



## 7. Public Administration

In this chapter we will try to understand the meaning of public administration, the evolution of Public Administration, and its role, relevance and scope. We will also look at the administrative system in India.

Let us begin with few questions. What do we study in Political Science? What is administration? What is the difference between private and public administration?

Political Science studies the state and government. It studies politics at the local, state, national, and international levels. It studies how a society governs itself. Public Administration is a sub-discipline of Political Science. Public Administration, focuses on what we call “government in action”. Once decisions are taken through democratic methods they need to be implemented. This is done by the executive arm of the government and is known as public administration.

The government has three branches: the Legislature; Executive and Judiciary. The executive arm of the government is made up of two types of executives:

- (a) One, is Political Executives i.e. Ministers who are elected and
- (b) Second is Permanent Executives i.e. Bureaucrats who are recruited through open competitive exams like those conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) or the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC), etc.

Administration is an activity found

everywhere in everyday life. As a process, administration occurs in both public and private organisations. The term ‘administration’ means management of affairs, this can be in the public or private sector. Public administration as a subject studies the activity and the process of government.

### Defining Public Administration:

Public administration can be loosely defined as the organisation and management of human and material resources to fulfil the objectives laid down by the government.

Here are some definitions of public administration:

**Herbert Simon:** ‘By Public Administration is meant, in common usage, the activities of the executive branches of national, state and local governments.’

**Dwight Waldo:** ‘Public administration is the art and science of management as applied to the affairs of the State.’

**Luther Gulick :** ‘Public Administration is that part of the science of administration which has to do with government and thus concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the work of the government is done.’

### Inter-relationship between Political Science and Public Administration

As we have already discussed above, Political Science studies the manner in which public policies and laws are made. It studies the role of the political parties and other organisations, various

governmental institutions like the Parliament, Election Commission, etc.. Public Administration basically implements these laws and public policies.

There are many specialised functions which governments have to perform like maintaining law and order; providing education; securing public health; promoting agriculture; providing social security, social welfare, sanitation, transport and communication facility etc. Each of these is a specialised activity requiring special skills. For instance, public health requires doctors, law and order requires trained police. When the administration of these activities is carried on by the government and its different organisations they fall into the domain of public administration. Thus a District Collector, Tehsildar, Block Development Officer, Police Officer, Anganwadi Worker, etc. are all part of the public administration in India. They assist the government in implementing various policies and programmes of the government. When some of the same functions mentioned above (like providing Education or Healthcare) are performed by private organisations (institutions/companies) or any non-governmental organisations the word used would be private administration or business administration.

**Public Administration broadly includes following:**

- Activities of the government especially, that of the executive branch.
- Management of public affairs and activities.
- Public welfare and well-being of the people.

## **Scope of Public Administration: Narrow and Broad**

The scope of public administration can be divided into two broad categories.

### **(i) Narrow Perspective**

In a narrow sense it focuses on those aspects of administration which are related with only the executive branch of the government. This view was given by Gullick and Urwick in their famous acronym POSDCORB. This view of the scope of public administration is limited to following things:

**P- Planning:** The first step in administration is planning where broad outline or a blueprint is prepared. This happens at all three levels : National, State and Local. For instance the NITI Aayog has adopted a bottom –up approach where planning begins at the grassroots level and then reaches at the top.



### **Do you know ?**

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on 1st January 2015. NITI Aayog is the premier policy ‘Think Tank’ of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. While designing strategic and long term policies and programmes for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre and States.

**O- Organisation:** The planned objectives and goals are achieved by establishing the formal structure of authority through which the work is arranged, defined and coordinated. For

example, All India Services, Central, State and Local Services.

**S- Staffing:** Human resources are the backbone of any administrative system. The personnel who actively engage in the process of administration are to be recruited and trained. It is also important to maintain favourable working conditions for them. For example, recruitment through UPSC and State PSC.



### Do you know ?

The Union Public Service Commission is India's central recruiting agency. It is responsible for appointments to and examinations for All India services and group A and group B of Central services.

The Maharashtra Public Service Commission is a body to recruit officers for the civil service in Maharashtra.

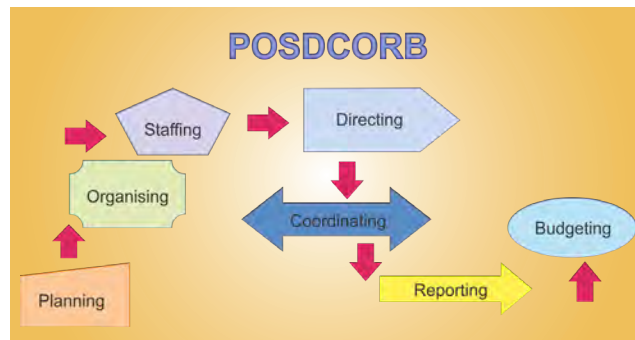
**D- Directing:** Administration is a continuous activity. Therefore making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions is also necessary.

**CO-Co-ordination:** Administration is a complex and interrelated process and hence different parts of organisation such as branches, divisions, sections need to be co-ordinated. This helps in elimination of overlapping work and prevents conflict.

**R-Reporting:** Information related to the on-going or completed task and its reporting to higher authorities is a key aspect of administration. This ensures accountability and responsibility within administration.

**B-Budgeting:** Finance is a key aspect

of any activity. Therefore accounting, fiscal planning and its control are maintained through budgeting.



### Do this activity.

You want to organise a cricket match in your college. Students should form groups. Each group will do the following task:

**Group A:** Plan the event. Decide the dates, venue etc.

**Group B:** Decide who would take up various responsibilities for the sports match. Create small committees for each task that is to be done.

**Group C:** Coordinate with the college authorities (Teachers, Principal, Administrative staff).

**Group D:** Prepare a budget for this activity.

### (ii) Broad Perspective

In a wider sense (broader sense), public administration includes the activities of all the three branches of the government. This is quite different from the narrow or managerial view of public administration that focuses only on the activities of the executive branch of the government. The broader view of public administration involves the activities of legislature, executive as well as judiciary and their

inter-relationships. This broader view of public administration is seen as a cooperative group effort. It also focuses on formulation of policy and hence it is part of the larger political process.

In a wider sense, public administration is also engaged in collaborations and interactions with numerous private groups and individuals in providing basic services to the community. This would include specialised functions of the government such as defence, finance, education, health care etc. This means broader view of public administration is concerned with both, the techniques of administration such as POSDCORB and with other substantive matters of administration.



### Do you know ?

#### Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Companies try to integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations. CSR is not charity but a way to improve society. These activities include work like limiting pollution, disaster relief, clean water and educational programs in developing countries, etc.

#### Evolution of Public Administration

Since ancient times, various thinkers have contributed to the area of administrative thought and practice. Kautilya's 'Arthashastra' is a text on administration in ancient India. Aristotle's 'Politics' and Machiavelli's 'The Prince' also are works on administration. However, credit for the systematic study of the discipline should be given to 18th century system of Cameralism in Germany and

Austria which was concerned with the systematic management of governmental affairs.



### Do you know ?

Cameralism, refers to a system of "sciences" during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It attempted to extend and improve administrative practices to serve the monarchs of Germany and Austria. The themes taken up by the cameralists are still relevant to public administration.

Public Administration as an academic discipline was born in the United States. Woodrow Wilson was the first to emphasise the need for the study of public administration as a subject. His celebrated essay 'The Study of Public Administration' published in 1887 laid the foundation of the science of public administration. He was one of the first political leaders who emphasised the need to increase the efficiency of the government. Wilson argued that administration is the most obvious part of the government but the least discussed aspect of the government.

Today the subject matter of public administration has expanded to include areas like comparative public administration, development administration, new public administration, new public management, public policy and good governance. Public Policy is one of latest areas of study within the fold of public administration. In the contemporary times public administration is not merely about implementation but increasingly it is oriented towards policy making.

## Public Policy

Today the government has become more complex with increasing inter connectivity, technological innovations, forces of globalisation and challenges that arise because of all this. Thus government today undertakes various activities that go beyond what we call simple administration of activities in the public sphere. Today government is increasingly about making and implementing public policy for the welfare and well-being of people. The new approach to understand this aspect of government activities is called Public Policy.

Availability of electricity in rural areas is a major issue in India. So the task of the government is to provide electricity to these areas. The Government of India came up with a programme called Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana. This is a Public Policy aiming to electrify rural hinterland of India. The Ayushman Bharat is another example of public policy. The aim is to provide universal access to good quality health care services without anyone having to face financial hardship.

Public policy can be understood in three steps:

- (i) **Policy Choice:** Citizens face several problems. Ministers, politicians, members of parliament, bureaucrats or other authorities decide on issues to be dealt with. Then various options are discussed about how to deal with those issues. For example, the issues may be of water supply to the city, or anti malaria programme. On the basis of this discussion a policy or a programme is decided.
- (ii) **Policy Output:** This stage is of actual

implementation of the policy. This determines the policy output.

- (iii) **Policy Impact:** The third is to understand the impact of the policy. This is the evaluation stage. The objectives of the policy are assessed to determine the impact of the policy.

Let us try to understand the process of public policy making and its implementation through this following example. The local government of your area is facing the problem of waste management or garbage disposal. The critical issue here is of hygiene and sanitation. The people's representatives (i.e. Municipal Corporators, office bearers and members of Gram Panchayat, etc.), government officers (Ward officers) and local residents discuss this and decide upon a particular policy choice about garbage disposal. Suppose the decision was to segregate the waste at source and its separate collection and treatment. It will then formulate a plan about the method to implement the decision mentioned above. This falls into what we said earlier a Policy Choice. The second stage is to implement it i.e. Policy output. While implementing the decision government as well as non-government agencies can be involved in the task. The third stage is Policy Impact which tries to look at whether it has worked in the manner expected. This is the evaluation stage. It tries to understand the problems in implementation so that the work can be improved upon later.

### Do this.

Find out how waste management is done in your locality.

## Administrative System in India

Administration in India has been

influenced by the framework and institutions that British had created during their rule. However, even before the British, India had a structured administrative system. Kautilya's Arthashastra is a detailed text on administration during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The Gupta Dynasty, the Mughal rule and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's contribution to the administrative system is equally important. The British introduced a centrally controlled administrative system in India. This was implemented through a series of important acts like Government of India Act of 1909, Government of India Act of 1919 and Government of India Act of 1935.



**Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.**

After Independence India declared herself as Union of States with a federal structure. It opted for a parliamentary form of democracy. The Indian Administrative System is primarily guided by broad values and goals as mentioned in the Constitution of India. These values act as guiding posts for all the politicians, ministers, bureaucrats etc. who are involved in the process of administration. These values are Liberty, Equality, Justice,

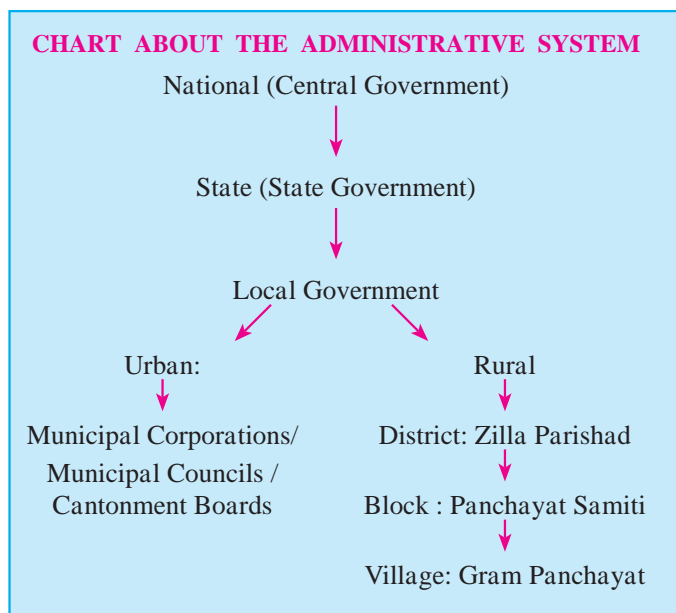
Fraternity and Secularism.

Let us try to first understand the broad framework of administration in India. Indian administration has to be understood at two levels:

(1) One is the three level administrative structures that India has as a federal system of government: National, State and local level.

(2) The second refers to the three arms of the government: Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. The executive consists of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. These ministers look after the ministries. The task of the Legislature (Parliament in the Centre and

Assembly at the State level) is to pass laws and also to keep a watch on the work done by the executive. The task of the Judiciary is to interpret and adjudicate cases.





Mantralaya, Mumbai

### How does the administration function?

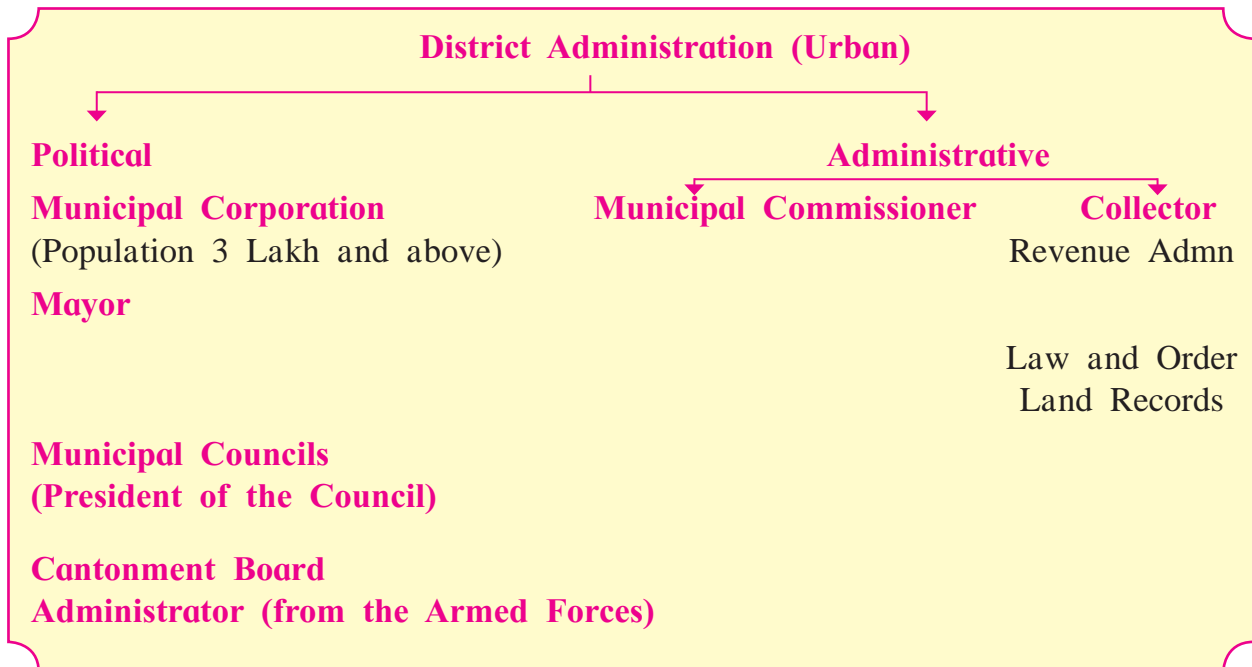
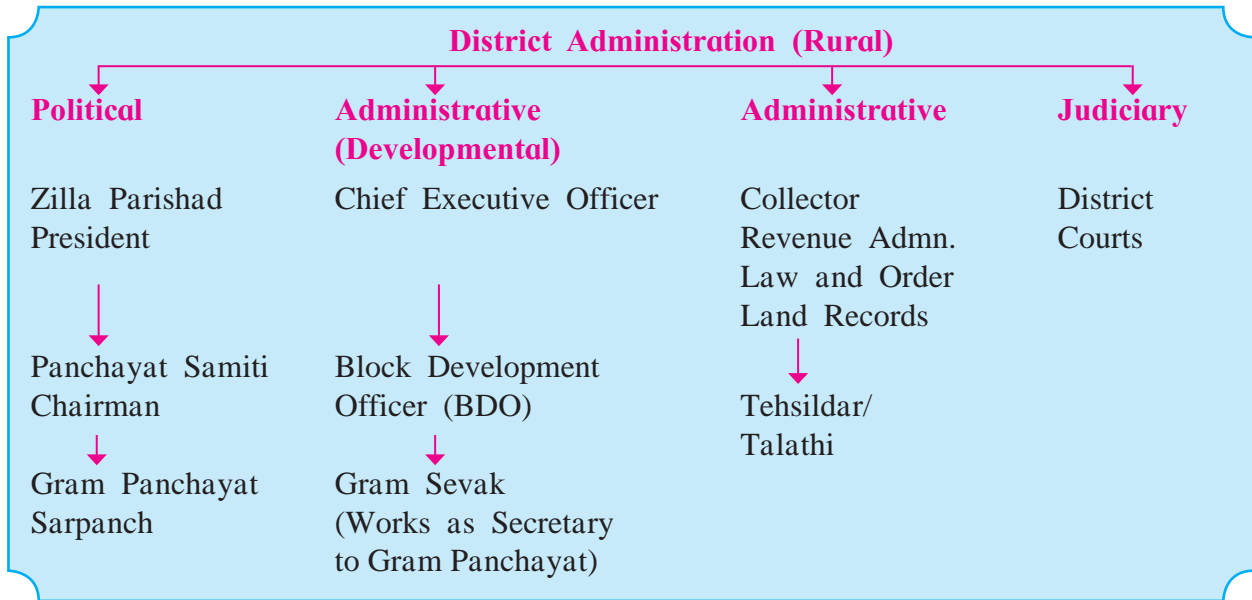
- (i) At the national level, the work of the Central Government is conducted by various ministries (departments). For example there are ministries of Agriculture, Health, Home, Defence, etc. Each ministry (or department) is headed by a minister. Below the minister is the bureaucracy or the administrative machinery. Besides the ministries there are such institutions like the Election Commission, Union Public Service Commission, National Commission for Backward Classes, NITI Aayog, etc. These also require administrators or a bureaucracy.
- (ii) At the state level also, there are various ministries and commissions that do the work of the government. Like the Central government, the ministries of the State are also headed by a minister and staffed by the bureaucracy.
- (iii) At the local level administration is of two types: urban and rural administration. At the district level the highest administrative officer is the Collector. In large cities, the Municipal

Commissioner is in charge of the Municipality or Municipal Corporation. In rural areas, at the level of the Tehsil the Tehsildar looks after the administration.

- (iv) There is a close link between the political leadership and the administrative machinery. The Ministers are in charge of the ministries and the departments at the national and the state levels. At the local level also the political leaders are closely linked to the administrative machinery. For example at the rural level, the President of the Zilla Parishad or the Chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti or the Sarpanch are in close contact with the administration. At the urban level, Municipal Corporation and the Municipal Council has elected members who are in contact with the administration.
- (v) The recruitment for all administrative posts at all levels is done through competitive examinations conducted by the government. At the central government level, the UPSC and Staff Selection Commission are the bodies that conduct these examinations. At the State level, the State Public Service Commissions conduct these examinations.
- (vi) The bureaucracy follows the principle of political neutrality. They owe allegiance to the constitution and not to any political party.

In the next chapters we will learn about Development Administration.

## Local Government Administration



**Do this :** Visit any government office near your school/college/home. It may be a Panchayat Office, the Zilla Parishad, Municipal Corporation or any other government office. Observe how the work is done. Talk to the people who have come to the office to do their work.

Discuss in the classroom your experience. Write a one page note on the experience.

**Please see the following websites for further information:**

**The Study of Administration: Woodrow Wilson**  
Source: Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jun., 1887), pp. 197-222  
Published by: The Academy of Political Science  
Stable URL: [Quarterly.http://www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)  
Volume II. June, 1887. Number2. Political Science Quarterly.  
[http://www.iupui.edu/~spea1/V502/Orosz/Units/Sections/u1s5/Woodrow\\_Wilson\\_Study\\_of\\_Administration\\_1887\\_jstor.pdf](http://www.iupui.edu/~spea1/V502/Orosz/Units/Sections/u1s5/Woodrow_Wilson_Study_of_Administration_1887_jstor.pdf)





## Exercise

**1. (A) Choose the correct alternative and complete the following statements.**

1. The backbone of any administrative system is ..... .  
(material resource, human resource, natural resource, geographic resource)
2. Gulick and ..... put forth the acronym POSDCORB.  
(Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Simon, Urwick, Dwight Waldo)

**(B) Identify the incorrect pair in every set, correct it and rewrite.**

- (a) Kautilya - Arthashastra
- (b) Aristotle - The Politics
- (c) Machiavelli - Republic

**(C) State the appropriate concept for the given statement.**

1. The systematic management of governmental affairs in 18th century Germany and Austria -
2. Efforts of companies to integrate social and environmental concerns -

**2. State whether the following statements are true or false with reasons.**

1. The first step in administration is staffing.
2. Public Administration as an academic discipline was born in India.

**3. Explain the co-relation between the following.**

1. Political science and Public administration
2. National Administration and State Administration

**4. Answer the following.**

1. Explain the functioning of the administration
2. Explain the steps in public policy making.

**5. Answer the following in detail with reference to the given points.**

1. Discuss the scope of public administration with reference to the following points.
  - (a) Planning
  - (b) Organisation
  - (c) Staffing
  - (d) Co-ordination
  - (e) Reporting.

**Activity:**

Look at the latest Annual Report of the Ministry of Home, Government of India. Make a list of the main activities of the ministry.