Effectiveness of Administrative Reforms for Citizen –Oriented Administration in India

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ABSTRACT

Citizen-Oriented or citizen centric administration means that the people in administration "have a sense of empathy" with the citizens in public policies and programs. All the organs in modern democratic states like politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs etc. are meant to serve to "common citizen".The universal unhappiness of people with the prevailing administrative systems in the changing times stressed both developed as well as developing countries to redefine the role of the state and to reform the public administration. A number of approaches for making administration more and more citizen oriented or citizen friendly are adopted to bring improvements in the efficiency, economic, and effectiveness in public sector. Also the structural and functional reforms like, re-engineering, reinventing government, New Public Management (NPM), globalisation, civil services reform, democratization, decentralization etc. have being seen rapid influence on changing nature of administration and peoples participation in administration. After disintegration of soviet union and economic reform of 1990's, different administrative reforms and other initiatives have been introduced from time to time at worldwide level and especially in developing countries like India for the administration of any country focused on citizen-oriented. The objective of the proposed paper is to analyse the effectiveness of Administrative Reforms and other initiatives for Citizen- oriented Administration in India. For the present paper, both the descriptive and the analytical type of research methods have been used. Also the present paper is based on secondary data.

Keywords: Citizen –oriented administration, administration reforms, initiatives, citizens' charter, public service

I. INTRODUCTION

Citizen-Oriented or citizen centric administration means that the people in administration "have a sense of empathy" with the citizens in public policies and programs. All the organs in modern democratic states like politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs etc. are meant to serve to "common citizen"[1]. In the long run smooth and peaceful survival of society would depend on an honest, efficient and pro-people public administration of the state. The developmental goals of the government may not fructify without an effective delivery machinery of the public services. There is, therefore, serious need and urgency to improve the image and quality of our public administration and the persons engaged in it [2].

As per the ancient Indian thinking, the essence and basis of the moral state depends on the triangle of those actions for governance which are undertaking for universal welfare, maintaining and protecting each and everyone in the creation, and securing universal care for all and everyone. But that triangle has a centre point, the common most good which is denoted by the term "happiness for all". However, those pre-requisites as enunciated in ancient times in India are sadly missing among the stewards and practitioners of governance [3].

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Banawat (2011) focused on the requisites of citizen centeredness in administration as: to make a desirable situation in which the administrative system trusts a common man and makes rules and regulations accordingly; recognition of dignity of the 'common man'; the ability of the citizen to understand and comprehend various nuances of programs of the government schemes; and the administration can become citizen-centric only if those who matter at various levels, be they from political or the executive wings have to believe in it [4].

The "Modernising Government" programme has been initiated in the UK. There is a move to look at long-term problems rather than short-term crises. Secondly, efforts are made to run the government in such a way that it meets the needs of those who use them, and not those who provide them. What is lacking is not the programmes or the policies, but the will to implement and the inability of some of the bureaucrats to shed their indifference to the needs of the public [5].

According to Moin Sakir (1986), the fact of exploitations, economic inequalities, social oppressions and political servitude of people explain the nature of public administration and political system in India [6].

V. Bhaskara Rao (2004), says that the future of the State in India would be decided in the initial decades of the 21st century by its positive desires to read the pulse of the people carefully and imaginatively adopt the people-cantered policies of development to maintain the stability of order and control the social unrest and discontent. This needs not only keeping its own house i.e., public administration clean and neat, but also regulate effectively the market-centered capitalism permitted by it (the state) [7].

R. A. Mashelkar (2005), concludes that despite all the administrative reforms and well-meaning initiatives taken by the government, the general perception is that citizens have to face several hardships at every level, in particular at the functional level, for getting their legitimate work (that too, many times, of a trivial nature) done. Citizens continue to remain at the mercy of junior functionaries of the administration [8].

III. OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of the proposed paper is to analyse the effectiveness of Administrative Reforms and other initiatives for Citizen- oriented Administration in India. For the present, administrative reform initiatives after Independence of India are briefly described and their impact on the fulfilment of citizens' needs and their satisfaction are being analysed. Therefore, both the descriptive and the analytical type of research methods have been used. Also the present paper is based on secondary data.

IV. NEED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Rapid economic growth, increasing literacy, improved health indices etc. point towards improving governance standards. At the same time, the poor image of government in the minds of large sections of society points towards inefficient and ineffective administration. All these highlight the need for substantially reforming our governance systems. The Prime Minister in his Civil Services Day speech (2007) observed:

"It is in this context that 'reform of government' becomes relevant. 'Administrative Reforms' is a phrase that has been used widely to mean many things. It is used by some to mean change of any kind to deal with government problems of any description. Some regard 'administrative reform" merely as a means of "making the government work" better. Others in fact see 'reform' as "less government". I view the reform of government as a means of making citizens central to all government activities and concerns and reorganising government to effectively address the concerns of the common people" [9].

The globalization of our economy is heralding new and rapid changes. Indian citizens now have access to private and not-for-profit segments in several public utility services. These are already reaping the benefits of access to information due to rapid advances in information and communication technologies. This movement would push the government to think seriously about the ways and means of reorganizing public service delivery systems around citizens. The three cornerstones of Citizen-oriented Administration and high quality governance are fairness, accountability and transparency in all endeavours in the public domain. An ideal responsive and citizen-friendly administration ensures that:

1. The processes though which public authorities make decisions are understandable and open.
2. The decisions themselves are fair, reasoned and objective.
3. The information on which decisions are made is accessible to the public, as far as possible.

Fundamentally, there is a need to change the image/perception of our system of public administration in terms of attitudes, mindsets, structures, roles, systems, rules, personnel, work environments and responses [10].

1.1. Necessary Pre-conditions for Citizen-oriented Governance:
There are several preconditions which must be fulfilled in order to make governance citizen oriented. Some of the pre-conditions are:
a) Sound legal framework.
b) Robust institutional mechanism for proper implementation of the laws and their effective functioning.

c) Competent personnel staffing these institutions; and sound personnel management policies. d. Right policies for decentralization, delegation and accountability.

Besides, a number of tools can also be employed to make administration citizen centric are: i) Re-engineering processes to make governance 'citizen centric', ii) Adoption of appropriate modern technology, iii) Right to information, iv) Citizens' charters, v) Independent evaluation of services, vi) Grievance redressal mechanisms and vii) Active citizens' participation – public-private partnerships [11].

2. ANALYSIS

Analysis of Administrative Reform initiatives towards effectiveness for Citizen-oriented Administration in India:
A number of approaches for making administration more and more citizen oriented or citizen friendly are adopted to bring improvements in the efficiency, economic, and effectiveness in public sector. Also the structural and functional reforms like, re-engineering, reinventing government, New Public Management (NPM), globalisation, civil services reform, democratization, decentralization etc. have being seen rapid influence on changing nature of administration and peoples participation in administration. After disintegration of soviet union and economic reform of 1990's, different administrative reforms and other initiatives have been introduced from time to time at worldwide level and especially in developing countries like India, offered by the international bodies like World Bank, the IMF, United Nations, etc. for the administration of any country focused on citizen-oriented [12].

There have been a large number of reform measures taken in India- some at the macro level and others at the micro level - which have sought to bring administration closer to the people. Some of the important administrative reform initiatives are briefly described as following:

Santhanam Committee Report – The Central Vigilance Commission
On the basis of recommendations made by the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, popularly known as the Santhanam Committee, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) was set up by the Government of India in 1964. It was accorded statutory status, consequent upon the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1998) 1 SCC 226, through the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. The CVC advises the Union Government on all matters pertaining to the maintenance of integrity in administration. It exercises superintendence over the working of the Central Bureau of Investigation - the principal investigating agency of the Union Government in anti-corruption matters - and also over the vigilance administration of various Ministries and other organizations of the Union Government.

First ARC – Lok Pal and Lokayukta:
The first Administrative Reforms Commission had recommended the setting up of the Lok Pal. The Lok Pal Bill has been introduced several times in Parliament, but due to various reasons it has not been enacted into a law. The Lok Pal is supposed to be a watchdog over the integrity of Ministers and the Members of Parliament. The Lok Pal Bill provides for constitution of the Lok Pal as an independent body to enquire into cases of corruption against public functionaries, with a mechanism for filing complaints and conducting inquiries etc. After the recommendations of the first Administrative Reforms Commission, many States have constituted 'Lokayuktas' to investigate allegations or grievances arising out of the conduct of public servants including political executives, legislators, officers of the State Government, local bodies, public enterprises and other instrumentalities of Government. A member of the public can file specific allegations with the Lokayukta against any public servant for enquiry. The Lokayukta can also initiate suo-motu inquiry into the conduct of public servants. The 2nd ARC has dealt with this subject extensively in its Report on 'Ethics in Governance' and has made substantive recommendations [13].

It is argued that two swings, one upward from national governments to international organizations, and the other downward from national governments to grass-roots non-governmental organizations, are the keys to understanding the challenges that confronted public administration in the 1990s for administrative reforms. Six essential challenges have been perceived in this context:

• The managerial challenge (process);
• The challenge of quality (3 E's: efficiency; economy and effectiveness);
• The democratic challenge (friendly with citizens);
• The challenges of professionalism (policy and operation expertise);
• The challenges of responsibility (limit public spending, re-design the welfare state); and
• The challenges of decentralization (closer to citizens) [14].

Chief Secretaries Conference in 1996
Sharing the concern for ensuring responsive, accountable, transparent and citizen-centric administration at all levels, and with the objective of restoring faith of people in administration against the prevailing dissatisfaction, the then

Prime Minister of India, had inaugurated a conference of the Chief Secretaries in 1996 to develop an effective and responsive administration and to make public services more efficient. The Conference of Chief Secretaries in India suggested several corrective steps widely known as Civil Services Reforms. The conference recommended that accountability should be interpreted in a larger sense in relation to public satisfaction and responsive delivery of services and phased introduction of citizen's charter for as many service institutions as possible.

Important Aspects Mentioned was:
(a) Administration is not people sensitive or citizen's friendly;
(b) Urgent need to make the administration people sensitive, efficient and cost effective;
(c) For public satisfaction and responsive delivery of services, a phased introduction of citizen's charter for as many service institutions as possible by way of citizen's entitlement to public services; and
(d) Governing conceived as governance with possibilities of inclusion of other actors such as citizens, consumer groups, elected local bodies or those who are linked with administration in some way or the other.

Action Plan on Effective and Responsive Administration
As a result of the above recommendations, the department of administrative reforms and public services in 1997 evolved an "action plan on effective and responsive administration" based on the responses received from experts, officials, media, voluntary agencies etc. The three main areas of action plan that were discussed in the conference of Chief Ministers on May 24, 1997 were to (i) make the administration accountable and citizen-friendly, (ii) ensure transparency and right to information and (iii) adopt measures to cleanse and motivate civil services. An implementation committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary to formulate ways and means to implement the above stated concerns of the Action Plan [15].

Citizen Charter
The concept of citizen's charter was first adopted in Great Britain from where it spread to different parts of the world including India. The idea behind the charter is tapping citizen's responses to the actual working of government organizations. Normally, the charter would cover all public services and aim at demanding from the government and services organizations accountability, transparency, quality and choice of services provided by them to the people. Charter is generally defined as a written document delivered by the sovereign or legislature. A citizen's charter is a micro-concept in the sense that it is invoked by an organization. **Secondly**, it is as a rule, proclaimed by an organization having its day-to-day dealings and contacts with citizens. These organizations could be local governments, subordinate offices of the government, banking and financial institutions, public utilities etc. **Thirdly**, all these organizations promise rendering of services to the citizens within a specified time-frame and conforming to a certain standard. The sanction behind the citizen's charter is moral and nothing else. The proclaiming agency makes it absolutely explicit that it is not justifiable: a citizen cannot sue an organization for not abiding by its self-proclaimed standards of services embodied in a citizen's charter. The charter may thus be seen as only emphasizing the moral dimension of civil service accountability [16].

The charter will have the following elements:
➢ Details of business transactions by the organizations,
➢ Details of clients,
➢ Details of service provided to each client group,
➢ Details of grievances redressal mechanism and how to access it.
➢ Expectations from the clients

Six principles of the Citizens' Charter movement as originally framed, were: (i) **Quality:** Improving the quality of services; (ii) **Choice:** Wherever possible; (iii) **Standards:** Specify what to expect and how to act if standards are not met; (iv) **Value:** For the taxpayers' money; (v) **Accountability:** Individuals and Organisations; and (vi) **Transparency:** Rules/ Procedures/ Schemes/Grievances. These were later elaborated by the Labour Government as following nine principles of Service Delivery (1998):

▪ Set standards of service
▪ Be open and provide full information
▪ Consult and involve
▪ Encourage access and the promotion of choice
▪ Treat all fairly
▪ Put things right when they go wrong
▪ Use resources effectively
▪ Innovate and improve
▪ Work with other providers [17].

Citizens Charter was first introduced in UK in 1991 to streamline the administration and also make it citizen friendly. The charter is a significant influence in the latest efforts undertaken by the Government of India to make the

administration citizen friendly, open, transparent, sensitive and accountable. Therefore they are entitled to expect high quality services, responsive to their needs, provided efficiently at a reasonable cost.

The UK's Citizens' Charter initiative aroused considerable interest around the world and several countries implemented similar programmes e.g. Australia (Service Charter, 1997), Belgium (Public Service Users' Charter 1992), Canada (Service Standards Initiative, 1995), France (Service Charter, 1992), India (Citizens' Charter, 1997), Jamaica (Citizens' Charter 1994), Malaysia (Client Charter,1993), Portugal (The Quality Charter in Public Services, 1993), and Spain(The Quality Observatory, 1992) (OECD, 1996).

Despite all concern for effective implementation of Citizen's Charters, there was little evidence of improved public service and affective, accountable and responsive administration actually being delivered. The Government of India was confronted with several challenging issues. These included the challenge of:

- Aligning public service delivery performance in India with citizen's expectations;
- Institutionalizing continuous improvement and assessment of performance in the Government organizations against clear and improving standards
- Benchmarking quality of service delivery by government organizations and grading them on performance;
- Providing public service providing government organizations a scheme for acquiring (and retaining) a symbol of excellence in service delivery.

The Sevottam Framework
Department of the Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, GOI has come out with a framework for improving delivery of public services, which is known as the Sevottam framework. It is a quality management framework which provides a systematic approach to improving public service and any public organization may acquire the said certification by complying with the steps. With the adoption of Sevottam, India became the first country in the world to publish a requirement standard for quality management of public service delivery. The Sevottam framework is applicable to all public services delivered by the central and state governments. The framework has three different modules as:

1. Citizen Charter for defining the level of services to be provided to the citizen,
2. Sound Public Grievance Redress Mechanism, and
3. Improving capability for delivery of services to the desired standard.

Information and Facilitation Counters (IFCs)
Information and Facilitation Counter (IFC) is a facility set up by selected Central Government organisations to provide information to citizens about their programmes/schemes, rules and procedures etc. as well as status of cases/applications. An IFC also acts as a nodal point for redress of public grievances. The IFC, therefore, is a physical manifestation of Citizens' Charter. Hence it has now been decided to set up IFCs in all government ministries/ departments having Citizens' Charters. About 110 Information and Facilitation Counters/ May I Help You/ Inquiry Counters have been set up so far.

Evaluation of the functioning of the IFCs was carried out by the DARPG and the Consumer Coordination Council. The organisations concerned have taken action on deficiencies pointed out in these evaluations. This Department also regularly monitors the working of the IFCs through a half yearly return prescribed for all the organisations that have set up IFCs [18].

Computerised Grievances Redressal Mechanism
A Computerized Public Grievances Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) developed by the Department of AR&PG in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) was installed in the Department on 5 September, 2001. All the grievances received are entered in this system and processed. The internet version of this software was launched on 31.05.2002 which facilitates the citizen to lodge and monitor the progress of his/her grievance on internet. A comprehensive website of Citizens' Charters in the Government of India was also launched the same day. The CPGRAMS has been further improved by adding several other services.

Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005
The RTI bill was passed by the parliament on May 11-12, 2005 and received the Presidential assent on June 15, 2005 The RTI Act, after notification in the Gazette of India, came into force on Oct 13, 2005. The major purpose of the Act is fourfold- (i) informed citizenry (ii) transparency of information which is vital to its functioning (iii) necessary information to contain corruption and (iv) to hold government and its functionaries, instrumentalities accountable to the governed.

It includes the right to (a) inspect works, documents and (b) take notes, extracts of certified copies of documents or records, (c) take certified samples of material, (d) obtain in form of printouts, diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through Printouts. 2nd ARC has examined this subject and made comprehensive recommendations in its First Report. Right to information has been seen as the key to strengthening participatory democracy and ushering in people centred governance as access to information can empower the citizens to demand and get information about public policies and actions, thereby leading to their welfare. Transparency in government organisations makes them function more objectively, predictably and also enables citizens to participate in the governance process effectively [19].

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) (2009) in its 12th report on citizen-centric administration during its visits to the states identifies the following barriers in citizen-centric administration in India:

➢ Attitudinal Problems of the Civil Servants.
➢ Lack of Accountability.
➢ Red Tapism.
➢ Low levels of Awareness of the Rights and Duties of Citizens.
➢ Ineffective Implementation of Laws and Rules [20].

Second ARC - Citizen-centric Administration: The Heart of Governance

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) was set up with a wide mandate to prepare a blue print for revamping the public administration system and to suggest measures to achieve a proactive, responsive, accountable, sustainable and efficient administration for the country at all levels of government. The commission was the first to clearly elaborate and flourish the concept of Citizen-centric or Citizen-friendly Administration in its 12th report entitled as, "Citizen Centric Administration: The Heart of Governance" and the Commission was headed by Shri Veerappa Moily. The Commission was set up in August 2005 and submitted it report in February 2009.

The 2nd ARC One of the terms of reference of the Commission relates to Citizen Centric Administration. Specifically, the ARC has been asked to examine the following aspects of this issue:

▪ Accountable and Transparent Government.
▪ Progressive interventions to make administration more result-oriented.
▪ Strengthening Citizen Centric decision making.
▪ Freedom of Information.
▪ Social Capital, Trust and Participative public service delivery.

According to 12th report of 2nd ARC Governance in order to be citizen centric should be participative and transparent. It should be effective, efficient and responsive to the citizens. Furthermore, an ethos of serving the citizens should permeate all government organizations. Last but not the least; government organisations should be accountable to the people. As one of the primary functions of the State is to promote the welfare of its citizens, an evaluation of the functioning of the institutions of governance will ultimately have to be based on the satisfaction they provide to the common man. In this regard, prominence would need to be attached to the voice of the citizens' themselves [21].

Good governance aims at providing an environment in which all citizens irrespective of class, caste and gender can develop to their full potential. In addition, good governance also aims at providing public services effectively, efficiently and equitably to the citizens. The **4 pillars** on which the edifice of good governance rests, in essence are:

• **Ethos** (of service to the citizen),
• **Ethics** (honesty, integrity and transparency),
• **Equity** (treating all citizens alike with empathy for the weaker sections), and
• **Efficiency** (speedy and effective delivery of service without harassment and using ICT increasingly).

Citizens are thus at the core of good governance. Therefore, good governance and citizen centric administration are inextricably linked.

There are several laudable state-level initiatives, for example, the Government of Karnataka has set-up an Administrative Reforms Commission to make its governance more people-oriented, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has established e-Seva for good governance, Saukaryam Project in Visakhapatnam, Gramsat Pilot Project in Orissa, Friends Project in Kerala, etc. for making governance transparent, accountable, and accessible [22].

According to Mohit Bhattacharya, a majority of citizens are not satisfied with the administration in delivery of public services and their general perceptions about administration include: favouritism in administration; inordinate delay; unhelpful attitude of officials; citizens' ignorance about procedures; and discrimination in terms of rich-poor in administration [23].

CONCLUSION

Despite of all the measures or initiatives of administrative reforms taken in India after Independence to make administration more and more citizen- oriented, still the level of satisfaction towards administration is low because citizens are facing several hardships from grass root level to national level during the implementation of public policies and programs. Therefore, government should to address these issues immediately and gain the trust of citizens on administration through creating a responsive and citizen centric administration.

No doubt, the different initiatives has been taken at national as well as state levels in India for making administration more and more citizen-oriented as different administrative reforms, legislative Acts, and other policies and programmes were made. Instead of this, there is a vast gap between citizens and administration in terms of trust, responsibilities, accountability, accessibility, responsiveness, transparency, equitability, etc. or simply we can say in terms of effective Citizen- oriented administration at ground level. The causes may be different, but the actual cause for not achieving the objectives of citizen- oriented administration which I realise is not in policy-making or initiatives up-rise but in their implementation, monitoring, evaluation and analysis processes. We shall not only focussed on initiatives taken at different levels but also on their efficient implementation and outcomes through the whole country so that administration will influence the hearts of citizens by gaining their trust and achieve the goals of Citizen centric administration.

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