

# Administration—From the Human Angle

*There is a saying in Sanskrit that no one worships Siva to make 'Kailas', the abode of the Lord, prosperous. One worships the Lord for ones own advantage.*

*Similarly, no one joins Government service to make the country prosperous; it is to his own benefit and to the benefit of his kith and kin.*

*It is not, however, a question of self above the country. The clever or lucky ones in Government service have to be like a banyan tree giving shelter to all those who seek it. Family, friends and kinsmen have always been the special charge of men of position in this country. It is under this tradition that our civil service k still working.*

To look for 'out of way' favour and to extend such favour are normal things in Government. When a new man comes to a post, whether through the Service Commission or, by promotion or transfer, to the usual question "Who is he?" the inevitable answer is "He is so and so's nominee". The result is that you find at every level of administration cliques and sub-cliques. This is the bane of Government service. It is frustrating and ruinous. This human element is often forgotten when the question of administrative reform is discussed.

Our administrative system has grown—some would call it an over-growth—around the nucleus which was left behind by the British. There are a few clever people in it. There are also elaborately laid-out procedures. Those men and the system were quite useful at the time of change-over. Today, the problems the administration has to face are different and the men and system left behind by the British are found wanting in most respects.

Our basic policies relate to the Plan. The bankruptcy of the civil service as advisers on policy was exposed when the Draft Plan-frame for the Second Plan emerged from outside the Secretariat and the Planning Commission, which was under the dominating influence of civil servants, had to toe the line.

Similarly, everyone who had to do anything with the administration knew the drawbacks of the system but it was left to one Appleby, a foreign expert, to examine our administrative system and suggest how to improve it.

Even the Governor of Communist Kerala alluded to Appleby reports in his Address to the Legislature. No doubt, Dr Appleby is eminent and courageous. And there are many valuable observations in his reports. One should not, however, forget that in matters of organisa-

tion, the human element is uppermost. The success of any organisation, whether it be in the administrative field, in industry or trade, lies in welding together men of different temperament, equipment and capacity for effective action. For that, understanding of the human material is essential.

If our senior officers who have grown and worked with us cannot find a solution to our administrative problems, what can we expect from them. We are going to make a mess of everything, if we are to look to globe-trotting foreign experts for advice and guidance on matters of organisation and methods of work in our own Administration. Every nation has to organise its affairs according to the genius of its people.

Though we launched the second of the five year plans for economic development, we have not yet adjusted our administrative machinery for the successful implementation of the Plan. The basic principles governing recruitment, conditions of service, office procedure etc continue to be the same as before. A new set-up, the Organisation and Methods Division, is scratching the fringes to stream-line the administration for the last three years; but it has not yet cut deep into the ulcer of clique's and sub-cliques. One wonders whether it will ever do it.

We are in the second year of the Second Plan. No Ministry seems to have a clear picture of its year to year requirements of different categories of staff; nor has the Public Service Commission, the main recruiting agency of the Government, any idea of a planned, rational system of recruitment. The rule that was introduced as a temporary measure still continues. The Ministries can make their own appointments if a post is not to last beyond one year, and such appointments can be continued

for another two years with the formal concurrence of the Service Commission. It is only where the post continues beyond three years that the Ministry need go to the Service Commission for recruitment. It is this rule which has led to wide-spread nepotism. When a candidate is entrenched in a department for three years, the Service Commission advertisement becomes a farce.

Further, there is a lot of waste of time, energy and public money when the Service Commission tries to recruit for solitary posts. For example when a Government Department wants an engineer, the Service Commission advertises and selects two or three suitable candidates and from them one is appointed. At the same time, another department also may need an engineer with similar qualifications. The candidates who appeared for the first post have to apply afresh for it, and appear once again for interview and the same procedure has to be gone through all over again.

Such duplication can be avoided to a large extent if the sponsoring Ministries are prepared to submit to the Service Commission a year in advance category-wise requirements of staff, to enable the Commission to plan its programmes for recruitment. It will be argued that unless different cadres of services are organised, a uniform system of recruitment would not be feasible. There is force in this argument. What prevents Government from forming necessary cadres of service? No Ministry likes to do it, because it will take away patronage.

After recruitment comes the question of training. Here the first problem is how to train the large number of those who have got into positions without proper equipment or training. If they are not properly trained, the new recruits will get lost, however good the qualifications they may have. There is a lot to learn in the process of actual work, and here,

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your colleagues and superiors count most. It is worth considering whether much will be lost if Saturdays are devoted for rigorous training of staff for, at least, a period of six months. Training should be given in small groups, in order to bring the senior officers and the lower staff close together. There should also be a forum for mutual exchange of experiences.

### Policy Making

A great weakness in our administration is at the policy making level. Our top civilians find solutions to most of the problems by their resourcefulness, rather than by careful study and understanding of the problems. They have the usual weakness of the bureaucrat to grab and keep more and more power in their hands. This is a weakness, however, which the civil servant will never admit; he may not even be aware of it. The inevitable result is that he gets bogged down in too many problems and too many trivial details. He hardly realises that the trait of a good civil servant is always to keep his successor ready. Instead of trying to make himself indispensable. He should always find sufficient time and leisure to keep abreast of the developments in his field, not from the files coming from below, but from his own independent study and discussions. He should be in a position to apply his mind constantly to major issues of policy, and anticipate events before they overtake him. He should have also at hand a small group of officers, who have intellectual curiosity and aptitude for policy making, for discussions and assistance. He should not allow himself to be over-worked year after year, without leave or rest.

### Execution


When policies are clear, the problem of execution becomes easier. But a sound policy can be spoilt by bad execution also. It is at the execution level that vast number of people are employed. To weld them together into a team and to employ them usefully require leadership of the first order at all levels. Discontent, particularly at lower levels, is widespread. Here comes the conditions of service, governed by innumerable rules. They are so complicated that hardly any one understands them. These rules were framed a long time ago and though they have been amended many times, they are now

completely out of tune with the requirements of today's administration. Rules should be simple and clear, and no room should be left for doubt in regard to one's conditions of service. The absence of such rules is one of the main reasons for discontent among the ranks of Government servants.

There is, besides, the desperate economic condition of the vast majority of the staff, which is the root cause of many of the troubles. This is a matter over which Government cannot sleep for long. The difficulties of Government are also equally great. To allow any substantial relief to the staff would involve a heavy financial commitment which it is in no position to make. Simple salary increases, however, do not seem to be the solution. Government should meet groups in the legislature and try to develop mutual understanding of each others' problems and difficulties and to evolve a scheme by which Government can take greater responsibility for providing minimum amenities like food, housing, medical aid and education of the children of the staff at reasonable cost. There is no escape from it. The defence services have their own canteens and stores where they can get most of their requirements at a cost much

lower than that prevailing outside. The working of the army canteens should give Government an idea whether the civilian staff can also be given this much needed relief on similar lines. If an army marches on its stomach, it is no different with the other categories of service personnel, particularly when the country is launching such ambitious plans.

Administration is a large problem and a human problem. In this, what is lost in character cannot be regained by any other means. A civil servant cannot afford to have any lapses. And the standard has to be set right at the top, so that it percolates to the lower levels. Unfortunately it is the lapses at the top level, including those at the ministerial level, which are bringing down the standard of administration. It is the man who gets into the position and not the position that makes the man. This is a maxim which is seldom understood by the bureaucrats. The result is that they lose touch with realities when they get into position. It is character that comes first and foremost in administration. Who will instil this into the heads of our top men? Will they realise it themselves and act up to it or will they go the Old China way?



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