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## NEED OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS IN INDIA

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## Research Paper - Pol. Sci.

**Abstract:**

“Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development” Kofi Annan

*‘Purpose of a government is to make it easy for people ‘to do good’ and ‘difficult to do evil’. Sir Gladstone, So is the importance of government Administrative is as old as society. Basically administrative is defined as ‘co-operative’ human effort to achieve ‘common goals’. So, administration of government affairs is co-operation of government officials, citizens, media, judiciary, legislature to achieve common goal of development of the society. It covers various aspects including socio- economic development, financial administration, providing basic facilities like health, education. Thus, administration covers all activities from womb to tomb. But, there are many discrepancies in programmes, schemes developed for larger public good and their implementation. Thus, there is a need for enhancement in the process of administration.*

**Key words:** Reforms, RTI, Government, Corruption, Grievances

## Introduction:

Governance is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It consists of the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Without good governance, no amount of developmental schemes can bring in improvements in the quality of life of the citizens. On the contrary, if the power of the state is abused, or exercised in weak or improper ways, those with the least power in the society – the poor- are most likely to suffer.

There is increasing lawlessness in several pockets of the country, and armed groups are resorting to violence with impunity for sectarian or ideological reasons. The state apparatus is generally perceived to be largely inefficient, with most functionaries serving no useful purpose. The bureaucracy is generally seen to be tardy, inefficient, and unresponsive. Corruption is all-pervasive, eating into the vitals of our system, undermining economic growth, distorting competition, and disproportionately hurting the poor and marginalized citizens. Criminalization of politics continues unchecked, with money and muscle power playing a large role in elections.

Governance is admittedly a weak link in our quest for prosperity and equity. We have an impressive governance infrastructure and significant successes to our credit. But we need to refashion the instruments to suit the emerging challenges. Unemployment and discrimination are two malignant factors afflicting our society, and militating against the principles of equality of opportunity enshrined in our Constitution. Our governance process must be redesigned to combat these two scourges, so that the productive potential of our people is liberated. The political system has the resilience and capacity to mobilize public opinion and transform our governance. What we need is the will and painstaking effort and energy to innovate, design and reform.

Administrative Reforms in India have a very long history. During ancient period, many kings including Chandragupta Maurya, Samrat Ashoka took various initiatives for making administration effective and responsive. In medieval period, Mughal Kings like Akbar introduced various reforms for betterment of the subjects. Later with advent of

British rule in India, administration went through profound change. But mainly, these changes were for the convenience of British rule and not people - oriented. After independence, India is striving hard for reducing disparities in society through various administrative measures. But before going into the details of reforms, one must take account of strength of present administrative system.

The Administrative Reforms Commission was set up in the year of 1966 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Morarji Desai, interalia (a) to give consideration to the need for ensuring the highest standards of efficiency and integrity in the public service (b) for making public administration a fit instrument for carrying out the social and economic policies of the Government and (c) for considering the machinery of the Government and its procedures of work, the machinery for planning at all levels—centre State relationship, financial and economic administration and administration at the State and district levels and agricultural administration.

Present system is hierarchical, so there is well-defined division of work and effective co-ordination but it makes administration non-participative where policy decisions are taken only at top level. Adherence to laws, rules eliminates arbitrariness but makes it inflexible. Recruitment of Civil Servants based on merit ensures best talents take up to task of development; but doesn't permit people with grass-root level experience. Stable tenure of Civil Servants enables them to perform better.

Red-tapism has received immense impetus from the numerous legislative enactments and rules framed there under year-after-year. Lack of administrative personnel has made matters worse. The IAS cadre was created with intention of meeting the administrative requirements of a vast, developing country. Unfortunately, recruitments were made without much regard for quality and this has had its adverse reaction on administrative efficiency.

There are weaknesses and strengths which are two sides of a coin. These weaknesses are evident in India's performances in international indices and reports. For example 'Human Development Index India' slipped to 134th in 2011 report World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness report ranked India 59th in 2012 Compared to 50th in 2008. Rank of India in Global Corruption Perception Index 2011

is 95th which necessitates improvement in present system.

There is huge disparity in income, life-style, availability of basic amenities in India. For e.g. Considerable percentage of population live still below poverty line. Around 40% of Indians is number 1 country in open defecation. These are black spots on Indian's growth story. There is rise in awareness of people about their rights. People's expectations from government to perform are growing.

While keeping in mind above situation which calls for effective administration, Government of India has created 'Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances' as a nodal agency for administrative reforms. It is engaged with various activities for improvement in governance. Most significant administrative reform in India has been 73rd, 74th amendment which has created rural and urban local bodies making way for democratic decentralisation, It has provided 50% reservation for women.

Government's interface with citizens is most important. To make governance citizen centric, government has introduced various reforms. Most important being Right to Information Act, 2005. It has largely been successful because of simplicity and enabled citizens to get information without help of lawyers. It makes administration transparent. Another way of efficient delivery of services is e-governance. India has designed National e-governance plan E-governance minimises corruption, improves efficiency significantly besides being citizen-friendly. This has been successfully illustrated by 'Bhoomi Project' in Karnataka where land records after digitized.

Citizen's charter is an important initiative to make administration citizen centric. This document defines standards of delivery of services. For handling department of administrative reforms and public grievances has developed 'Central Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System. Citizens can register their complaint online, can track progress of actions taken after complaint. Government has developed Quality Management System i.e. Sevottam Model which has three pillars viz. citizen charter, improving delivery capacity and effective grievances redressed system. Another important tool for efficient implementation of scheme. It has been illustrated in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. 'File to Field Programme' has been successful in Kerala. According to this, administrator goes to village/ area and hears public grievances and takes immediate action

wherever possible. Important activities of governments have related to providing health facilities, providing education, employment opportunities.

Government has launched and implemented many welfare programmes for this purpose. Recent success story in health has been successful eradication of polio. Important step in improving service delivery is 'Aadhar Card' this unique identity will effectively deliver services to target group; including health schemes, education facilities, providing subsidies. Maharashtra Government has successfully demonstrated it using Aadhar identity to weed out fake students in 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan'.

Government of Chhattisgarh has successfully implemented project 'Prayas' which gives coaching to tribal student. This year, over 100 students have been selected in IITs and NITs. Similarly, Jammu & Kashmir Government is implementing "Himayat Project" which has emerged as platform for women empowerment. This project has been designed to provide employment opportunities to youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Civil services forms integral part of Indian administration. Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) which conducts examination is introducing level playing field for all aspirants in phased manner by doing away with optional subjects in phases. Government is also introducing lateral entry of experts e.g. Nandan Nilekani has been appointed as chairman of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). However, well designed programmes are not showing significant result because of one major impediment to progress, i.e. Corruption, Government of India has established institutions to deal with this larger problem. Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) were established after Santhanam Committee reports, 1964. CVC is mainly responsible for preventing corruption in Central government. Institution of Lokpal, Lokayukta has been suggested by Administrative Reforms Commission headed by Morarji Desai, 1966. Bill for Lokpal is under parliament consideration. Many states have institutionalised Loayukta. Lokayukta especially in Karnataka State has been successful to a large extent.

J.F. Kennedy said "ask not what country has done for you, but what you have done for the country". For a State to become democratically successful, participative political culture is a must. In a democratic strong states, top-down political cultures have

given way to participative ones, where national leaders don't just issue policy edicts from remote capitals, but rather work towards selling them to own parties, allies, opponents and the public. Effective governance requires effective communication with people. The breakdown in effective communication between government and people enable Anna movement to appear more trust-worthy last year. Corruption has been everyday experience for ordinary citizens. Parliament must pass Lokpal Bill at the earliest. But at the same time, it should be ensured that we don't centralize power in one institution. Aruna Roy cautioned, 'Make sure the cure isn't worse than the disease.'

Though, RTI has helped empowered ordinary citizens, there are many loopholes which must be corrected. Underlying spirit of act is speedy access to information. Chief Information Commission (CIC) is not statutorily required to hear cases within particular time period. But most RTI applications are often relevant to particular time also. CIC doesn't have contempt powers. Only way to ensure compliance with its order is to impose a penalty. Additionally, parliament should pass 'whistleblowers Bill' with urgency to protect whistleblowers.

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