

Definition of Public Administration: Various Scholars

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ABSTRACT:- Public administration, which is an aspect of a more generic concept of administration, and that exists in a political system for the accomplishment of goals, and objectives formulated by the political decision makers, consists of the activities of the executive branches of the national, state and local governments. All these constitute the subject-matter of this study.

Keywords:- Administration, Public Administration, Goals and objectives, public administrators and Decision Making

I. INTRODUCTION

Various writers and scientists define public administration variously for various reasons. For instance, Leonard D. White defines Public Administration as consistency of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy. However, a broad view suggests that scholars of public administration have expressed two divergent views on the nature of public administration, that is, an integral view and managerial view; which views are the focus of this study. Therefore, the Purpose of this Study is to define administration and public administration according to various renowned scholars and to demonstrate the scope and nature of the discipline of public administration.

Meanings and definitions of public administration

It is difficult if not impossible to define the concept of public administration in one sentence. Waldo (1967) corroborated this fact by asserting that “the immediate effect of all one sentence or one paragraph definition of public administration is a mental paralysis rather than enlightenment and stimulation”. In the words of Arora (1985), “to define a subject is to fix its boundaries or if this turns out to be fuzzy, its essence and core characters can be identified”. However, this has proven to be so intricate a problem that public administration is said to be suffering from a “crisis of identify”. To a layman or amateur, public administration means public service or public management. Some people even refer to public administration as the activities of the executive branch of government either at the national, state or local level.

The word “public” refers to people of a define territory or state. As the will of the people of a state is represented by the government, the word “public” also connotes specialized meaning i.e government. Therefore, when government carries out any act of administration, it is called “public administration”. The English word “administration” has been derived from two Latin words “ad” “ministare” meaning “to minister to” or “to serve” or “to manage”. Thus, in simple parlance, administration means the “management of affairs” or looking after people. It is a management process found in all kinds of organization from household to the accomplished common goals, an administrative activity is assumed to have been involved. In other words every group activity involves administration.

The following are some of the definitions of administration and public administration by scholars in the field:

Administration

The concept of administration is defined by various writers in the following ways:

E.N. Gladden: “Administration is a long and slightly pompous word, but it has a humble meaning, for it means, to care for or look after people, to manage affairs... is determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose.”

Felix A. Nigro: “Administration is the organization and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose.”

Herbert A. Simon: “In its broadest sense, administration can be defined as the activities of groups cooperating to accomplish common goals.”

John A. Veig: “Administration is determined action taken in pursuit of conscious purpose. It is the systematic ordering of affairs and the calculated use of resources, aimed at making those things happen which we want to happen and simultaneously preventing developments that fail to square with our intentions. It is the marshaling

of available labour and materials in order to gain that which is desired at the lowest cost in energy, time and money.”

Pfiffner: “Administration is the organization and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends.”

L.D. White: “The art of administration is the direction, coordination and control of many persons to achieve some purpose or objective.”

Luther Gulick: “Administration has to do with getting things done; with the accomplishment of defined objectives.”

George E. Berkley: “Administration is a process involving human beings jointly engaged in working towards common goals.”

Brooks Adams: “Administration is the capacity of coordinating man and often conflicting social energies in a single organism, so adroitly that they shall operate as a unity.”

Keith Henderson: “Administration is the arrangement of men and materials in the rational carrying out of purposes.”

Ordway Tead: “Administration is a variety of component elements which, together in action, produce the result of a defined task done. Administration, primarily, is the direction of people in association to achieve some goal temporarily shared. It is the inclusively process of integrating human efforts so that a desired result is obtained.” He further adds, “Administration is the central power house of the motivational impulsion and spirit which makes the institution drive to fulfill its purpose.”

D. Waldo: “Administration is a type of cooperative human effort that has a high degree of rationality.”

James McCanny: “Administration is the organization and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose. It is the specialized vocation of managers who have skills of organizing and directing men and materials just as an engineer has the skill of building structures or a doctor has the skill of understanding the human ailments.”

F.M. Marx: “Administration is a determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose. It is the systematic ordering of affairs and the calculated use of resources aimed at making those things happen which one wants to happen and foretelling to the contrary.” The above definitions make it clear that administration has two essential elements that is, a collective effort and a common purpose. Thus, administration means a cooperative effort of a group of people in pursuit of a common objective. Administration is a universal process and occurs in diverse institutional settings. Based on its institutional setting, administration is divided in public administration and private administration. The former refers to the administration which operates in a governmental setting, while the latter refers to the administration which operates in a non-governmental setting, that is, business enterprises.

Public Administration

L.D White (1955): “Public Administration consists of all those operations having for their purpose, the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy as declared by competent authority”

J.M Pfiffner (1946): “Public administration consists of getting the work of government done by co-ordination the efforts of people so that they can work together to accomplish their set tasks”.

Woodrow Wilson (1889): “Public Administration is detailed and systematic application of law”. Every particular application of law is an act of administration.

Percy McQueen: “Public administration is administration related with the operation of government whether central or local”.

Herbert Simon (1957): “By public administration is meant in common usage, the activities of the executive branch of the national, state and local government”

Luther Gulick (1937): “Public administration is that part of the science of administration, which has to do with the government; it concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the work of the government is done; though, there are obviously problems also in connection with the legislature and judicial branch”.

Dwight Waldo (1967): “Public administration is the art and science of management as applied to the affairs of state”.

E.N. Gladden: “Public Administration is concerned with the administration of the government.”

H. Walker: “The work which the government does to give effect to a law is called Public Administration.”

Willoughby: “The term administration may be employed in Political Science in two senses. In its broadest sense it denotes the work involved in the actual conduct of governmental affairs, regardless of the particular

branch of government concerned. It is, thus, quite proper to speak of the administration of the legislative branch of the government, the administration of justice or judicial affairs, or the administration of the executive branch as well as the administration of the affairs of the administrative branch of the government, or the conduct of the affairs of the government generally. In its narrowest sense, it denotes the operations of the administrative branch only”.

M. E. Dimock: “Public Administration is the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy as declared by the competent authorities. It deals with the problems and powers of the organization and techniques of management involved in carrying out the laws and policies formulated by the policy-making agencies of government. Public administration is the law in action. It is the executive side of a government.”

John A. Veig: “Administration signifies the organization, personnel, practices and procedures essential to effective performance of civilian functions entrusted to the executive branch of the government.”

Merson: “The administrator gets things done, and just as the science of is an enquiry into the best means whereby the will of the people may be organized for the formulation of policy so the science of Public Administration is an enquiry as to how policies may best be carried into operation.”

Corson and Harris: “Public Administration is the action part of the government, the means by which the purposes and goals of the government are realized.”

F.A. Nigro (1970): “Public Administration

- i. is a cooperative group effort in a public setting;
- ii. covers all the three branches – executive, legislative and judicial, and their inter-relationship;
- iii. has an important role in the formulation of public policy and is thus part of the political process;
- iv. is different in significant ways from private administration; and
- v. Closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community.”

J.S. Hodgson: “Public Administration comprises all activities of persons or groups in government or their agencies, whether these organizations are international, regional or local in their scope, to fulfill the purposes of these governments or agencies.”

James W. Fesler: “Public Administration is policy execution and policy formulation, public administration is bureaucracy and public administration is public.”

James W. Davies: “Public Administration can be best identified with the executive branch of a government.”

Frank Goodnow: “Administration includes the function of executing the law as well as the semi-scientific, quasi-judicial and quasi-business or commercial functions.”

Ridley: “Public Administration in the public sector...It is administration by the state...Public Administration is governmental administration...It is administration by public authorities...Public authorities are authorities who administer according to the rules of public administration. Public administration should be the study of administration, descriptive, theoretical and normative.”

M. RuthnaSwamy: “When administration has to do with the affairs of a state or minor political institutions like a Municipal or County Council, or District Board, it is call Public Administration.”

Dimock and Dimock: Like the study of politics, the study of public administration is a study of what people want through government and how they go about getting it. In addition, administration is the area of study and practice where law and policy are recommended and carried out.”

J. Greenwood and D. Wilson: “Public Administration is an activity, a set of institutions and a subject of study.”

Rosenbloom: “Public Administration does involve activity, it is concerned with politics and policy-making, it tends to be concentrated in the executive branch of government, it does differ from private administration, and it is concerned with implementing law.” He further adds, “Public Administration is the use of managerial, legal and political theories and processes to fulfill legislative, executive and judicial governmental mandates for the provision of regulatory and service functions for the society as a whole or for some segments of it.”

Eugene McGregor: “The term public administration is reserved to denote the generation of purposive public action whose success depends on reconciling the competing demands of administrative operations, democratic governance and public solving.”

F.M. Marx: “Public Administration has come to signify primarily the organization, personnel, practices and procedures essential to effective performance of the civilian functions entrusted to the executive branch of government.”

M. Ruthanaswami: “When administration has to do with the affairs of a state or minor political institutions like the municipal or country council (district board), it is called public administration. All the acts of the officials of a government, from the peon in a remote office to the head of a state in the capital, constitute public administration.”

Max Weber: “Public administration is the implementation of government policy and also an academic discipline that studies this implementation and prepares civil employees for working in the public service. As a

"field of inquiry with a diverse scope" whose fundamental goal is to "advance management and policies so that government can function".

Paul H. Appleby (1947): "Public administration as public leadership of public affairs directly responsible for executive action". In a democracy, it has to do with such leadership and executive action in terms that respect and contribute to the dignity, the worth, and the potentials of the citizen".

James D. Carroll & Alfred M. Zuck, (1887): "Regarded public administration as the beginning of public administration as a specific field of study"

Patricia M. Shields (1998): Asserts that public administration "deals with the stewardship and implementation of the products of a living democracy" The key term "product" refers to "those items that are constructed or produced" such as prisons, roads, laws, schools, and security. "As implementors, public managers engage these products." They participate in the doing and making of the "living" democracy. A living democracy is "an environment that is changing, organic", imperfect, inconsistent and teaming with values. "Stewardship is emphasized because public administration is concerned "with accountability and effective use of scarce resources and ultimately making the connection between the doing, the making and democratic values".

Donald Kettl (2009): "Public administration "as a sub-field within political science".

According to Lalor (2014), A society with a public authority that provides at least one public good can be said to have a public administration whereas the absence of either (or *a fortiori* both) a public authority or the provision of at least one public good implies the absence of a public administration. He argues that public administration is the public provision of public goods in which the demand function is satisfied more or less effectively by politics, whose primary tool is rhetoric, providing for public goods, and the supply function is satisfied more or less efficiently by public management, whose primary tools are speech acts, producing public goods. The moral purpose of public administration, implicit in its acceptance of its role, is the maximization of the opportunities of the public to satisfy its wants

H.A. Simon, D.W. Smithburg and V.A. Thompson: "By Public Administration is meant, in common usage, the activities of the executive branches of national, state and local governments, government corporations and certain other agencies of a specialized character. Specifically excluded are judicial and legislative agencies within the government and non-governmental administration." Corson and Harris "Public administration ... is the action part of government, the means by which the purposes and goals of government are realized."

M.E. Dimock: "Public Administration is concerned with 'what' and 'how' of the government. The 'what' is the subject matter, the technical knowledge of a field, which enables the administrator to perform his tasks? The 'how' is the technique of management, the principles according to which co-operative programmes are carried through to success. Each is indispensable; together they form the synthesis called administration".

Nicholas Henry: "Public Administration is a broad-ranging and amorphous combination of theory and practice; its purpose is to promote a superior understanding of government and its relationship with the society, it governs, as well as to encourage public policies more responsive to social needs and to institute managerial practices attuned to effectiveness, efficiency and the deeper human requisites of the citizenry".

The North American Industry Classification System definition of the Public Administration (NAICS) sector states that public administration "... comprises establishments primarily engaged in activities of a governmental nature, that is, the enactment and judicial interpretation of laws and their pursuant regulations, and the administration of programs based on them". This includes "Legislative activities, taxation, national defense, public order and safety, immigration services, foreign affairs and international assistance, and the administration of government programs are activities that are purely governmental in nature".

From the academic perspective, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the United States defines the study of public administration as "A program that prepares individuals to serve as managers in the executive arm of local, state, and federal government and that focuses on the systematic study of executive organization and management. Include instruction in the roles, development, and principles of public administration; the management of public policy; executive-legislative relations; public budgetary processes and financial management; administrative law; public personnel management; professional ethics; and research methods."

The traditional definitions of Public Administration, which are given above reflect the view that the Public Administration is only involved in carrying out the policies and programmes of the government. It reflect that it has no role in policy making and also locates the administration in the executive branch but today the term public administration is used in a broader sense that it is not only involved in carrying out the programmes of the government, but it also plays an important role in policy formulation and covers the three branches of the government.

In this context, we may reflect on the definition offered by **F.A. Nigro and L.G. Nigro**. According to them Public Administration: is co-operative group effort in a public setting; covers all three branches-executive, legislative, and judicial, and their inter-relationships; has an important role in the formulation of public policy

and is thus a part of the political process; is different in significant ways from private administration; and is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community"

II. NATURE AND SCOPE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

White observes that although public administration varies in form and objects, and although the administration of public and private affairs differs at many points, there is an underlying similarity, if no identity.

As an integral aspect of such generic concept, public administration could be related to that type of administration, which operates within a specific ecological setting. It is a means to carry out the policy decisions made by political executive.

To be seen along with it is the 'Public' aspect of Public administration, which attributes a special character and focus to it, 'Public' can be looked at formally to mean 'government'. So, public administration is government administration, government in action, or a socio-economic and politico-administrative confluence, the focus being especially on public bureaucracy.

Encyclopedia Britannica (2010) defines public administration as 'the application of a policy of a state through its government'. Public Administration, therefore, refers to that part of administration, which pertains to the administrative activities of the government.

Public administration is the non-political public bureaucracy operating in a political system; deals with the ends of the State, the sovereign will, the public interests and laws; is the business side of government and as such concerned with policy execution, but it is also concerned with policy-making; covers all three branches of government, although it tends to be concentrated in the executive branch; provides regulatory and service functions to the people in order to attain good life; differs significantly from private administration, especially in its emphasis on the public; and is interdisciplinary in nature as it draws upon other social sciences like political science, economics and sociology.

III. CONCLUSION

Public administration is an aspect of a more generic concept of administration. Therefore, before understanding the meaning of public administration, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the word "administration". Administration means a cooperative effort of a group of people in pursuit of a common objective. Administration is a universal process and occurs in diverse institutional settings. Based on its institutional setting, administration is divided in public administration and private administration. The former refers to the administration which operates in a governmental setting, while the latter refers to the administration which operates in a non-governmental setting, that is, business enterprises. Public administration is centrally concerned with the organization of government policies and programs as well as the behavior of officials (usually non-elected) formally responsible for their conduct Many non-elected public employees can be considered to be public administrators, Public administrators are public employees working in public departments and agencies, at all levels of government. The Purpose of this Study was to define administration and public administration according to various renowned scholars and to demonstrate the scope and nature of the discipline of public administration.

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