

Public Policy and Indian Administration

Dr. Reena Srivastava

Associate Professor, Govt. College, Sirohi, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT: Woodrow Wilson was among the first to conceptualise the understanding of public policy in the federal structure; he later became the President of the United States of America. He quoted one very significant line, ‘it is getting harder to run a constitution than to frame one’. It is first important to understand the concept of ‘public’ for a discussion of public policy. We often use terms such as ‘public interest’, ‘public sector’, ‘public opinion’ and so on. ‘The starting point is that ‘public policy’ has to do with those spheres, which are so labelled as ‘public’ as opposed to spheres involving the ‘private’. The public dimension is generally referred to as ‘public ownership’ or control for ‘public purpose’. The public sector comprises that domain of human activity, which is regarded as requiring governmental intervention or common action. However, there has always been a conflict between what is public and what is private.

India is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a Parliamentary form of government which is federal in structure with unitary features. There is a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head to advise the President who is the constitutional head of the country.

KEYWORDS: public policy, Indian administration, service, sector, president, parliament, government

I. INTRODUCTION

It is very much evident that policy might take different procedures like legislation, executive orders or the official acts. They actually comprise a set of intentions or objectives, a combination of devices or means for the attainment of intentions, a description of governmental or non-governmental units indicated with the accountability of transporting out the intentions, and distribution of resources for the necessary tasks. To recognize a public policy, it is very much needed to examine nature. A policy may contain specific or general, broad or narrow, simple or complex, public or private written or unwritten explicit or implicit, discretionary or detailed and quantitative or qualitative.[1,2] The accountability of political officials and public managers is a positive public value. It is also a multidimensional concept: those who study it need to flesh out who is accountable to whom, for what, through what kind of processes and with what kind of standards, and possibly with what consequences. For analytical purposes it is helpful to view accountability as a social mechanism of relational and communicative nature that connects individual or collective policy actors to accountability “forums” in deliberative (sometimes also bargaining) processes, usually under the threat of sanctions by the forums in case of estimated misconduct or poor performance of the policy actors. Even if the forums’ monitoring of actors may be concomitant to their action and if rule-makers anticipate the accountability phase, accountability fundamentally takes place ex post. India has one of the highest number of laws on its statute books – there are over 3,000 laws at the central level only – some of them dating back to the British era. [27,28] Each of these laws carries a larger back story about the competition, coalition building, lobbying and compromises carried out by various actors, government and non-government, to give shape to the final piece of legislation enacted by Parliament. Somewhat surprisingly, however, there is scant documentation of how these laws evolved from being an idea to their enactment.[3,4]

The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is the administrative arm of the All India Services of Government of India.[3] Considered the premier civil service of India, the IAS is one of the three arms of the All India Services along with the Indian Police Service and the Indian Forest Service. Members of these three services serve the Government of India as well as the individual states. IAS officers are also deployed to various government establishments such as constitutional bodies, staff & line agencies, auxiliary bodies, public sector units, regulatory bodies, statutory bodies and autonomous bodies. As with other countries following the parliamentary system of government, the IAS is a part of the permanent bureaucracy of the nation, and is an inseparable part of the executive of the Government of India.[25,26] As such, the

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering, Technology & Management (IJMRSETM)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed Online Journal)

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Volume 4, Issue 7, July 2017

bureaucracy remains politically neutral and guarantees administrative continuity to the ruling party or coalition. Upon confirmation of service, an IAS officer serves a probationary period as a sub-divisional magistrate. Completion of this probation is followed by an executive administrative role in a district as a district magistrate and collector which lasts several years. After this tenure, an officer may be promoted to head a whole state administrative division, as a divisional commissioner.[5,6]

On attaining the higher scales of the pay matrix, IAS officers may lead government departments or ministries. In these roles, IAS officers represent the country at the international level in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. If serving on a deputation, they may be employed in intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, or the United Nations, or its agencies. IAS officers are also involved in the conduct of elections in India as mandated by the Election Commission of India.[23,24]

II.DISCUSSION

There are three modes of recruitment into the Indian Administrative Service. IAS officers may enter the IAS by passing the Civil Services Examination, which is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).[3] Officers recruited this way are called direct recruits. Some IAS officers are also recruited from the state civil services,[3] and, in rare cases, selected from non-state civil service.[3] The ratio between direct recruits and promotees is fixed at 2:1. All IAS officers, regardless of the mode of entry, are appointed by the President of India.[18] Only about 180 candidates out of over 1 million applicants, who apply through CSE, are successful, a success rate of less than 0.02 per cent.[10][23][24][25] Unlike candidates appointed to other civil services, a successful IAS candidate is rendered ineligible to retake CSE.[26] From 1951 to 1978, an IAS candidate was required to submit two additional papers, as well as three optional papers[21,22] (instead of two as with other civil services) to be eligible for the Indian Administrative Service or the Indian Foreign Service. The two additional papers were postgraduate level submissions, compared to the graduate level of the optional papers, and it was this distinction that resulted in a higher status for the IAS and IFS. The two postgraduate level submissions were later removed, but this has not changed the perceived higher status of the IAS and IFS.[27][28] After the selection process, the successful candidates undergo training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand.[11]

The typical functions performed by an IAS officer are:

To collect revenue and function as court officials in matters of revenue and crime (for the revenue courts and criminal courts of executive magistrates), to maintain law and order, to implement union and state government policies at the grass-roots level when posted to field positions i.e. as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate, District Magistrate and Divisional Commissioner, and to act as an agent of the government in the field, i.e. to act as an intermediary between the public and the government.[4]

To handle the administration and daily proceedings of the government, including the formulation and implementation of policy in consultation with the minister-in-charge of a specific ministry or department.[4] To contribute to policy formulation, and to make a final decision in certain matters, with the agreement of the minister concerned or the council of ministers (depending upon the weight of the matter),[19,20] when posted at the higher level in the Government of India as a joint secretary, additional secretary, special secretary or secretary equivalent, secretary and Cabinet Secretary, and in state governments as secretary, principal secretary, additional chief secretary or special chief secretary and chief secretary.[4] At the beginning of their career, IAS officers receive district training with their home cadres followed by their first posting. Their initial role is as an assistant collector cum sub-district magistrate and they are placed in charge of a district sub-division. As assistant collector cum sub district magistrate, they are entrusted with maintaining law and order, as well as general administration and development work, of the sub-district.[12] With the completion of their training, IAS officers are assigned to various designations in various ministries, departments and establishments under the ownership of the union government, state governments and in local governments (municipal corporations, notified area councils and municipal councils at urban level and gram panchayats, prakhand parishads and zilla parishads at rural level).[13]

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Volume 4, Issue 7, July 2017

In 2015 it was announced that a new designation of assistant secretary at the Central Secretariat had been created to enable new IAS officers to be posted to Delhi for a three-month assignment as part of their training regime.[17,18] IAS officers were previously only permitted to go on a deputation once assigned to the Central Secretariat after nine years of service in their home cadre. It was observed that the experience of central functions was severely lacking among these deputations, resulting in this change in their training.[20] As part of the new system, IAS assistant secretaries are supposed to work on projects—a new policy in their respective areas—and present it to their respective ministries; of all projects, 36 are selected to be presented before all secretaries of the Government of India; consequently, 16 are selected to be before the Cabinet Secretary and a final eight are selected for presentation before the Prime Minister. Completion of this probation is followed by an executive role in a district as a collector cum district magistrate, which lasts several years. After this tenure as a district magistrate, the officer may be promoted to head a whole state division, as a divisional commissioner. On attaining the apex scale, IAS officers may lead government departments or ministries.[7,8] In these roles, IAS officers represent the country at the international level in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. If serving on a deputation,[16] they may be employed in intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the United Nations or its agencies. IAS officers are also involved in the conduct of elections in India as mandated by the Election Commission of India.[15,16]

III. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Notable IAS officers

Naresh Chandra; a retired 1956 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, who served as the Cabinet Secretary of India, Defence Secretary of India, Home Secretary of India, Water Resource Secretary of India and Indian Ambassador to the United States. He was awarded India's second-highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, for civil service, in 2007.

Narinder Nath Vohra (N. N. Vohra); a retired 1959 batch IAS officer of Punjab cadre and the 12th Governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Vohra was the first civilian Governor of Jammu and Kashmir in 18 years since Jagmohan. Vohra has also served as the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India, Home Secretary of India, Defence Secretary of India and Defence Production Secretary of India.[9,10] He was awarded India's second-highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, for civil service, in 2007.[13,14]

T. N. Seshan; a retired 1955 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, notable for enacting significant reforms to electoral oversight in India. He was the 10th Chief Election Commissioner of India (1990–96), who reformed elections by subduing electoral malpractice throughout the country and strengthened the image of the Election Commission of India. He previously served as the 18th Cabinet Secretary of India in 1989, and later as a member of the Planning Commission. He was presented the Ramon Magsaysay Award for government service in 1996. Vinod Rai; a retired 1972 batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre, who served as the 11th Comptroller and Auditor General of India. He is widely considered a symbol of the anti-corruption movement in India.[163] He also served as the Financial Services Secretary of India. Rai was awarded India's third highest civilian honour, the Padma Bhushan, for civil service, in 2016.

Duvvuri Subbarao; a retired 1972 batch IAS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre. He served as the 22nd Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). A former Finance Secretary of India, he also served as a member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and as a senior economist in the World Bank. Subbarao's selection as RBI governor in 2008 was coincidental with the outbreak of the global financial crisis. His leadership is generally credited with safeguarding the Indian economy through the financial crisis.[11,12]

Yogendra Narain; a retired 1965 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre. He is a former Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha, who also served as the Defence Secretary of India, Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh as well as Surface Transport Secretary of India. He was awarded the Dean Paul H. Appleby Award, for distinguished civil service.

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(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed Online Journal)

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Volume 4, Issue 7, July 2017

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**International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering,
Technology & Management (IJMRSETM)**

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed Online Journal)

Visit: www.ijmrsetm.com

Volume 4, Issue 7, July 2017

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