Government in India displays two marked characteristics. There is, in the first place, a subtle and complex interplay of politics and administration at all levels. Second, there is a wide difference in the quality, vigour and outlook of the elite at the top and the rest of the hierarchy.

The inadequacies of administration derive not so much from excessive hierarchical organisation, but from the fact that the hierarchy is not filled in, that it is not truly pyramidal.

Coupled with the bureaucracy’s tendency to concentrate power, this leads of lack of flexibility, impedes communication down the line and encourages isolated action by bureaucrats who are sure neither of their ability nor of the confidence of their superiors.

Whether the present inter-relation between politics and administration will work satisfactorily in future will depend on three factors:

First, introduction of flexibility into the administrative structure and dispersal of power.

Second, filling-in the administrative hierarchy by rationalising its line.

Third, building up active channels of communication both within the administration and between the administration and the general public.

The organisation of government in a democracy calls for constant reconciliation of conflicting elements. The principles of democracy are not always conducive to administrative efficiency. The preservation of democratic forms might necessitate a continuity of tradition and a piecemeal approach to problems of change, while a revolution in administrative methods may be necessary to secure efficiency. The attractiveness of political office in a democracy might draw talent away from administration. Accountability to popular opinion may make for timidity and lack of drive. Administrative efficiency calls for a simple line of command, but popular government leads to complexity of administration. Administrative departments multiply according to exigencies of the moment. Finally, the administration has to be constantly varied of "what the public will not stand".

**Tradition vs Change**

These difficulties are aggravated in countries where the expansion of the functions of government has not been a gradual process but has come almost at one stroke with political independence. The dilemma that these countries face is real though it does not always appear on the surface. On the one hand, sweeping changes in organisation might affect the delicate balance of constitutional government. On the other hand, excessive reverence for traditional forms and failure to carry out much-needed reform may lead to much frustration.

It is in this context that the conflict between tradition and change within the machinery of government in India has to be seen. In what follows, an attempt is made to examine the assumptions on which a democratic administration is based. These assumptions govern the place of administrative departments in the scheme of government. They also deal with such matters as the relation between ministers and civil servants and between civil servants and the general public. Then the departures from these assumptions in actual practice in India and their bearing on the nature of the government will be studied.

Traditional political science distributes the functions of the state between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Government departments thus fall entirely under the purview of the executive; they have no separate existence of their own in constitutional theory.

**Central Position of Bureaucracy**

Such a view of the functions of government may be attractive but is not real. It ignores the bureaucracy, oversimplifies the line of responsibility and draws a sharp distinction between the making and carrying out of policy. In practice, however, large bureaucratic establishments have come to occupy so central a position in government that their constitutional importance can no longer be ignored. They constitute a fourth organ of government, alongside the three traditional organs.

Recognition of the pivotal position of administrative departments in modern government has led some people to hold a point of view which though diametrically opposed to the traditional view, is no less misleading. Known as the "realist" view of public administration, it makes government a purely technical undertaking and considers the administrative secretariat as much a part of the machinery of government as the executive and the parliament without making any qualitative distinction. While traditional theory denies any distinction between the executive and the administration by including the latter in the former, the new school does the same by conceiving of the former as part of the latter. Evidently, this is an "operational*" view of government; it fuses together the executive and the administration and conceives of the former in as non-political terms, as the latter. In bringing down the barriers between the ministerial and the bureaucratic...
A study of the actual development of the machinery of government in India reveals the extent to which politics and administration are intertwined. The lack of reliable facts makes such a study difficult. The government's tendency is to shroud public acts in secrecy and such information as percolates through the veil in the form of "revelations" by men who have fallen from public grace is unreliable. The lack of adequate channels of communication between the world of politics and that of scholarship accounts for much of our ignorance of public administration. Some general observations may, however, be possible from what is known.

**Administration : Bulwark of Stability**

The period immediately following independence was one of great confusion. It was a question of sheer survival. Under such conditions, the administrative apparatus became the bulwark of stability. It provided a nucleus around which a national government could consolidate its position in a country torn by violence and disaffection. The administration became the basis of political authority. The experience required for new and challenging tasks could come only from the public services. Politicians were untutored in the arts of government. The mantle of responsibility passed to the services who continued to dominate the political process in the first phase of development.

That the predominance of the services was allowed to continue may seem surprising. During the independence movement, resentment against the personnel of the Indian Civil Service was widespread. Civil servants were much maligned. It was also believed then that the administrative structure evolved under the British was alien and unsuited to free India's needs; it was a servile order. It would have been quite within expectations, therefore, if the new inheritors of power, in their first flush of victory, had proceeded to dismantle the administrative apparatus with a view to building it up again on the basis of new political objectives. This did not happen because the tasks that faced the country were urgent and because of the commonsense of Sardar Patel whose ability as an organiser was equal to that of any in the world of administration. The power he wielded over the civil servants was not simply a reflection of his "iron will"; it was more a measure of the confidence that existed between him and the services, for creating which he was largely responsible. His contribution to the political stability of India by canalising the loyalties of a band of outstanding and exceptional men in the task of national reconstruction is without parallel.

Those who rightly give credit to Nehru for India's stability should not forget the pivotal role of Sardar Patel in consolidating and strengthening the infant state. Far more important than the unification of the country by the absorption of the princely states was the manner in which he dealt with the law and order situation and consolidated the administrative structure by imparting a sense of security to the services.

**Expansion of Administrative Structure**

The result was that the political process, developed initially within the rigidity of an administrative framework. The next stage of political development was conditioned by a similar framework of political authority. Shortly after the proclamation of the Republic, a largescale programme of social and economic change was launched. There followed an unprecedented expansion of the administrative structure. The result was a great dilution of standards of efficiency and integrity in administration.

The fact that the whole programme was conceived within the traditional framework led to the persistence of an ethos not conducive to development effort. Even new types of administration that were set up such as the machinery of planning, the Community Development Administration, or the new institutions of local government came to be conditioned by the structure and ideology of the old set-up. Consequently, frustration of a large part of the process has set in. The old methods were employed in carrying out new tasks. The nature of the state was sought to be transformed within the confines of the old bureaucracy.

Hut the political process had also its own dynamics which conditioned the development of the administration. The interaction between politics and administration took place at two levels. There was, first, the interaction between the ruling party and the bureaucracy. Alongside an administration which enjoyed virtual monopoly of power for so long, a new power now emerged: the politician. The conflict between the civil servant, hardened by experience and cynicism, and the politician full of ideas and impatient for power assumed many forms, not the least of which were opportunistic alliances between utterly incompatible elements. The other development took place within the party, in the relations between its organisational and...
government wings. The process was one sided for a long time. The government wing providing leadership and patronage while the party machinery was used to sustain it in power. Slowly, however, with the waning of the popularity of the Congress governments and the growing power conflicts within the party, the trend has reversed: the government is under constant criticism and challenge from the organisational wing of the party which does not hesitate to take the conflict on to the floor of the legislature and to the council room of the cabinet. The strength of the ruling party is to the council room of the cabinet. The position was complicated by the practice of having some Ministers of State in charge of independent portfolios while others occupied subordinate position under cabinet minister.

The Ministerial Hierarchy

The organisation of government has been conditioned by interplay of the two processes. In the process, the accepted principles of constitutional and administrative theory have been modified. The expansion of the functions of government has brought out the conflict between the principle of ministerial responsibility inherent in the constitution of parliamentary government and that of collective responsibility which developed as a convention of cabinet government. Collective responsibility, to be effective, necessitates a small and compact team of ministers. Ministerial responsibility, on the other hand, limits the size and number of administrative units under a single minister thus increasing the total number of ministers. As a result, the ministry and the Cabinet could not obviously be the same. Distinctions set in and the hierarchical organisation of the bureaucracy was also projected into the ministerial structure.

The position was complicated by the fine and delicate sense of honour that led to much political semantics. Some ministers not included in the cabinet were, however, to be called ministers of cabinet rank and the substantive hierarchy of powers was overlaid by a formal equality of status. Considerations of prestige led to much confusion. A minister of cabinet rank could be provided with an appropriate designation if he could be in charge of specific functions grouped under specific departments (such as the Minister of Heavy Industries). This was not always possible and that led to such designations as Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs. More logical was the designation of Ministers of State for all subordinate ministers. The conflict between logic and honour led to change from one designation to another four times in the ten years between 1948 and 1957. Still the practice is not uniform. The position was further complicated by the practice of placing some Ministers of State in charge of independent portfolios while others occupied subordinate position under cabinet minister.

Deputy ministers and (in certain cases) parliamentary secretaries occupy the lower tiers in the hierarchy. The category of deputy ministers was created with the specific purpose of giving experience to younger men and to train them for ministerial position. In practice however, elderly politicians are accommodated as deputy ministers. Also accommodated in these positions are politically turbulent persons like members of the Congress 'Ginger Group'. All of this shows how personal and political influences interfere with considerations of administrative efficiency.

Multiplication of Portfolios

The overlapping of functions, for example, the deputy minister, the parliamentary secretary and the permanent secretary; the consequent dilution of the line of responsibility; and the wide gulf between a ministerial council charged by the Constitution to be collectively responsible to parliament, but which never even meets as a group, and the actual cabinet which meets and decides issues often beyond the competence of those who attend such meetings—all these create a peculiar situation. Of course, the development of the Cabinet Secretariat and the system of memoranda brine some order to the situation but it falls far short of giving a cabinet government to the country.

The multiplication of portfolios during the last fourteen years shows similar influences at work. Here the unfortunate impression is often created that these adjustments are made either to suit the convenience of ministerial changes or to widen the avenues of advancement of secretariat personnel. Thus on the death of Sardar Patel in December 1950 the portfolios of States and Home were separated even though by then the former had ceased to be an exacting undertaking. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture was bifurcated in October 1956 as it was felt that the importance of preventing food prices from rising necessitated that food administration be placed under a 'whole-time secretary'. The same minister held the two portfolios but the new arrangement could accommodate two permanent secretaries. In April 1957 the two ministries were once again united. The death of Maulana Azad led 16 a protracted conflict of personalities resulting in separation of Scientific Research from Education, each being placed under a Minister of State. As a result such an important subject as education remains unrepresented in the Cabinet. The same is the case with the Ministry of Law which was downgraded in the ministerial hierarchy in 1957 and was placed under the charge of a minister of state; the personality of the Law Minister then was not strong enough to secure for him a seat in the Cabinet. The Health Ministry also suffered the same fate. On the other hand, the powerful personality of the Railway Minister prevented the integration of transport and communication in April 1957 from affecting the railways, which with other modes of transport should have logically been placed under one ministry. Planning, labour and now the vice-chairmanship of the Planning Commission are in the charge of Shri Gulzarilal Nanda. They make a motley combination.

Case of Ministry of Production

The classic example of personal considerations frustrating efficient administrative development is provided by the short-lived Ministry of Production. Keeping in view the needs of planning, it was decided in June 1952 to set up two new ministries, one of Production and another of Irrigation and Power. Powerful resistance to the former came from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry which was in no mood to part with its control over the steel industry. The control over iron and steel was retained by it for the time being. The dilemma was ultimately resolved by a compromise: an altogether new Ministry of Iron and Steel was set up.
No liveried footmen or blazing chandeliers remain to proclaim the grandeur and gaiety that once pervaded the large red brick mansion that still stands in Calcutta’s Hastings Street and which Warren Hastings, India’s first Governor-General, built for his charming wife as her town house. For many years this fine residence was the scene of glittering assemblies and balls, the entrée to which was considered a high social privilege.

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to look after the steel plants, at first only those in the public sector but with another reorganisation, those in both the private and the public sector. The new ministry, however, continued to be under the charge of the Minister of Commerce and Industry and not of the Ministry of Production; the power of the latter was greatly circumscribed.

This was not all. When Shri T T Krishnamachari left the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to become the Finance Minister in August 1956, he took the Iron and Steel portfolio with him. In fact, when he left the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the latter was split into two separate ministries of (i) commerce and consumer industry and (ii) heavy industry. Shri T T Krishnamachari had hitherto represented in the Cabinet the Ministry of Production and the Ministry of Iron and Steel apart from the Commerce and Industry Ministry. Now, when he became Finance Minister, he continued to represent Iron and Steel. One anomaly led to another: the Home Minister was asked to look after the interests of the Ministry of Heavy Industry in the Cabinet. Finance and Steel, Home and Heavy Industries one cannot imagine more curious combinations. At last in the 1957 reorganisation, the two ministries of Commerce and Consumer Industries and Heavy Industry were once again merged into a Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Production Ministry, set up with so much fuss was also finally wound up.

Cabinet Committees

It is not suggested here that political considerations are irrelevant to the development of the machinery of government. Two points, however, emerge from the above analysis. One is that when political and personal considerations are carried too far they render the administration liable to such confusion and instability as defeat their political objectives. Secondly and this is the focus of our analysis—the substantive process that emerges deviates from the expected pattern to a very significant extent.

Deviation from more fundamental constitutional principles also can be seen in practice. Thus the collective responsibility of a council of ministers that never meets, has more the character of a coalition than a unified team, is divided into several layers of hierarchy, and allocates functions on a basis of drift and stop-gap arrangements, can neither be collective nor responsible. The Cabinet Committees seek to co-ordinate the functioning of the various ministries. It has been found in practice, however, that most of these committees share the top-heavy structure of the cabinet; in fact they are more top-heavy than the Cabinet. The Prime Minister is the Chairman of nine out of ten standing committees, the Home Minister presiding over the tenth. In fact, the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Finance Minister and one or two other ministers dominate the deliberations of these committees.

"Appointments to these Committees have been made more on personal considerations than on the consideration of bringing only ministers concerned together in relevant committees." The concentration of decision-making power in the "inner Cabinet" is also reflected in the working of the committees. In any case, it hardly makes for collective responsibility of the ministry as a whole. The result in practice is that the principle has been flouted on a number of occasions though perhaps never seriously enough to jeopardise Constitution. The emergence of the Planning Commission as a semi-political, semi-administrative arm of the governmental machinery, without really becoming an integral part of it, has also added to the general vagueness of the decision-making process. All this modifies the working of cabinet government considerably.

The principle of ministerial responsibility has also been subjected to considerable strain. The question will lie taken up below in dealing with the relations between the minister and the civil servants. Suffice it to say here that the fact that a number of important aspects of the administration in the fields of planning, development and social welfare remain unrepresented in parliament affects the working of the principle. The view that for every act of government some minister is answerable to parliament has not been fully accepted in this country. Also, the ministers feel that their responsibility is more to the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister than to the elected legislature. The general result is a ministry more of the Presidential type where neither collective responsibility nor ministerial responsibility is constitutionally important. But the analogy should not be stretched too far. Actually, the structure conforms neither to the Cabinet model (although its formal requirements are usually complied with) nor to the single executive model (although much of its practice can be discerned in actual working). It is a structure which is in some senses unique and without parallel in other democracies.

The Substantive Pattern

The substantive pattern that has emerged is made up of three layers of organisation. There are the bureaucratic departments which provide the structural framework within which the governmental machinery has expanded and functioned. They constitute an elaborate structure from the Centre down to the district level. It has its own rules, procedures, jurisdictions, and lines of command. Overlaid on this structure is the development of an intricate network of planning and development administration. This is a new type of organisation with its own jurisdictions and work-techniques, independent authority and specified functions. The Planning Commission commands a huge stall organisation that provides leadership in research and evaluation, direction for action programmes, advice on specific policies and acts as a clearing house of information on diverse issues, it shapes a large part of the government's programmes both at the Centre and in the States and, although acting in an advisory capacity, makes its weight felt. It has ensured in a manner which has no precedent in modern administrative systems that investigation and appraisal should go hand in hand with the implementation of programmes. It lies maintained a close contact with the Cabinet by having a common membership, the same secretary, joint deliberations and continuous informal contacts. Indeed, the Planning Commission is more political than professional in its character. The Prime Minister is its chairman as he is the chairman of the National Development Council. The Finance Minister and two other Cabinet Ministers are its members. All the other official members of the Commission enjoy the status of ministers of cabinet.
rank. Its members attend all meet-
ing of the Economic Committee of the
the cabinet whenever economic questions
the cabinet and meetings of the
ommittee has completed the
mission is thus, in many ways, "a
small edition of government itself"
Planning Apparatus

It is not often realised in assess-
ing the mammoth growth of the
extra-constitutional apparatus of the
Planning Commission and its
auxiliaries that quite apart from
carrying out their special purpose
held of development, the latter have also performed a more
general role in the country's ad-
ministration. In the period after in-
dependence the administration was
in the danger of breaking up into so
many parts each jealous to preserve
its local identity and to care out
their respective areas of influence.
Against the background of virulent
parochialism in the country as a
whole, this would have spelled di-
saster. (Even today the danger is
not wholly absent). The develop-
ment of various planning authorities
cutting across the existing pattern
of administration both horizontally and
vertically with the clear purpose
of carrying out defined tasks has pro-
vided a unity of outlook and a
sense of direction to the machinery
of government as a whole. The
Planning Commission, the National
Development Council, the Committee
on Plan Projects, the Research Pro-
grammes Committee, the Programme
Evaluation Organisation, even the
Statistical Institute, the Panel of
Economists and the various insti-
tutes of public administration, these
and other institutions have succeeded
to a marked degree in instilling a
sense of common purpose. There is,
of course, the danger of too much
uniformity and conformism in such
a system. This must be guarded
against. But the primary need in
this country is to develop a com-
mon consciousness among the people
transcending their diverse identities
without completely destroying them.
And this is being done in some
measure by the new administrative
pattern that is emerging in this
country. At a time when the gov-
ernmental structure is suffering from
divisive tendencies, the administra-
tion imparts some unity and conti-
nuity to the political process.

The other important element
making for such unity of effort is
the political party which is the
third "layer" of the substantive pattern.
Enveloping the administrative
and developmental structures
is the large network of the Con-
gress Party, stretching in depth as
well as breadth, and touching all
levels of governmental organisation.
Its personnel man most of the dis-
trict development boards, provide
information to government officials
and actively collaborate (at times
in spite of the resistance of entrenched
officialdom) in solving local prob-
lems. It is especially effective in
spreading "plan-consciousness"
among the people. There is also an
attempt at evolving a machinery of
consultation and communication at
the pradesh and district levels in
various States, while coordination
of effort between the Congress Party
and the Community Development
Blocks and Extension Services is
more even marked. Very often non-
official but nonetheless officially sus-
tained organisations like the Bharat
Sevak Samaj serve as useful links in
such collaboration. Other and more
informal methods are also employ-
ed. The techniques of collabora-
tion between the party and the gov-
ernment are wide and varied. The
result is immensely useful in the
present phase of political develop-
ment. Of course, much tension is
generated in the process and person-
al rivalries and opportunism often
generate in the party and the gov-
ernment are wide and varied. The
result is immensely useful in the
present phase of political develop-
ment. Of course, much tension is
generated in the process and person-

The pattern that emerges is large-
ly the creation of the last decade or
so in which the same men have pro-
vided the leadership of the various
key organisations and served as links
between them. On the other hand,
it is a pattern that has evolved with-
in the framework of the old bureau-
cracy. And it is this that has creat-
ed a number of problems. The ex-
ercise of power resides with the tra-
ditional departments and collecto-
tes; only lately inroads are being
made into their power, largely with-
out success. The results are dis-
appointing. When it comes to the
actual execution of plans and pro-
grames, inertia and vested interests
together frustrate the attempts. A
remarkable feature of administration
is the wide gap in enthusiasm and
initiative between its higher and
lower levels. The lower down you
go, the farther you feel you are re-
moved from the vitality you found
at the top. The administration thus
provides a classic case of "appo-
plexy at the centre and anaemia at the
circumference". The result is
waste and frustration. Targets re-
main unfulfilled, policies remain on
paper, consultations (for example,
between the block development offi-
cers and the district authorities) are
rendered fruitless by mutual
jealousy, statistics are unreliable and
administrative waste and corruption
rampant. Red tape becomes a tech-
nique of self-preservation and re-
verence for traditional forms is
matched only by attachment to
strict routine and an unwholesome
preoccupation with questions of ac-
countability. Concentration of de-
cision-making powers and reluctance
to grant discretionary authority to
the men on the spot reflect the same
mentality. The conservatism of
habit and thought and suspicion of
experiments disprage the whole
process of change and distort it.

All Staff, No Line

The fact that much of the admi-
istrative structure of the Planning
Commission and even the Central
Government is all "staff and little,
if any, 'line" adds to the problem.
There is no way of ensuring that
the implementation of policies in
the districts advance the goals laid
down. There is no way of check-
ing on the progress reports, the
statistics and other information sup-
plied from below. The findings
based on such data tend to be un-
reliable and lead to faulty policy
conclusions. More important is
the fact that lack of experience in
a 'line" organisation lends unreality
to the process of deliberation and
policy-making; the important maxim
of modern public administration
that it is ultimately the executors
who should make policy is neglected.
Similarly while the insistence on
investigation as a preliminary to
policy-making is laudable in itself,
lack of communication in adminis-
tration leads to the fruits of re-
search being accumulated with-
out making their impact on action
programmes; the two proceed apace

824
unrelated and uncoordinated. The result is that a large part of the directives and advice received from above appear like so many sermons which have little, relevance to the actual problems of administration and are generally scoffed at by the "realists" in the field. The process is aggravated by the fact that the party men at the bottom do not share the zeal and idealism of their counterparts in the middle and upper ranks and often conspire with the administrators to share the spoils and consolidate their political control over the locality.

Concentration of Power
Lack of flexibility and creative enthusiasm, a chronic preoccupation with rules and precedents, and low morale at the lower levels of administration have been noted by many observers. Much of the rigidity springs from concentration of authority at the top and from an "inherited disinclination to delegate, to consider administration as literal execution of orders and to think of decision-making as issuing orders, to confine subordinates by too many and too precise rules, and to limit both inter-organisational and public communication to a few as empowered to "commit government".

Even the emphasis on "coordination" is often wrongly placed: attempts at coordination take place even before action has started: Even the smallest case is "referred"; there are successive verifications and re-verifications, and inquiries, commentaries and reports constantly pile up, the net result being delay, inaction, lack of initiative and dilution of responsibility. Even the esprit de corps is confined to one's own unit of work, thus giving rise to not one but several bureaucracies. Lack of an efficient communication system between different levels of authority results directly from an insufficient "line" organisation. The coordination that occurs is largely one that takes place in the higher regions of government. It is co-ordination "between peers and between different hierarchies, not within unified hierarchies". In fact, the structural inadequacies of the machinery of government in India derive not from too much hierarchy as is often alleged, but from an "irregular hierarchy, a hierarchy that is not well filled-in, that is not truly pyramidal. Coupled with the tendency to concentrate authority at the top, this leads to lack of flexibility, impedes communication and encourages isolated behaviour among bureaucrats who are neither sure of their own abilities nor of the confidence of their superiors.

Ministers and Civil Servants
Ministers also tend to concentrate decision-making power in themselves and to interfere unduly with the administrative process. A reaction seems to have set in to the earlier practice when most of the substantive decisions were taken by the civil servants. The results are sometimes unhappy. In their zeal to exercise initiative and take their own decisions, ministers often adopt questionable methods. They tend to rely too much on reports from outside, especially from party men. Although popular opinion often sets a corrective to departmental orthodoxy, the former is not always correctly represented by the minister's informants. The tendency among ministers to take particular decisions instead of confining to general policy leads to irresponsibility and evasion lower down the hierarchy. When we remember that ministers also shift responsibility to their subordinates by declaring to have acted "on the best available advice", the extent to which confusion can spread in the administrative process can be imagined. Weak in their grasp of governmental processes, the Ministers rely far too much on civil servants. Cashing in on the principle of anonymity of the civil servant, they naturally get the credit for the department's performance. Tin's is as it should be. When subjected to criticism, however, the Ministers are equally quick to shift responsibility to the civil servant.

On the other hand the "favourites among the civil servants are almost full-fledged politicians, often neglecting their official duties. The odium of the whole arrangement is experienced by those who feel left out of the network of patronage. Ministers wield considerable patronage and influence in the administration. There is a growing number of posts to which direct recruitment is made. Even in recruitment to the regular posts, the Public Service Commission's authority has sometimes been limited by withdrawing some categories of appointments from their competence by invoking Article 320 (3) of the Constitution. All the makes for significant departures in practice from the accepted relationship between the political and administrative parts of the machinery of Government.

Where the political party and the bureaucracy form the twin pillars of Government, the intertwining of political and administrative processes becomes inevitable. The development of healthy practices would depend here on the quality of political and administrative leadership. It would also depend on the extent to which the leadership can build up and rationalise a hierarchy and delegate power to it and thus vitalise administration all the way down and provide it with a unified outlook and a sense of oneness. The efficiency and ability of an administrative system can ultimately be judged by the extent to which it furthers the political objectives it is designed to serve. In India, the public's attitude to bureaucracy is very often prejudiced. Experience with an alien regime has left in the popular mind an unhappy image of the administrator. Bureaucracy appears to be antithetical to democracy, and the picture of an officialdom fighting to enslave the people has not died.

Public's Antipathy for Bureaucracy
But the public antipathy for the bureaucracy cannot be entirely explained away as a hangover of the past. The rigidity of the administrative structure noted above results in a rigidity in the approach to the public. The pre-occupation with rules and precedents leads to undue insistence on forms and procedures that do not fail to annoy; the insistence on formal correctness leads to excessive red tape; the concentration of discretion at the top leads to a shirking of responsibility leaving the citizen in doubt about whom to approach to get his work done; above all, the bureaucratic norms of impersonal treatment, supplemented by a tendency to "categorise" persons into "cases", results in much irritation at the point of contact with the public. The impression of officialdom as arrogant, indifferent and inhuman, leaves a deep mark and opens up a wide chasm between the administration and the general public.

In a sense, what is clear from the above analysis is that an
authoritarian structure of administration cannot go hand in hand with a democratic polity; the former defeats the latter. Concentration of decision-making powers is as had for administrative efficiency as it is for political organisation. Similarly, a static and rigid model of administration ill serves a dynamic society that must find new flexible avenues of effecting change. Above all a system that has not devised the principal need of modern administration, namely, an efficient system of communication with the general public, fails to provide the psychological context from which the mechanics of political democracy find its chief sustenance.

Putting Administration in Its Place

Unless we cut the administration down to its proper size and assign to it its due place in the scheme of democratic government, we would slip imperceptibly into an "administrative state". Efficiency in administration is not always the first objective in a democracy; indeed, an inefficient bureaucracy may provide opportunities for the exercise of capacities which a highly efficient system would have streamlined into standardised behaviour. What is more important is flexibility, scope for initiative for all and the readiness to submit traditional forms to scrutiny and change them when they are found unsuited. Democracy survives only in an atmosphere of open dealings and incessant questioning of forms and beliefs.

The machinery of government in India displays two marked characteristics. There is, in the first place, a subtle and intricate interplay of politics and administration at all levels, giving rise to complex forms and multiple structures. Second, there is a very wide gulf in the quality, vigour, and outlook, of the elite and the laity in each of these structures. While the cross-conditioning of the political party and administrative bureaucracy has modified the accepted relationship between the two, the development was both inevitable and desirable and can, properly directed, lead to the growth of healthy and sound conventions in the long run. Muck would depend, however, on the extent to which the process of nullification, distortion of policies at the point of implementation is arrested. It is suggested here that this would depend on three factors: flexibility and dispersal of the power to use discretion, the filling-in of the administrative hierarchy by rationalising its "Line", and the building up of an active system of communication both within the administration and between the administration and the general public. These are no obiter dicta. They follow logically from the analysis of the substantive process of government.

Notes

2. For the classic expression of such a view, see Frank J. Goodnow, Politics and Administration, p 9.
3. The first systematic steps towards such rejection were taken by Morstein Marx. Elements of Public Administration; Paul Appleby, Policy and Administration.
4. This is shown very well in the monumental study of Philip Selznick, TV A and the Grass Roots. See, however, Herbert Simon, Administrative Behaviour, where the dichotomy between value and policy continues to be maintained.
7. Asoka Chanda, Indian Administration, pp 61. 78.
9. Chanda, op cit p 82.
11. ibid, p 95.
19. Appleby, Public Administration in India, p 11.
20. On the whole question of the relations between ministers and civil servants in India, See Gorwala, Report on Public Administration. See also R. Durakadas. Role of the Higher Civil Service in India.

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