the plan projects. In 1964, a Management and Development Administration Division were also established as a part of this committee to promote the use of the modern tools of management. It also undertook studies on problems related to development administration at the district level.

#### 6. Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) 1966

The Administrative Reforms Commission was set up in January 1966 under the chairmanship of K. Hanumanthaiya. Its terms of reference were the widest as it covered the entire gamut of Public Administration at the centre as well in the States.

The Commission submitted 20 reports containing more than 500 recommendations. These led to major and minor changes in administration and paved the way for further thinking, which led to more reforms.

***Recommendations:***

- a) It recommended the reactivating of the O&M units in different ministries and departments
- b) IT called for setting up a special cell in the central reforms agency to give effect to the reports of ARC
- c) IT stated that the central reforms agency should be research based in matters dealing with the methods of work, staffing pattern and organizational structure.

**7. Kothari Committee, 1976**

The committee on recruitment and selecting methods under the chairmanship of D. S. Kothari was set up in 1976 by the UPSC to examine and report on the system of recruitment to All India Services and Central Group a& B services. The committee in its report recommended for single examination for the IAS and Central Group non-technical services. It recommended for conducting an objective type preliminary screening test for the civil service examinations to weed out candidates not competent enough. Those who qualify in the preliminary examinations will appear for the Main examination which is of written essay type and later an interview, the Central Government decided to implement its recommendations from 1979 onwards.

**8. National Police Commission, 1977**

The commission was set up under the chairmanship of Shri Dharma Vira to examine the role and functions of police with special reference to control of crime and maintenance of public order, the method of magisterial supervision, the system of investigation and prosecution and maintenance of crime records. The Commission made over five hundred recommendations extending to a wide area of interest relating to police administration.

**9. Commission on Centre-State Relations, 1983**

Justice R. S. Sarkaria, a retired judge of the Supreme Court was the chairman of this commission. It was setup in March 1983 by the Government of India in the backdrop of regional parities like the Telugu Desam in A.P. and Karnataka Kranti Ranga and Janata Party in Karnataka coming to power. These state governments including that of west Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir were demanding more autonomy for the states. Its terms of reference was to examine and review the working of the existing arrangements between the Union and States with regard to powers, functions and responsibilities in all spheres and make recommendations as to the changes and measures needed. The commission submitted its report in 1988 into two parts. While the first part comprises of the Main Report, the second part deals with the memoranda received from the state governments and political parties.

***Recommendations:***

- a) The Article 365 for imposing sanctions should be resorted as a last resort by the Central Government in case of the State Government decides, not to comply with Articles 256 and 257 of the constitution.
- b) All possibilities should be explored before imposing sanction under Article 365.
- c) There was need to setup an Inter-State Council or Inter Governmental Council on the basis of Article 263 to ensure inter governmental co-ordination and sort out problems between inter-governmental agencies.
- d) In issues pertaining to disputes between the Union Government and the State Governments, an independent assessor should be appointed to examine the issue before a decision is taken.

***10. The Fifth Central Pay Commission, 1997***

The Fifth Central Pay Commission 1997 made several for reaching recommendations regarding administrative reforms and it said that the machinery of the government has to be reinvented.

***Recommendations:***

- a) The government staff should be drastically reduced as there are too many secretaries in each department.

- b) There should be restructuring of government departments and no file should travel for more than three hierarchical levels. Furthermore, it said there should be restructuring of office systems to make the office more efficient and effective.
- c) The repetitive tasks should be eliminating. It suggested for the following modified version of hierarchy in a typical central government department.
  - Senior Executives
  - Executives
  - Supervisory staff
  - Supporting staff
  - Auxiliary staff
  - Introduction of the concept of multi-skilling at the group D level.

#### **11. *Surender Nath's Committee Report 2003***

The Surender Nath Committee has submitted a comprehensive report to streamline the civil services. Appointed by the Department of Personnel, the committee headed by the former chairman of UPSC surrendernath was asked to review or examine the present system of Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) and devise a new method for promotion of officers.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- a) It advocated for the system of Performance Appraisal (PA) of the government officers for promotion.
- b) The officers' professional capabilities have to be assessed in order to determine the capacity building needs and suitability for particular areas of responsibility and assignments and his conduct with peers, juniors, elected representatives and public.
- c) The performance appraisal report would enable the officer to identify systemic shortcomings in the organization with a view to improve governing standards.

#### **12. *2<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Reforms Commission: important Recommendations***

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) was set up in 2005 with Veerappa Moily as Chairman; it presented 15 reports in all by April 2009 when the term of the commission came to an end.

***Some of the Recommendations:***

- a) First Report: Right to Information, Master Key to Good Governance
- b) Second Report : Unlocking Human Capital: Entitlements and Governance- A case study
- c) Third Report: Crisis Management: From Despair to Hope
- d) Fourth Report: Ethic in Governance
- e) Fifth Report: Public Order- Justice for All... Peace for All, etc.....

***Conclusion:***

Administrative reforms are vital for the sustenance of the government machinery. The focus on good governance today has necessitated reforms in government as well as in administration. The Government of India undertook reform measures since independence. Various commissions and committees were set up to suggest reforms in the administrative system, organization, methods and procedures. One of the important commissions to suggest reforms was the ARC, which made recommendations covering the entire gamut of administration at the centre and states.

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