

Subject: Political Science
Semester: 2nd
Course:

Marks: 20

New Public Administration

Meaning of New Public Administration:

The 1960s and early 1970s were periods of turbulence, instability and confusion in the West, particularly in the United States. Like other social sciences such as psychology, sociology and political science, public administration was shaken by this revolutionary period.

The earlier dogmas of public administration 'economy' and 'efficiency' were found inadequate and incomplete objectives of administrative activity. It began to be said that efficiency is not the whole of public administration. Man is the centre stage of all administrative activity who cannot be subjected to the mechanical test of efficiency.

The impact of administration on human character is more important than its efficiency and economy. Public administration cannot be 'value free', it is to be 'value-oriented' as certain human values are to promote in the society.

The term New Public Administration was used to describe this new trend in the field of public administration. The two books "Towards a New Public Administration, The Minnowbrook Perspective" edited by Frank Marini and published in 1971 and "Public Administration in a Time of Turbulence" edited by Dwight Waldo and published simultaneously gave currency to the concept of New Public Administration.

These two books edited the ideas of an academic get together of younger age-group on public administration called the Minnowbrook Conference held in 1968. This conference expressed dissatisfaction with the state of the discipline of public administration and sought to give it a new image by discarding traditional concepts and making it alive to the problems presented by the "turbulent times".

Anti-Goals of New Public Administration:

Robert T. Golenbiewski mentions three "anti-goals" (what they reject) and five "goals" (what they want to approach) of the New Public Administration.

These are:

- (1) The literature of the New Public Administration is anti-positivist which means:
 - (a) They reject the definition of public administration as 'value-free',
 - (b) They reject a rationalist or perhaps deterministic view of humankind,
 - (c) They reject any definition of public administration that was not properly involved in policy.
- (2) The New Public Administration is anti-technical—that means they decry the human being sacrificed to the logic of the machine and the system.
- (3) The New Public Administration is more or less anti-bureaucratic and anti-hierarchical.

Goals of New Public Administration:

From a positive perspective, the five goals of New Public Administration are:

- (1) The New Public Administration considers mankind as having the potentiality of becoming perfect. Humans are not static factors of production.

- (2) It stresses the central role of personal and organizational values or ethics. There is an essential relationship between the structures and processes of administrative efforts and their ends and goals.
- (3) Social equity should be the guiding factor for public administration. Social equity means that public administrators should become champions of the underprivileged sections of the society. They must become active agents of economic and social change.
- (4) The New Public Administration advocates a client-centered approach. It wants administrators to provide the people a major voice in how and when and what is to be provided. In the words of Nigra and Nigra, "Client-focused administration is recommended along with de-bureaucratization, democratic decision-making, and decentralization of administrative process in the interest of more effective and human delivery of public services."

(5) The New Public Administration places emphasis in innovation and change. The key-note of New Public Administration is an intense sensitivity to and concern for the societal problems of the day. Its parameters are relevance, post-positivism, morals, ethics, and values, innovation, concern for clients, social equity, etc. In this background, new forms of organization be carved out to suit the fast-changing environment.

In the words of Frederickson "The essence of New Public Administration is some sort of movement in the direction of normative theory, philosophy, social concern and activism. It is less generic and more public, less descriptive and more perspective less institutional oriented less mental and more normative" Nigro and Nigro observe "...In the past public administration has neglected the question of values in relation to the social purposes of government and that public officials have emphasized efficiency and economy of execution often at the expense of social equity. These officials profess neutrality but in fact have been far from neutral even catering to special interests".

Evaluation of New Public Administration:

The critics of the doctrine of New Public Administration hold that the New Public Administration possesses only a kind of difference by definition. For example, Campbell argues that it "differs from the 'old' public administration only in that it is responsive to a different set of societal problems from those of other periods."

Robert T. Golembiewski holds that New Public Administration must be counted a partial success, at best and perhaps only a cruel reminder of the gap in the field between aspiration and performance. He describes it "revolution or radicalism in words and (at best) status quo in skills or technologies."

The critics also fear that the advocates of New Public Administration are trying to arrogate to themselves what falls within the domain of political institutions. Further, the concept of social equity is vague. What it means, what it requires in public programmes, opinions vary greatly.

The New Public Administration has not yet developed a theory of its own. It was the product of the social ferment of the 1960's and early 1970s in the United States. The Minnow-brook Conference was a youth conference which felt that old public administration had failed to solve the current social problems.