

THE ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Introduction

In developing countries majority of the people live in rural areas. As such any attempt at bringing overall development should rightly lay greater emphasis on rural development which is sought to be brought about through planning. The governments in these countries are facing the problem of initiating and accelerating the pace of development to enhance the standard of living of the people. The task of rural development and modernization in developing nations is not possible without a well-organized and effective bureaucracy. Interest in bureaucracy and its relation to democracy predates the advent of sociology as a discipline.

The first concrete effort to study the bureaucracy in a systematic manner was made by Max Weber, a German sociologist who was known father of “ideal type” of bureaucracy. Weber mentioned three main features of bureaucracy i.e. Division of Labour and Specialization, Legal Frame Work, Principle of Hierarchy. But Max Weber’s model of bureaucracy which is highly rational and technical is not suitable to explain the administrative system and their working in development countries who are engaged in new task of rural development.

Post-independence period: -

In the post-independence period the role of the public bureaucracy in carrying out the diverse tasks of rural development remained a much debated subject among practicing administrators and academicians. The present bureaucracy in these less developed nations has emerged from the British colonial system. After attaining political independence the scope of functions of government and bureaucracy have undergone a fundamental change. The governments in these countries have launched massive programmes of rural development with a view to liberating the millions from squalor, disease, illiteracy, ignorance, unemployment,

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poverty etc. But it has been observed that the ability of bureaucracy system to carry out planned programme of socioeconomic development has been limited, partly due to lack of commitment to the ultimate goals of society and partly due to its inability to mobilize enough public support for development programmes.

F. W., Riggs and others have developed an ecological and developmental administration approaches and models like prismatic and “sala” model to explain the administrative behavior in non- western countries. In this approach the bureaucracies are to be explained and designed in terms of local influences as well as the influence of developmental tasks and goals. Obviously ecological and developmental administration approaches because of its open minded, realistic and flexible character, is the best approach particularly for the purpose of designing a development bureaucracy. The development bureaucracy should not be conservative but it should have scientific outlook, progressive, innovative, reformist and revolutionary in nature. The concrete tasks of development which the state had to undertake include modernization of agriculture, industrializations and economic diversification and building of infrastructure including irrigation, electrification, communication, transport, education, health and promotion of science and technology. In the field of agricultural and rural development, a beginning was made in 1951-52 with the establishment of the country development programme and a net work of national extension service. Simultaneously, a multi-tier structure of co-operative institutions was also established in the field of credit supply of inputs, marketing, processing, consumer distribution, rural industries etc.

The administrative mechanism: -

The administrative mechanism set up for the community development programme soon gave way to the three-tier Panchayat Raj system in order to make rural development administration responsive to the elective representatives of the people. In the sixties, it was felt that the general approach towards community development was not adequate and there had to be special thrust and single minded approach to agricultural development to deal with emerging food crisis. A number of programmes were, therefore, introduced. The extension service was also intensified through T & V approach. This approach of intensive development in agriculture ushered in the “green revolution” in some parts of the country, especially Punjab and Haryana and especially in respect of wheat, the Mexican varieties which become available thanks to Dr.

Norman Borlough. In the seventies there was another major change when a realization came that the green revolution approach had benefited only better sections of the rural society and the weaker sections were left out of the mainstream.

A number of programmes known as anti-poverty programmes were, therefore, introduced to specially care for the weaker sections of the society. These included small and marginal farmers and agricultural labour agency programmes and special programmes called the DPAP for the 70 drought prone districts in the country like in the rain shadow areas. These programmes were later integrated into Intensive Rural Development Programme. To fill in the gaps rural credit, commercial banks were also asked to enter into the field and networks of rural branches of the commercial banks as well as regional rural bank were established. They became a part of the comprehensive net work concerned with rural development. In the early years a great deal of attention was paid to land reforms to introduce structural changes in the rural economy. Employment programmes were introduced beginning with the national rural employment programme.

The Twenty Point Programme: -

The Twenty Point Programme also contained a number of points for the poorest sections of the society like the liquidation of the rural indebtedness, provision of house sites for landless, and enforcement of minimum wages. The formulation and implementation of these programmes required bureaucracy to play a new role, the role of an agent of development or agent of change as compared with the traditional role of the past as agent of status quo. Furthermore, since most of these were people oriented programmes bureaucracy had necessarily to work with people. Motivating and mobilizing the people, communicating programmes to them, eliciting their co-operation, building up grass-root popular institutions-these were the new methods and techniques of administration which bureaucracy had to adopt. They contrasted sharply with the traditional functions of deciding case according to prescribed rules and regulations. The bureaucracy had to go to people as development workers rather than just passing orders on cases of people approaching them with their grievances.

British colonialists: -

British colonialists paid little attention to the development of rural Indian and only confined to limited function of collecting land revenue and maintaining law and order which helped the British to improve the British economy. It was only after independence that with the transfer of political power to Indians, a serious thought was given to development of rural people who live in villages. In India the task of development was initiated with community development programme in fifties, then in sixties the area development programme was launched, in seventies integrated rural development programme became popular and the latest emphasis now on the individual development programme realized to uplift the rural poorest from the level of poverty to better living.

Thus the bureaucratic function in India and other developing countries are performed by a variety of institutions. Bureaucracy has also been criticized as urban oriented and elitist in nature having failed to have adjusted to the need of rural area where majority of the people live. The changing role of Indian bureaucracy and developing nations is the major issue of our times, commenting on the role T.N. Chaturvedi himself a distinguished member of the IAS says; “The civil service has to undergo radical structural, procedural and attitudinal changes if it has to serve as an effective instrument of change and progress in a developing society.

The Civil Servants in Rural Development: -

The civil service has to cultivate much wider social awareness and responsiveness as well as social base apart from the traditional of integrity, functional efficiency and a sense of fair play and impartiality. To remove the problems of rural development administration one has to reform the entire structure of the government’s machinery which comes into direct contact with the public. A purposeful administrative reform must proceed from the lowest rung of the administrative hierarchy. Recruitment procedures must be radically changed to facilitate the lateral entries of more broadly oriented new blood from other sectors of the society. It is argued that it would be desirable to create new structure to perform new functions of the administrative system. Structural changes need to be supported by attitudinal changes. There appears to be a strong need for attitudinal training of bureaucrats. C.P. Bhambri has observed that in the Indian context there is a dissonance between the orientation and the attitudes of the higher civil service and the national goals, planning, equality, socialism, social justice and democracy. The quality of an administrative system depends primarily upon the quality of its personnel. Bureaucratic

system has to be much more open and continuously subject to revision and modification which to a large extent disturb the Weberian Model. Greater emphasis has to be placed on the human relation approach. If the attitudes and beliefs system of the administrators is not in line with the goal of administration, no effective result can be expected.

Therefore, the civil servant today has to keep himself abreast of all the prevailing trends in social life, the capacity to see them against the proper background, a sympathetic understanding of contemporary tendencies and of the needs and aspirations of men, the knowledge that can place facts in their true relations. Higher civil servants must have wide outlook, power and quickness in comprehension, the gift of dealing with people and the readiness to take the initiative and to assume responsibility. The coming decades are in no way going to be peaceful and thrust of political, economic and social forces are likely to throw up new tensions and problems. In the new environment of turbulence and relative uncertainty, we have to reorient and refashion bureaucracy so that it may cope with requirements of environmental changes. The journey involved in a country's progress from a backward poverty-stricken subsistence economy to a growing fully fledged development of resources and technical positions, in which technical decisions are made must be held by men with specific and opposite training and the rest of the administrative structure must rely upon those men for solutions to specific problems.

Douglas Esminger observed "yet another need is for the administrative bureaucracy to accept fully, emotionally as well as intellectually, the importance of the technician in the administrative structure about if the political executive provides the necessary leadership in terms of integrity, conscious attention to the overall direction of the administrative machinery and the promotion of a clean and responsive administration. Bureaucracy in operation in developing countries has to undergo a good deal of change in response to the new needs, when the new focus of the state activity is the welfare of the rural people, the orientation and the behavior of bureaucracy has to change. With the fast historical advancement and changing situations, attitudes and values also change with the system. Attitudes and values cannot be considered static but they are changing with the time and space. The democratic ethos and systems that emerged and developed in the western countries affected the idea of the people and officials themselves about the bureaucratic behavior. The attitudes of the civil servant can indeed

make or mar the future of developing nations. Even in developed societies the attitude and behavior orientation of the civil servants affect considerably the results of governmental planning and expenditure objectives.

Writing about the British and French civil servants Professor William A. Robson cites following attitudes which impede effective development administration in a democratic set up.

1. An excessive sense of self importance on the part of officials.
2. An indifference towards the feeling and convenience of individual citizens.
3. An over devotion to precedent, arrangement or forms.
4. A failure to recognize the relations with other segments of polity as an essential part of the democratic process.
5. Lack of initiative and imagination, inaccessibility and faulty handling of the public.

Scholar interested in the problems of rural development administration in India have listed similar several attitudes and behavioral orientation which considerably reduce its operational efficiency while these are commonly thought to be the attitudes of the civil servants. It does not imply that all those who work for the government of India necessarily possess these attitudes. In fact, a majority of the administrators are committed to the goals of rural development and exhibit none of the anti-development attitudes.

Primarily, it is alleged that Indian bureaucracy was conceived, born and nurtured during the foreign, British rule. Even after more than two centuries of its birth in India, it is alien in its own land. It has not yet acquired a native orientation. If the attitudes and belief system of the administrators is not in time with the goals of administration, no effective results can be expected. Our country is committed to democratic Socialism and secularism and we are sentenced to hard work to achieve our destined goals. In order to pursue our objectives, we require a bureaucratic structure fully committed to these ideals and philosophy. In the changed circumstances, and environment bureaucracy has to play a new role, the role of an agent of change as compared to the traditional role or the agent of status quo. Value orientation and attitudinal change are two crucial facts which have not found a proper place in rural development training.

The Seventh Plan: -

As the seventh plan rightly pointed out, it is essential to transmit values, such as honesty and integrity, through training to minimize rampant corruption eroding the flow of benefits to the rural poor. In tune with the movement for responsive administration, attitudes may change towards the public. Vertical mix of trainees can bridge the gap between the policy makers and the implementing agencies by bringing them in training programmes. At the moment such courses are confined to civil servants from district level and above. A perspective training plan should be prepared in every state for development bureaucracy at various levels of rural development administration. Sponsors of community development saw training as a sine-qua-non for the success of the movement. Pandit Nehru too felt that if the community development movements ever failed in achieving its objective, it will not be for lack of money, but for lack of trained personnel. The vital role of training in rural development was highlighted by various studies and reports of expert committees i.e., ARC, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Ashok Mehta Committee.

Lately the G.V.K. Rao Committee recommended creation of additional training facilities to offer orientation and refresher training to all functionaries in rural development. Stressing the vital role of training the seventh plan noted that renewed attention will have to be paid to questions of motivation, morale, and orientation of extension machinery.

Suggestions for specific areas of training: -

Bolar suggests four specific areas of training in the rural context. These are: (a) Values and motivation (b) Skills for dealing with people, communication, leadership etc. (c) Information and intellectual capacity to understand a situation to apply knowledge to be self-reliant and inventive; and (d) development of a sense of group identity and mutual problem solving capacity. So the need of the time requires bureaucracy based on flexibility, freedom and change of traditional forms and techniques when they are formed unsuited and which recognizes public interest as the supreme and of a democratic government and administration. In some of the developing countries, bureaucracy has to bring about social revolution to crate a caste-ridden stratified society. Bureaucracy has to act as a dynamic force which follows the will of the people as well as leads it. Though the Indian bureaucracy was not consciously designed on the Weberian

model, it did possess some of the important characteristics of bureaucracy as were enumerated by Weber.

The most important of all these characteristics is the impersonal role of bureaucrat. Can it be said that all those characteristics could be done away with for enabling the bureaucracy to play its role in the field of rural development?

If bureaucracy is rational and legal institution then in the name of rural development these characteristics cannot be done away with. Also it is difficult to see how the cause of development can be furthered by tempering with these characteristics of Weberian model of bureaucracy. The impersonal character to bureaucracy and adherence to rules and procedures are essential for objectivity in administration. Hierarchy of command and compliance are required for discipline. Fulfillment of prescribed qualifications and objective system of recruitment are required for minimum efficiency. Objectivity, discipline and efficiency are the prerequisites of a good bureaucracy. Indeed without them bureaucracy cannot function and deliver goods. The task of development cannot be performed satisfactorily without order, discipline and efficiency. Order, discipline and efficiency are required for successful completion of any large scale task undertaken by the State and this applies to all developmental tasks.

On the other hand, while objectivity, discipline and efficiency are basic prerequisites of a bureaucratic system, it is not contended that they are enough for the task of rural development administration. Development administration requires additional qualities of creativity responsiveness, flexibility and innovativeness and ability to evoke the trust and confidence of the people, to get their co-operation and involvement in the task of development. It requires dynamism to break away from the stagnation of the past. It is not that all rules and regulations hinder creativity and innovativeness. Dysfunctional forms and procedures should be drastically simplified. Development programmes should not be designed according to the centrally prescribed rigid norms and conditions but must lend themselves to be adjusted to varying socio-economic and agro-climatic conditions. Bureaucrats have to learn man; more skills which development needs. They must have skills of programme planning, institution building and community organization. They need to have a developmental outlook. They need to be more flexible. Training should provide the new knowledge, skill outlook required for development.

The old forms of organization also need to be modified. Greater delegation and decentralization are needed if bureaucrats are to play their changed role.

The traditional Notion of Hierarchy: -

The traditional notion of hierarchy in a bureaucracy also needs to be examined and revised and supplemented by horizontal organizations. The authority and powers enjoyed by bureaucracy also tend to be reduced because of the pressure of democratic ideas and values. Bureaucratic neutrality is based upon the assumption that the same set of civil servants can function under governments that are committed to different political philosophies. Neutrality is an essential complement of the merit principle, as it guarantees that permanent officials, who have competed for their post and have advanced in their ranks sherry through their merit, would be given to the government, whatever, be its political complexion, their expert advice and assistance absolutely impartially and that the decisions of the ministers, whether beginning consonance with the advance of the officials, or not, would be faithfully carried out by the civil service. In India, the need for stability in administration is of considerable importance in case we want to get the socio-economic development programmes implemented effectively. Neutrality of a civil servant should not be taken as personal neutrality in his relationship with the minister. An Indian civil servant of the post-independence era is not likely to maintain such strict neutrality as for his attitude is concerned.

Firstly, because he is also a citizen of independent India and has personal concern and interest in the performance of the government. Secondly, in development administration, a civil servant is expected to have a greater involvement in the policies of his government and to be attached to his work deeply, when he attempts to convince the masses about the government policies for getting their full co-operation he is in fact acting like a committed civil servant and therefore, his neutrality and involvement are at variance. So political neutrality of civil servants should not be misunderstood of indifference towards people and their programmes. In any case, the political complexion of governments in India has changed both at the centre and in the states and bureaucracy has been able to function with governments of varying political coloration.

Conclusion:

This article deals with The Role of Bureaucracy in Rural Development in India, in which the post-independence period the role of the public bureaucracy in carrying out the diverse tasks of rural development. It also gives the administrative mechanism set up, the twenty point programme, Attitudes of development administration and the problems of rural development administration. It presents the Bolar suggestions for training in the rural context, Design of development programmes, Bureaucratic neutrality etc...

