



CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract:

Political scientists and administrative thinkers are unanimously agreed on the fact that extensive public participation in politics and administration is essential. Citizen participation may be used both for support by an agency and as a control device by the law makers. Participation has both a broad and a narrow connotation. In a broad sense, it implies giving every citizen an opportunity to actively participate in administrative work. In a narrow sense, participation would refer to a specific action by which the citizen registers his involvement in public affairs to achieve a particular objective. Citizens' participation in administration may be in many ways: that is, participation in policy formulation and programme planning, implementation of policies and programmes, and involvement in the processes of administration. Citizen participation demands certain preconditions, that is, enlightened political leaders, integrity and honesty of civil servants and well-informed and cooperative general public.

INTRODUCTION:

Participation at all levels, both rural and urban, is also necessary for speedy development. Public administration and citizens are closely connected with each other and no administration can function well without the support of the citizen.

The relationship between public administration and the public raises a number of important conceptual issues regarding the role of government machinery and its interaction with the members of the public. The attitudes of Indian citizens towards their government and its administrative officials, particularly, is a complex and paradoxical mosaic of support and hostility, of consensus and critique. The success of the developmental process depends to a great extent upon the harmonious relationship between the citizens and administration. In order to have better understanding of citizen-administration relationship the study of institutional devices is essential. Institutional devices are necessary to check executive inflation and guard against corruption and administrative injustice. The developing countries like India suffer from paucity of resources in a situation where speedy socioeconomic development is an imperative necessity. The bureaucratic machinery is a legacy of the colonial past and its essential nature is elitist and isolationist. Tuned to needs of the imperial regime, the administrative agencies have to slowly adjust themselves to the needs of socioeconomic development and the larger public interest. As the monopolist of state power during the colonial days, the basic orientation of the administrative agencies has been toward power, and no service to the people. To combat this administrative behaviour, effective administrative no doubt has its own value importance.

Since the authoritarian organs of government have the tendency to overshadow the non-bureaucratic components of the political system, these components have to be strengthened first. New social and political institutions have to grow to increase the capacity of the political system to beat the bureaucracy at its own game by subjecting it to effective political control. With the rapid growth of development activities under the aegis of the government, bureaucracy has become all pervasive. There is a

search today in most developing countries for effective checks on the administrative agencies that are proliferating in the course of development. One response to this situation has been to identify types of developmental activities that could be handed over to voluntary organizations. But not much success has come over this issue in India. Debureaucratising developmental activities is also attempted by decentralization of functions to local self-governing bodies like municipalities and the Panchayati raj bodies. Still another attempt, very feeble though, to debureaucratise development administration can be traced to sporadic measures for popular participation and political mobilization in some of the states in India such as Kerala and West Bengal, fairly successfully in their speedy and effective land reforms.

Decentralization and popular participation are attempts at decreasing the area of operation of the bureaucratic state apparatus. These are measures for less bureaucracy. Administrative reform has been a continuous concern of most developing countries in their search for efficient and effective administration. To deal with administrative corruption and to redress citizen's grievances, procedural changes and institutional innovations have been made in many countries. The need for institutional innovation to deal with corruption and citizen's grievances has been keenly felt in India, and suggestions have been made from time to time by various commissions and committees to bring about administrative changes and create new controlling agencies. In India several institutional experimentations have been made at different levels — centre, state and local.

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