

PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION —ROLE OF IIPA

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There are very few disciplines — theoretical as well as applied which have a basic concern with the management of public affairs. Public Administration as a discipline has often been exclusively regarded to take care of all the challenges which developing countries face in their effort at socio-economic development. There have, therefore, been efforts to expand the horizons, explore new roles, add new dimensions to the existing knowledge about administrative sciences. This continuing change in the functional content of public administration has necessitated another look at the content and context of the discipline. The traditional public administration was content with nodal functions of administration such as organisation theory, personnel and financial management. These functions continue to be important but there has been change in the nature of programmes of development leading to a different emphasis on the entire field of investigation. Today, public administration is mainly concerned with policy making, instruments of implementation and other management functions, encompassing both the traditional and the modern trends.

The interplay of conceptual loci and foci explains partly the growth of the discipline. Rising above the controversies as to whether it has 'locus' or 'focus' — locus is the institutional 'where' of the field and focus is the specialized 'what' of the field, or whether it is a discipline or a sub-discipline, suffice it to say that Public Administration has started developing on its own, as a broad-intellectual field. It is an old profession but a new discipline.

Drawing on the literature of the last half century or so, the development of the discipline has often been divided into five phases. First, in the formative years, there was an analytic distinction of politics from administration. Public administration was concerned mainly with the administration component including the "function of executing the law" as well as, semi-scientific, quasi-judicial, and quasi-business or 'commercial' functions. Second, a concrete and sharp separation between politics and administration in which the former was supposed to have a real locus in the interaction between legislatures and high-level members of the executive, and the latter as having a focus on public bureaucracy. Third, the greater emphasis on isolation and analysis of administrative processes, developing a science of management based on the idea of universality of administration. Fourth, the pervasive orientation towards public policy due to 'thinking man's response to demands for relevance'. The new thrust takes into account how professional relevance requires drastic reshaping and how scholars approach their work and obligations. Lastly, there is emphasis on professional or vocational aspects. Vocational training, however, imparts specific managerial techniques and aims at producing better practitioners. Simultaneous efforts are being made to make the discipline of public administration culture-bound and socially relevant. In the sixties specially, public administration was shaken and affected by turbulence and penetrating inquiries by some serious scholars challenging the very purpose of the discipline. The new public administration wave rejected a definition of public administration as 'value free' and a rationalist and perhaps determinist view of human kind, which view basically rested on a static image of 'being' as contrasted with becoming. The new wave was essentially characterised by a more forthright and honest consideration of the relationship between the structures and processes of administrative efforts and their ends and goals. The separation of 'values' from 'facts' was challenged and the new public administration was more concerned in creating a bridge to a post bureaucratic society in which the administrator is regarded to be proactive and the organization is restructured to allow it to be so. Younger scholars started agitating for new values, new forms of organisation, a new sensitivity to the discontinuities of change. The new emphasis called for more

orientation toward changing reality and less toward considering what exists to be an unalterable given. To be optimistic about human perfectibility was asking for too much, therefore, soon after, pessimism peaked through even exuberant visions of the new advocates.

CHALLENGES AND EMERGING CONCERNS IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

The growth contemporary focus of the government on the realization of the basic human rights and amelioration of the fate of the rural poor has posed new challenges. The anti-poverty programmes in some of the developing countries, serious efforts at nation building and securing political stability, preservation of internal order, impact of science and technology, and new economic challenges have brought out the inadequacies in the existing principles and practices. Challenges from behavioural sciences which stress the use of approaches and methods with greater methodological rigour, incorporation of operationally definable concepts, empirical orientations and interdisciplinary nature are becoming real. Inadequacies have also come to light in recent attempts at quantification of public administration research. The absence of adequate training in statistical skills and sufficient exposure to the theoretical knowledge in the relevant area is posing another serious handicap. Research and teaching in management services have comparatively been more sensitive to the advances in social sciences and operations research. Public administration has hardly received the professional recognition in the sense that its products have requisite expertise for work in government. While public administration is supposed to function as catalyst of change, much remains to be done to identify factors involved in the process of change such as resistance from the individual, group norms and community structure. Another serious handicap emerges due to a widening gap between the institutes engaged in training and research in public administration on the one hand and the administrative systems and university departments on the other. Another challenge to the discipline arises from inadequate facilities of communication, rapport among researchers, policy-makers and decision-makers. Again, there is a

criticism that many of the concepts, models and frameworks have been borrowed from the West. It is pointed out that even the movement for comparative and development administration with focus on non-western areas has originated in the West. There are, therefore, strong pleas that in the long run substitutes for Western concepts, categories and tools of analysis have to be found and borrowing habit changed. This may be possible only when there is a high level of maturity within all the related social sciences and a high degree of professionalisation within each discipline. Organizational problems emanate from diverse sources and with diverse reasons, therefore, the environmental factors cannot be ignored either. Those who are interested in the study and research in the field of public administration need an interdisciplinary orientation for broad understanding of the various types of inter-relationships. Therefore, the discipline has to develop concepts and theories which facilitate an understanding of the real life problems and ways of resolving them. The initiative for changes in the direction and growth of the discipline has to come from some source. If the discipline has to maintain its independent status, various internal and external challenges to the discipline cannot be ignored. All this will be possible only when the overall intellectual strength of the discipline is improved and analytic abilities of all those interested in research, consultancy and study as well as practitioners are developed in a systematic and phase manner.

There are a number of problems which have been posing challenges to administration in the field of social, economic and political spheres but in the coming years a few more are likely to crop up. First, due to rising expectations and population explosion coupled with recurring shortages of resources, any lapse in implementation of policies will not easily be condoned. Second, the spread of science and technology has created new channels of communication and the communication media if not properly utilized can pose a threat to provide outlet to discontent and unrest. Third, the dichotomy of theory and practice, the controversy of 'locus' and 'focus' cannot be prolonged much further and sooner or later some specific stand would have to be taken. Fourth, there will be more emphasis on performance aspect and the existing procedures and practices will be seriously challenged. Fifth, environment and ecology will have greater

impact and influence on the working of administration. Sixth, the latest researches and advances in organisation theory are opening up new vistas in the field of human relations and allied matters. Seventh, the quantification of various issues and factors will be more insisted upon, without of course diluting the quality aspect. Eighth, the course content and teaching methods would have to be made in tune with the latest techniques. Teaching research and consultancy will be judged more from the social relevance point of view. Ninth, the training needs would increase while the resources for training are likely to shrink in the context of new developmental responsibilities. Lastly, the new economic and political order which is emerging would have lot of repercussions on the administrative systems. All these factors would have to be taken into consideration while projecting the future role of IIPA.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Institute as conceived by Dr. Paul H. Appleby was to provide a national informal focussing of attention on Public Administration as a profession of many facets and elements. The purposes would be 'to provide for stimulation through association; through the medium of a professional journal and through the making of studies and the development of a liberative recording and expanding administrative learning'. The Memorandum of Association accordingly recorded the objectives for which the IIPA was registered as a Society as follows:

- (i) to promote and provide for the study of public administration and economic and political science with special reference to public administration and the machinery to government and for educational purposes incidental thereto;
- (ii) to undertake, organise and facilitate study courses, conferences and lectures and research in matters relating to public administration and the machinery of government;
- (iii) to undertake and provide for the publication of a journal and of research papers and books to impart training in

- and promote study of public administration;
- (iv) to establish and maintain libraries and information services to facilitate the study of public administration and spreading information in regard thereto;
 - (v) to constitute or cause to be constituted regional branches at convenient centres in India to promote the objects of the Society; and
 - (vi) to co-operate with approved institutions and bodies for the purposes of helping the cause of public administration.

To meet the objectives outline above, the members are aware that Institute is engaged in the following five major activities at present:

Research

Research when properly directed and conducted helps to supply the necessary scientific and analytical information needed to provide for the special administrative need of a planned society. It also adds to the effectiveness of the instructional programme by providing better teaching material. Apart from the research done by the members of the faculty of the Institute in their individual capacity, group studies, seminars, conferences and case studies are organised. Certain special studies commissioned by the Government and other agencies are also being conducted.

Training

For the last few years, training courses have become an important part of the Institute. About fifty courses are organised in a year and mainly the training courses fall into three categories: (a) the Management Orientation Programmes, conducted in association with the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, (b) Courses conducted by the Centre for Urban Studies, (c) other Management Development Courses conducted by the Institute at the request of various Central or State Government enterprises and agencies. To appreciate recent developments in administrative and management services and to equip the participants with new techniques and cultivation of new values, the advanced professional programme in public administration, a nine month long-term course meant for senior

civil servants and university teachers is being run.

Publications

The Institute publishes a Quarterly Journal, Monthly Newsletter and Quarterly Documentation in Public Administration. Books are published either by the Institute or in collaboration with outside publishers. Occasional lectures, proceedings of seminars and annual conferences, reports of study groups etc., are also published. 'Nagarlok' is another quarterly brought out by the Institute dealing with the problems of urban management.

Library and Reference Services

Over the years, the library has been able to collect a number of books, journals and other research material. The reference and Bibliographical services of the Library have also been very helpful to the Members and other researchers. The Library subscribes to about 500 important journals and periodicals. The Library has been acquiring all public documents and reports and is recognized as the most important centre for all publications relating to public administration and allied disciplines.

Consultancy

Another dimension to the activities of the Institute was added in 1968 with the decision of the Executive Council to set up a consultancy within the Institute. Consultancy work at present is confined to government organisations and public sector undertakings and a number of studies are at hand. This activity is expected to generate more revenue for the Institute.

Over the last several years, the demand for the Institute's services has been considerably increasing. The Institute has, therefore, expanded its functional areas, and it has today six divisions comprising: (i) management of public enterprises, (ii) financial management, (iii) behavioural studies and personnel management, (iv) rural studies, (v) urban studies, and (vi) public policy and planning. Steps have been initiated to set up a Centre for Rural Development Administration.

ROLE OF IIPA IN THE CONTEXT OF EMERGING CHALLENGES

To meet the challenges of the eighties and subsequent decades, it be desirable to critically examine and identify the perspectives and plans of IIPA. At present the focus of the activities of the Institute is to respond to the requests received either from the government or other agencies but the time has come when the Institute has also to concentrate more in another direction, *i.e.*, developing knowledge and practice in public administration. A comprehensive definition of the new role is important for developing its own activities as well as for selecting the faculty. The Institute has to play the role of a catalyst, by establishing vital links with the government, selectin for study the managerial, or executive system of the government and selectively the legislative, the political and environmental factors. Citizen response is one of the yard-sticks to measure government's achievement. Institute has to fill this gap by acting as a bridge between the Government on the one hand and people at large. Institute has not only to help improve the planning for change and action programmes to develop strategies for social transformation but also facilitate and activate this transition. The major success of the efforts in this direction would be measured by the effectiveness which the Institute exhibits in providing active help in the use of knowledge to improve upon the administrative work system as a whole. Institute has already initiated action by extending the programmes of public lectures, seminars, debates, etc., but such activities would have to be further speeded up.

In India, the role of the government extends to development aspects as emphatically as it relates to the regulatory and control aspects, therefore, improvements in the administrative processes and administrative capability will go a long way for better formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. IIPA would not only be concerned with the organisation of the planning systems of the government, the evaluation of the industrial, social and economic policies but also on the impact of these programmes on the quality of life. Its chief concern would, therefore, be to study the effectiveness of regulatory administration, programme co-ordination, project formulation and to identify and facilitate the adoption of latest

developments in the field of science and technology so that the living conditions of the people improve and anti-poverty programmes make greater impact. To discharge these responsibilities effectively and efficiently, it may be desirable to expand the Research programmes of the IIPA. Apart from micro-studies and other issues confined to administrative problems narrowly conceived, concern should extend to questions which are basic and more vital in the context of economic development and the growth of governmental institutions. Institute can also think of undertaking the training of advanced research workers by organising and conducting on Research Methodology and Field Research.

The major concern and the broad objectives of research, training and consultancy would be to enable administrators to acquire in depth and in detail an understanding of socio-economic environment, influencing policy formulation and decision-making. Institute would also do well to popularise the utility of introducing latest management techniques and tools for bringing about efficiency and economy. For tackling complicated problems created by science and technology, effective policy analysis and formulation will become essential. The Institute should make a thrust in conducting studies and researches having more impact in policy formulation. The training courses be so designed as to enhance analytical capacity taking into consideration the likely constraints and the organisational features of the systems.

The case studies programme has proved to be quite useful. There is, however, ample scope for its expansion. As far as possible, it may be assured that case studies deal with live issues. 'Burnt out' cases no doubt serve some useful purpose but in selecting them due care may be exercised that the cases chosen are typical and illuminative. The Publication Programme would also have to be speeded up but the highest academic standards of the publications appearing under its auspices should be assured. Either one issue of the Journal or a new periodical case be devoted entirely to Annual Review of Administrative Developments in India. Absence of a compilation of selective and not easily available documents relating to administrative developments is another serious handicap.

It is true that awarding of the degrees, etc., alone does not

help in the promotion of discipline but looking to the demand of the scholars and practitioners, serious efforts are called for to secure for the Institute recognition as an institution of higher education in terms of the University Grants Commission Act. It should have powers to confer Master's degree and doctorate in the field of Public Administration. There is a need to further expand the Library and reference facilities.

The government will also have to play a more positive role by locating at the Institute all activities which properly belong to it rather than dissipating effort in proliferating agencies to duplicate a similar type of job. In the last few years, a number of studies have been carried out in certain other places some of which belonged precisely to the range of activities for which the Institute was set up. It has to be realized that so far as the field of public administration is concerned, the Institute has to play a leading and co-ordinating role. The grants from the government and other quarters should be liberal and finances should be sanctioned with a measure of stability about the arrangement so that the regular development programmes are better conceived on a continuing basis.

In the above paragraphs, certain proposals have been given to make the Institute a model institution. This will necessitate a new look at the organisational structure and the personnel policies and practices of the Institute, systematic evaluation of the various activities and more contacts and interchange of views with the members. Serious exercises will also be essential to identify priority areas for Research. Training programmes and consultancy services would have to be geared to be useful in the changed context. Publication programme and library facilities would need more support and greater allocation of funds. The task will not be simple and would require a close co-operation of members of the Institute and the Faculty, more interchange and collaboration with national and international organisations and above all a substantial and liberal support of the Government. Ultimately the activities of the Institute are to be reoriented, revitalized and broadened to meet the emerging challenges and much of the responsibility will be on the shoulders of the Director, the faculty and the administrative staff. I am very optimistic about the outcome and under the direction and guidance of the President, the Chairman and the Executive Council and

the Director, the Institute is poised for a thrilling and illuminating experience. Institute has a mission to perform and the coming decades would pose a prospect of wider vistas of enterprise. The first twenty-five years were more or less a period of consolidation. It should now be possible to think in terms of more deeper involvement and comprehension. With a clearer sense of focus and direction the performance would not be wanting and the previous record of the Institute is an ample testimony that it would amply justify the thrust.

SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

The above account gives a brief description of some of the activities of IIPA and the role which it is likely to play in the wake of the challenges. However, there are many details which will have to be worked out. Below are some of the questions by way of illustration which require detailed discussion so that a broad consensus emerges :

1. What could be the priority areas of research for the next five years? How can the Institute keep in creating a data bank, arranging research methodology courses, developing analytical capabilities and professional skills for those who are interested in pursuing research?
2. What kind of continuous feedback is required from the members and others in order that corrective action where required is swiftly taken? How validity of the feedback be established? What mechanism is required to provide the feedback?
3. How and in what areas the IIPA can be a focal point as well as an instrument for promoting awareness and the issues of good administration during the coming decades?
4. How can there be better co-ordination and co-operation with sister organisations performing similar task both in the country and abroad. In particular, what could be the possible areas where a close liaison with the universities and other professional institutes and organisations as well as Regional and local branches could be established?
5. What kind of financial, academic and administrative

support can be made available by agencies and organisations in sponsoring social science research?

6. How can the mid-career education and training of administrators and managerial personnel be made more effective? What could be the new areas in which the Institute should plan new executive development programmes and other activities?
7. How can consultancy expertise be further developed in the Institute and how can it be integrated as an important activity of the Institute?
8. What are the ways in which the publications of the Institute can be organised to serve the academic community and administrators better?
9. How can the library and reference services be made more useful to the members and other researchers?
10. What can be the leadership role of the Institute in the development of the discipline as well as in modernizing and producing teaching material in the field of public administration?