

Overview of Bureaucracy: With Reference to India

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ABSTRACT:

The German economist. Max Weber, employed bureaucracy to mean a rational system of administration. He was followed by other social philosophers who described it as a system, which increased the likelihood of alienation from work. The modern authors employ this term in a wide variety of theories. To quote Martin Albrow: "It has linked with the growth of territory occupations, with the differentiation of social functions, with the alienation of man from work, with the growth of oligarchy and with a general process of rationalization. It has been an element in many more restricted theories about rules, hierarchy, communications, participation, and decision making in a wide variety of organization .

The competing concept of bureaucracy has been brought under seven broad categories by Martin Albrow: (1) Bureaucracy as a rational organization, (2) Bureaucracy as organizational inefficiency, (3) Bureaucracy as rule of officials, (4) Bureaucracy as public administration, (5) Bureaucracy as an administration of officials, (6) Bureaucracy as the personnel system, (7) Bureaucracy as the organization, and (8) Bureaucracy as modern society.

Keywords : Bureaucracy , Administration , Corruption , Government

I INTRODUCTION :

The term bureaucracy is a very perplexing one and is susceptible to more than one meaning. To a common man bureaucracy means, a system of government characterised

by inefficiency, delay, corruption, arbitrariness etc. but in administrative parlance, bureaucracy refers to rule of officials.

The bureaucracy has a very important role to play in the socio-economic development of a country. It brings order out of Chaos by imparting stability to the administrative affairs, specifically, of countries, which suffers from frequent political instability. This is so because of officials are selected on the basis of merit, enjoy permanency of tenure, there is a chain of command, or hierarchy with clearly defined authority and responsibility, and above all the bureaucrats are expected to be efficient, rational, impartial and neutral in their dealings and in the implementation of government policies.

Bureaucracy in its modern form had made its appearance much earlier on the continent of Europe than in England. The reason for this is that the English people, by temperament, are lovers of democratic ideas and institutions, consequently in France, Germany, Spain and Italy, the work of administration at national, state as well as local levels was carried on by persons appointed by the monarch in their respective empires. They were under obligation and responsible to the monarchs and not to the people, but in England, the members of the public bureaucracy were always associated with the national and local administration. Bureaucracy, in its present form, was not in existence in England even in the eighteenth century, while by this period it had fully established itself on the European Continent.

Bureaucracy had existed upto a certain extent even in ancient time in Greece, Egypt, Roman, Empire, India and China. But, the importance of bureaucracy had increased very greatly in the nineteenth century. With the march of civilization, bureaucracy is bound to grow more and more in importance. In the first place, with the rise of multiplied over night. It made the parliament pass a number of acts to check abuses in Industries. This called for a number of officials to enforce these laws. Secondly, the march towards socialism of the various countries had called upon the state to enter into new fields of administration. In India, prior to the independence, bureaucracy was primarily engaged in performing regulatory functions i.e. revenue collection, judiciary and the maintenance of law and order. But now however, the situation has changed. The state has assumed the responsibility of multi - faced development of the society and with this the active and

positive role of bureaucracy has increased manifold under the Indian condition. For a developing country like India, state is considered to be the main agency for development.

The system of bureaucracy as it exists in India has a continuous history of more than one hundreds years. While three hundred years have been revolutionary from the point of view of country's social, economic and political life, the organization of bureaucracy under the assumptions, on which it is based have remained unaltered even unquestioned. The legacy has been accepted. During the masses against the British Raj was focussed and directed primarily against the bureaucracy the visible arms of the Raj. It was the District collector and the patwari, who were Raj to the masses. Bureaucratic Rule was based on fear and awe and mass obedient was extracted by repression and suppression of popular demands. All this has changed. Indian masses are highly politicised and conscious of their rights, coupled with this is the fact of structural change taking place in the society with the initiative and effort of the government. Large scale schemes of economic planning, steel plants, heavy irrigation projects, community developments and family planning programmes are changing the old order and ushering in the new. Two aspects made India different in twenty years of freedom what it was for hundreds of years. First, universal adult franchise has politicised every concern of the country by involving masses in decision making. Secondly, sponsored programmes of economic change, such as new varieties of seeds and fertilizers have resulted in an "agricultural revolution" bringing in its wake prosperity and rising expectations for better standards of living among hitherto neglected and exploited masses\ Thus, this heterogeneity and co-existence of many centuries at the same time and the revolutionary impact of "induced" social economic and political change is the "ecology" in which India bureaucracy has to task. Its content, task and roles all have undergone change. But the system of bureaucracy continues to exist in the same shape as it was established by the British in a different environment and for difficult requirement . In India some of the Socio-economic, Political factors that were at work from about the middle of the eighteenth century led to the growth of modern bureauucracy'. Since the bureaucratic structure continued to expand and to grow into a large scale organization. In the process of its growth, the bureaucracy developed a highly organised structure and a set of values and

norms determining bureaucratic behaviour . When India become free in 1947, she inherited the bureaucracy from the out going regime and have since maintained it with some modifications.

The structure of bureaucracy, which India inherited in 1947 had two levels : (i) the administrative organization of the government head quarters called secretariat. And (ii) field of units of administration. At the field of administratiwi, a district was the basis unit of British Government in India.

In the modern administrative system of India, the bureaucracy or the Civil Service plays a crucial role.

In a democratic system of government, the power to govern is entrusted to the elected representatives of the people. In Parliamentary democracies such as that of India, the council of ministers with the Prime Minister at the head ‘administers ‘the country. The ‘Council of Ministers’ for all its acts of commission and commission remain responsible to the Parliament. The ministers thus constitute what is known as the political executive. The primary function of the Council of Ministers to formulate the policies of the government.

Every administrative department of government is placed under the charge of a minister responsible to the legislature. A minister is thus, the political head of an administrative department.

The continuity and expertness in the administration are contributed by the bureaucracy of the civil service. In an ideal situation, the minister contributes policy while the civil service applies the policies in concrete situations. Thus, the minister and the Civil Service together make up the total administrative setup.

The founding fathers of the Indian constitution were fully alive to the need for a well-organized bureaucracy in India. Indeed India Bureaucracy is the inherited model of bureaucracy from the British Raj. The Constitution improved on the model left behind by the “Raj.”

Thus, since India is a federation there is provision for dual civil service; service under the Union and service under the State governments. In the words of Dr. Ambedkar, “the dual policy is followed by a dual service” in all federations. Ambedkar emphasized that the Indian federation through a dual policy will have a dual service but with one exception. The Constitution provides that without depriving the states of their right to form their own civil services, there shall be an All India Service, recruited on an All India basis with common qualifications, the uniform scale of pay etc.” Thus, the Civil service in India is divided into two categories: All India Services and the State Civil Service. Besides Art 312 create a special category of service—which is common to both the Union and the State. Two services of this type are (1) The Indian Administrative service and (2) The Indian Police Service. The All India Services are designed to give greater cohesion to the federal structure and to conduct to greater efficiency in the administration of the Union and the States. Such an integrated Civil Service is a unique feature of the Indian political system. Given the diversity and divisiveness inherent in the Indian political system, the integrated civil service was an unavoidable necessity.

The members of the civil service are recruited on merit on the basis of competitive examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission in the case of All India Service and State Public Service Commission in the case of State services. The members of the services hold office during the pleasure of the President in the case of All India Services and of the state governor in case of state services (Art. 310). But the pleasure of the President or the Governor cannot be arbitrary. Such pleasures are exercised subject to legal limitations stipulated by Art 311 of the Constitution.

As has already been pointed out, the bureaucracy in India, both at the union and the states level constitutes the backbone of the administration. In Indian administrative hierarchy, the President at the union and Governor at the state level is the constitutional head. The council of ministers constitutes the political executive. But the real, permanent, experienced and expert executive is the Civil Service or the bureaucracy.

The role and function of the bureaucracy in India have increased enormously. The normal function of the bureaucracy is to execute the policies of the Council of Ministers. Under the system of delegated legislation, the powers of bureaucracy are steadily

increasing. As India has accepted the principle of the welfare state, the economic and social functions of the State are steadily increasing. Every increase in the power of the government means a corresponding increase in the powers of the bureaucracy. It is on the successful and satisfactory functioning of the bureaucracy that the success of the government to a very large extent depends.

The bureaucrat in India being the President's or the Governor's appointee, and serving during the President's or the Governor's pleasure, has to rise above party considerations. The bureaucrat takes order from the minister and acts accordingly within the limits of the Constitution. The civil servants also being administrative experts, remind the minister about the feasibility or otherwise of a particular course of action. Thus, the top civil servant has two duties towards his minister:

He has to remind the minister whether or not a particular course of action is constitutionally permitted, and

Whether or not a particular course of action is practically feasible or not. The advice of the top civil servant on both counts is of immense value to the minister.

The Civil Service provides the permanent element in government. As the fortunes of the civil servants do not depend on political vicissitudes, they can take a dispassionate view on political developments. Their long-term view of national interest, not colored by immediate political considerations, gives the minister a glimpse of long term interest of the nation.

In India, civil servants enjoy a measure of social respectability not easily attained by people in other professions. Consequently, civil servants in most cases are honest and dutiful. The civil servants also are administrative experts. Hence the ministers have to depend on them.

The bureaucracy, through experience, knows what policy is or is not feasible. Hence the minister listens to the advice of the top civil servant as to the desirability of a policy from the administrative point of view. Thus, in a healthy situation, the minister and the

bureaucracy are mutually complementary – the Minister contributing the policy decisions and the bureaucracy executing the decisions.

The bureaucracy in India works under the cloak of ministerial responsibility. For every act of the government, the minister is answerable to the Parliament. Though the bureaucracy executes government policies, they remain in splendid anonymity. They do not take part in Parliamentary debates nor are they members of political parties. The actions of the civil servants must be defended by the minister on the floor of the House. This system compels the minister to keep a close watch on the actions of the bureaucracy and the bureaucracy to behave in such a way that the minister is not put into difficulty.

II DEFINITION OF BUREAUCRACY

The word bureaucracy together with "communism" and "imperialism" forms a trident the most forceful weapon in the armory of words so widely used in all the present day political controversies.

A simple word, which in free translation means a "government by bureau" or "desk government" has, **in common used, acquired a colour and power** as emotion - raiser and battle - cry. Though distortion and caricature it has come to imply "bungling, arbitrariness, wastefulness, officiousness, and regimentation". A bureaucratic system is monastic, with a single formal line of command and control.

It is characterized by a hierarchy of superior and subordinate relationship, in which the person at the top assumes all authority and issues general orders to initiate action. Orders reach the lowest subordinate through a series of layers, states and reward system closely follow the pattern of these hierarchies. There is no effective delegation of authority and not much scope for discretionary decision - making. This type of control centered administration is ideally suited for discharging routine functions, relatively simple technology*. The term bureaucracy has been derived from the word "bureau" (French),

which means an office or post. So the bureaucracy means a government of official. According to G. B. Shaw; "The bureaucracy consists of functionaries, the aristocracy of ideas, the democracy idolaters.

In the words of Laski; "Bureaucracy is the term usually applied to a system of government, the control of which is so completely in the hands of officials that their liberties of the ordinary citizens" .

III MAX WEBER AND BUREAUCRACY

Max Weber (1864 - 1920), a German Sociologist, was the first Social Scientist to have systematically studied the bureaucracy. Therefore his name is associated with the study of bureaucracy. Max Weber developed a typology of authority and distinguished three pure types - traditional, charismatic and legal. He regarded bureaucracy, sustained and sanctified by purest type of exercise of legal authority, as the most effective form of organization. Experience shows that the

purely bureaucratic type of administrative organisation is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of obtaining the highest degree of efficiency and in this sense formally the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings. It is superior both in intensive efficiency and in the scope of its operations and is formally capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks. But what is bureaucracy; Bureaucracy is a form of organization, which has certain essential characteristics and these Weber has himself listed. These are (i) separation of office and its incumbent, (ii) Selection by merit, (iii) Fixing remuneration of officials, (iv) The official is subject to discipline and control while performing his official work, (v) Hierarchy of offices, (vi) Allocation of authority required to discharge these activities, (vii) Allocation of activities of the organization needed to fulfil its objectives, and (viii) strict adherence to rules etc.

Furthermore, Weber himself says: The pursuit type of exercise of legal authority is that which employs a bureaucratic administrative staff, only the supreme chief of the organization occupies his position of authority of virtue of appropriation of election or of having been designated for the succession. But even his authority consists in a sphere

of legal "competence". The whole administrative staff under the supreme authority then consists, in purest type of individual officials who are appointed and function according to the following criteria :-

- A. They are personality free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations.
- B. They are organised in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices.
- C. Each office has a clearly defined sphere of the competence in the legal sense.
- D. The office is filled by a free contractual relationship. Thus, in principle, there is free selection.
- E. Candidates are selected on the basis of technical qualifications. In the most rational case, this is tested by examination or guaranteed, or both. They are appointed, not elected.
- F. They are rewarded by fixed salaries in money, for the most part with a right to pensions. Only under certain circumstances does the employing authority especially in private organizations, have a right to make the appointment but the official is always free to resign.
- G. The office is treated as the sole or at least the primary occupation of the incumbent.
- H. It constitutes a career, there is a system of promotion according to the seniority or the achievement, or both promotion is dependent on the judgement of superior.
- I. The official work is entirely separated from the ownership of the means of administration and without appropriation of his position.
- J. He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of office".

IV CHARACTERISTICS OF BUREAUCRACY

Max Weber enumerates the characteristics of bureaucracy;

- (i) There is the principle of fixed and official jurisdictional areas, which are generally ordered by rules, that is, by laws or administrative regulations.
- (ii) The regular activities required for the purpose of bureaucratically governed structure are distributed in a fixed way as official duties.
- (iii) The authority to give commands required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly carried by the rules concerning the coercive means, which may be placed at the disposal of officials.
- (iv) Methodical provisions are made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties and for the execution of corresponding rights, only persons who have the generally regulated qualifications to serve which are employed.

In public and lawful government these four elements constitute, "bureaucratic authority". In private economic domination these constitute "management". Bureaucracy, thus, understood, is fully developed in political and ecclesiastical communities only in the modern state and in the private economy, only **in the most advanced institutions of capitalism. Permanent and public office authority**, with fixed jurisdiction is **not** the historical **rule but rather than** the exception.

The principles of office of hierarchy and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of super and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones. Such a system governs the possibility of appealing the decision of a lower office to the higher authority, in a definitely regulated manner, with the full development of bureaucratic type, the office of hierarchy is monocratically organised. The principle of hierarchical office authority is found in all bureaucratic structures in state and in large partly organizations and private enterprises. It does not matter for the character of bureaucracy whether its authority is called "private" or "Public".

Office management, at least, all specialized office management and such management is distinctly modern usually presupposes thorough and expert training. This increasingly holds for the modern executive and employee of private enterprises in the same manner as it holds the state official. When the office is fully developed, official activity

demands the full working capacity of the official, irrespective of the act that his obligatory times in the bureau may be firmly devoted. In the normal case, this is only the product of a long development in the public as well as in the private office. Formerly, in all cases, the normal state of affairs was reserched and official business was discharged as a secondary activity.

The management of office follows general mles, which are. more or less. stable, more or less, exhaustive, and can be learned. Knowledge of these rules represents a special technical learning, which the officials possess. It involves administrative or business management. Thus these are the characteristics of bureaucracy on which a bureaucratic set up is based".

V TYPES OF BUREAUCRACY

Bureaucracy, inspire of its homogeneity, is also shaped by the different external influences i.e. political : social and economic. Still more important may be cultural influences, such as the German devotion to order and order-liness and the American love of mechanical devices. Thus, each bureaucracy is likely to see itself as a type and to behave accordingly. In broader outline it is possible to distinguish, at least, several types of bureaucracies, depending on the predominance of certain characteristics.

The utility of bureaucracy had been underlined under various shades. The societies felt need to accommodate suiting variety, as they found necessary for regulating their requirements.

1. The Guardian Bureaucracy

There are the two examples of guardian bureaucracy i.e. Chinese bureaucracy upto the advent of the Sung Period (960 AD), and the Prussian Civil Service during 1640 and 1740. This type may be defined as "a Scholastic officialdom trained in right conduct according to the classes" (Marx). Such Civil Service regarded itself as custodian of public interest, was independent of unresponsi'e to the public opinion' .

Now the question arises: What is guardian bureaucracy? Prescription of Plato system as "'guardian' were not simply meant to go about doing things as directed: More important was their capacity for the essence or the public interest".

In this sense they were meant to be custodians of the ideals and assumptions about justice and welfare that held together the city - state - political myth, as Plato saw it, which was the ultimate foundation of the community. The guardians were, thus, to serve as the physical representatives of the approved ideology and as it devoted instruments too, yet in the platonic scheme qualification for guardianship was not supposed to be one of the mysteries of divinely guided revolution. On the contrary, Plato sought to put selection for guardianship on a rational basis by systematic utilization of a carefully planned course of education.

2. The Caste Bureaucracy

An early example of the caste bureaucracy can be found in the history of Roman Empire during the century after Diocletian. The last Emperor was a forceful reformer of government. The legal, fiscal and administrative reforms he introduced between 284 and 304 A.D. enable the Christian Empire after him to live on. But his successors have shown the shadow rather than the substance. Eventually, on all pervading public status system pulled down the entire economy. At first only the officialdom was affected by the spirit of the caste. A precisely defined separation functions degenerated into a large scheme of ranks and titles until in the end of a vast enlarged bureaucracy spent most of its time inventing and enforcing minute distinctions in official standing. As time passed, the conversion of private enterprise to public function extended across the entire body of society. Honorific status proved to be an impoverishing burden because each title carried an increasing load of public duty. Finally, a thoroughly unbureaucratized economic order collapsed under its own weight.

"The caste bureaucracy has a class base and 'arises' from the class connection of those in the controlling positions" (Marx). The British rulers introduced the class character in the Indian civil service as well the "Civil Lines" where almost all the "Civilians" lived was just the counterpart of the "cantonment" in which the military forces lived. Even today the civil service in India has not been able to shed completely its class character.

In the words of Appleby, "personnel.... are arranged selfconsciously in too firm classes and too many special 'Services' with barriers between classes and services too high There is too much and too constant consciousness of ranks, class, title and service membership, too title consciousness of membership in the public service"

3. The patronage Bureaucracy

Another name for the patronage bureaucracy is the 'spoils system'. Its traditional development began from the U.S.A though patronage had full sway even in the U.K. till the middle of nineteenth century. This type of civil service exists where the public jobs are given as a personal favour or political award. The system it is increasing to note, worked differently in the U. K. patronage bureaucracy marked side by side with an aristocratic social order and fulfilled its purpose. The patronage in Britain was used only for the benefit of the sanctions of the mobility. In the United States, on the contrary, the system worked quite differently and jobs went as spoils to the victorious political party. The patronage was, thus, an exercise in democracy. "The system of spoils began on a minor scale and apologetically with Washington. Jefferson and Adams became a torrent in 1829 when Jackson came into office and from that time until 1883, swept through all the offices of government without let and most usually without moral inhibitions. "The case for the spoils systems were put at its best by president Jackson in his first annual message to the congress in 1829". The duties of the public offices are, or, at least, admit of being made, so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance; and I cannot but believe that more is lost by the long continuance of men in office than is generally to be gained by intrinsic right official station than another"*. Such a system, however, could not produce a civil service competent to cope with the ever - growing complexities of the governmental functions after the setting in of the industrial Revolution. "The patronage system was stood condemned as an anarchy for its lack of technical competence, its partisanship, and its want of spirit".

Whereas in England upto the middle of the past century the patronage bureaucracy had served the purposes on an aristocratic social order, but in the United States was distinctly on the other side. Respect for competence in public office for above

contemporary British standards had been firmly accepted in the central department during the Presidency of George Washington. When Thomas Jafferson won control from the federalists, he felt compelled to make better replacements that he could not suffer from the administrative deficiency. But Jafferson was so deeply steeped that in the idea of merit as a condition to government service to slight ability and experience.

4. The Merit Bureaucracy

The merit bureaucracy is more simple than guardian, patronage and caste bureaucracy. Even in the merit system, the intelligence is judged of the people, but the patronage bureaucracy is the product of special influence and its willing tools.

The merit bureaucracy, in contrast, as governed by objective standards, specialiv be the principle of admission on the basis of prescribed qualifications as attested by the outcome of a written examination. Thus, most qualified and competent candidates having the chance to enter into the public service. Thus, they remain free from the political pressure, particularly, they are left free to devote himself to the promotion of the common good without being bridled by special influence as soon as there is a conflict.

Therefore, the merit bureaucracy has its bases on the merit of public officials, and. its aim efficiency of the civil service. It aims at "career open at talent". In other words, the attempt is to recruit the best men for the public service, their merit being judged by objective standards. This method is usually used in all civilized countries. Appointment to public service is no longer governed by class considerations, and it is no more a gift or a favour. Nor is the public servant may large the self - appointed guardian of the people. The civil servant in a modern democracy is really an official in the service of the people, and is recruited on the basis of prescribed qualifications tested objectively. He owes his job to no one except to his industry, intelligence lack. After entering into the public service on a showing of fitness, the appointee would not assure to stay, therefore, at any length of time. Certainly, he would have little place of mind if the tenure depended on the approval of particular group or, at least, one conduct that would not bring down their wills. For this reason, the merit bureaucracy is usually not supposed proper by legal guarantees or status or stability, expressed in such concepts as life

appointment and regular position. Typically, the merit bureaucracy also draws compensation on the basis of a salary Schedule that is not open to discretionary management. Administrators may not decree from pay day to pay day the amount concerned by each subordinate or for the various worthy causes, including the local party organisation.

VI CONCLUSION :

Max Weber's concept of bureaucracy was confined to public administration by officials. The idea of office, hierarchy, appointment, prestige, social stratification are the control parts to the concept of bureaucracy. Riggs has analysed public administration in a framework. He concludes that the idea of administration in accordance with the policies laid down by a legislature is too limited to industrial societies. He suggests a definition of 'public administrative system' as structures for allocating goods and services in a government. In the administration of the developing countries like India, bureaucrats are government officials. The characteristics of complex and large administration are hierarchy of authority, rules, system of records and specialization. But some authors have found bureaucracy as much outside as inside the government.

There are various merits of bureaucracy. At the first place, its contribution to governmental administration is not insignificant. In fact, it has made administration more efficient, rational, impartial and consistent than was the case in the earlier times. In the words of Herbert Morrison: "Bureaucracy is the price of parliamentary democracy".

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