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ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL DISPUTE

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Abstract: *Early in the twentieth century, Max Weber recognised the tendency of increasing number of large-scale organizations in all modern systems of government. He had also indicated that the growth of bureaucracies was inevitable in all democratic governments and that both democracy and bureaucracy had to go hand in hand. The growth in the number of large-scale organisations and the consequent growth in the number of public employees has since become an outstanding feature of all modern governmental systems. The enlargement of the functions of government has increased the size of the civil service although such a growth has generally undermined administrative efficiency. When such increase in the number of public employees is seen in the context of a developing country like India several factors which have had adverse effects on administration become visible. In particular, the prevailing conditions of social conflict become determining factors effecting administrative performance in such a way that there is the need of strengthening the administrative capabilities of government. This can be understood by a close scrutiny of the nature of social conflict prevailing within the society and the resultant conditions affecting administrative performance.*

Keywords

- *Administrative capabilities*
- *Administrative Efforts*
- *Suggestions for improvement*
- *Measures for Administrative Responsiveness*
- *Caste Differences*
- *Lack of Public Interest*
- *Corruption*
- *Literacy*

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the nature of the social environment in which administrative agencies have to operate, it must be recognised at the outset that social conflicts in India, especially caste conflicts, have grown mainly after the achievement of Independence in 1947. Prior to Independence, the Indian Society had manifested an extraordinary absence of social conflict in spite of recognised divisions of society into various castes, sub-castes and creeds. The social stratification within the Indian Society has been entirely descriptive with virtually no scope of mobility from lower to higher strata's of society. The society manifested peculiar equilibrium of different social groups which, although

retaining their distinct identity, had remained reconciled to their positions. Such a homeostatic condition was an accepted fact right up to the middle of the twentieth century and this balancing of diverse elements had remained undisturbed in spite of the raising of voices by national leaders for the removal of extreme disparities between social groups in the pre-independence days. In the post-independence days also movements against the caste system have remained weak while the growth of caste consciousness has been accentuated in recent times for electoral and political benefits. The oath of a class consciousness on purely economic differentiation has also remained weak in the absence of large scale industrialization. Economic differentiation leading to revolutionary social conflict has somehow never developed

on a nation-wide scale and has remained localised in the main urban-industrial centres. Due to this peculiarity of the social environment, social conflicts, which have become frequent in recent times, have characteristics different than are commonly assumed. The "contemporaneity of the non-contemporary" has created conditions typically different from those found in countries where revolutionary conflicts have occurred. Recurrent patterns of civil strife indicate that the struggle is quite often for the establishment of a new kind of particularism and not for the realisation of social and economic development on a large scale. In fact, recurrence of civil strife has generally led to the extension of social and economic problems creating institutional instability. Social Conflict has thus undermined social order and while different social groups struggle for the re- placement of elites at various levels, the goals of economic development and modernisation become more and more distant.

Social conflicts leading to disorder and dilution of authority have established a condition in which there has been an erosion of administrative performance. This has had several manifestations. For example, an erosion of administrative authority becomes evident when superior officers profess inability to enforce their directives because erring subordinates manage to get political protection emanating from caste or communal and regional differentiation.

Various grades of functionaries hold attitudes of non-cooperation with functionaries belonging to castes or social groups other than their own resulting in non-performance, ill-performance, and delay in the performance of normal duties. Similarly there is a condition of competitive corruption when employees of a particular caste compete with members of other castes in making money or in deriving undue advantages from their official positions. The undermining of administrative performance has also resulted from the general atmosphere of permissiveness which has developed from the condition of caste conflict. If an erring official is excused on the grounds of belonging to a particular caste and is further rewarded in spite of his failings in the performance of his own duties, the employees belonging to other group, also begin to cultivate similar relationships with higher personnel belonging to their own caste. Quite often the honest and diligent workers become disillusioned and give up the honest performance of tasks because they experience situations where dishonest performance has been re-warded and honest performance of functions is ignored and sometimes even victimised. Such an atmosphere of permissiveness, becomes evident in social, educational and governmental institutions in general. Conflicts between groups and castes in society have undermined existing beliefs in such a way that normal functioning of institutions becomes affected and questions of

administrative legitimacy become established. Social conflicts have thus created a situation which may be characterised as a functional loosening of the infra- structure, in all institutional sectors of the society. Administrative organisation at the lower levels of government becomes worst affected by this situation creating problems which affect vitally the programmes of development in the rural areas.

In recent years rural development has become one of the main foci of govern- mental activity. Rural Development constitutes the centre of attention of the Government and it signifies the anxiety of the Government for the uplifting of the people living in rural areas. Various kinds of programmes have been initiated and are being worked out in the rural areas for bringing about economic well-being and for providing employment opportunities. But most of these programmes have not produced the results which were desired by the planners. There are such programmes as the Small Farmers Development Agency, the Integrated Rural Development Programme, the Drought Prone Area Programmes and the Command Area Development These different kinds of Programmes. Developmental efforts have now been combined as the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) but the nonrealisation of the main objective of the removal poverty remains a cause of concern and the realisation of the objectives of rural development constitutes the main challenge for the administration in the eighties.

Social conflict in the rural areas constitutes the main factor affecting administrative efforts frustrating the realisation of objectives. In the rural areas there is a conflict between the so called "entrenched castes and the dominant caste" in such a form that there is a struggle for replacement elites in the local areas. There is a situation of class mobility without caste mobility. Class mobility occurs when persons of the lower castes become affluent through governmental aid but their caste position remains unchanged. A caste situation is non-mobile because caste creates mobility blocks which are descriptive. Consequently, the class situation may change when many members of the lower castes become economically well off but their belonging to lower strata of society and "caste continues. Such a dichotomy of class has created a peculiar condition due to which the struggle for the replacement of rural elites often takes a vicious form. All such conditions of social conflict affect administrative performance in the rural areas in such a way that the beneficiaries under various schemes of development are quite often those for whom the schemes were not intended but who manipulate the administrative machinery by sheer force of dominance in their areas. Consequently there is an urgent need of strengthening the administrative capabilities of government.

Factors Affecting the Administrative Efforts

It is in this environment that the plans of development have to be worked. The main factors which affect administrative efforts may be listed as follows:-

- Perpetuation of caste differences: Members of particular castes disregard family planning efforts because they want to create a majority for the members of their caste! Thus, developmental efforts are frustrated.
- Lack of public interest or common concern. Feeling of common concern is generated only during natural calamities such as destruction by floods, or epidemics. At normal times public interest becomes vague and illusory.
- Corruption among public employees is often condoned on the grounds of caste.
- Erring subordinates are excused by their superiors belonging to the same caste.
- Ministers give political protection to corrupt civil servants on the grounds of caste or material benefits.
- At lower levels administrative functionaries are intimidated by dominant caste members or they perform their function under material attractions.
- The poor in the rural areas remain in order to avoid unnecessary trouble or expenses which they cannot bear.
- The number of public employees keeps on growing at the lower levels, so that there is a proliferation of functionaries leading to duplication and overlapping of functions.
- There is complete absence of training for the lower category of staff. This is particularly true of the clerical staff who fill the government offices in the field areas.
- People's partition becomes a misnomer because the common people do not have the necessary information and motivation.
- Political leadership is quite often weak and there is a lack of far-sightedness.
- There is also too much of political interference in the work administrative officials so that quite often genuine efforts are frustrated by local political leaders whose aim is to realise private gain rather than public prosperity

Suggestions for Strengthening of Administrative Capabilities

Keeping in view these obstacles in the path of developmental administration certain suggestions for the strengthening of the administrative capabilities of government may be put forward.

- The different nature of particular localities must be acknowledged. In India local situations differ from area to area and a general pattern is bound to be frustrated due to the difference in local areas. Such differences may be due to the caste situation or due to material resources available in particular areas. The recognition of the differences between localities and the moulding of the administrative effort according to the situational needs becomes crucial for the success of the administrative efforts. Management strategy must be derived from the local environment; so as to undermine the causes of social conflict.
- New knowledge should be made meaningful for the local inhabitants. Terminology barriers should be removed by couching new terms in the local language.
- The new knowledge should be made motivating so that the local people begin to understand the advantages.
- The common people should be educated in the scope and methods of participation in administration.
- A regular training programme should be formulated and implemented for the local public employees. This is particularly necessary for those who man the government offices. The clerical staff is generally untrained and they acquire wrong habits, and wrong methods of work quite easily. This is more necessary because the educational level of the clerical staff is poor and they can easily frustrate the programmes of government by wilful delay or non-performance.
- Lower civil servants must also be trained in handling information and processing available data for the best utilisation of resources.
- Civil servants must learn to respect the local situation and deal with it according to the local needs. Civil servants must also have to strike a balance between peoples' participation and bureaucratic methods.
- Professional competence and professional standards of performance must be developed by administrative officers. They should try to put public service before private gain and develop a kind of professional pride which would exhibit honesty and efficiency.

This then, is the general picture from which certain challenges for the coming decades may be identified for the developing nations, rural development programmes are crucial. On one side there are the positive forces of development including the objectives of social and economic change and the resolve of the government to bring about economic well-being. On the other side are the negative forces of social conflict, corruption and incompetence The

challenge of the next decades for the government is a challenge of reconciling the positive forces of development with the negative forces of social conflict, corruption and incompetence. The Indian society is in a state of transformation in which elements of modernity have been acquired without much disposal of the traditional and parochial elements. In fact, the traditional elements are being perpetuated, rather than discarded, on political grounds. Consequently, administrative responsiveness has often to be moulded in such a way as not to undermine traditional elements but to give them protection. Thus, the features of a traditional peasant society merge with the features of the modern industrial society and are forced to coexist at the cost of each other. In the big cities some features of a post-industrial society may also be seen and people going to the big cities for employment become affected by it. The whole ecology in which developmental administration has to take place becomes influenced by new ideas and new information, which is much ahead of local condition, and which filters through the population migrating from rural areas to the big cities in search of employment opportunities.

Remedial Measures for Improved Administrative Responsiveness

Administration under such conditions of social flux is bound to be full of problems. But some remedial measures for improved administrative responsiveness may be indicated keeping in view the needs of a future in which high technology is going to play a larger and a more vital role.

- There should be a better arrangement for dispersal of messages and Information coming from the higher echelons of government. The concept of an audience must be used in such a way that usable information reaches all those who come within the sphere of local role is already established through the television which is now being used to create an awareness of facilities created by the government . But local public the higher information coming from administrative activity. Such a terminology removed in public and maybe government to improve people for better understanding and consciousness level ought to be understanding employees must be better trained to extend all information about developmental work and facilities to those members of the community who are most needy.
- There should be a proper monitoring of the needs of the people in the local areas by harnessing all sources of information which may be tapped. The needs of the individual members of the community, whether he is a farmer owning land, or landless labourer, or an artisan, should be determined by an on the spot verification. From the collection of such

information a need based programme of development may be formulated for meeting the immediate or short term needs of the people.

- A distinct programme of development may be formulated by recognising the long-term needs of the community. For this purpose new techniques of handling data may be used. For example, the resources available may be determined in accurate terms by measuring the available man-power, local materials including raw- material for production, the productivity of land, the best use of land available in the area, and various other kinds of in- formation which may be properly analysed by the use of computers. Such harnessing and analysis of information will add to reduction of wastage and a better utilisation of resources.
- The agencies of socialisation such as the family the local educational institutions should be strengthened for a better capacity to understand and use the facilities created by the government. The local people should be educated in the methods necessary for using the opportunities offered to them. A simple training programme for such rural people may be worked out so that they may properly understand the required administrative procedure of Barriers created by the use of administrative terminology in government offices may be removed in this way. Similarly, the local public employees and the staff of the government offices should also be trained to improve contacts with the common people. For this purpose of creating a better understanding between the administrators and the administered a small task force consisting of all sections at the local level may be created. Such a task force should be of a composite nature functioning for short periods when better mutual understanding becomes necessary. The aim should be to establish a self-sustaining system of citizen-administration relationship which recognises the local needs and local facilities for a better realisation of develop- mental targets. Citizen-administration relationship has to be an on-going system with enough flexibility for adjustment according to the variety of the local culture Patterns of social and cultural diversity have to be adjusted and the administrative agencies correspondingly moulded for the better flow of information and for the removal of situations of conflict.

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