
**UNIT-1 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION - MEANING,
NATURE, SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE**

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1.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- define Administration and Public Administration
- describe the nature of Public Administration
- explain the scope of Public Administration
- distinguish between Private and Public Administration
- analyse the Role of Public Administration vis-à-vis Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Administration as an activity is as old as society itself. But as an area of study it originated, with the publication of Wilson's essay on study of Administration in 1887. As a process, administration occurs in both public and private organisations. It occurs in such diverse institution as settings as a business firm, labour unions, religious or charitable organisations, educational institutions, etc. Its nature is affected by the

sphere with which it is concerned. Administration is commonly divided into two types, Public and Private Administration. As an aspect of government activity it has existed since the emergence of political system(s). While public administration relates to the activities carried out by government, private administration refers to the management of private business enterprises.

It is important to understand the functioning of administration for on this lies the understanding of the government. In this Unit an effort has been made to bring the concept of administration, public administration in particular, closer to you. This understanding will take you through the entire course of Public Administration. In what follows, we will examine the meaning, nature and scope of public administration.

1.2 WHAT IS ADMINISTRATION?

The word ‘administer’ is derived from the Latin word *administere*, which means *to care for* or *to look after* people, to manage affairs. Administration may be defined as “group activity which involves cooperation and coordination for the purpose of achieving desired goals or objectives”.

Broadly speaking, the term administration appears to bear at least four different meanings or different senses depending upon the context in which it is used:

- (1) As a Discipline: The name of a branch of learning or intellectual discipline as taught and studied in colleges and universities.
- (2) As a Vocation: Type of work/trade or profession/occupation, especially one that involves knowledge and training in a branch of advance learning.
- (3) As a Process: The sum total of activities undertaken to implement Public Policy or policies to produce some services or goods.
- (4) As a Synonym for 'word' Executive or Government: Such other body of persons in supreme charge of affairs, for example, Manmohan Singh Administration, Bush Administration, etc.

Noted below are definitions by a few famous writers.

E.N. Gladden

“Administration is a long and slightly pompous word, but it has a humble meaning, for it means to care for or look after people, to

manage affairs.... is determined action taken in pursuit of conscious purpose”.

Brooks Adams

“Administration is the capacity of coordinating many, and often conflicting, social energies in a single organism, so adroitly that they shall operate as a unity.

Felix A. Nigro

“Administration is the organisation and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose”.

J.M. Pfiffner and R. Presthus

“Administration is the organisation and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends”.

L.D. White

“The art of administration is the direction, co-ordination and control of many persons to achieve some purpose or objective”.

Luther Gullick

“Administration has to do with getting things done, with the accomplishment of defined objectives”.

F.M. Marx

“Administration is determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose. It is the systematic ordering of affairs and the calculated use of resources, aimed at making those things happen which one wants to happen and foretelling everything to the country”.

Herbert Simon, D.W. Smithburg and V.A. Thompson

“In its broadest sense, the administration can be defined as the activities of group cooperating to accomplish common goals.”

A brief analysis of the definitions listed above reveals that administration comprises two essentials, namely (1) cooperative effort, and (2) pursuit of common objectives. One does not find any administration if there is only a common purpose without a collective effort or vice-versa. Administration is also called a ‘technology of social relationships’. Thus, administration is a process common to all

group effort, public or private, civil or military, large scale or small scale. It is process at work in a department store, a bank, a university, a high school, a railroad, a hospital, a hotel or a local government.

1.3 ADMINISTRATION, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Before we discuss about the meaning, definition, nature, scope and importance of public administration we will try to know what is administration, organisation and management. As these terms are often used interchangeably and synonymously, it is pertinent to know the differences and distinctions between these three terms.

According to William Schulze **Administration** is the force, which lays down the object for which an **organisation** and its **management** are to strive and the broad policies under which they are to operate.

An **Organisation** is a combination of the necessary human beings, materials, tools, equipment and working space, appurtenances brought together in systematic and effective co-relation to accomplish some desired object.

Management is that which leads guides and directs an **organisation** for the accomplishment of pre-determined object.

To put the above in simple terms, administration sets the goal, **management** strives to attain it and **organisation** is the machine of the management for the attainment of the ends determined by the administration.

Some scholars have a different view about the **administration** and **management**. According to Peter Drucker **management** is associated with the business activity, which has to show economic performance, whereas administration is associated with the non business activities like activities of the Government.

The other view is that **administration** is associated with performing routine things in known settings in accordance with certain procedures, rules, and regulations. The **Management** is associated with performing functions like risk taking, dynamic, creative and innovative functions.

Some scholars of Public Administration are closely associated with the first view that is, **administration** is a determinative function. **Management**, on other hand is an executive function that is primarily concerned with carrying out the broad policies laid down by the **administration**. **Organisation** is the machinery through which coordination is established between **administration** and **management**.

1.4 DEFINING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

L.D. White observes that although public administration varies in form and objects, and although the administration of public and private affairs differs at many points, there is an underlying similarity, if not identity. As an integral aspect of such generic concept, public administration could be related to that type of administration, which operates within a specific ecological setting. It is a means to carry out the policy decisions made by political executive.

To be seen along with it is the 'Public' aspect of Public administration, which attributes a special character and focus to it. 'Public' can be looked at formally to mean 'government'. So, public administration is government administration, government in action, or a socio-economic and politico-administrative confluence, the focus being especially on public bureaucracy. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines public administration as 'the application of a policy of a state through its government.'

Public Administration, therefore, refers to that part of administration, which pertains to the administrative activities of the government.

Now we will try to look into the definitions of Public Administration provided by various scholars.

Woodrow Wilson

Public administration is the detailed and systematic application of law. Every particular application of law is an act of administration.

L.D. White

"Public administration consists of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfilment or enforcement of public policy". As per White, this definition covers a multitude of particular operations in many fields the delivery of a letter, the sale of public land, the negotiation of a treaty, the award of compensation to an injured workman, the quarantine of a sick child, the removal of litter from a park, manufacturing uranium 235, and licensing the use of atomic energy. It includes military as well as civil affairs, much of the work of courts, and all the special fields of government activity-police, education, health, construction of public works, conservation, social security, and many others. The conduct of public affairs in advanced civilisations requires the employment of almost every profession and skill-engineering, law, medicine, and teaching; the crafts, the technical specialties, the office skills, and many others.

Percy Mc Queen

Public administration is related to the operations of government whether local or central.

Luther Gulick

Public administration is that part of the science of administration, which has to do with the government; it concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the work of the government is done; though there are obviously problems also in connection with the legislative and judicial branches.

J.M Pfiffner

“Administration consists of getting the work of government done by coordinating the efforts of people so that they can work together to accomplish their set tasks”.

M. Ruthanaswami

“When administration has to do with the affairs of a state or minor political institutions like the municipal or country council (district board), it is called public administration. All the acts of the officials of a government, from the peon in a remote office to the head of a state in the capital, constitute public administration.”

H.A. Simon, D.W. Smithburg and V.A. Thompson

“By Public Administration is meant, in common usage, the activities of the executive branches of national, state and local governments, government corporations and certain other agencies of a specialised character. Specifically excluded are judicial and legislative agencies within the government and non-governmental administration.”

Corson and Harris

“Public administration ... is the action part of government, the means by which the purposes and goals of government are realised.”

Dwight Waldo

“Public administration is the art and science of management as applied to the affairs of State.”

M.E. Dimock

“Public Administration is concerned with ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the government. The ‘what’ is the subject matter, the technical knowledge of a field, which enables the administrator to perform his tasks. The ‘how’ is the technique of management, the principles according to which co-operative programmes are carried through to success. Each is indispensable, together they form the synthesis called administration”.

Nicholas Henry

“Public Administration is a broad-ranging and amorphous combination of theory and practice; its purpose is to promote a superior understanding of government and its relationship with the society, it governs, as well as to encourage public policies more responsive to social needs and to institute managerial practices attuned to effectiveness, efficiency and the deeper human requisites of the citizenry”.

The traditional definitions of Public Administration, which are given above reflect the view that the Public Administration is only involved in carrying out the policies and programmes of the government. It reflects that it has no role in policy making and also locates the administration in the executive branch but today the term public administration is used in a broader sense that it is not only involved in carrying out the programmes of the government, but it also plays an important role in policy formulation and covers the three branches of the government. In this context, we may reflect on the definition offered by F.A. Nigro and L.G. Nigro. According to them Public Administration:

In this context we can reflect the definition offered by F.A. Nigro and L.G. Nigro. According to them Public Administration:

- is co-operative group effort in a public setting;
- covers all three branches-executive, legislative, and judicial, and their inter-relationships;
- has an important role in the formulation of public policy and is thus a part of the political process;
- is different in significant ways from private administration; and
- is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community”.

In sum, public administration:

- is the non-political public bureaucracy operating in a political system;
- deals with the ends of the State, the sovereign will, the public interests and laws;

- is the business side of government and as such concerned with policy execution, but it is also concerned with policy-making;
- covers all three branches of government, although it tends to be concentrated in the executive branch;
- provides regulatory and service functions to the people in order to attain good life;
- differs significantly from private administration, especially in its emphasis on the public; and
- is interdisciplinary in nature as it draws upon other social sciences like political science, economics and sociology.

1.5 NATURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There are two views regarding the Nature of Public Administration, that is, Integral and Managerial.

According to the integral view, ‘administration’ is the sum total of all the activities – manual, clerical, managerial, etc., which are undertaken to realise the objectives of the organisation. In this view all the acts of officials of the government from the Attendant to the Secretaries to the government and Head of the State constitute Public Administration. Henri Fayol and L.D. White are the supporters of this view.

According to the managerial view of administration, the managerial activities of people who are involved in planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling constitute Public Administration. This view regards administration as getting things done and not doing things. Luther Gullick, Herbert Simon, Smithburg and Thompson are the supporters of this view. The managerial view excludes Public Administration from non-managerial activities such as manual, clerical and technical activities.

The two views differs from each other in many ways. According to Prof. M.P. Sharma the difference between the two views is fundamental. The integral view includes the activities of all the persons engaged in administration whereas the managerial view restricts itself only to the activities of the few persons at the top. The integral view depicts all types of activities from manual to managerial, from non-technical to technical whereas the managerial view takes into account only the managerial activities in an organisation. Furthermore, administration, according to the integral view would differ from one sphere to another depending upon the subject matter, but whereas that will not be the case according to the managerial point of view because the managerial view is identified with the managerial techniques common to all the fields of administration.

The difference between the two views relates to the difference between management and operation or we may say between getting things done and doing things. The correct meaning of the term administration would however, depend upon the context in which it is used. Dimock, Dimock and Koenig sum up in the following words:

“As a study public administration examines every aspect of government’s efforts to discharge the laws and to give effect to public policy; as a process, it is all the steps taken between the time an enforcement agency assumes jurisdiction and the last brick is placed (but includes also that agency’s participation, if any, in the formulation of the programme in the first place); and as a vocation, it is organising and directing the activities of others in a public agency.”

1.6 SCOPE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

By the scope of Public Administration, we mean the major concerns of Public Administration as an activity and as a discipline.

1.6.1 Scope of Public Administration as an activity

Broadly speaking, Public Administration embraces all the activities of the government. Hence as an activity the scope of public administration is no less than the scope of state activity. In the modern welfare state people expect many things – a wide variety of services and protection from the government. In this context public administration provides a number of welfare and social security services to the people. Besides, it has to manage government owned industries and regulate private industries. Public administration covers every area and activity within the ambit public policy. Thus, the scope of public administration is very wide in modern state.

1.6.2 Scope of Public Administration as a Discipline

The scope of public administration as a discipline, that is subject of studies, comprises of the following:

The POSDCoRB view

Several writers have defined the scope of public administration in varying terms. Gullick sums up the scope of the subject by the letters of the word POSDCoRB which denote: Planning, Organisation, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordinating reporting the Budgeting. Planning means the working out in broad outline the things to be done, the methods to be adopted to accomplish the purpose.

Organisation means the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which the work is sub-divided, arranged, defined and coordinated.

Staffing means the recruitment and training of the personnel and their conditions of work.

Directing means making decisions and issuing orders and instructions.

Coordinating means inter-relating the work of various divisions, sections and other parts of the organisation.

Reporting means informing the superiors within the agency to whom the executive is responsible about what is going on.

Budgeting means fiscal planning, control and accounting.

According to Gullick the POSDCoRB activities are common to all organisations. They are the common problems of management which are found in different agencies regardless of the nature of the work they do.

POSDCoRB gives unity, certainty, and definiteness and makes the study more systematic. The critics pointed out that the POSDCoRB activities were neither the whole of administration, nor even the most important part of it. The POSDCoRB view overlooks the fact that different agencies are faced with different administrative problems, which are peculiar to the nature of the services, they render and the functions they performed. The POSDCoRB view takes into consideration only the common techniques of the administration and ignores the study of the 'subject matter' with which the agency is concerned. A major defect is that the POSDCoRB view does not contain any reference to the formulation and implementation of the policy. Therefore, the scope of administration is defined very narrowly, being too inward looking and too conscious of the top management.

The Subject Matter View

We all know that public administration deals not only with the processes but also with the substantive matters of administration, such as Defence, Law and Order, Education, Public Health, Agriculture, Public Works, Social Security, Justice, Welfare, etc. These services require not only POSDCoRB techniques but also have important specialised techniques of their own which are not covered by POSDCoRB techniques. For example, if you take Police Administration it has its own techniques in crime detection, maintenance of Law and Order, etc., which are much and more vital to

efficient police work, than the formal principles of organisation, personnel management, coordination or finance and it is the same with other services too. Therefore, the study of public administration should deal with both the processes (that is POSDCoRB techniques and the substantive concerns). We conclude the scope of public administration with the statement of Lewis Meriam: “Public administration is an instrument with two blades like a pair of scissors. One blade may be knowledge of the field covered by POSDCoRB, the other blade is knowledge of the subject matter in which these techniques are applied. Both blades must be good to make an effective tool”.

We may conclude the discussion with the observation of Herbert Simon who says that Public administration has two important aspects, namely deciding and doing things. The first provides the basis for the second. One cannot conceive of any discipline without thinking or deciding. Thus Public administration is a broad-ranging and an amorphous combination of theory and practice.

1.7 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ADMINISTRATION

The major concern of administration is to properly organise men and material for achieving desired ends. As a co-operative group activity, administration is truly universal and operates in all types of public and private organisations. In other words, administration occurs in both public and private institutional settings. Its nature depends upon the nature of the setting and goals with which it is concerned. On the basis of the nature of the institutional setting, public administration can be roughly distinguished from private administration. Public administration is governmental administration concerned with achieving state purposes, determined by the state. Private administration, on the other hand is, concerned with administration of private business organisation and is distinct from public administration. Let us elaborate this

1.7.1 Distinction between public and private administration

John Gaus, Ludvig Von Mises, Paul H. Appleby, Sir Josia Stamp, Herbert A. Simon, Peter Drucker, etc., in their writings, have made distinction between public and private administration.

According to **Simon**, the distinction between public and private administration relates mainly to three points:

- Public administration is bureaucratic whereas private administration is business like;

- Public administration is political where as private administration is non-political; and
- Public administration is characterised by red-tape where as private administration is free from it.

Felix A. Nigro has pointed out that government is also different from private organisation, as no private company can equal to it in size and diversity of activities.

According to Sir Josiah Stamp, the four principles, which differentiate public from private administration, are:

- **Principle of Uniformity:** Common and uniform laws and regulations mostly regulate public Administration.
- **Principle of External Financial Control:** the representatives of the people through a legislative body control Government revenues and heads of expenditure.
- **Principle of Ministerial Responsibility:** Public administration is accountable to its political masters and through them to the people.
- **Principle of marginal Return:** The main objective of a business venture is profit, however small it may be. However, most of the objectives of public administration can neither be measured in money terms nor checked by accountancy methods.

According to Paul H. Appleby public administration is different from private administration. He remark, “In broad terms the governmental function and attitude have at least three complementary aspects that go to differentiate government from all other institutions and activities: **breadth of scope, impact and consideration; public accountability; political character.** No non-governmental institution has the breadth of government.

Appleby notes that the **political character** of Public Administration differentiates it from private administration. Public Administration is subject to political direction and control. This is the primary distinction between the two. He further argues, “Administration is politics since it must be responsive to the public interest. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that popular political processes, which are the essence of democracy, can only work through governmental organisation, and that all governmental organisations are not merely administrative entities, they are and must be political organisms.”

Appleby reflects further on the distinction between public and private administration in the context of public accountability “Government administration differs from all other administrative work to a degree not even faintly realised outside, by virtue of its public nature, the way in which it is subject to public scrutiny and outcry. This interest often runs to details of administrative action that in private business would never be of concern other than inside the organisation.

According to Appleby private administration cannot claim the **breadth of scope, impact and consideration of the public administration**. He observes, “The organised government impinges upon and is affected by practically everything that exists or moves in our society. It involves policies and actions of immense complexity. Its fullest possible understanding requires the wisdom of many specialists as well as the key participants in public and private life.

The more important distinguishing features of Public administration may be described under the following sub-heads:

Political Direction: Public administration is political, while private administration is non-political, public administration takes place in a political context.

Absence of profit motive: The absence of profit motive from the Public administration is another feature, which distinguishes it from the private administration. The primary purpose of governmental organisation is to provide services to the people and promote social good.

Prestige: Public administrators who serve in the Government enjoy high status and prestige in comparison to their counterparts in private enterprises especially developing countries.

Public Gaze: All the actions of public administration are exposed to wide public gaze because the public closely watches it. This does not happen in private administration.

Service and Cost: Most governments spend more money than their income or revenues. That is the reason for finding generally a deficit budget that is, expenditure exceeding income. Conversely, private administration income often exceeds expenditure without which they cannot survive.

Legal framework: Public administration operates within a legal framework. It is rule oriented. The responsibilities of public administrators are fixed by a set of constitutional practices, laws and

regulations. Government officials are obliged to act within their legal powers and not outside the law.

Consistency of treatment: A government official is required by law to maintain a high degree of consistency in his dealings with the public. He has to observe the principle of equality of treatment in serving the people. It is a legal obligation to not to discriminate against any person.

Public accountability: Public accountability is the hallmark of Public administration in a democracy. Public administration is responsible to the public, though not directly but indirectly through political executive, legislature, judiciary, etc.

Large-scale administration: Public administration is large-scale administration. It is said that almost anything under the sun is directly or indirectly under the domain of public administration. It is by all means larger than any big private concern in terms of size., complexity and diversity of activities.

Monopolistic and Essential Services: In the field of public administration, there is generally a monopoly of the government and it does not generally allow private parties to compete with it. For example, no person or bodies of persons are allowed to establish or perform functions related to public services like national security, foreign relations, law and order, mint and currency, as these are the exclusive fields of the government and thoroughly important for the community and polity to prosper.

Officials remain Anonymous: In public administration, even the most senior officials remain anonymous and their identity is not disclosed. This is so because whatever they do, they do in the name of the government and not in their own name.

Financial meticulousness: Public administration has to be very careful in financial matters because it is working as custodian of people's money.

Lower level of Efficiency: Efficiency is said to be the cornerstone of any organisation. However, due to varied responsibilities, lack of effective control, less accountability, involvement of a large number of levels and job security of employees, efficiency has not been there in public organisations to the effect desired. When compared to private administration, one finds that the degree of efficiency in public organisations is at a lower level. With profit as the major motive coupled with excessive control and flexibility in personnel administration the level of efficiency in private organisations is much higher.

1.7.2 Similarities between Public and Private Administration

Scholars like **Henry Fayol**, **Mary P. Follet** and **L. Urwick** do not make a distinction between public and private administration. The classical writers held the view that public and private administrations are the undifferentiated members of the genus administration. **Henri Foyal**, for example, says that there is only one administrative science, which can be applied equally well to public and private sectors. In his address in the Second International Congress of Administrative Science, **Fayol** remarked, “The meaning which I have given to the word administration and which has been generally adopted, broadens considerably the field of administrative sciences. It embraces not only the public service but also enterprises of every size and description, of every form and every purpose. All undertakings require planning, organisation, command, co-ordination and control and in order to function properly, all must observe the same general principles. We are no longer confronted with several administrative sciences but with one which can be applied equally well to public and to private affairs”.

The following similarities between the two types of administration may be noted:

1. Both public and business administration rely on common skills, techniques and procedures.
2. In modern times the principle of profit motive is not peculiar to private administration, because it is now accepted as a laudable objective for public sector enterprises also.
3. In personnel management, the private organisations have been influenced greatly by the practices of public organisations.
4. The private concerns are also subjected to many legal constraints. Government is exercising much control over business firms through regulatory legislation such as taxation, monetary and licensing policies, etc. Consequently, they are not as free as they once used to be.
5. There is a similar type of hierarchy and management systems, both in public and private sectors. Both have same kind of organisation structure, superior – subordinate relationships, etc.
6. Both Public and private administration carries on continuous efforts to improve their internal working and also for efficient delivery of services to people or customers.

7. Public and private administration serves the people, whether being called clients or customers. Both have to maintain close contact with people to inform about their services and also to get feedback about services and product. In both the cases, public relations help them to inform and improve their services to the people.

The preceding discussion shows that the distinction between public and private administration is not absolute. In fact, they are becoming more and more alike in many respects. However, it does not mean that there are no significant differences between these two types of administration. **Waldo** observes that Public administration is distinct because it reflects the peculiar characteristics of government activity and the public setting in which it functions.

Given the wide acceptance of the ideas of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, both public and private administrations have to compete in the same area to provide services to people. Here both are dealing with customers, who pay for their services, in such a situation it narrows down the differences between the public and private administration. New Public Management, which has come into prominence, recently, puts emphasis on managerial techniques, which are to be adopted by public administration for the efficient delivery of public services. But in providing public services in the field of social and welfare areas there exists a difference between public and private administration.

With this brief characterisation, it could be stated that both public and private administration are placed in different environments. But this difference is more apparent than real. According to Waldo, The generalisation which distinguish public administration from private administration by special care for equality of treatment, legal authorisation of, and responsibility of action, public justification of decisions, financial probity and meticulousness, etc. are of very limited applicability.” In fact public and private administrations are the “two species of the same genus, but they have special values and techniques of their own which give to each its distinctive character.

1.8 IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

We will be discussing the importance of public administration as a specialised subject of study and later the role and importance of public administration in the modern society.

1.8.1 Importance of Public Administration as Specialised Subject of Study

The study of administration assumed significance, according to Woodrow Wilson, as a consequence to the increasing complexities of society, growing functions of state and growth of governments on democratic lines. This exhaustive list of functions made to think as to 'how' and in what 'directions' these functions should be effectively performed. To this Wilson suggested that there was a need to reform the government in the administrative field. As per Wilson, the object of administrative study is to discover what government can properly and successfully do and how it can do these things with utmost efficiency and the least possible cost either of money or of energy.

The importance of public administration as a specialised subject can be attributed to the following reasons:

- One of the important reasons is the practical concern that the government today has to work towards the public interest. The first and foremost objective of public administration is to efficiently deliver public services. In this context, Wilsonian definition of the subject as efficiency promoting and pragmatic field was the first explicitly articulated statement on the importance of a separate discipline of public administration. During the first half of the preceding century, a number of countries have appointed committees to look into the problems of administration and recommended suitable administrative machinery to respond to diverse public needs. The Haldane Committee Report (1919) in Britain; the President's Committee on Administrative Management (1937) in the United States; A.D. Gorwala Committee's and Paul H. Appleby's Reports in India are some of the examples of the efforts by various countries to make changes in public administration. During the last four decades also, a number of reports, produced by committees/commissions appointed by governments in various countries or multilateral agencies, and books published by scholars have enriched the discipline and provided new perspectives to public administration to tune it to the changing needs of the times. They include: Report of the Committee on the Civil Services (Fulton Committee Report, U.K., 1968); various reports of the Administrative Reforms Commission (India, 1967-72); Reinventing Government (U.S.A., look by David Osborne and Ted Gabler, 1992), Governance and sustainable Development (UNDP, 1997) and World Development Report: Building Institutions for Markets (The World Bank, 2002).
- Administration is looked at, in the social science perspective, as a cooperative and social activity. Hence the concern of academic inquiry would be to understand the impact of

government policies and operations on society. What kind of society do the policies envisage?; To what extent administrative action is non-discriminatory?; How is public administration functioning and what are the immediate and long term effects of governmental action on the social structure, the economy and polity?; etc. are questions requiring careful analysis. From the social science perspective, public administration, as a discipline, has to draw on a variety of sister disciplines such as History, Sociology, Economics, Geography, Philosophy, Psychology, etc., with the objective to explain and not just to prescribe.

- Public administration has a special status in the developing countries. Many of these countries, after independence from the colonial rule have stressed upon speedy socio – economic development. Obviously, these countries have to rely on government for speedy development. The latter requires a public administration to be organised and effectively operated for increasing productivity quickly. Likewise, social welfare activities have to be effectively executed. These aspects have given birth to the new sub-discipline of development administration. The emergence of development administration is indicative of a felt need for a body of knowledge about how to study the third world administration and at the same time to bring about speedy socio-economic development with government's intervention. Development administration has therefore, emerged as a sub-discipline to serve the cause of development.
- Public administration, as witnessed holds a place of significance in the lives of people. It touches them at every step. For most of their needs, the citizens depend upon public administration. In view of the important role of public administration in the lives of people, the citizens of a country cannot ignore. Therefore, its teaching should become a part of the curriculum of educational institutions. People must get to know about the structure of government, the activities it undertakes and the manner in which these are actually performed. The study of public administration will contribute to the realisation of the values of citizenship.

1.8.2 Importance of Public Administration as an Activity

The contemporary age, which has witnessed the emergence of 'Administrative State', public administration has become an essential part of society and a dominant factor. The functions it is called upon to perform, have expanded in scope and nature, and what is more, are continually increasing. Many of them are more positive in nature because they care for the essential requirements of human life, be it

health, education, recreation, sanitation, social security or others. It is, therefore, a creative factor, with its motto being 'human welfare'. These functions are over and above its regulatory functions. The view points of eminent scholars, as referred to below, amply reflect the significance of public administration.

Woodrow Wilson: "Administration is the most obvious part of government; it is government in action, it is the executive, the operative and the most visible side of the government.

Brooke Adams: "Administration is an important human faculty because its chief function is to facilitate social change and to cushion the stock of social revolution".

W.B. Donham, 'If our civilization fails, it will be mainly because of breakdown of administration'.

Paul H. Appleby: 'Administration is the basis of government. No government can exist without administration. Without administration government would be a discussion club, if indeed, it could exist at all'.

The role of public administration in various facets is noted below:

- **Basis of the Government:** A Government can exist without a legislature or an independent judiciary. But no Government can exist without administration.
- **An instrument for providing services:** Public administration is mainly concerned with the performance of various activities performed by government in the public interest. Felix A. Nigro aptly remarks, "The real core of administration is the basic service which is performed for the public".
- **An instrument for implementing policies:** Modern governments go a long way in formulating and adopting sound policies laws and regulations. It should not be forgotten that such policies, laws, etc. are not merely printed papers. Such paper declarations of intent are translated into reality by public administration thus converting words into action and form into substance.
- **A stabilising force in society:** Public administration is a major force for bringing stability in society. It has been observed that though government often changes, but violent change is seldom experienced by administration. An element of continuity between the old and the new orders is provided by public administration. It does not hold true only of constitutional

changes of government in democratic countries, but is also reflected when there are revolutionary changes in the form and character of government.

- **An instrument of social change and economic development:** Public administration's role as a change agent is particularly crucial in developing nations. It is expected of the state at present to work for accelerating socio-economic change and not to be a passive agency to maintain the status quo.
- **Technical Character:** The present day government is expected to provide various services to its population. The increase in the number of functions undertaken by the government require highly specialised, professional and technical, services. Modern public administration usually represents a galaxy of all of a nation's occupations.

According to **Gerald Caiden** public administration has assumed the following crucial roles in contemporary modern society:

- Preservation of polity;
- Maintenance of stability and order;
- Institutionalisation of Socio-Economic changes;
- Management of large scale commercial services;
- Ensuring growth and economic development;
- Protection of the weaker sections of society;
- Formation of public opinion; and
- Influencing Public policies.

The points mentioned below summarise the reasons for the growing importance of public administration:

- **Emergence of Welfare and Democratic state**
Emergence of welfare and democratic state has led to an increase in the activities of public administration compared to that of the laissez-faire state. The state has to now serve all sections of people in the society. This amounts to enhanced responsibilities of public administration. Public administration is also to regulate and control private economic enterprises to meet the objectives of the state.
- **Industrial Revolution**
The industrial revolution gave rise to socio-economic problems making the government to assume new roles and responsibilities such as protection and promotion of the rights of workers in industrial establishments, etc. Consequently, the state has

enacted a number of Industrial and Labour laws and it is imperative for public administration to implement such laws in order to meet the requirements of labour welfare.

- **Scientific and Technological Development**

Scientific and technological developments have brought about welcome additions in infrastructure such as power, transport and communication system. The invention of telephone, telegraph and other mechanical devices such as typewriter, tele-printer, and calculators, photocopying machines, computers, fax and the electronic mail has brought revolutionary changes in office administration. All these have made possible 'big government' and 'large scale administration'. Besides changing the ethos and character of public administration, the revolution in information and communication technologies have contributed to improved delivery of services to people.

- **Economic Planning**

Centralised economic planning has been pursued in many developing countries as a method for socio-economic development. It requires a large number of experts and elaborate administrative machinery for plan formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Apart from the reasons cited the rapid growth of population, modern warfare, increase in natural and manmade disasters, decline in social harmony, increase in violence due to conflicts, communal riots, ethnic wars, terrorism, etc. have increased the importance of public administration.

It goes without saying that public administration is not only the operative but also the most obvious part of the government. It is government in action and occupies a significant place not merely as an instrument of governance but also as an important mechanism for preserving and promoting the welfare of community. It has substantive impact upon the life of the people. It is a vital process charged with implementation of pre-determined, welfare oriented, and developmental objectives.

1.9 ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION UNDER LIBERALISATION, PRIVATISATION AND GLOBALISATION (LPG)

Since the 1980s a number of countries, have been influenced by the concept of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. In the 1980s India has also started the process of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG). One form of LPG has entrusted the management

of public sector enterprises partially or fully to private companies. Another form of LPG is disinvestment in public sector enterprises, which is followed in India. As a result of this the public sector enterprises find themselves in a competitive and challenging environment. However, the role of public administration under LPG continues to be quite significant. It requires dismantling of a regime of regulations, controls, restrictions, licences, secrecy and delay. The bureaucracy has to play an investor friendly, responsive, transparent, open and competitive role. So, this requires necessary administrative reform, which should aim at elimination of redundant practices, procedures, administrative laws and corruption. Thus, the policy of LPG affects the role, values and skills of public bureaucracy. It also decreases the scope of the functions of the state, resulting in minimum of state interference in the lives of the individuals. The state is called upon to oversee the operational side of the enterprises. This gives the state a new role as regulator.

Today, the role of public administration is towards more of governance, then of direct involvement. The public administration has to play enabling, collaborative, cooperative, partnership and regulatory roles. Coming to the core areas such as defence, atomic energy, law and order, foreign policy it has a direct role to play. In certain other areas such as telecommunications, airlines, insurance, etc., it has to compete with the private sector, for which there should be regulatory commissions to provide for equal level playing fields for both the sectors. There are other areas which it can have partnership with the citizens for efficient delivery of services, for example, maintenance of schools, hospitals, irrigation water and civic amenities. An example we can give is the 'Bhagidari Scheme' adopted by the Delhi Government. In certain areas like electricity, water and transport it can have partnership with the private sector. A number of states have partnership with the private sector in providing these services. Other such areas are protection of forests, empowerment of women, micro credit, health schemes, and awareness programmes, it can have partnership with the Non Governmental (NGO) and Voluntary Organisations.

In analysing the emerging role of public administration in the new millennium, we are dealing with governance. And governance implies that public administration has to operate in a wider context and coordinate efforts and activities of the governmental agencies at various levels with that of the market/the private sector, civil society groups, NGOs and contextual participant or elected local government bodies, self-help groups, etc. The role and character of public administration has seen a major transformation. Although it appears that its directly handled operations have declined in some of the non-traditional areas, public administration has to provide synergy and direction for many collaborative, cooperative and regulatory activities

with other segments of the society. The accent is also on promotion of greater public participation. Yet, it is still accountable for the outcomes of all the activities in which it participates directly or indirectly.

1.10 CONCLUSION

In the preceding text, the importance of Public Administration as a discipline and as an activity has been discussed. Subsequent developments in the discipline in response to both practical problems and academic questions have further enhanced its importance as a vibrant and meaningful field. In the contemporary world, the burden of public duties on government has been steadily increasing. It seems that public administration is indispensable because contemporary civilisation cannot progress without a sound administrative system. According to Gerald, E. Caiden “The positivistic-interventionist role of government would automatically find reactions in academic inquiry. And as history has shown, the importance of Public Administration as a discipline has been closely associated with the increasing activist role of government everywhere. In the context of the newer and the wider duties and responsibilities thrown on the state, the role of public administration is more vital and important than of almost any other branch of government. As a growing field of knowledge and practice, Public Administration has attempted to meet this challenge”.

1.11 KEY CONCEPTS

Equality: The idea that all persons have an equal claim to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Globalisation: The process of globalisation not only includes opening up of world trade, development of advanced means of communication, internationalisation of financial markets and services, growing importance of multinational corporations, population movements and, more generally, increased mobility of persons, goods, capital data and ideas, but also of infectious diseases and environmental problems like pollution.

Liberalisation: A process of freeing the economy, from various Governmental regulations such as industrial licensing, controls on pricing and distribution of products and services, imports and exports and foreign exchange regulations; control of capital issues by companies; credit controls, restriction on investment, etc., so that the development and operation of the economy is increasingly guided by freely operating market forces. Thus liberalisation is essentially a process of withdrawal of all direct controls on the economy.

Privatisation: It means transfer, from the public to the private sector, of ownership or control over assets or activities. Privatisation fosters

efficiency, encourages investment – and thus new growth and employment – and frees public resources for development of infrastructure and social programmes.

Red Tape: The ribbon that was once used to bind government documents; the term now stands as the symbol of excessive official formality and over attention to prescribed routines.

Regulation: The totality of government controls on the social and economic activities of its citizens; the rulemaking process of those administrative agencies charged with the official interpretation of laws.

Synergy: The enhanced result of two or more people, groups or organisation working together. In other words one plus one equals three! it comes from the Greek “Synergia”, which means joint work and cooperative action. The word is used quite often to mean that combining forces produces a better product.

1.11 References and Further Reading

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1.12 Activities

1. Consider public administrative operations with which you have recently dwelt or are familiar as a functionary or as a citizen.
2. The differences between public administration and private administration are profound. Explain how the two fields differ and why the two terms are not interchangeable.