

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE CITIZEN: HOW FAR PUBLIC ADMINIS- TRATION CAN BE PUBLIC ?

V. Jagannadham*

When I was invited to write a paper for the members' 21st Annual Conference of IIPA with 'Public Administration and the Citizen' as the main title and 'How Far Public Administration Can Be Public' as the sub-title, I agreed without assessing fully to what I was committing myself. The main title was the subject of an earlier Conference (1961) and of a special issue of the Institute's journal in 1975 and of some research studies by IIPA¹. The focus in this year's Conference is, in my view, on the sub-title and the paper seeks to highlight some issues in this

*Professor of Social Policy and Administration, IIPA, New Delhi.

¹Vid: Administration and the Citizen, *Fifth Annual Conference, IIPA, New Delhi, August 1961.*

(i) A. P. Barnabas, *The Experience of Citizens in Getting water Connections*, IIPA, New Delhi, 1965.

(ii) Samuel J. Eldersveld, V. Jagannadham, A.P. Barnabas, *The Citizen and the Administrator in a Developing Democracy*, IIPA, 1968 (also published in U.S.A. by Scott, Foresman & Company 1968)

(iii) A.P. Barnabas, *Citizen Grievances and Administration*, IIPA, New Delhi, 1969.

(iv) V. Jagannadham and H.R. Mukhija, *Citizen Administration and Lokpal* (a study made for A.R.C. by IIPA) S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1969.

(v) V. Jagannadham and N.S. Bakshi, *Citizen and the Municipal Bureaucracy*, IIPA, New Delhi 1971.

(vi) I.R. Kumar "Select Bibliography on Citizen and Administration", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXI, No. S-II, July-September, 1975, pp. 591-615.

area from two points of view, namely, diagnostic and remedial. The paper is neither thorough nor comprehensive but indicative.

The title and the sub-title have both global and local significance. The former refers to the inter-relationship aspect of the citizen and the political system acting through administration. Also, areawise, it is global because the State's functions are growing and becoming blurred with those of the society crossing the geographical national/municipal boundaries. Two universal questions in this regard are: (1) Could the inherited instrument of administration operating with marginal modification manage today's public affairs with the consent of the public in the welfare sector and in production and distribution of goods/services with the same effectiveness as in the traditional areas of law and order and revenue collection; and (2) Can the flabby State make administration smart in serving the competing demands of multiple publics with conflicting interests? Many more aspects are implicit in the main title but these are enough to indicate the enormity of the new responsibilities both of the State and the citizen.

The sub-title contains really the crucial issue. It raises questions of magnitude; and for measuring it, no objective scales or norms are, to my knowledge, widely available. We have, therefore, to be content with 'guesstimates' and informed views or intuitive judgements of experts and experienced persons. The sub-title too has global and local dimensions. Questions are raised in many sectors about 'public-private inter-relations' all over the world but each looks at them from a narrow cultural frame. Dwight Waldo rightly stated:

"At some point the question becomes not what is the implication of public in general, but for this particular government in this particular society at this particular time."²

Each cultural group and Government system has to appraise periodically the new dimensions of the public's and administration's mutual relationships and responses. Every generation

²Dwight Waldo, "The Administrative State Revisited", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. XXV, No. I, March, 1965. Present Quotation is taken from p. 26 of Reprint No. 12 of the University of California, Institute of Government Studies, Berkeley, California.

has to measure the 'how far' and the 'can'. Each generation's perceptions and expectations are bound to be different.

The implications of the sub-title need to be made explicit. As it stands, the sub-title raises many doubts. One may say that public administration's competence to be public may range from zero to infinity and the location of an optimum point is just not possible. Secondly, public administration is not as public as it could or should be, because of erosion from external and internal forces. A further implication is that the distinction between public administration and private management is becoming narrow and thin and the two are overlapping, if not coalescing. Consequently, the traditional distinctions are inapplicable and inappropriate. For example, in Dr. C.D. Deshmukh's view, administration is subsumed within management even though he points out differences in operation between business management and public administration (1966).³

GLOBAL ISSUES

Prof. Dwight Waldo, however, posed the question in a sharp way:⁴

"What should we, can we, make of public administration as against administration generically? What is 'public' about public administration" (p.24)

He also issued a caution and said:

"The terms and concepts *public* and *private* must be used with great caution. Obviously there is something of a private-public spectrum, from, say, a moonshining operation to the Presidency. Also, some large 'private' corporations are not only larger than some governments, but act more 'publicly' " (p.26).⁵

Dwight Waldo draws attention to the growing importance of public administration and to the need for showing something distinct about public administration:

"After all public administration is not likely to decline in

³C.D. Deshmukh, "Management and Administration—New Trends," *Golden Jubilee Memorial Lectures*, 1966, Sydenham College of Commerce & Economics, Bombay, pp. 3, 18.

⁴Dwight Waldo, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 26 footnote 35.

importance, nor public employment diminish. But unless it can be shown that there is something distinctive and important about 'public', then the phrase indicates only an administrative convenience; a pragmatic adjustment to supply and demand and perhaps not even that but a resultant of the accidents of inertia, resources and personalities.⁶

Prof. Woodrow Wilson, the father of the study of public administration, raised a few significant issues regarding 'publicness' of administration:

"To whom is official trustworthiness to be disclosed, and by whom is it to be rewarded? Is the official to look to the public for his need of praise and push of promotion, or only to his superior in office? Are the people to be called in to settle administrative discipline as they are called in to settle constitutional principles? These questions evidently find their root in what is undoubtedly the fundamental problem of this whole study. The problem is : What part shall public opinion take in the conduct of administration."⁷

The above views indicate the academic scope and global significance of the sub-title.

What is public anyway? The dictionary meaning emphasises the concern for people as a whole. According to Herman Finer, however, (1931) " 'public' consists of all the clients of government subjected to various obligations which they owe... to officials and are entitled to the receipt of various services from them."⁸ For our purpose, Finer's view has greater relevance. The dictionary meaning of citizen is that he is an inhabitant of a city but public administration responds to organized citizens more effectively and quickly than to the unorganized ones. To some extent the terms 'citizens' and 'public' would be synonymous. Both have common interests which are affected by the policies of the State and actions of public administration.⁹

⁶Dwight Waldo, *op. cit.*, p. 24 footnote 30.

⁷Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 2 (June 1887), pp. 197-222.

⁸Herman Finer, "Officials and the Public", *Public Administration*, Vol. IX (January, 1931), p. 23

⁹Mumtaz Soyasal, *Public Relations in Administration. The Influence of the Public on the Operation of Public Administration Excluding Electoral Rights*. International Institute of Administrative Sciences, Brussels, 1966, p. 8.

Usage of the term public administration has created some images about mutual relationships which are not visible in fact. How do we relate images to realities?

Apart from the meaning of terms, a few basic questions are: why are we debating the magnitude of 'public' in public administration? Are there doubts about the adjective-noun relationships? Statements such as 'No taxation without representation' and 'No voting for further moneys without rendering accounts for those already voted' lie at the root of the manifold growth of public administration. Woodrow Wilson and Dwight Waldo referred to the global aspects in their local culture. For our purpose, we have to find answers relevant to our culture.

LOCAL ISSUE

How far public administration in India can be public? This could be answered with reference to the satisfaction or otherwise of the public with public administration. Satisfaction is a function of the public's participation, and public's knowledge about administration and the citizens' sense of equality of treatment from administrators. Equally important is the effectiveness of the existing machinery for holding the administration responsible. All these together lead to mutual responsiveness and to mutual respect. How are these factors perceived by the Indian public?

Since independence and, in particular, since the adoption of development planning in 1950, the law and order functions of Government are supplemented by development and welfare functions. Is the public administration adapted to perform these functions satisfactorily to the public by sharing with them the responsibility for fulfilling the tasks and informing them properly so that the public, in turn, discharge their obligations? Dr. Deshmukh¹⁰ complained of paralysis by red tape, (1955) referred to the organic or teleological connection between ministerial failure and official lapses (1959) and remarked about a

¹⁰ C.D. Deshmukh: (a), *The Sinews of the State*, Institute of Public Administration, Patna University, October, 1955 p. 7; *Citizens of No Mean Country*, University of Madras, 1959, p. 23; *Management and Administration, New Trends*, Golden Jubilee Memorial Lectures, Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay 1966, p. 18.

steady deterioration in administration (1966). The Administrative Reforms Commission¹¹ (1966) has taken note of the oft-expressed public outcry against the prevalence of corruption, the existence of widespread inefficiency and the unresponsiveness of administration to popular needs.

More forceful and outspoken was the assessment in the Draft Fifth Plan (Vol. I, p. 92). The Central and State Governments have taken upon themselves a variety of complex tasks to fulfil when *there is no adaptation of organizational framework of administration*. Besides organizational failure, the factors that, in its view, impeded plan implementation were: (a) rigid compartmentalisation in field which requires a high degree of integrated multi-disciplinary activity; (b) excessively wide or narrow spans of control; (c) lack of clear lines of responsibility; (d) inadequate delegation of authority; and (e) improper relationship and positioning of line and staff functions. A pertinent question may be raised about the many committees in the Central and State legislatures and their effectiveness. As committees multiply probably their effectiveness diminishes.

INHERENT FACTORS

The diminution in organizational effectiveness may be due to what Woodrow Wilson regards as the inherently confusing character of public administration. He wrote: "One cannot easily make clear to everyone just where administration resides in the various departments of any practicable Government without entering upon particulars so numerous as to confuse and distinction so minute as to distract." He bemoans the absence of lines of demarcation and refers to the need "to run uphill and down dale, over dizzy heights of distinction and through dense jungles of statutory enactment, hither and thither around 'ifs' and 'buts' 'whens' and 'however' until they become altogether lost to the common eye not accustomed to this sort of surveying".¹²

Apart from the aforesaid confusion, the system's faults,

¹¹Administrative Reforms Commission, Interim Report: Problems of Redress of Citizens' Grievances, 1966, p. 3.

¹²Woodrow Wilson, *op. cit.*

acquired by administrators as they grow with it, also keeps the public away from administration. These are described in a U.K. Report as follows :

“The faults most frequently enumerated are over-devotion to precedent, remoteness from the rest of the community, inaccessibility and faulty handling of general public, lack of initiative and imagination, ineffective organization and waste of manpower, procrastination and unwillingness to take responsibility or to give decisions ”¹³

SOME CRITICAL ISSUES

Returning to the Indian scene, we come across a similar description. Shri Y.B. Chavan, as Home Minister in the Government of India, warned that it is not enough for a ‘public’ servant to follow the instructions and secure the approval of his superiors. “If he leaves the bulk of Government clientele” says Shri Chavan (1969) “dissatisfied and restless, his adequacy would be open to serious doubt”. In his view, objects of administration, however, laudable, are to a large extent defeated : “If devotion to precedents leads to paralysis in new situations, detachment becomes remoteness, examination turns into procrastination, cross-consultation brings abdication of responsibility and thoroughness results in debilitating delay ”¹⁴ Contrast this with what Dr. B. Venkatappiah said : “If Ministers, Secretaries and others went about as if rules did not matter, the harm done to public administration would be incalculable.”¹⁵ The art of public administration consists in keeping the essence in tact while adapting the structure and forms as well as rules and procedures to the changing conditions and demands. Institutions, however, resist innovations and

¹³C.R. Hensman, *The Public Servant—A Self Portrait and Self Criticism*, Community, No. 3, 1963, p. 44.

¹⁴Y.B. Chavan, “Inaugural Address at the Conference on Training” sponsored by the Training Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, February 24, 1959, IIPA, New Delhi, pp. 1-3.

¹⁵B. Venkatappiah, Summary of speech at a special discussion meeting organised by the Maharashtra Branch of IIPA on the subject *Administration Public and Private: What each learn from the other* (Proceedings) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1963, p. 19.

develop a vested interest in the *status quo*. The ministers and civil servants view the role of public administration from different angles and thereby create tensions which tend to tarnish the public image. How to get the elected and appointed executives operate on the same wavelength is a critical issue.

The other trends flowing from the psycho-technical factors in 'admass-society' and eroding public element in administration are: (a) the growing number of statutory corporations and tribunals without the base of an administrative jurisprudence; and (b) the anaemia of local-self governing institutions in development planning and implementation. From a few studies of IIPA, concerning the citizen-municipal government relations, the following findings are culled out :

- (i) "The tendency among the public was to avoid coming into direct contact with the officials and to prefer getting things done through middlemen or agents even if it costs extra money" (Barnabas 1965).
- (ii) "An average person hates to visit the corporation because he wastes more time and achieves very little" (V. Jagannadham and N.S. Bakshi 1971).
- (iii) "We are of the opinion that the citizens are reluctant to cooperate and to make the Corporation Staff's work easy" (V. Jagannadham and N.S. Bakshi 1971).

Structural, procedural, attitudinal and behavioural changes in public administration are making the management of public affairs in society less public. While some of these factors are universal, the additional problem in India is that an alien language has been the ruler's language; and the wide diversities in regional language make communication with the non-literate public and non-English literate citizens most difficult.

Over-emphasis on 'classified' documentation and making capital out of secretiveness undermine the public's access to and confidence in administration. According to the Fulton Committee (1968), "The administrative process is surrounded by too much secrecy" (p. 91). The Official Secrets Act is the source of much mischief and the Frank's Committee Report (1972) in U.K. made several recommendations to make Government more open and accessible to the public. The ARC Study Team Report on the Machinery of the Government of India

and its Procedures of Work also recommended an amendment of the Official Secrets Act in India and a reorganisation of the Information Department.

Four features that divorce public from administration have been touched upon so far :

- (i) The practices of public administration rooted in 'rural' 'liberal' State may not be adequate for welfare functions of the 'urban' 'industrial' State.
- (ii) Inherent in the system of public administration are specialization, fragmentation and cross consultations driving the citizen from pillar to post.
- (iii) The attitudes and behaviour of the public servants are not always congenial to make citizen-administration relationships mutually responsive.
- (iv) The over emphasis on confidentiality and secretiveness of public information system promotes public's alienation.

RELATED ISSUES

Besides these, the Centre-State relations, the anaemia of local-self government, the indifference and inertia of the public also contributed to the cleavage between the public and administration. Cumulatively these create skepticism about the adjective-noun relationship. Beyond these lies the phenomenon already mentioned, namely, the diminishing distinction between 'private' management and 'public' administration'. One wonders whether public administration is not eroding the familiar forms of Government. Some ask about what form of Government is at present prevailing? Is it a Government by consent as in democracy? Or Government by consultation as in bureaucracy? Or Government by confrontation as in technocracy? Or alienation as in 'numerocracy' or mobocracy. When uncertainty pervades the system of Government, its instrument, namely, administration suffers from greater uncertainty. Volumes could be written on these speculative aspects. But our concern is not with the metaphysical nor constitutional distinctions but with the more intimate and practical problems of mutually reinforcing system of public administration. We are familiar with democracy as Government by consent, pithily expressed by Abraham Lincoln as "Government of the people,

for the people, by the people". Some cynics, however, twist the phrases and say that today's democracy is Government off the people, buy the people and far the people. Today's Government, according to others is by 'consultation' instead of consent because administration is technical, complex and remote. So we have Government by committees in and outside the legislatures. We have also a system of consultations with 'interest groups', 'citizen associations', etc. The advantages and disadvantages of these committees are too well known and need not be recapitulated.¹⁶ But the unorganised and inarticulate public are beyond the pale of the consultative machinery. A third form is 'Government by confrontation' among politicians, bureaucrats and technocrats. These three 'professionals' never seem to be on the same wavelength and hence distortions disturb the public perceptions and participation. Technocracy specializes in remote push-button control and, as such, its association with the public is the least

Among these varying forms of Government we find a common feature, namely, emphasis on 'form' and indifference to the 'essence' of Government; the concern is with functional efficiency rather than with public cooperation; neither human warmth, nor courtesy nor communication with the public flash before the file pushers. The 'public' recedes to the background as technology and complexity overtake Government management. Government servants seldom look at problems from the citizen's point of view.

The question in the sub-title has so far been skirted around but not answered. This cannot be helped. Public administration, is, to a large extent, public insofar as public officers are held responsible and accountable for their actions. The degree of legislative, judicial or ministerial control may vary but not totally absent. The variations could be identified and explained only when we make in-depth in comparative administration in the country and outside. Apparently, however, instead of convergence, there seems to be a growing divergence between public and administration.

¹⁶S.R. Maheshwari, *Government Through Consultation—Advisory Committees in Indian Government*, New Delhi, IIPA, 1972.

RULE OF THUMB MEASUREMENT

What rule of thumb could be adopted for measuring how far public administration can be public? To this question, John Freeman, the former British High Commissioner in India gave some indications in an address at IIPA in 1966 (p. 2, mimeographed).¹⁷

- (i) "The public administration will be efficient and Government stable, only if the bottom band of administration is first of all *tailored to the social needs of the user*;
- (ii) "secondly, organizationally efficient and fast moving and *seen by the public to be so*;
- (iii) "thirdly, doing justice as between individuals and the State and *seen by the public to do so*; and
- (iv) "lastly, subject to some degree of *external check and control*."

The emphasis in Mr. Freeman's talk is upon public's perception and credibility among the people in the bonafides of public administrators. This is a simple test to feel but difficult to apply for measuring the extent and nature of publicness of public administration.

BALANCE AND IMBALANCE

Shri Asoka Mehta once referred in a seminar at IIPA to the concept of 'balance' and the need to introduce it into the discipline of public administration. The concept has its relevance in the context of citizen administration relationships. In a democracy, the consent of the governed is the basis of Government. According to Prof. Janowitz and others, public administration suffers from imbalance if it becomes either too much the master or too much subservient.¹⁸ To achieve equilibrium, the

¹⁷John Freeman, *The Public Administrator and the Public*, 22nd Nov-1966, IIPA, New Delhi, p. 2.

¹⁸Morris Janowitz, Deil Wright and William Delany, *Public Administration and the Public Perspective toward Government in a Metropolitan Community*", Bureau of Government, Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan, 1958, p. 6.

"A bureaucracy is in imbalance when it fails to operate on the basis of democratic consent. Bureaucratic imbalance may be either despotic or subservient. Despotic implies that the bureaucracy is too much the master while subservient implies that it is too much the servant. The

(Continued on p. 78)

public must be vigilant and must act as informed critics. The public should make its voice felt without becoming meddling; public satisfaction and systemic balance could be prescribed as the two measuring rods for depth study of the subject in the sub-title.

REMEDIAL APPROACH: TRIPARTITE COOPERATION

How to promote public satisfaction and systemic balance? Prof. Robson emphasised the public's concern for high quality public services for promoting mutual good conduct, *i.e.*, of citizens and civil servants. Though long, his statement is worth reproducing :

“The achievement of good relations between the Government and the public is a matter which does not by any means depend solely on the conduct of civil servants and politicians. It depends equally on the attitude of citizens, groups, corporations, associations of all kinds and indeed of all unofficial bodies to public authorities. If we want public servants behave well towards us, we must behave well towards them. Moreover, we must normally assume that they for their part will behave well . . . if politicians and civil servants are held in low esteem: if their work is derided, if abuse and invective is poured on them continuously, if loose and unsubstantial allegations are made about their incompetence, dishonesty, laziness and indifference to the public interest, it is unlikely that officials will develop or display qualities of integrity, industry and public spirit.”¹⁹

(Continued from p. 77)

despotic bureaucracy disregards public preference and demands. It is likely to resort to coercion and manipulation to maintain its power. The subservient bureaucracy finds itself so concerned with the demands of special interest groups that it compromises its essential organisational goals and sacrifices essential authority”. Also vide in the context E. Pendleton Herring, “Public Administration and the Public Interest”, New York, Mc-braw Hill 1936 at p. 6. He says, “Democracy itself will collapse if it creates irreconcilable minorities.”

¹⁹William A. Robson (ed.), *The Civil Service in Britain and France*, Hogarth Press, 1956, p. 13

MUTUAL ORIENTATIONS

How is the tripartite cooperation to be stimulated and achieved? To this the answer lies in orientating a favourable attitude towards the authority system. Orientations towards any authority system could be classified, according to Prof. Janowitz (p. 7), under three categories: (i) knowledge; (ii) self interest; and (iii) principle mindedness. These three terms are explained as follows:

- (i) Knowledge means a person's level of information. What does a person know about a particular agency or administrative system? Is he poorly or well informed?
- (ii) Self interest is the political measure of gratification. Does the person see administrative authority as serving his self interest and meeting his essential needs; and
- (iii) Principle mindedness is the moral evaluation of administrative authority. Does the person see the public bureaucracy and the civil servant operating according to a set of accepted and recognized principles and rules of behaviour.

To these Janowitz also added a fourth, namely, prestige which he describes as public respect or esteem for bureaucracy and the public servant.²⁰

Freeman's public perception, Robson's tripartite trust and Janowitz's four orientations provide a fairly reliable scale for measuring the extent of publicness in public administration. In a field study of citizen administration perceptions in and around Delhi, we attempted in the aforesaid manner to measure the mutual response orientations. We found a paradoxical picture of cynicism with support and helplessness coupled with respect.²¹

"The attitudes of Indian citizens towards their Government and its administrative officials, particularly, is a complex and paradoxical mosaic of support and hostility, of consensus and critique. From 75 per cent to 90 per cent view governmental jobs as prestigious, 90 per cent feel that health and community development programmes are worthwhile, and less than 50 per cent (20 per cent rural) are critical of the job performance of Central Government officials. On the other

²⁰Morris Janowitz, Deil Wright and William Delany, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²¹Eldersveld, Jagannadham, Earnabas, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

hand, the majority feel that 50 per cent or more of the officials are corrupt, large proportions (60 per cent urban, 32 per cent rural) say their dealings with officials are unsatisfactory, and the majority sense that their probabilities of gaining access to officials and being successful in processing their complaints with them are low. Over 50 per cent feel officials in certain agencies are not fair, that the citizen can do little by himself, and from 60 per cent to 75 per cent feel that political pull is important in getting administrative action. Only a minority (22 per cent urban, 37 per cent rural) reveals no hostile attitudes towards bureaucrats. This is a peculiar blend of respect for authority and impatience with authorities, of desire for administrative progress and frustration at administrative tactics and style, of realism as to how things get done and bitterness that one cannot get things done, of confidence in the system and cynical appraisal of the system. On balance, Indian citizens tend to be supportive of the administration, though not consistently or enthusiastically so. Our composite index of support reveals that only 20 per cent to 25 per cent are clearly critical, apathetic or rejective. In the villages, 80 per cent are moderately or very supportive; in the city 66 per cent are supportive. Similarly, our hostility index reveals no more than 20 per cent to be consistently hostile, while 50 per cent (urban) to 60 per cent (rural) manifest virtually no hostility reactions. Indices, however, are summations of responses and hide nuances of sentiment and attitude. Even among those highly supportive of administration one finds an underlying hostility at the 20 per cent level in rural areas and at the 40 per cent level in urban Delhi. Thus although the movement is towards consensus and support, conflict exists, and the consensus is tenuous or mixed with doubt. Perhaps the most significant finding is that one finds such basic support in cognitions of the bureaucracy, despite the existence of considerable latent hostility... The image which persists in our data then is one of citizen acquiescence and support, as well as actual and potential disaffection."

DISJUNCTION BETWEEN ADJECTIVE AND NOUN

Other studies in India have more or less confirmed the above

conclusions. Given this ambivalence about public perception, the question is what needs to be done. To recapitulate what was said so far:

- (i) in admass society, alienation between public and administration is growing and this has to be arrested in the interests of the health of the socio-political system;
- (ii) the system's fragmentation, the procedural complexities, the isolationist attitudes of civil servants and the secretiveness of Government information system keep the public ill-informed and non-cooperative; and
- (iii) the imbalance in public administration could be remedied by tripartite cooperation.

How do we make the governmental machinery more responsive to the needs of the people? The answer cannot be in quantitative terms—not in equations nor in percentages but in an intuitive assessment of public confidence in the trusteeship role of administration. This would mean understanding not what the administration is but what it does for the public by feeling their pulse and knowing how to secure public cooperation. Dwight Waldo raised a significant point:

“If our culture is importantly an administrative culture, and so few participate in it with real understanding, of course, many are alienated”.²²

A further point he made about American situation was that much in our culture has operated to take our attention of the adjective ‘public’ and to focus it intently upon the noun ‘administration’. This is serious commentary not only with regard to USA but about other developed countries as well as the developing countries which are groping to discover a system of administration appropriate for promoting development.

How to discover and design a public administration system appropriate to the changing environment and aspirations? How are these changes affecting the elitist-populist perceptions and inter-relations. Dr. Deshmukh expresses the characteristics of the environment in the admass society as follows :

²²Dwight Waldo, “Public Administration and Culture” p.46 in the Reprint. Reprinted from *Public Administration and Democracy*, Ed. by Roscoe C. Martin, 1965, Syracuse University, New York.

“Man in the mass who wields the power of franchise has necessarily a fairly low common denominator of culture

.....
 “The real microscopic minority of intellectuals, *i.e.*, the cultured and educated who worry on account of others, are cold-shouldered and edged-out in this traffic-jam of the selfish educated and the ignorant proletariat; and the pampering of the worst instincts of the latter by the former leads to a steady deterioration of the decencies of life.”

“In such an environment” Dr. Deshmukh says, “quality is sacrificed to quantity, vulgarity to taste, restraint to hysteria, intellectual effort to mental flabbiness and respect for principle to political expediency.”²³ (sic)

Democracy initially was based upon the availability of politicians who live for instead of off politics (*i.e.*, one who strives to make politics a permanent source of income lives ‘off’ politics, while he who does not do so lives ‘for’ politics). Full time professional politicians are growing in recent democracies. This trend up-sets the balance between democracy and bureaucracy.

While the Government is becoming more remote and technical, people are becoming less interested in self-government and least bothered about ‘public’ interest. How to persuade the users to become better informed of administration? People have lost commitment to ideologies and have become most attached to comforts and profits. Most users employ middlemen who are familiar with the corridors of the secretariats and cabinet circles to get things done for them by appropriate means. Ordinary citizens find themselves helpless and bewildered before big offices. According to a distinguished citizen.

“There is no short-cut to improvement or elevation of the national ethos. But there is an element of mutability in it which can be influenced for better by good leadership, for worse by its opposite.”²⁴

LEADERSHIP AS A REMEDY

To bridge the gulf between public and public administration,

²³C.D. Deshmukh, *Citizens of No Mean Country*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²⁴C.D. Deshmukh, *Management and Administration—New Trends*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

the 'mantra' according to Prof. D.G. Karve is "good political leadership". He observed:²⁵

"Over the long period it will be wellnigh impossible for officers at any level to maintain standards of integrity, efficiency and courtesy which are not shared and promoted by the responsible ministers—where they, the responsible ministers, fail to honour democratic and constitutional proprieties, as they often do, none below them can normally be counted to give to the people the full due under the law."

In parenthesis we may also ask: Could not the civil servants provide leadership for better public service? Do not elected executives also depend upon the top administration for placing the facts and alternative choices based upon departmental knowledge and personal experience? While the civil service provides these services, the politician is to convert them into goodwill of the people by playing liaison and leadership roles.

Prof. V.K.N. Menon summarized Mr. Fairlie's views on implications of political leadership as follows.²⁶

"The first task of the politician, according to him, is to try to reconcile the many conflicting wills and interests which exist in a free society, and to propose out of such conflict some kind of policy which will be acquiesced in, at least, if not fully approved by the majority."

"His second task is to sustain the political interest of the people on public questions".

"The third is to act as a catalyst on public opinion and the fourth to act as a link between informed opinion and the ordinary opinion of the public".

"The qualities required for all this" says Menon, have been described as passion, a feeling of responsibility and a sense of proportion. a combination of the ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility (Weber)" (p.16, 1970). Manu's sanskrit classical expression for these is that the king is the upholder of Dharma. "If divinity was latent in the king, it would be reflected

²⁵D.G. Karve, "Citizen and Administration—Mutual Response", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XII, No. 3 July-Sept. 1966, p. 336.

²⁶V.K.N. Menon, *Politics as a Profession*, The Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, 1970, p. 16.

in his virtuous upholding of Dharma, not otherwise".²⁷

If politicians perform a liaison and leadership role, the administrators have to sustain those roles by providing open access to information and an easy passage to citizens into the portals of the government offices. Prof. Eldersveld has spelled out five theoretical propositions so as to promote better citizen-administration interactions. These are:²⁸

- (i) If citizens are to be properly involved in the system and in the achievement of system goals, administrative contacts with the public, to be relevant, must be extensive, continuous and *penetrate* to those sectors of the population most 'traditional', most probably alienated, and most vital for the success of developmental goals.
- (ii) If citizens are to be properly involved in the developing India of today, these administrative contacts, if relevant, should lead to greater *information* and knowledge, instrumental and substantive, about governmental programmes, policies, plans and goals.
- (iii) If citizens are to be properly involved, these administrative contacts, if relevant, should result in greater *citizen belief in and support of* governmental actions and programmes. One should not expect, however, that there will be unanimous consensus by the large majority that programmes exist which are worthwhile, and feasible.
- (iv) If citizens are to be properly involved, these administrative contacts, if relevant, should inspire *confidence* on the part of the public in the integrity, efficiency, and 'bureaucratic style' of officials, leading to a feeling that officials care about the citizenry, treat them fairly, and, thus, that the individual citizen counts in the system, and that his actions are considered meaningful for the system.
- (v) If citizens are to be properly involved, these administrative contacts, if relevant, should tap the realistic aspirations of the common man, appeal to these aspirations, whether strictly utilitarian or idealistic, and moti-

²⁷V.K. Rangaswamy, Iyengar, *Aspects of the Social and Political System of MANUSMRTI*, Lucknow University, 1949, p. 179.

²⁸S.J. Eldersveld, "Bureaucratic Contact with the Public in India" *IIPA*, April-June 1965, Vol. XI No. 2, pp. 216-235 at p. 218.

vate the individual to *action* and achievement, which is significant for the citizen as well as for the system.

The goals then must be penetration, information, belief, confidence and action. These, when fulfilled, tend to meet the expectations of bulk of the people. If the performance of the administration does not approximate to the expectations of the citizens, the stability of the political system will be in danger.

How far can public administration be public is a question answered by the counter question as to how far could public be an authoritative and vigilant participant without becoming meddling? Or a rustic handling a delicate instrument? In the answers to these questions lie the dynamics of bureaucracy's institutional growth. Variations arises out of varieties of life situations, and personality factors. The nature and extent of the adjective 'public' may vary but it is not totally absent. Knowledge about the precise degrees of variations requires systematic series of studies in time, space and culture about accountancy and accountability, accessibility and adaptability of the system and the will and skill of persons that manage it. These five ideas need quantification for measurement.

CONCLUSION

Is public administration a single word, a hyphenated word or is it a compound word? The way words are written and used may give insights into usages. The length of the hyphen or the distance between the two words may indicate the apparatus required to answer the question raised in the sub-title. The meaning of the word 'public' too has been undergoing changes. At one time it used to denote the people as a whole but currently it means the informed public or the interest group or the organized association but not necessarily the people as a whole. The inarticulate and the unorganised people are out of its spectrum. Similar is the case with words, 'administration' and 'management'. Subtle changes in the use of the words, 'public' and 'administration', are indicative of the changes in the nuances of concepts behind them. Instead of public administration some say we have 'pressure' administration, *i.e.*, administration working only under pressures of different kinds. That, without pressure, administration does not move, seems to be gaining ground.

The sub-title raises fundamental issues about the competence and magnitude of 'publicness' in public administration. These issues arise, probably, because some external factors have been disturbing the inherited balance and assumptions underlying the adjective and the noun. The neo-public administration school of writers question the adequacy of assumptions in the old classics on bureaucracy in a democracy.

Accountancy and accountability for raising and spending public funds and people's control over these constitute the essence of public administration. These functions were somewhat served by the then prevailing systems before the rise of collectivism and socialism and industrialisation and urbanisation. The new ideological and technological impacts and the consequent responsibilities of development-planning have forced Government to undertake tasks that, in view of some, could be fulfilled only with the widest public involvement and participation. But some technocrats view public participation with suspicion because it dilutes functional efficiency. They describe the politicians' and bureaucrats' concern for public opinion and human warmth as 'softness' that saps the efficiency in management. Revolutions in transport and communication have rendered the centrifugal tendencies dysfunctional and the technocrats plead for economics and efficiency through centralised management of large scale organisations. In the 'admass society' the public too is indifferent to participation in decision-making; they are satisfied if goods and services are provided. They do not feel satisfied by participation because they do not see results immediately.²⁹ Under these changing conditions of environment and attitudes of the public, a question arises about measuring how far public administration can be public. Metaphysical as well as metrical issues are, therefore, surfacing for discussion today.

While service to the public through due process is the object of public administration, its counterpart, namely, private management is concerned with the achievement of beneficial results but, accountability to legally accredited authorities

²⁹Sharon Perlman Krefetz and Alan and Goodman, "Participation for What or for Whom? Some Consideration for Research", *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol. 5, No. 2, August 1973, p. 376.

distinguishes public administration from its counterparts. How far can public administration be public, should, in my view, be examined without prejudice to its essential characteristic, namely, due process in accountability while serving the public.

Public-private cooperation or cleavage in the public affairs' management is assuming new dimensions in modern governments. Governments find it beneficial to use private bodies to act on their behalf for promoting innovations, ensuring flexibility, responding quickly to the needs and avoiding known weaknesses of government departments. So do interest groups and voluntary associations use governments for subsidising their activities from tax-resources. These as well as other forms of administration through semi-governmental organisations or statutory corporations, instead of through departmental organisations, have been making inroads into a strict application of accountability tests. Government departments could be controlled more easily than quasi-governmental or non-governmental organizations. Public administration today tends to be less public in quantitative terms but, may be, it is more public or more responsive to public needs than before in qualitative terms. These assumptions and hunches need further testing by systematic research studies over a series of years and areas of action. The dilemmas of accountability in modern government and administration have made the question in the subtitle both contemporaneously relevant and difficult to answer. Public administration in a democracy raises paradoxical issues because of multitudinous masters exercising and demanding control over it. Some view efficiency to be in inverse proportion to openness in administration. Is this correct? Can this be permitted to remain uncorrected if bureaucracy is to serve democracy? What corrective measures can be recommended for government? These questions deserve the attention of the present audience. The dynamics, dialectics and didactics of democracy, bureaucracy, technocracy and numerocracy/mobocracy call for seminal thinking, public debate and focussed research on the interrelations of philosophy, science and art of management of public affairs and resources.

How far public administration can be public needs to be approached from the angle of its accountability to the public and the public's control over it. All over the world the

traditional system of accountability to the public and public's control over administration are declining in effectiveness and losing credibility. New management techniques in budgeting, programming, monitoring and evaluation as well as information and communication system are helpful but they are meaningful to the elitist, not to the populist, public. The public are either ignorant or ill-informed about the laws, rules, regulations and procedures about rights as well as obligations. Even the well educated suffer from inadequate knowledge of the voluminous and complex government laws and controls. Public servants tend to be subservient to their superiors and dominant towards the public. The public, therefore, use 'professional middlemen' to manage the affairs for them. This phenomenon undermines credibility and creates imbalance in public administration. Distortions and imbalances in public administration need correction after proper diagnosis. Hopefully, an open government system may offer solutions to these distortions.³⁰

³⁰Ronald Wraith, "Open Governments—The British Interpretation" *Royal Institute of Public Administration*, London, 1977, "those brought up in the tradition of reticence do not find it palatable to adjust to openness", (p. 68).