CITIZEN PERCEPTION ABOUT BUREAUCRATIC ETHOS AND ATTITUDE: A STUDY OF SHIMLA AND KINNAUR DISTRICTS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Bureaucracy is the organised working mechanism which sustains and ensures the case of dimension of systematic process, orderly management of issues bearing upon life of citizens, as well as maintaining linkages between administrative hierarchy and citizenship in evolving and continuing context. In the present study the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the perception about bureaucratic ethos and attitude of the district officers. The study was conducted in the Shimla and Kinnaur districts of Himachal Pradesh. Shimla is the capital of Himachal Pradesh and the Kinnaur district is the biggest Integrated Tribal Development Program in Himachal Pradesh. The data for this study was collected through primary sources. A well-designed questionnaire for the purpose of collecting information regarding the bureaucratic attitude towards the value premises was used. Observational technique was also used for the study. For the purpose of the study the researcher has selected 334 respondents from both the districts with the help of random cum purposive sampling. The major hypothesis of the study is that the Common citizen views the role performance of district officers as authoritarian which make administration insensitive towards development and defeats all efforts to usher in an era of good governance.

Keywords: Citizen Perception, Bureaucratic Ethos, Attitude, Shimla, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

Since, politics is the care of system, law, order and sustained evolution the interface of citizens, administration and politics cannot be conceived in isolation. A free and self-governing political system is as relevant to administrative efficacy as it is to ensure perceived objectives of social change, welfare and development. The interface of citizens, politics and administration is indicative of the kind of systematic objectives. This also explains the organizational and operational dimensions of bureaucracy at different levels. The nature of politics in operation has been perceived in the context of Citizens. Expectations concerning administrative obligations and accountability have to be perceived in the context of politics as manifest in the rational continuum of politics and administration. Citizens cannot remain immune to the continuing interactions and its fall-out. In general, citizens' expectations of bureaucracy are not low. They expect competence, effectiveness, loyalty, innovation, responsiveness, efficiency, and equity. The temptation on the part of the bureaucracy, to abuse this trust are high because it exercises a great deal of discretion over allocation of scare resources. Responsiveness of bureaucracy includes a prohibition of actions, which while not strictly illegal are of questionable propriety. Responsiveness requires that in implementation of policies, bureaucracy must be flexible in dealing with problems of citizens. If the facts of a situation do not fit previous defined categories, or if the case in a expectation to the normal rule, than the bureaucracy should be flexible and make expectations rather than rigidly and possibly incorrectly apply rules that are not appropriate. Another aspect of bureaucratic responsiveness in policy administration in its openness to criticism directed at it, and administering policies with impartiality and fairness.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZEN AND BUREAUCRACY

The most visible instrument of government-has been a matter of speculation and concern for political philosophers, theorists, monarchs and administrator ever since the beginning of the rudiments of a state. While some writers have conceived the relationships in idealistic terms resulting in the establishment of plethora of rights obligations both on the part of citizen and the state, the others have seen a series of confronting relationship emerging out of the seemingly conflicting interests between them. The parameters of such conflicting situations are not confined merely to the apparent perceived violation of spectrum of rights supposedly occurring to the citizens in a state by its functionaries, but opposing interests between the citizens and bureaucracy also emerge within the bureaucracy itself in situations when a citizen performs the role of a functionary of the government and feels that his personal interests are not being properly safeguarded. Thus a situation of confrontation emerges within the folds of the bureaucracy itself. Yet another source of the conflict between the citizen and the bureaucracy is inherent in almost all process of public administration necessitating citizens' involvement in decision making process. In all these situations, however, there is need to bring out consensus between the two for the survival and benefit of the citizenry as a whole. In any society, even if apparently stable, citizen-bureaucracy interface is instrumental to the elite in achieving its support, utilisation, objectiveness, its recruitment of personal and its aims for maintenance and development of consensus. At the same time from the point of view of citizens, such communicative relationship can resolve his doubts about elite objectives, and motivate him to share in governmental programmes. Such an interface between the citizen and bureaucracy are even more than ordinarily significant in the context of developing societies. Citizen-bureaucracy contact must be extensive, continuous and penetrative. They must lead to greater information and knowledge, and results in greater citizen belief and support of governmental actions and programmes, must inspire confidence and motivate the individual to action and achievement.

CITIZEN-BUREAUCRACY RELATIONSHIP: RECENT TRENDS

A report on the 'Citizen and Public Administration' presented to the 24th congress of the International Institute of Administrative Science held at Paris in September 1998, has noted a radical change in the citizen-bureaucracy relationship, that is administrators recognise individuals as citizens who are on the same level as the administrators and benefits from their rights. This change had been brought about the convergence of many factors (1) increasing number and size of administrations: which make it impossible for the civil servant to remain anonymous: they no longer be presented as the "long arms" of government: they act in the first person (ii) political democracy, leading to change in the mutual positions of administrators and citizens: the former is no longer recognised as being superior to the latter (iii) the distribution of public services (iv) the shrinking gap between the public and private sectors which leads to adoption of management criteria of the latter by the former, and enables public offices to allow their clients to voice their opinions just as private counterparts. (vi) Cultural-the second management revolution referred to as the 'new public management involving 'putting customers first. However, the foregoing success of citizens against bureaucracy should not under scare the various problems which still arise in securing consensus between them in various conflicting situations. There are the problems of transparency in administration, bureaucracy tendency to perpetuate in tradition dominated by the hierarchy and secrecy; failure of the institutions, strengthening the positions of citizens in relation to administration. It is thus important to realise that the conditions under which a balance between the continuous conflicts between citizen and bureaucracy can be reconciled are determined by cultural, political and administrative context and the national traditions of a society.

INDIAN BUREAUCRACY AND CITIZENS PERCEPTION

In the Indian context, the efforts to reform the centralized Weberian bureaucratic structure that was inherited from British, started immediately after independence. The

early efforts towards bureaucratic reforms focussed largely on improving the professional skills and changing the behavioural orientation of individual bureaucrats. The work culture in India bureaucracy in the years following independence, characterized by inaccessibility, indifference, corruption-process and non-accountability, proves that there was something that was wrong with the strategy of focusing only on the citizen-bureaucratic aspects of reforms.

The process of National-Building in emerging nations like India is inconceivable today without massive and direct participation of government, and qualitative performance of the bureaucracy. The new conception of the state requires a new conception of public service. Researches have demonstrated how unreal and impractical it would be to think of any type of national development in which the bureaucracy even if its role is limited is excluded. This is more pertinent in developing nations where the bureaucracy has to develop a potential social demands and organizations. The Indian officials have to overcome the legacies of the freedom movement which discredited not only British rule, but also the administration and the steel-frame bureaucracy, and hence intensified the personal and social distance between and official representatives of government. The citizen's image of the government is shaped by the treatment he is accorded by the bureaucracy. Researches have indicated citizen involvement as a precondition for an effective process in the modern policy. Administrative contracts help move in public toward greater knowledge of the system, greater optimism about the public's role in the system, greater attitudinal support and greater cooperation with the goals of the system. Lower level bureaucracy, in particular, is assumed to come in contact with citizens with greater frequency. Political elements and influences keep interacting directly or indirectly with citizens and bureaucracy. The assumption is that whereas the citizen is 'a political animal' he is equally concerned about the nature of interface between him and the bureaucrats he come across.

Table 1: Public Opinion about Behaviour of Bureaucrat

District Bureaucrats	Excellent	%	Satisfactory	%	Not-Satisfactory	%	No opinion	%	Total
Behaviour of the D.C.	12	4	160	48	108	32	54	16	100
Behaviour A.D.C.	7	2	175	52	43	13	109	33	100
Behaviour of A.D.M.	19	5	186	56	23	7	106	32	100
Behaviour of S.D.M.	29	9	181	54	89	27	35	10	100
Behaviour of Tehsildar	22	7	184	55	97	29	31	9	100
Behaviour of B.D.O.	21	6	200	60	91	27	22	7	100

Sources: Primary Prove

The study in the table 1 indicated that 48 percent respondents opined the bureaucratic behaviour of Deputy Commissioner satisfactory, 32 percent not satisfactory, 4 percent excellent, 16 percent respondents gave no opinion, whereas regarding the behaviour of Additional Deputy Commissioner 52 percent respondents were satisfied, 13 percent not satisfied, 2 percent felt their behaviour excellent, 33 percent respondents had no opinion about their behaviour. The table further showed 56 percent respondents found behaviour of Additional District Magistrate satisfactory, 7 percent not satisfactory, 5 percent excellent and 32 percent respondents had no opinion. The study further showed that 54 percent respondents thought behaviour satisfactory, 27 percent not satisfactory, 9 percent found it excellent, 10 percent gave no opinion, whereas the behaviour of tehsildar the study revealed 55 percent were satisfied, 29 percent respondents not satisfied, 7 percent excellent behaviour, 9 percent gave no opinion. Regarding the

behaviour of B.D.O. at block level 60 percent respondents were satisfied, 27 percent not satisfied, 6 percent highly satisfied and 7 percent respondents with no opinion.

Table 2: Administration and Public Satisfaction

Do You satisfied with the working of bureaucracy?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	8	2%
Somewhat satisfied	169	51%
Neither satisfied/nor satisfied	0	0%
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	157	47%
Total	334	100%

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 2 indicated that 51 percent respondents are somewhat satisfied with the working of district bureaucrats whereas 8 percent respondents are very satisfied with the bureaucratic working and delivery system in administration whereas 47 percent respondents are dissatisfied with the performance of district officers. From the above study it can be concluded that more than 53 percent respondents are somewhat satisfied and 47 percent are not satisfied with the performance of district bureaucrats.

Table 3: Bureaucracy and Public Sector Image

In your opinion what do you think about Reputation of public bureaucrats?	No. of Respondents	%
Equal treatment to all citizen	0	0
Favouritism rather than merit	298	89
Influence group in public sector	24	7
Action of Public Administration serves only of few individuals	12	4
Total	334	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 3 shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 89 percent respondent is of the opinion that bureaucrats favours few individuals in their dealing with common man, whereas 7 percent respondents felt they were also influenced by which powerful groups of the society. The study further shows that 4 percent respondents thought they provide administrative services to few individuals. From the above study it can be concluded that majority of the citizen perception of image about the bureaucracy is favouritism rather than merit while dealing with common man. The study showed that neutrality and impartiality had considerably disappeared from the services. Bureaucracy observed double standards in its dealing. Most of the bureaucrats are willing to oblige influential politicians and their friends irrespective of law, the rules and procedures but it comes to common man, the Weberian impersonal attitude and styles of functioning starts persisting. Therefore, the bureaucrats image in the eyes of common people are biased, favouritism and serves for few individuals.

Table 4: Bureaucracy and Responsiveness

Do You think Citizens are treated properly and effectively with a reasonable period of time?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	5
Agree	119	36
Strongly Disagree	198	59
Neither agree/Nor Disagree	0	0
Total	334	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 4 revealed that 59 percent respondents strongly disagreed that bureaucrats treated common citizen with efficiently and effectively in a reasonable

period of time whereas 36 percent respondents agreed and 5 percent strongly agreed that bureaucrats are responsive and efficient in their working. From the above study it is concluded that 59 percent respondents viewed bureaucrats apathic unresponsiveness and inefficient whereas 41 percent respondents thought they were capable, efficient rational in their working and solving the problem of common man.

Table 5: Bureaucracy and Accountability

Degree of Accountability	N=334	Percentage
Highest Degree (75-100%)	0	0
Medium degree (50-74%)	130	39
Lesser Degree (25-49%)	204	61
Negligible (0-24%)	0	0
Total	334	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 5 revealed that the citizen perception about the bureaucratic accountability and transparency in administration it was found that 61 percent respondents opined that the degree of accountability among bureaucrats were (25-49%) and 39 percent felt it was between (50-74%).

  From the above study it can be concluded that 61 percent respondents feel accountability in administration was to a lesser degree only 39 percent respondent voted in favour of bureaucrats advocating transparency and accountability.

Table 6: Bureaucracy and Morality

Degree of Morality	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highest Degree (75-100%)	0	0
Medium Degree (50-74%)	104	31
Lesser Degree (24-49%)	170	51
Negligible (0-24%)	60	18
Total	334	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 6 shows that citizen opinion about the bureaucratic moral values in administration it was found that 31 percent respondents opined bureaucratic moral values to medium degree, 51 percent to the lesser degree and 18 percent respondents felt it negligible. The study shows that majority of the respondents felt that there is no moral values it bureaucrats only 31 percent respondents thought the moral values among bureaucrats were of medium degree. Most of the citizens were of the opinion that there was a continuous degradation of moral values among bureaucrats is the biggest impediment in development.

Table 7: Bureaucracy and Efficiency

Degree of Efficiency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highest Efficiency (75-100%)	0	0
Efficient (50-74%)	72	22
Just Efficient (24-49%)	245	73
Do Not Know (0-24%)	17	5
Total	334	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 7 indicated that 73 percent respondents felt that bureaucrats were just efficient, 22 percent efficient and 5 percent respondents gave no opinion.

While interpreting the table we have come to the conclusion that majority of the district bureaucrats were just efficient only 22 percent felt they were efficient in their working.

Table 8: Bureaucracy and Internal Politics

What do you think about Political Considerations in administrative decision making?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highest Degree (75-100%	189	57
Medium Degree (50-74%)	145	43
Lesser Degree (24-49%)	0	0
Negligible (0-24%)	0	0
'Total	334	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 8 revealed that 57 percent of the respondents approved the statement about political consideration in administration to the highest degree and 43 percent to the medium degree. We have concluded from the study that there is a highest level of political consideration in administrative decision making.

Table 9: Opinion On Nexus Between Politicians and bureaucrats

Is there any news Between Politicians and Bureaucrats	Yes	%	No	%	Total Percentage
Total	334	100	0	100	100

Source: Primary Prove

The study in the table 9 indicated that hundred percent respondents opined that there was a close nexus between the politicians and the bureaucrats. The respondents were of the view that district bureaucrats work under the influence of political party and district officer's dependence on political support in order to get preferred postings or promotion they developed close nexus with politicians. On the other hand, politicians are closer to bureaucrats to implement their party policies among common masses. Therefore, there is close nexus with each other for their personal gains.

CONCLUSION

The study showed important variations in respect of behaviour of bureaucracy towards common people. We concluded from the study that respondents ranging from 48 to 60 percent were satisfied and the respondents ranging from 7 to 32 percent falling in not satisfactory group and 7 to 32 percent in no opinion group. The study shows important variations in respect of behaviour of bureaucracy towards citizen. By way of broad statement therefore, it could be said that so far as the attitudes towards public is concerned it is a mixture of very moderate and indifferent behaviour in their dealings towards the common man. The behaviour of district bureaucrats still reminds of pre-independence days on towards culture scepticism. More than half percent respondents were satisfied with the performance of bureaucrats and remaining were dissatisfied with the bureaucrats. The common people always complained about the functioning of their bureaucracy because most of the business and professional organisations have been changing with time, government bureaucracies, by and large, remain the same hierarchical, insensitive, inset and monopolistic. This phenomenon has contributed to a great extent making them non-responsive and non-responsible. Common citizen sees bureaucrats with suspicion and have trust and their conduct. As the public Administration machinery expands and becomes more complex, the need for holding it properly accountable is more acutely felt. There is need of ethical governance which requires public officials adhering to the principle of serving others by setting a high standard of moral conduct. There is need to create an atmosphere that motivates official to respond to the challenges by adhering to notion of duty and service to the community as well as talking responsibility for the welfare of others, we do need to build the capacity of moral reasoning and ethical behaviour public service system. Because without encouraging reinforcing, resurrecting and strengthening some articles of faith the system of governance is never going to good. Improvement in government efficiency and the system will come only if we allow the individual district bureaucrats to rise to

their full creative potential. There is need to develop a system by which will be able to make a contribution. Every individual bureaucrat should realise that his potential is not in any way restricted and, in fact even while working within the parameters of rules and regulations, there is excellent scope for showing initiative, creativity, and efficiency at every level. There is need of ethical governance which requires public officials adhering to the principle of serving others by setting a high standard of moral conduct. There is need to create an atmosphere that motivates official to respond to the challenges by adhering to notion of duty and service to the community as well as talking responsibility for the welfare of others, we do need to build the capacity of moral reasoning and ethical behaviour public service system. Because without encouraging reinforcing, resurrecting and strengthening some articles of faith the system of governance is never going to good. The most infected by it is district administration where we can easily notice 'give and take' between local party leaders and administrative personnel. And above bureaucrats are afraid of politicians and do not want to take any decision which may annoy or upset them. Abrupt and repeated transfer is particularly prominent reason for this fear.

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