



ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The term 'Administrative Culture' was popularized in the year 1963 when G. Almond and Sydney Verba published their work on 'The Civic Culture'. Administrative culture which is mainly comprised of values, beliefs and attitudes concerned with action and behavior of bureaucracy. Administration is culture bound which is influenced and shaped by its environment in which it operates. Both administration and environment will impact each other, because Political conditions prevailing in the country have a direct impact on the administrative behavior and its values. British colonial period only which developed the system of Indian Civil Service who were in charge of policy makers and implementers. Later 1970s the new breed of politicians emerged in Indian politics, they did not give much respect for neutrality, impartiality and even for integrity. The rampant corruption and criminalization of politics continues even today in Indian administrative culture. Administrative culture and its public administration should be harmonious in nature in order to bring the socio-economic change of developing countries like India.

KEYWORDS : Neutrality, Anonymity, Integrity, Impartiality, Pragmatism.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural approach was first used in the social sciences by G. Almond but the term 'Administrative Culture' was popularized in the year 1963 when G. Almond and Sydney Verba published their work on 'The Civic Culture'. The administrative culture is a complex phenomenon which is not easy to identify the parameters and dimension whether it is a subsystem of the culture of the country or something distinct. But, anyhow administrative culture of any society is a product of converging as well as conflicting components. Administrative culture which is mainly comprised of values, beliefs and attitudes concerned with action and behaviour of bureaucracy. Administration is culture bound which is influenced and shaped by its environment in which it operates. Both administration and environment impact each other, because administrative system is influenced by political, economic and socio-cultural environment. Mainly this could be more influenced by political system. But there is no clear cut concrete definition for administrative culture in the literature of public administration. Generally the evolution of particular conglomeration of bureaucratic values and administrative traditions which are commonly described as administrative culture. Administrative culture which includes the entire gamut of traditional, societal, historical, political, religious and cultural values which directly influences the behavior of the bureaucracy and its professional norms. Political conditions prevailing in the country have a direct impact on the administrative behavior and values but it does not mean that other systems like socio economic system do not affect administrative sub system. According to the system theory, all the systems and sub systems forming the part of the organic as a whole and interact with each other continuously. The beliefs and values of any system and sub systems affect the behavior of the other systems. So administrative system is a sub system of political system which alone would affect administrative system most.

Although India has 5000 years of known history of origin of our contemporary administrative system but it can be traced back over a British colonial period only which developed the system of Indian Civil Service who were in charge of policy makers and implementers. After Independence bureaucracy was dedicated and powerful instrument which efficiently managed the post war and post partition problems and also tendered fair advice and not indulge in politicking. On the other part, political leaders not only tolerated but encouraged independent advice and dissent even against their views and interest. This era was called as statesman politician who treated the civil servants with dignity and respect who are working under him. The things did not continue very long. After ten years, a new generation of politicians were started to emerge, but they did not adhered the liberal orientation of statesman politician. After the year 1970 s, the new breed of politicians emerged in Indian

politics, they did not give much respect for neutrality, impartiality and even for integrity. They wanted power for the sake of power and for enjoying its fruits, not for serving the people, they are very hurry to do something for the poor and wanted quick results rather than adherence to rules and regulations. In this situation political leadership was not in a position to give a sense of direction with values of service to the people. During this period civil servants totally confused and divided in two parts like those who adhered to values of neutrality, anonymity and impartiality etc., and others joined powerful politicians in the game of making hay while the sun shines. In this way Indian bureaucracy lost its 'esprit de corps' and 'steel frame' and became a divided house. Things were at very low ebb during emergency, although there was some semblance of efficiency due to fear of arbitrary arrest and punishment. When Rajiv Gandhi came to power who tried to inculcate the values of efficiency, responsiveness and speedy service to the people and also wanted to introduce the new technology and modernize the economy but he could not change the behavior of bureaucracy with remarkable achievement of decentralization of power to local self government institutions. Normlessness and rampant corruption and criminalization of politics continues even today in Indian administrative system. With this background we may proceed to discuss the some of the important feature of administrative culture of India.

Corruption

In India laws, rules and regulations can be broken or bent for the benefit of members of the family, caste, religion and any other consideration. The politicians and civil servants enjoy lot of discretion in providing various licenses, permits and awarding national and international contracts. The discretion is often used in favor of those who are prepared to pay the price in the nature of illegal gratification to the concerned politicians and civil servants. The corruption in civil service in India is so rampant and expected as part of citizens life. When the citizens approach any government office for any work they have to pay some money depending upon the nature of work in addition to facing a humiliating behavior. It is suffice it to say that corruption has become almost an integral part of our administrative culture so that almost nothing gets done in government offices without consideration. Citizens have to give bribe for normal business of their work.

Criminalization of politics

Criminalization of politics has been adversely affecting the administrative culture in India where politicians using muscle power of criminals for winning elections at any cost by which criminals violated the economic laws with impunity and grow rich. No civil servants could dare to touch them to penalize action because they are enjoying protection of powerful politicians.

Finding themselves helpless to take action many of the civil servants joined the fray. they also started cooperated with politicians, criminals and mafia networks. The politicians-criminal-civil servant nexus is eating into vitals of our political and administrative system. It is a very serious problem and will require a herculean efforts on the part of government and civil society to tackle this kind of menace. According to National Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms data clearly shows that more politicians with criminal cases are entering into Indian legislatures, in the year 2009, 30% Loksabha members faced criminal cases and it rose to 34% in the year 2014. It is 36% now.

Authoritarian character of bureaucracy

Authoritarian traits in Indian bureaucracy are generally traced to the British colonialism. The British administrators showed a high degree of authoritarianism in their behavior towards the Indian subordinates like superior in office enjoy the un questioned authority over the subordinates even after independence. The subordinates cannot question superior in office, they should obey superior then superior demands personal loyalty to himself and not to organization or the work. The subordinates in Indian organizations and institutions enjoy very low self esteem in almost all Indian organizations superior officers are very assertive at all levels of the organizational hierarchy.

Excessive self importance

Bureaucracy in India suffers from a sense of excessive self importance. The bureaucrats keep themselves surrounded in a maze of rigidly applied rules, regulations, procedures and precedents irrespective of the problems caused to the citizens which has become a part of their administrative culture to be inaccessible to the people and assert their importance.

Secrecy

Secrecy is another important feature of our Indian administrative culture. Minister take oath of secrecy not to divulge any matters coming to their knowledge as ministers. The official secret act makes it possible for the bureaucrats to disclose almost anything as secret. Even after implementation of Right to Information Act in India ,secrecy is more prevalent and dominating the Indian administrative culture.

Rigid hierarchy

Rigid hierarchical pattern is a part of our administrative culture where everyone appears keen to guard his position. The rigid bureaucratic hierarchy structure in Indian organization curbs many initiatives and give rise to many conflicts.

Unresponsiveness and Insensitivity

Excessive self importance of bureaucracy is total insensitivity to the problems of the citizens. The bureaucrats do not respond properly to the citizens who approach their offices for work. They do not even listen to their problems, much less help them in solving problems. Even the behavior of the officials with the citizens is so rude that most of them avoid visiting government offices as far as possible.

Delays and avoidance of responsibility

Indian bureaucrats avoid taking difficult decisions which require some initiative and involve taking certain risks and also refer such questions to other departments for advice, refer them back to the subordinates with queries, seek guidance and orders from superiors. This kind of culture of avoiding responsibility and passing on the buck to the others is widespread in Indian administrative system. The rules and regulations have been devised that no one can be held responsible for delay and no body can be punished. Everyone seems to be follow rules and avoid responsibility and appears to be keen to deliver the results in our country.

Nepotism, Casteism and Communalism

The civil servants should uphold the constitutional principle of right to equality while render service to the citizens of the country but the behavior of the civil servants India is conditioned by their

traditional loyalties to the family, caste and religion are deep rooted in socio-cultural norms that creep into the political and administrative culture which gives raise to nepotism, favoritism and communalism in our Indian administrative culture.

CONCLUSION

The administrative culture during the British regime was characterized by a high degree of authoritarianism and bureaucratic values of neutrality, anonymity, integrity, impartiality and efficiency. After independence we have retained the authoritarianism and say good bye to the other values of bureaucracy. By this we have lost efficiency and pervades corruption in every aspect of our administrative system. We are criticizing that colonial administration is not suitable for developmental needs of the country and ultimately failed to evolve a suitable model to meet our needs and requirements. our political system has been completely taken away the autonomy of our administrative system. At present our country needed a committed bureaucracy which means that committed to individual leader and particular political parties where in place of neutral bureaucracy .Though the supreme court has asked the parliament to enact a law to ensure that people with criminal background do not enter into politics Indian democracy has seen a steady increase in criminalization of politics.

It tends to disrupt the constitutional values and ethos and strikes the root of democratic form of government and makes citizens suffer more . India wanted whole spirited development administrator supposed to have tact, pragmatism, dynamism, flexibility, adaptability to changing needs of the society and willingness to take fast track administrative decisions without much worrying about procedures and protocol in order to strike the right balance to administrative culture and public administration. Administrative culture and its public administration should be harmonious in nature in order to bring the socio-economic change of developing countries like India.