



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation

ISSN: 2582-7138

Received: 20-10-2020; Accepted: 22-11-2020

www.allmultidisciplinaryjournal.com

Volume 1; Issue 5; November-December 2020; Page No. 42-44

An introduction to Public Administration

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Abstract

The main argument in this book is that the traditional model of administration is obsolete and has been effectively replaced by a new model of public management. This change represents a paradigm shift from a bureaucratic model of administration to a market model of management closely related to that of the private sector. Managerial reforms mean a transformation, not only of public management, but of the relationships between market and government, government and the bureaucracy, government and the citizenry, and bureaucracy and the citizenry. The beginnings of this movement were in the thorough ideological attack on the public sector in the 1970s and 1980s mainly in the United Kingdom and the United States. Initially the attack was theoretical, based on public choice and other economic theories, later it was an attack on the traditional practices and conditions of the public services. As the 1980s ended, the change to managerialism seemed a little less ideological as it was adopted by other countries, and after governments to an extent rediscovered the public sector. If the idea earlier in the 1970s was that government could be reduced to almost nothing, it is no longer. Instead, we may be seeing a relatively pragmatic division between those things governments and public services do well, and those things the private sector

does well. There has, however, been a substantial reduction in the scale and scope of government and more seems likely. Another effect of the attack on government has been far more important than that fostered by the noisy debate over government's role and size. This has been a transformation in the management of the public sector. It is by no means complete, but the agenda has been agreed by most governments in the developed world. Instead of cutting government in the hope this would, by itself, make economies improve, the strategy has been to improve the management of government. If the public sector was to stay important it faced the need to greatly improve its performance and to do so by using any means at all. This has included importing some theories and practices from the private sector and exporting some goods and services provision back. 53 The traditional model of administration was one of bureaucracy, due process, neutrality, and direct provision. It did operate in a non-partisan way, but was also a system in which performance was secondary, and considered too difficult to measure. No one really knew what was produced, how well it was produced or whether it had any effect on its targets, if indeed there were any. It is hardly surprising that this model lost both its utility and its political support.

Keywords: Public Administration, characteristics, Scope Significance, Narrow perspective

Introduction

The word Administer is an English word, which is originated from the Latin word 'ad' and 'ministrare', which means to care for or to serve. Administration may be defined as the group activity which involves cooperation and coordination for the purpose of achieving desired goals or objectives. Various definitions of Public Administration are as follows

1. **Prof. Woodrow Wilson:** The pioneer of the social science of Public Administration says in his book 'The study of Public Administration', published in 1887 "Public Administration is a detailed and systematic application of law.
2. According to **L. D. White:** "Public Administration consists of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfilment of public policy as declared by authority." Both above definitions are done from traditional viewpoint and related only to the functions and actions of Administration.
3. **According to Gullick:** "Public Administration is that part of the science of administration which has to do with government and thus, concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the work of the government is done.
4. **According to Waldo:** "Public Administration is the art and science of management as applied to the affairs of the state."

Important characteristics of public administration

1. It is part of executive branch of government.
2. It is related with the activities of the state.
3. It carries out the public policies.
4. It realize the aspirations of the people as formulated and expressed in the laws.
5. Waldo and other thinkers insist on the commitment and dedication to the wellbeing of the people. Otherwise Public Administration behaves in a mechanical, impersonal and inhuman way.
6. Public Administration is politically neutral.

Scope of Public Administration: Following are the three important perspectives about the scope of Public Administration.

1. Narrow perspective or postcard perspective.
2. Broad perspective or subject-matter view.
3. Prevailing view.

Significance and importance of public administration

In today's modern state and in developing countries functions and role of Public Administration is very important. The role and importance of Public Administration are as follows. 1. It is the basis of government. 2. It is the instrument of change in the society. 3. It plays vital role in the life of the people. 4. It is an instrument for executing laws, policies, programmes of the state. 5. It is a stabilizing force in the society as it provides continuity. 6. It is instrument of national integration in the developing countries which are facing class wars.

Narrow perspective or POSDCORD perspective

Luther Gullick is the main exponent of this perspective. According to him the scope of public administration is narrow or limited. It is also regarded as POSDCORD view. It insist that the Public Administration is concerned only with those aspects of administration which are related with the executive branch and its seven types of administrative functions. These seven types of functions which shows the scope of Public Administration are as follows

1. 'P' stands for planning
2. 'O' stands for organization
3. 'S' stands for staffing.
4. 'D' stands for Directing.
5. 'Co.' stands for Co-ordination.
6. 'R' stands for Reporting
7. 'B' stands for Budgeting

Broad perspective or subject-oriented perspective

Prof. Woodrow Wilson, L D White are main exponent of this perspective. They have taken a very broad approach about the scope of Public Administration. According to them (A) Public Administration covers all three branches of the government. Legislative, Executive and Judicial and their interrelationship. Legislative organ makes the laws, Executive organ of the government implements the laws and judicial organ of the government interprets the laws. There is interrelationship between these three organs. B) Scope of Public Administration is like a cooperative group. It consist of all from class one officer to class four employees. C) Public Administration is a part of the political process. It has an important role in the formulation of public policy at all levels, from national to grass root. It is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community. It has been influenced in recent

years by the human relations approach.

Prevailing view

Prevailing view divides the scope of Public Administration into two parts

1. Administrative theory
2. Applied administration

1. Administrative theory

It includes the following aspects.

a) Organizational Theory

The Structure, organization, functions and methods of all types of public authority engaged in administration, whether national, regional or local and executive.

b) Behavior

The functions of administrative authorities and the various methods appropriate to different types of functions. The various forms of control of administration.

c) Public personal administration

The problems concerning personnel e.g. recruitment, training, promotion, retirement etc. and the problems relating to planning, research, information and public relation services.

2. Applied administration

It includes the following aspects

a) Political functions

It includes the executive-legislative relationship, administrative activities of the cabinet, the minister and permanent official relationship.

b) Legislative function

It includes delegated legislation and the preparatory work done by the officials in connection with the drawing up of bills.

c) Financial functions

It includes total financial administration from the preparation of the budget to its execution, accounting and audit etc.

d) Defense

Functions relating to military administration.

e) Educational function

It includes functions relating to educational administration.

f) Social welfare administration

It includes the activities of the departments concerned with food; housing, social security and development activities.

g) Economic Administration

It is concerned with the production and encouragement of industries and agriculture.

h) Foreign administration

It includes the conduct of foreign affairs, diplomacy, international cooperation etc.

i) Local administration

It concern with the activities of the local self-governing institutions.

Conclusion

The main argument in this book is that the traditional model of administration is obsolete and has been effectively replaced by a new model of public management. This change represents a paradigm shift from a bureaucratic model of administration to a market model of management closely related to that of the private sector. Managerial reforms mean a transformation, not only of public management, but of the relationships between market and government, government and the bureaucracy, government and the citizenry, and bureaucracy and the citizenry. The beginnings of this movement were in the thorough ideological attack on the public sector in the 1970s and 1980s mainly in the United Kingdom and the United States. Initially the attack was theoretical, based on public choice and other economic theories, later it was an attack on the traditional practices and conditions of the public services. As the 1980s ended, the change to managerialism seemed a little less ideological as it was adopted by other countries, and after governments to an extent rediscovered the public sector. If the idea earlier in the 1970s was that government could be reduced to almost nothing, it is no longer. Instead, we may be seeing a relatively pragmatic division between those things governments and public services do well, and those things the private sector does well. There has, however, been a substantial reduction in the scale and scope of government and more seems likely. Another effect of the attack on government has been far more important than that fostered by the noisy debate over government's role and size. This has been a transformation in the management of the public sector. It is by no means complete, but the agenda has been agreed by most governments in the developed world. Instead of cutting government in the hope this would, by itself, make economies improve, the strategy has been to improve the management of government. If the public sector was to stay important it faced the need to greatly improve its performance and to do so by using any means at all. This has included importing some theories and practices from the private sector and exporting some goods and services provision back.

53 The traditional model of administration was one of bureaucracy, due process, neutrality, and direct provision. It did operate in a non-partisan way, but was also a system in which performance was secondary, and considered too difficult to measure. No one really knew what was produced, how well it was produced or whether it had any effect on its targets, if indeed there were any. It is hardly surprising that this model lost both its utility and its political support. Management in the public sector has now changed, probably for ever. The achievement of results is the main aim at both the organizational and individual level. New public management looks at results first, with no preconceived notion as to how these should occur. It does not matter if results occur through the bureaucracy or through privatization, subsidies or contracts. The focus on results has led in turn to the establishment of financial, performance and personnel systems in which some assessment of success in achieving goals can occur. There are now greater imperatives to ensure that money is not wasted, which is probably the main reason for the changes which have taken place. As is not surprising, a change of this magnitude is highly controversial. Of course, the changes will not work perfectly; of course, there will be mistakes made; of course, there will be problems in the change to new forms of public management. Perhaps the public sector may return to the days

before Woodrow Wilson, to political or personal administration, and the kind of corruption he fought against may also return. This could cause political demands to again institute a non-partisan, neutral administrative system. But this scenario seems unlikely. What is more likely is 'to define the desired equilibrium between, on the one hand, a focus on results and resources, and on the other, a focus on control and process; to find a synthesis between the rationality of management and the rationality of public law. This may be an idealistic view, as implementation of new public management has not been easy. Perhaps government is always difficult so that, even if a 'synthesis' is feasible, there is a long way to go.

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