

Lesson 35

Political Executive and Bureaucracy

Summary,

Bureaucracy is a permanent fixture. Theoretically they play different roles, politicians make policies and administrators implement them. Bureaucracy is a body of permanent paid and skilled officials. It aids and advises the government to make plans and carry them out this advice may or may not be accepted by the minister but once the decision is made, S/he is duty bound to implement it effectively.

Bureaucracy

Meaning –

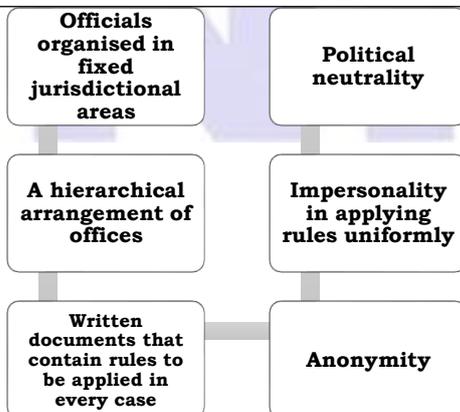
It is associated with red-tapism, delay & wastefulness, bureaucracy is a specific form of social organisation involved in administrative efforts.

It is a machine which is needed to run the government of the day.

It is the only tool available to any modern government to administer.



Max Weber: ideal type of bureaucracy characterized by:



Role of Bureaucracy in Development

- ✚ Bureaucracy constitutes the apparatus & mechanism through which the state realizes its purposes, a country's life is largely shaped by the quality of administration.
- ✚ A plan can succeed only if its administrative implications have been worked out in detail, a high degree of bureaucratic competence is essential to push through speedy development measures.

Bureaucracy & Politics - Politics / Administration Dichotomy

- ✚ The conventional view of public administration is based upon the dichotomy of politics and administration.
- ✚ Politics or policy making is the proper activity of the legislative bodies and administration is the proper activity of administrators who carry out policies.

- ✚ The bureaucrat acts as pure adviser to his political head presents facts of the case suggests lines of action and implications of alternative policies.
- ✚ It is the prerogative of the political master to decide the policy. The bureaucrat is expected to implement the policy faithfully.
- ✚ An impersonal, strictly rule-bound neutral bureaucracy was expected not only to provide the necessary administrative objectivity but also enhance the democratic principle of equality and provide protection from arbitrary rule.

Decline of Neutrality Concept –

The breakdown of the theory of neutrality has come about because of several reasons:

1. The processes of policy making are no longer confined to the political executive
2. The decline of neutrality can be attributed to the demands and pressures of coalition politics
3. The classical theory of civil service neutrality presupposes agreement on principles fundamental to democracy.

Committed Bureaucracy –

- ✚ Weber model of bureaucracy was found inappropriate to effect the social transformation in many developing countries.

- ✚ The concept of committed bureaucracy was much contested in the political & administrative circles.
- ✚ If committed bureaucracy stands for a non-partisan socially sensitive civil service which can empathize with the politician who is genuinely, interested in progress and development of the country, then a committed civil service is more appropriate for a developing nation than having an insensitive neutral one.

Sources of Stress –

- ✚ The political leaders claim to be the true representatives.
- ✚ Political interference in all matters including those where the statutory power is vested in the civil servants is a constant phenomenon.
- ✚ There are numerous instances of use of transfer, promotion, supersession & compulsory retirement from service by elected politicians as tools to silence the voice of dissent and expression of difference of opinion.
- ✚ Many administrators use political influence or forge alliance with the politician to brighten their own career prospects.
- ✚ Sometimes they take advantage of the new politician this is an equally grim scenario.

Improving the System:

✚ Administrative Reforms Commission's Views
Expressing the government appointed the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in 1966 to conduct a comprehensive study of the administrative system and suggest remedies.

The two most important areas touched upon by the ARC in its reports were:

- (a) **Minister** – Civil Servants relationship, wherein the ARC emphasized the need for the de-politicization of the services and
- (b) the creation of a climate and culture of administration that would help assert the growth of unhealthy personal relationship between Civil Servants and Minister.
 - a proper understanding of the administrative functions and recognition of its professional nature.
 - as little interference as possible in-service matters, postings, transfers, promotions etc.
 - no requests for departures from declared and approved policies to suit individual cases.

Similarly, on the part of the civil service it asserts:

(a) there must be a sincere and honest attempt to find out what the political head wants and make the necessary adjustment in policies and procedures to suit his wishes.

(b) readiness to fall in line with his political chief in all matters unless strong grounds indicate a different course.

Recent Developments –

Despite the valuable recommendations made by the ARC to streamline the relationship between the minister and the civil servants, nothing much seems to have changed because of political and administrative apathy.

✚ A developing nation cannot afford contradictory ethos between the political executive and bureaucracy because it strikes at the root of a progressive administrative culture.

✚ The roles of political and administrative elite are complimentary and in the interest of public welfare they must work in harmony with each other.

Evaluate yourself –

1. Write down the major characteristics of Weber's model of Bureaucracy.
2. Write down the principle of politics-administration dichotomy.
3. List down the sources of stress and write your opinion about them.