
UNIT 8 GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL EXECUTIVE

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8.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the role of bureaucracy and political executive in governance
- Examine the relationship between bureaucracy and political executive in historical perspective
- Highlight the relationship between bureaucracy and political executive in the post-independent period; and
- Analyse the changing complexion of relationship between bureaucracy and political executive.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Governance refers to forms of political system and manner in which power is exercised in utilising country's economic and social resources for development. It also deals with the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions. It is equivalent to purposive and development-oriented administration, which is committed to improvement in quality of life of people. It implies a high level of organisational effectiveness. It also relates to the capacity of political and administrative systems to cope up with the emerging challenges of the society. Governance involves adoption of new values of public

service delivery in order to establish greater efficiency, legitimacy and creditability of the system. In simple terms, governance can be considered as citizen friendly, citizen caring, and citizen responsive administration.

The essential pre-requisites for quality governance are that the system should be such which suits the needs, aspirations, background and ethos of the people concerned and those selected for operating the system should be endowed with character and competence and motivated by the spirit of public service (Kashyap,2000).

One of the most crucial areas of institutional governance in present times is the interaction between political executive and career civil servants. These interactions become important for the government to perform its routine tasks, and to make and implement the decisions required of a modern political system. Besides, they are also important for the functioning of an effective political democracy. Against this background, it is important to discuss the role and relationship of bureaucracy and political executive. In this Unit, we shall discuss the role of bureaucracy and political executive in the process of governance. An attempt is made to examine the changing complexion of the relationship between bureaucracy and political executive.

8.2 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL EXECUTIVE IN GOVERNANCE

The pedigree of the term bureaucracy is not quite clear. The term bureaucracy is derived from the French term 'bureau' meaning a writing table or desk. Vincent de Gournay first coined the word Bureaucracy in the eighteenth century to refer to "a fourth or fifth form of government" in which officers, clerks, secretaries, inspectors and attendants are appointed to benefit the public interest (Weber, 1952).

According to Laski (1937), bureaucracy refers to a system of government, the control of which is so completely in the hands of officials that their power jeopardises the liberties of ordinary citizens. The characteristics of such a regime are a passion for routine in administration, the sacrifice of flexibility to rule, delay in the making of decisions and a refusal to embark upon experiment.

'Bureaucracy' is also a form of organisation. In this sense, it indicates sophistication in both design and operating methods. It is trained to increase the efficiency of performance and this by the weighing of reason in order to resolve differences in policy making. Governed to a considerable degree by professional standards of behaviour and competence, the modern career service (under favourable conditions), functions as a significant support of rational consideration in public policies and their administration (Marx, 1967).

Though Weber was the first social scientist who made a systematic study of bureaucracy and its characteristics, yet he never defined bureaucracy. He only described its characteristics. According to him, bureaucracy is "an administrative body of appointed officials." Thus in bureaucracy, he included explicitly appointed officials only leaving out the elected ones. In Weberian analysis, bureaucracy refers to the sociological concept of rationalisation of collective activities. It describes a form or design of organisation, which assures predictability of the behaviour of employees. According to Weber, bureaucracy is superior to any other form in decision, precision, stability, discipline and reliability (Mishra and Sweta, 1999). It

makes possible a degree of calculability of results for the heads of the organisation and for those acting in relation to it.

Thus, bureaucracy in spite of its so many shortcomings plays a vital role in the governance of a country both at the policy making and implementation levels. It is like a cart, which carries the burden of the political executive and committed to the programmes and policies being implemented. Bureaucracy being a professional, and skilled body of officials, has a major role to play in governance process. It is responsible for identifying major policy areas, preparing of policy proposals, analysing alternative solutions, categorising major policies into sub policies and determining programmes of action, to attain the laid down objectives. In the process of governance, which involves several set of activities to deliver effective services to people, bureaucracy plays a pivotal role in providing shape to policies that reflect people's needs and put their suggestive, analytical and informative roles to implement the policies.

In a presidential form of government, the President is the head of the political executive and other subordinates work under him who are responsible for policy formulation. But in a parliamentary form of government, it is the Cabinet that constitutes the executive i.e. Prime Minister (Chief Minister at the state level). The governmental activities are divided under various heads called ministries and there is a minister to head each of the ministries. The ministers are elected directly by the people from well demarcated parliamentary or the legislative constituencies as the case may be. Wherever there is a bicameral legislature, the members of the upper house though represent a particular state yet are eligible to become a minister. The political executives are those who are either elected directly by the people or appointed by those who have been elected, and are presumed to hold a mandate to enact and implement the policies they advocated during their electoral campaigns (Peters, 2002). The political executive is guided by the principle of collective responsibility that means if the Prime Minister/Chief Minister, as the case may be, resigns from the post, the whole Cabinet stands dissolved. The Prime Minister may ask any of his/her particular minister to resign from the ministry if s/he finds that the minister's functioning is not satisfactory and against the norms of ministerial morality.

The minister is a professional politician. As such s/he necessarily carries a combination of popular, political and parliamentary responsibilities, which s/he can afford to neglect only at the risk of eclipsing his/her political career. Since s/he decides on policies being the minister, s/he must be clear in his/her own mind about what s/he wants to achieve during the period at his/her disposal and what his/her scheme of priorities is.

The political executive, who represents the people, is to translate popular needs into public policies. In doing so, a minister must acquire a deep, if not a complete understanding and knowledge of the subject under his/her charge. S/he should be foresighted without becoming a mere visionary, firm without seeming obstinate, temperate without being devoid of moral sensitivity. Even former Prime Minister, Morarji Desai (1970) was of the opinion that these qualities should be adopted by a minister whose job would be 'to warn, to comfort and to command.' Obviously, the warning has to be against the consequences of failure of duty. The comfort has to be in terms of the hard lot of administrative existence, namely lack of appreciation on the part of those for whose welfare, administration exists. The word of command has to be as befits the head of a vast organisation through words and policies, which will carry instinctive or instant or deliberate obedience, as the case may be.

8.3 MODELS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL EXECUTIVE

The system of governance prevalent in India visualises a minister who is a part of the legislature at the top of, and holding command over, a body of permanent professional civil servants whose administrative head is the Secretary. It is a combination of lay politician and politically neutral and permanent civil servants. They are both engaged in policy-making. But the bureaucrats and political executives play very different roles in the policy process. Their permanence, longer time perspective and functional expertise all provide the bureaucrats with a different view of policy and policy-making than that held by the political executive (Peters, 2002). This system is different from that of United States of America. In the USA, the political head of a department, does not hold a seat in the Congress but is a nominee of the President, staying in the office at the pleasure of the latter and there is no civil servant corresponding to the Secretary in India.

The relationship between the bureaucracy and political executive is of critical importance for the effective functioning of the machinery of the government. However, there is no crystallised convention in regard to the relationship between the two. There are some models of the relationship between civil servants and their political masters. Peters (*Ibid*), formulates five models of interaction between civil servants and political executives. One of these models of interaction between the two is the 'Formal-Legal' model. In this model, the policy making role of the bureaucrat is reduced to saying 'Yes Minister'. The Wilsonian approach to public administration stressed this conception of the bureaucrat's role. This model serves as useful fiction, allowing bureaucrats a great deal of functional responsibility while retaining political responsibility in the hands of elected executive officials. This has been developed less in a formal sense in the USA than in other countries (perhaps especially the UK).

Another model of relationship between the bureaucrats and the political executives is the 'Village Life' model. In this model, the senior bureaucrats and political executives are conceptualised as having relatively similar values and goals, with the most important, perhaps being the maintenance of the government and the smooth functioning of the executive branch. This model was applied specifically to the values of British bureaucrats working within the Treasury, rather than the relationship of those bureaucrats with their political 'masters'.

The third model is the 'Functional' model, which envisages close ties among civil servants and political executives within the same functional area such as legislative committees, etc.

The fourth model is the 'Adversarial' model, which is converse of the village life model. In this model, the political executive and the senior civil servant are assumed to be competitors for power and control over policy. In this model, the civil servant is cast in the position of saying "No Minister" or more commonly saying nothing at all and then proceeding to do whatever he thinks best. This conflict is considered to be result of difference over the content of public policies, partisan conflict over policy, clash over battles for budgets etc.

The fifth model is the 'Administrative State' model, which reflects the perception that the decision making of government is dominated by bureaucracy. The political

executive or legislative bodies do not have the capabilities to accept the work load of modern government and permanent civil service is most suited to take up the tasks of modern State.

Thus, we see that in the formal legal model, it is the task of the political executive to shape decisions and the task of the bureaucrats is to implement those decisions. Whereas in the village life model, the political and bureaucratic elites coalesce against legislators and other groups in the society in order to maintain their privileged position in government. Secondly, in the formal-legal model, the conflicts are resolved almost automatically through law and hierarchical command. On the other hand, in the village life model, conflict is resolved through bargaining. Such bargaining might occur within a particular sub-set of the elite, depending upon the perspective adopted.

The minister is a professional politician who comes to the office with knowledge of what people expect from the government and they would not stand. S/he comes and goes, depending upon the fluctuation of the fortune of the party. S/he has to her/his credit legislative experience and may be some governmental experience. The secretary, on the other hand, is a permanent civil servant possessing wide administrative experience. Each lacks what is best in the other and, therefore, supplements the other. When one oversteps or does not interpret his/her role properly, friction, misunderstanding and disharmony are in store, obstructing the tempo of governance.

The political executive is rarely an expert in the special work on which his/her department is engaged, or for that matter, in the techniques of public administration. S/he has general ideas in line with the political ideology of his party, but he/she often is not sure what is the best solution to a particular problem with which he/she is faced. The political executive relies on permanent officials for facts and advice, for it is the latter who is the repository of the information.

A minister lays down the policy and it is the duty of the secretary to implement it in the right earnest. The secretary must briefly record all the decisions, which are made verbally to avoid ambiguity and confusion. The secretary makes available relevant information and data on the basis of which policy can be formulated. S/he is the principal advisor to the minister and must render advice without fear or favours. S/he should keep the minister well informed on all important developments in the sphere of his/her responsibility and should show sensitivity to the ministers' political and parliamentary responsibilities.

Policy and administration are intermingled in practice. Therefore, it is not possible to separate policy from administration. And as such a close relationship must exist between the minister and the civil servant for the optimal efficiency of the ministry. The minister must have complete trust and confidence in the secretary and latter must fully cooperate with his/her minister, should respect his/her views and share his/her anxieties. As the minister is accountable to parliament, the secretary must always have in mind that he/she is only his/her advisor and ultimate authority to take decision on policy matters. It is also the duty of secretary to see that the minister retains a favourable public image outside.

In theory, politicians (legislators), who represent the people, are to translate popular needs into public policies, and civil servants are to implement them. In practice, the intricacies and the nature of current legislation especially on account of large scale government intervention in the performance of economic and social welfare tasks -

are such that most politicians may not have the time and/or competence to shape these laws. Since they have no alternative, they leave policy making largely to officials. These officials obtain necessary inputs from interest groups and expert bodies, located outside the legislature, before obtaining the endorsement of the top level politicians, e.g. cabinet members. Other politicians may influence legislation by means of criticisms inside or outside the legislature. But they cannot claim predominance in policy making, whereas they serve self-interest by adhering usually to party discipline, and endorsing laws approved by the Cabinet in a country like India, where there is a parliamentary form of government, so that the defeat of a government sponsored legislation on the floor of the house does not expose them to the risk of an electoral contest.

The conventional view of the relationship between politics and administration is that of ends and means. Politics in its more specific sense is concerned with the use of State power. The conventional view of administration is that it is concerned with translating into practice political decisions, which are independently derived from other sources.

One another way of distinguishing politics from administration is in terms of career and vocations. On this count, in a democracy, politics is concerned, with the activities of elected representatives and of those who elect or influence them and administration is with the activities of professional administrators and advisors. However, this distinction obviously does not correspond with that of ends and means. In modern Britain, still more in France, the top professional administrators certainly wield more influence in policy making than do an average Member of Parliament. This is not a modern phenomenon. As a matter of fact, in the age of stronger representative assemblies, which preceded the First World War, there were officials who operated as extremely effective policy makers.

Yet another alternative distinction between politics and administration is in terms of process. At the apex there is a fusion of political and administrative influences. Voters and politicians seeking election have their eyes upon the rungs of political ladder and are not much concerned with administrative operations. Administrators down the line are primarily concerned with getting policies or rules effectively applied without bothering much as to how or why they were formulated. In simple words, politics is an area of change and indeterminacy and administration is of stability and routine.

The minister is not a superior civil servant and is likely to approach problems in different ways. The channel of his/her recruitment, training and promotion are entirely different from the civil servants. S/he is likely to have little or no knowledge of his/her post and if s/he is ambitious s/he may hope not to remain in it for very long. Over all a minister is believed to be interested in positive action in the short term rather than going for a long term planning. S/he is unlikely to be well disposed to decisions that are going to be unpopular. There is bound to be some conflict between them, which is unavoidable if the advice is to be tendered frankly and ministers made aware of all the consequences of their proposed action. In the day to day functioning of the government normally significant issues are referred to the ministers for decisions, but at the periphery important matters must be left to the permanent officials who are in actual contact with the general masses. And what s/he does influences the practical effect of government policy.

Apart from parliamentary business, the minister is like the head of any other organisation. Much will depend on the training and experience of civil servants and

on their ability to anticipate the minister's wishes. They know the pressures on his/her time and see their job partly as protecting him/her from being deluged with official files. However, no question of any importance is likely to be settled in the minister's name before s/he has seen the files and has a fair chance to intervene.

The fact is that a minister is supposed to be heavily relying upon his/her permanent staff. When major changes have been introduced and have been accepted and when a government has no major alterations in mind, initiative in policy formulation passes from the politician to the public servant. The public servant who deals with individual citizens, day after day, is in a good position to perceive their needs. Normally he/she will initiate more policy changes than his minister, who will be concerned primarily with major and spectacular issues; but because as the public servant is by training and tradition cautious, he/she is likely to recommend less than what the public expects or demands (Jain, 1976).

However, it is easier to describe such an ideal relationship than to practice it in reality. The advice given to the political executive today is not always what is in the best interests of the country but very often the one, which the minister may like. Slowly but steadily, objectivity has been giving place to palatability at the hands of a civil service, which enjoys the unparalleled distinction of protection by the Constitution itself. The game was started by a top few – perhaps at Delhi – but soon all levels seem to have mastered the technique. It coincides with careerism becoming an obsession with the civil service. The Administrative Reforms Commission (1968) observes: “there is a disinclination among quite a number of Ministers to welcome frank and impartial advice from the Secretary or his aides and an inclination to judge him by his willingness to do what they wish him to do. Instances are not wanting of Ministers preferring a convenient subordinate to a strong one and thereby making the latter not only ineffective but a sulky and unwilling worker. This has also bred a tendency on the part of an increasing number of civil servants to attempt to anticipate the Minister's wishes and put forth this advice accordingly. A further development of this unhealthy trend is the emergence of personal affiliations leading to an element of “politicisation” among civil servants. All these cut at the root of the healthy relationship ... the Prime Minister should take special interest to curb this tendency with the assistance of the Cabinet Secretary and the Central Personnel Agency”.

The minister often oversteps the legitimate function of laying down policies and starts interesting himself in the task of day to day administration, thus undermining the sense of initiative and independence of civil service. As a matter of reality, the minister should confine himself to his role of a policy maker and leave implementation of policy and day to day administration to civil servants. A popularly elected minister who has necessarily an eye on the next election is under pressure from various quarters and may desire a particular course of action on certain issues – often without being aware of its full repercussions. It is the duty of the civil servants to apprise him/her of the consequences that would flow from his contemplated action. If s/he remains adamant and the civil servant thinks that the contemplated course of action to be detrimental to public interest, he/she must put down his/her views in writing and wait for and abide by the ministers decisions. However, such a deep-seated reluctance to offer advice without fear or favour has gradually sunk down to all levels in the administration. Those who prize frank advice from their subordinates are not many, and those who have the courage and frankness to offer advice are still fewer. This is a new and discouraging phenomenon not known to the pre-independence administration (Maheshwari, 1990).

8.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL EXECUTIVE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Historically the notion of minister was created according to the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. For the first time in the administrative history of India, the secretary was called upon to work under a lay minister. The experiment in Minister-Secretary relationship did not go off entirely without friction and conflict. Many of the ministers later complained before the Reforms Enquiry Committee (1924) about lack of cooperation on the part of the Secretary.

Consequently, on the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935, the question of minister-secretary relationship came into fore and that too more prominently. The introduction of responsible government under this Act directly affected the functions and status of Secretary. The Committee on Organization and Procedure set up in 1937 under the chairmanship of R.M. Maxwell examined interalia, the question of proper relationship between the minister and his secretary (*Ibid*). The committee pointed out that the minister had a right to expect advice based on the widest administrative experiences available in the department and furthermore, the secretary was the only officer in the department qualified by experience to give such advice.

In view of the political, parliamentary and the public preoccupations of the minister, the Committee recommended that matters of only major importance should be referred to the minister for his/her decisions. Having this in mind, it suggested the following classes of business to be submitted to the minister: i) Cabinet business, that is, the business which under the rules must be brought before the Cabinet or about which the minister may wish to consult the Cabinet; ii) business which is likely to have political repercussions; iii) parliamentary business; iv) patronage; and v) any other class of business which, in the opinion of the secretary, is of sufficient importance to be submitted to the minister. The Maxwell Committee laid particular stress on the need for giving the secretary enough discretion and freedom in transacting the day to day business of administration (*Ibid*).

After independence in 1947, there has not been much of a friction between the ministers and the secretaries. It may be because of the following reasons: i) The minister had a legitimacy; ii) Sardar Patel had a strong standing as Home Minister and had intimate relationship with all the secretaries; iii) the administrators were swayed by the quality of leadership.

8.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL EXECUTIVE IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

In post-independence India, the rift between the minister and the secretary occurred for the first time in 1957. This was between T.T. Krishnamachari and H.M. Patel, the then Minister and Principal Finance Secretary respectively (Bhambhri, 1971). The subject of rift was the purchase of shares of certain private companies by the nationalised Life Insurance Corporation. According to the minister, the Finance Secretary only “casually” mentioned to him about the purchase of these shares, whereas the secretary maintained that he had been acting all along with the knowledge and approval of the minister. About the mode of consultation with the minister, the Vivian Bose Board of Inquiry, which was appointed by the government

to examine the propriety of this deal, observed: “And about that, all, we can say is that if that is Mr. Patel’s way of briefing his Minister on a grave issue that requires a high level decision of policy, he is very much to blame; and from the Minister’s point of view, we cannot blame him if he thought, as he said he did, that this was just casual information about the LIC which did not require any information from him” (Enquiry Report, 1960).

The upshot of this episode was that on the grounds of constitutional responsibility of the minister for any action of the civil servants, the minister resigned from his office and the secretary too preferred retirement from government service although he had been eventually exonerated of all the charges.

In 1966, the minister-secretary relationship again attracted widespread publicity when Gulzari Lal Nanda, was the Home Minister. He complained of non-cooperation by the then Home Secretary, L.P. Singh, and sought his replacement. “denied the kind of assistance and cooperation I needed from a civil service not set up in tune with my ideas, I was made to feel that I had no say in the making of decisions at policy making level. Have you ever thought to yourself how I was expected to function with the kind of tools you gave me to work with?” he complained to the unobliging Prime Minister (Indian Express, 1969). The controversy ended with the minister resigning from his office, and the secretary remaining in position.

Rajiv Gandhi also failed in restoring the balanced relationship between the politician and the civil servants. At a meeting of the Science and Technology Coordination Committee in January 1987, he rebuked senior officers, C.S. Sastry and Dr. D. Bandopadhyay, Agriculture and Rural Development Secretary respectively, in the central government. The Committee had before it an agenda to review the official programmes. But Rajiv Gandhi departed from the agenda and demanded that Sastry, the Agriculture Secretary, make a presentation on the National Dairy Development Board rather than on edible oil as already scheduled. When Sastry reminded him of the agenda, the Prime Minister ordered him out of the room and immediately issued verbal instructions reverting him to his parent cadre of Andhra Pradesh. This behaviour was criticised and argued that the Prime Minister ‘cares little for the distinction between the serious review of official programmes based on facts and what could be seen as approaching an inquisition of senior officers’ (Times of India, 1987).

Hardly had the irk dried when another episode, extremely ugly and shocking, occurred. The occasion and venue was a press conference, which the Prime Minister was addressing in New Delhi on January 20, 1987, and the victim was the Foreign Secretary, A.P. Venkateshwaran. At the end of the Conference, the Prime Minister was asked by a Pakistani correspondent about the former’s visit to Islamabad. The Prime Minister replied, he had no such plan. The correspondent reminded the Prime Minister that the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Venkateswaran, had said during his visit to Pakistan in December 1986, that the Prime Minister would be visiting the capitals of other member countries including Pakistan in his capacity as SAARC Chairman. The Prime Minister did not directly reply to the question, but remarked, “You will be talking to new Foreign Secretary soon” (The Hindu, 1987). Thus, Venkateshwaran’s removal was announced in the Press Conference, while the officer concerned was sitting in the Conference as Foreign Secretary taking notes of the proceedings of the Conference. Humiliated, Venkateshwaran dashed to his office and resigned from the Foreign Service altogether.

This phenomenon is not confined to the central government only but it is more prevalent in the states. Transfers at the secretariat level, sometimes en masse, have become quite common. With every change of government at the state level, top level civil servants are shuffled at will by a new Chief Minister, on extraneous considerations such as caste, and by side stepping several senior members. For example, in Bihar, when Bhagwat Jha Azad became the Chief Minister, Arun Pathak was appointed as Additional Chief Secretary superseding at least 22 other officers. Responding to critics, the Chief Minister in all innocence commented that such an appointment did not in any way adversely affect either the pay or ranking of the officers. He simply wanted that particular civil servant in that particular position (India Today, 1989). Similarly, Chief Minister Azad's nomination of a Director General of Police resulted in catapulting 10 Inspector Generals of Police to the rank of the Director General of Police (Sengupta, 1988). In 1990, when Mulayam Singh became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, 326 of 520 IAS officers and 169 of 411 IPS officers were transferred. To silence the critics, the Chief Minister said "when a new party comes to power and aims to bring about change, large scale transfers are unavoidable" (India Today, 1990). The reckless transfers and postings of officers, result in a virtual paralysis of administration.

Recently, after the elections of Parliament when the United Progressive Alliance came to power, the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and his Cabinet transferred secretaries in large scale including the Cabinet Secretary.

8.6 CHANGING COMPLEXION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL EXECUTIVE

The distinction Woodrow Wilson made between politics and administration appears to have blurred over time. Still the interplay of political and administrative concerns is important to understand in the present context. The aim of democratic accountability and neutral professional competence on part of bureaucracy holds good even in present times. Governance, which is broader in nature, assumes a multifaceted responsibility on the part of bureaucracy, towards the community, law, political interests and professional standards.

Governance reforms aim at improving interorganisational governance structures, process management and interorganisational decision-making. The bureaucrats have assumed changed roles and responsibilities in policy making and their relation with policy makers. In its new role, bureaucrats, have to incorporate openness in policy networks to enable partnerships.

Analysing the patterns of political executives' interaction with civil servants, Guy Peters (1987), highlights certain characteristics which include the forms of government of the country concerned, the types of training and career patterns of civil service, the role conception of political executives, openness of the government and its ministries to the organised groups in society. The training, careers and role conceptions that political executives bring with them to the office tend to influence the manner in which they interact with the permanent civil service staff. The interaction of civil servants with political executives is dependent on the type of training received by them.

The relationship between the bureaucrat and the political executive is of complementarity. They both need to help each other in a partnership for good

governance. The bureaucrats and political executives maintain distinct roles based on their unique perspectives and values and the differences in their formal positions, but the functions they perform necessarily overlap. The bureaucrats influence and are also influenced by the competing norms and values of the complex system of governance. They are squeezed between the demands of policy makers to increase efficiency on the one hand, and challenges from the market based actors on the other. These two forces, together, induce bureaucracy to develop new routines, organisational concepts and skills for greater efficiency to compete with private actors in the sphere of service delivery.

In today's world, the relationship between the bureaucrats and political executives is a complex pattern of interaction and interdependence. According to Pierre (1999), it is a two-way phenomenon. On one hand, there is 'politicisation of the bureaucracy': policy makers have increasingly come to realise that the bureaucracy is a source of tremendous executive powers and capabilities which require strong political control to ensure that they serve the objectives formulated by policy makers. On the other hand, there is 'bureaucratisation of politics', due to its higher degree of continuity and specialised expertise. The bureaucrat becomes politically more assertive, more engaged in creating networks and linkages with other organisations and more inclined to use its discretion to pursue its own interests and ideals.

In the present times, the tendency has been for the more representative and legitimate political institutions to throw power at the bureaucracy rather than resist its plea for influence. These representative institutions (political executives) are incapable of formally abdicating powers (even if they might want to), but they must bargain to get the assistance in policy making and implementation that only the bureaucracy can provide (Peters, 2001). The bureaucrats must be interested in the preservation of the existing policies of the agency, as also be interested in imposing a new set of policy priorities. This is because the bureaucrats are, or become, experts in their policy areas and develop ideas about how policy might be formulated better. The contact of the bureaucrat with the environment of the organisation, as well as the concentration of technical expertise in the lower echelons of organisations, tend to give bureaucrats a substantial control over information and expertise crucial for policy making. The political institutions have been attempting to break the monopoly on information that the bureaucracy appears to hold by creating their own independent sources. These "counter bureaucracies" are most numerous in the United States - for example, the agencies of the Executive Office of the President, the Congressional Budget Office, and the ever growing committee staffs of Congress – but they also exist in a number of other political systems (*Ibid*). Some have sought to provide this information through ministerial cabinets, while others have established research offices in government or have strengthened the Prime Minister's office. Still other governments have tried unsuccessfully to use their political parties as instruments for policy research. Despite these efforts, the bureaucrat retains a central role in the development and dissemination of policy-relevant information and thereby a powerful position in policy making.

The bureaucrat also retains one principal advantage in a struggle over power and policy – it is simply so numerous. The sheer intensity of the task of controlling a large, complex and knowledgeable public bureaucracy possessing substantial political support may defeat all but the hardiest politician. Even in the United States, where Presidents have a very large number of political appointees compared with most other countries, the size of the bureaucracy and its relationship to important political forces make it difficult to control (Peters, 2001, *op. cit*).

The bureaucrats occupy the most important positions in government. The positions, which they occupy, involve both the direct delivery of services and the definition of what the programmes really signify for clients. This may mean that they will disagree with the political leadership of their organisation, except perhaps on the crucial question of whether the organisation should survive. The bureaucrats, because of their skills, keep the organisations running on a day-to-day basis and find themselves boarding a policy train that has a great deal of momentum. The political executives, coming on board their departments find that the organisations of which they are nominally in charge tend to run on their own with little direction from above.

The governance trend, today, involves network management and interactive policy making where multiple societal actors like private, non-governmental, and voluntary organisations, individuals, the community, self-help groups, etc., are involved in the formulation of policies. In such a scenario, the bureaucrats have to bring these players to the table, facilitate and negotiate decisions and also create a sense of shared interests and responsibility (Mathew, 2003). It lays down policies for the empowerment of people, thus promoting consciousness and awareness among citizens and making the bureaucracy transparent, accountable and free from corruption.

The public bureaucracy, in a modern age, is in quite a strong position vis-à-vis the political executive. It has become an effective policy maker due to its expertise, the time, the stability and the techniques. The bureaucrats have to be stewards of public resources, conservators of public organisations, facilitators of citizenship and democratic dialogue, catalysts for community engagement and at the same time street level leaders (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). In this way they can operate as an interface between political executives and civil society.

The governance function presently, is the responsibility of hierarchies, market and communities. The role of political executives and bureaucracy is to ensure that there is proper network management with effective interactions between networks and appropriate institutional arrangements for realising public policy objectives. There are situations calling for multifaceted roles to be played either by politicians or bureaucrats, a leadership, coordinating, and steering roles to deal with complex situations.

8.7 CONCLUSION

Thus, to conclude, the political- administrative relationship remains intrinsically important as well as fascinating. There is not only the question of the balance of capacities and influence between the two groups but also of the nature of their influence upon each other. If there is to be a satisfactory balance in democracies between politicians and administrators, continuous attention must be paid to the recruitment and training of both groups. Also, it is a question of learning from experience and caring and sharing of responsibilities, and not conflicts and competition for power.

Globally, there are efforts towards good governance. India is not an exception. Good governance, for that matter governance, not only requires a cordial relationship between bureaucracy and political executive but also good citizenry. Therefore, the need of the hour is that more and more honest and dedicated individuals join politics and take active interest in the governance of the country. The same applies also to the bureaucracy. There must also be stricter public scrutiny over the functioning of

ministers and higher officials to prevent abuse of power by them. Once the top layer of politicians and civil servants show good examples, the quality of the cutting-edge level administration is sure to improve.

The relationship between the bureaucracy and political executive is of critical importance for effective governance. As democracy matures and the two sides – politician and civil servant – interact between themselves more and more in actual work situations, one can safely conclude that as in other mature democracies in the west, the relationship between the political and the professional executives would steadily progress toward more and more understanding for the service of the people.

8.8 KEY CONCEPTS

Bureaucratisation of Politics

The change in the complexion and functioning of politics influenced by the impact of bureaucratisation in the form of rigidity, adherence to rules and regulations, formal structures etc. The informal and, flexible form of functioning of politics is said to become formal and rigid.

Politicisation of Bureaucracy

It is considered to be contrary or opposite to the concept of political neutrality. It implies public service and its functioning getting influenced and used for party purposes. The appointment, promotion and tenure of public servants is said to be influenced by party activities.

8.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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8.10 ACTIVITIES

1. On the basis of media reports, make your observations regarding the relationship between bureaucracy and political executive in the current scenario.
2. Attempt to talk to the locally elected political representatives and elicit their views on this aspect.