

Administrative Reforms Through E-Governance in India

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ABSTRACT

A well-planned and up-to-date administrative machinery is the need for every government to prosper and a reform on its structure and functioning is required for it to be efficient and effective. The feeling of dissatisfaction, inadequacy and inefficiency in the performance of any administrative structure pressurize the need for improvement and reforms in it. Thus, reforms from the administrative point of view refers to the response to the challenges that has arisen out of the failure. Various types of administrative reforms were introduced by Government of India before and after Independence and Administrative Reforms Commission had been set up since 1966 in order to promote efficiency and transparency and thus eliminate corruption and improve malfunctioning of the government in the meantime. The Administrative Reforms Commission has been set up in order to review the administrative system and give recommendations for its improvement. The major concerns of the Administrative Reforms Commission are Right to Information (RTI), political ethics, financial management, e-governance, combating terrorism. Electronic Governance (E-Governance) has been the most efficient tool of reforms as it has improved the functioning of the government through the application of Information Technology so as to bring about efficiency and transparency and further play a vital role in the attainment of the goals of the government.

Key Words : Administrative Reforms, Efficiency, E-Governance, Information Technology

INTRODUCTION

Administrative reforms had been defined by Gerald E. Caiden as, “the artificial inducement of administrative transformation against resistance.”¹ F.W. Riggs has defined administrative reforms as, “it is an administrative development which is concerned with the growing capacity of administrative systems to make choices and exercise discretion to bring about changes in environment by deliberate and conscious decisions.”² The major concern of administrative reforms of India have been highlighted by Ramesh K. Arora and Rajni Goyal as under:³

1. Enhancement of efficiency and economy.
2. Updating administrative technology.

3. Creation of new institutions to undertake additional functions of administration.
4. Stressing structure and functional specialization.
5. Redesigning of Administrative structures with a view to enhancing their effectiveness.
6. Improving intra – agency to prevent frittering away of resources and facilitating a concerted action for goal achievement.
7. Rationalizing the personnel system in a manner that could promote merit – oriented recruitment and performance– based career development.
8. Ensuring higher level of integrity in public services and tightening the control and surveillance system.
9. Inculcating and sustaining in the administrative

1. Caiden, G.E. (1969). *Administrative Reform*. Chicago. 8.

2. Avasthi, A., Avasthi A.P. (2019). *Indian Administration*. Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal. 403.

system a spirit of responsiveness to people's needs and ensuring adequate accountability of government organizations.

10. Strengthening the bases of decentralization, delegation and democratization in administration at the macro as well as the micro levels.

The administrative reforms process had begun even before independence. In the discipline of Public Administration, the administration reforms process had begun way back in 1887 through the works of Woodrow Wilson *i.e.*, "The study of administration" which talked about how the administrators must be given power in order to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. F.W. Taylor's "Scientific Management" during 1910's had become another landmark in the administrative reforms as its concerned were the application of scientific methods in the managerial process and production methods so as to bring about efficiency. But this method was criticized on the ground that its main focus was on the work only and neglect human factor. This system was criticised and replaced by another administrative theory *i.e.*, Human Relations Theory by Elton Mayo which conducted the Hawthorne experiment which study the relationship between the workers behaviour and productivity in relation with the working conditions. The major administrative reforms before India's Independence are:

1. The Macaulay Committee to conduct Public Service Examination, 1854
2. The Special Committee on Civil Services salary, 1860
3. The Committee on the selection and training of candidates for Indian Civil Service, 1876
4. The Aitchison Commission (Public Service Commission), 1886 – 87
5. The Government of India Clerk's Salaries Committee, 1908
6. The Royal Commission Upon Decentralization, 1907 – 09
7. The Islington Commission on the Public Service in India, 1912 – 15
8. The Llewellyn Smith Committee, 1919
9. The Lee Commission, 1923 – 24
10. The Wheeler Committee: The Government of India Secretariat Reorganisation Committee,

1936

11. The Maxwell Committee: The Government of India Secretariat Committee, 1937
12. The Tottenham Committee: The Government of India Secretariat Committee, 1945 – 46

According to Ramesh K. Arora, the administrative reform activities since India's Independence to present can be divided into three periods for the purpose of analysis:⁴

The period of consolidation (1947 – 1966):

As many as eighteen (18) committees had been formed during this period and amongst these the most important committees are:

- (i) Secretariat Reorganization Committee, 1947 was set up under the chairmanship of Girja Shankar Bajpai. This committee examined the functions of Government departments whose top priority was their relative and further suggested the change in the working procedure of the government. It also suggested the utilization of the Indian Civil Servants to a great extent possible in order to prevent shortage of workers and even suggested the creation of Directorate of Methods, Organization and Training at the Union government.
- (ii) Aayangar Committee, 1949. In order to promote efficiency and economy, the committee had suggested the establishment of changes in the organizational set up. As a result of which the Defense Committee, the Economic Committee, the Parliamentary and Legal Affairs Committee and the Administrative Organization Committee had been created.
- (iii) Paul Apple by Report, 1953 and 1956. The then Finance Minister C.D. Deshmukh had appointed Paul H. Appleby, the famous public administrator in USA to do a research on the Public Administration system in India and submitted his report of it. The submitted report in 1953 had suggested the establishment of Indian Institute of Public Administration at New Delhi and the setting up of Organization and Management (Methods) department in the central government.

3. Arora, R., Goyal, R. (2012). *Indian Public Administration: Institutions and issues*. Delhi: New Age International Publishers.

4. Arora, R.K. (1999). *Indian Administration: Perceptions and perspectives*. Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers. 235 – 242.

- (iv) The Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption, 1964 had strongly recommended the establishment of the Central Vigilance Commission by the Central and State governments.

The period of reconstruction (1966 – 1980):

During this period five (5) committees/ commission were established, they are– The Administrative Reforms Commission, 1966 – 77; The third pay commission, 1970 – 73; Committee on Recruitment policy and selection methods; Ashok Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj Institution, 1977; and National Police Commission, 1977 – 80.

The period of modernization (1980 – till date):

There were fifteen committees/ commission upto the Seventh pay commission in 2014. Some of the most important commission or committees during this period includes Economic Administration Reforms Commission (1981 – 85), Sarkaria Commission on Central State relations (1983 – 87), Chellah Committee on tax reforms (1991 – 92) and Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2005 – 2009).

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission was constituted under the Chairmanship of Veerappa Molly on 31st May, 2005. The commission was established in order to bring reforms in the administrative machinery, thereby making the government accountable, responsible, proactive, sustainable and efficient at all levels. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has presented fifteen (15) reports to the government and they are as given below:⁵

1. Right to Information: Master key to good governance (June 2006)
2. Unlocking human capital: Entitlement and Governance – A Case study (July 2006)
3. Crisis Management: From Despair to Hope (September 2006)
4. Ethics in Governance (January 2007)
5. Public Order: Justice for each...peace for all (June 2007)

6. Local governance (October 2007)
7. Capacity building for conflict resolution: Friction to fusion (February 2008)
8. Combating terrorism: Protecting by righteousness (June 2008)
9. Social Capital: A shared destiny (August 2008)
10. Refurbishing of Personnel Administration: Scaling new heights (November 2008)
11. Promoting e – governance: The smart way forward (December 2008)
12. Citizen centric administration: The heart of Governance (February 2009)
13. Organisational structure of Government of India (April 2009)
14. Strengthening Financial Management System (April 2009)
15. State and District Administration (April 2009)

The eleventh report of the Second Administrative Reforms talk about promoting e – governance which is an important tool for administrative reforms. The ‘e’ in e – governance stands for electronic and it refers to the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the process of governance in order to promote efficiency, transparency, better accessibility and delivery of government services. According to UNESCO, E – Governance may be defined as, “any activity performed in the electronic medium in order to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process of disseminating information to the public and other agencies and for performing government administration activities.”⁶ The goals of e – governance that aims to bring about Simple, Morale, Accountability, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) governance is likely to help in the attainment of good governance. The major characteristics of good governance are:⁷

1. *Participation*: It involved the participation of the citizen either directly or through representatives.
2. *Consensus – oriented*: It involved taking into consideration a broad consensus on any matters and then finding and serving the best possible solutions for the interest of all. In order to

5. Sapru, R. (2018). *Indian Administration: A foundation of Governance*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd. 393 – 394.

6. Sumathy, M. (2020). *A Handbook of e – governance in India*. New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications. 22.

7. Raj, B.S. (2008). *E – governance techniques: Indian and Global experiences*. New Delhi: New Century Publications. 8 – 9.

attained sustainable development through it, a detailed and thorough understanding of the history of that society is required in every possible sphere.

3. *Accountability*: It is a necessity for achieving good governance. It refers to any type of organization being accountable to whom they are working and responsible for. It can be enforced through rule of law and transparency in the working of any public or private organization.
4. *Transparency*: It refers to easy and direct accessibility of information for the ones who are likely to have an enquiry for a matter concern to them.
5. *Responsiveness*: It refers to the response given by the government to the needs of its stakeholders within a short period of time frame.
6. *Effectiveness and Efficiency*: The concept of effectiveness and efficiency in good governance refers to the efficient used of resources and producing the best possible output from the available resources in the meantime.
7. *Equity and Inclusiveness*: In order to have a good governance system, every opportunity made should be at the reached of everyone so that everyone feels being included and a part of it.
8. *Rule of law*: It refers to impartial enforcement of a fair legal framework by the competent authority.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission have highlighted the need of making use of Information Technology (IT) in the functioning of the government thereby promoting e – governance. The reports in which the use of IT have been emphasized are as given below:

1. The First Report of the Commission entitled “Right to Information: Master key to Good Governance” recommended the setting of a unified portal through which all government information could be accessed. Meanwhile, the incapability of everyone especially in the rural areas were taken into consideration and thus further recommended the establishment and

building up of a robust e – governance infrastructure for the people.

2. The Second Report *i.e.*, “Unlocking Human Capital: Entitlements and Governance – A Case Study” emphasized the use of IT for the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), 2005. The recommendation of this report was to collect and stored all information in electronic form at the block level. The data are then shifted to the central repository at each state. The establishment of Geographic Information System (GIS) was recommended for Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) so that information collected from various levels could easily be presented through this system. It recommended the use of SMART Cards in carrying out pilot projects in cluster of villages. The card will be use for collecting personal information and recording of transactions through NREGA.
3. The fourth report of the commission “Ethics in Governance” recommended the re-engineering of the government system through the use of Information Technology (IT). The report suggested a thorough re – engineering of the present government working and then recommended the setting up of plans for the improvement of governance through the use of Information Technology (IT). In order to successfully use the system, a knowledge on the use of computers is required on the part of the officers and the National Information Commission (NIC) needed a training on the activities of every department to have a clear understanding on them. It further recommended the setting up of complaint tracking system and database for storing the personal details of persons convicted with the practise of corruption. The database should be fed with updated information by the concerned authorities.

Objectives of e – governance:

According to Pani and Mishra the major objectives of e – governance are as follows:⁸

8. Pani, N., Mishra, S. (2009). *E – Governance*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House. 48.

1. To enhance the information flow.
2. To improve the interaction with the government.
3. To encourage people's participation in development.
4. To make the governing process more transparent.
5. To make the government accountable to its deeds.
6. To minimize the governmental expenditure.
7. To make the government more responsive with quicker reaction.

Stages of e – governance:

In India, the evolution of e – governance has undergone the following stages:⁹

1. Computerisation: The use of computer *i.e.*, computerisation is mainly engaged to the work of word processing and data processing.
2. Networking: It refers to a large connectivity network through sharing of information takes place between different government entities
3. On – line presence: It refers to keeping and maintenance of government websites up – to – date so as to served the needs of the user.
4. On – line interactivity: It refers to the use of easy government and citizen online interface through the use of IT and reduce the time and cost involve in physical interactions.

Types of Interactions of e – governance:

The types of interactions provided through e – governance are as follows:¹⁰

1. Government to Government (G2G): This type of interaction can be both horizontal and vertical *i.e.*, the former refers to different government functional entities and the latter refers interaction between nations, provinces and local governments. The aim of this interaction is not only restructuring of the government but also providing information efficiently and thus increased the flow of information.
2. Government to Citizen (G2C): It aims at making

the functioning of the government citizen – friendly. It involves the interaction between the government and the citizen so as to make conveniences to the citizen when it comes to work with the government. It helps the government to work efficiently on their part and provide the best possible services to the citizens as and when required, thereby improving the quality of the work.

3. Government to Business (G2B): It refers to the interaction between the government and the business community in order to make the business deals, communication and different kinds of business transactions easy and convenient for the business firms.
4. Government to Employees (G2E): It refers to the interaction between the government and employees within it. It helps in increasing the speed and smooth interaction between the employees and thus increase the satisfaction level.

Role of e – governance in Administration:

¹¹In order to explain the role of e – governance in administration, Gartner proposed a four-stage model of e-governance. In the first stage of “**Presence**”, governments will go to the Internet and establish a least presence online. In the second stage of “**Interaction**”, online presence will be reorganised and enhanced to include a searchable database of services and government staff will begin to interact with communication tools such as E-mail. In the third stage of “**Transaction**”, governments will provide services online. At this stage, inhabitants will be able to benefit government services and governments can use E-authentication and payment services for providing services. The Fourth stage of Gartner's model is called “**Transformation**” in which governments will begin to assimilate services across various levels and functions to provide integrated services from various departments. Gartner believes that pace layers can be used to develop a business application strategy that delivers a better and faster response.

9. Second Administrative Reforms Commission: Eleventh Report. (2008).Promoting e – governance: The smart way forward.Retrieved from https://promoting_egov11.pdf (darp.gov.in) Retrieved on 08/12/2022.

10. Hothi, B.S. (2019).*E – Governance*. Jaipur: RBSA Publishers. 23 – 24.

11. Retrieved from – [https://\(civilserviceindia.com\)](https://(civilserviceindia.com)). E-Governance, E Governance Concept, E Governance In India

National e – Governance Projects:

The National e – Governance Plan (NeGP) which was formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) was approved by the Union Government on 18th May 2006. The major features of the national projects include – common support infrastructure, governance, public – private partnership, integrative elements for conducting business, programme approach at the national and state levels, facilitator of DEITY, ownership of ministries, centralized initiatives and decentralized implementation. The National e – governance Plan consists of 31 Mission Mode Projects, among which a total of 11 were Central Mission Mode Projects, 7 were confined for State Mission Mode Projects and the rest thirteen (13) plans were an Integrated Mission Mode Projects i.e., they are carried out by both the central and the state government. The Central Mission Mode Projects are – MCA 21 (which was incorporated by Ministry of Corporate Affairs to introduced a service – oriented system of government for delivery of Government services); Pensions (it was developed in order to make easy transactions which are related to pension or retirement related activity and the nodal Ministry for it is Department of Pensions and Pensioners Welfare); Income Tax (developed by the Income tax Department in order to provide a comprehensive service for transaction of different kinds of business related to the Department); Passport and Visa (the concerned authority is Ministry of External Affairs); IVERT (Immigration); Central Excise and Customs (Automation of Central Excise and Service Tax was developed under this MMP in order to control the conduct of business in trade and Industry); Banking MMP; Unique Identification Number (UID) MMP; e – office MMP, insurance MMP; Posts MMP.

The Integrated Mission Mode Projects include – Common Service Centre (CSC), E – Courts, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) for E – Trade, India Portal MMP, National E – Governance Service Delivery Gateway (NSDG) MMP, E – Procurement MMP and E – Biz MMP (the vision of this MMP was to transform business environment in the country by providing efficient, convenient, transparent and integrated electronic services to investors, industries and business throughout the business life cycle).¹²

The State Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) under the NeGP included the following – land records, road transport, agriculture, Police, Treasuries, Municipality, E – District, Commercial Taxes, E – Panchayat, Employment Exchange, Education, Health and E – Public Distribution System (PDS). Besides these MMPs, the state government can also take initiatives through the competent authorities and carried out e - governance projects, which may vary according to the needs of the state.

The challenges for development of e – governance when investigated from various spheres i.e., political, social, economic and technological came to the conclusion that the weaknesses included lack of cyber law, public acceptance of the system, poor internet connectivity, financial issue, shortage of persons with IT skills, software licenses and communication issue due to multi – linguistic nature. The major threats for this challenge included corruption, piracy, digital divide, lack of transparency, privacy and political instability.

Conclusion:

When considering the present and the future needs of the country, it is a good deed that the Second Administrative Reforms Commission has come up with the report of promoting e – governance for reforming the administrative machinery of the government. Although it had come up with many reforms strategy, the system of e – governance will always remain among the greatest help to the government and to the people as well. Even though we are in the initial stages of implementing the e – governance and building up of the IT infrastructure for it, we have experienced its uses in our everyday life. The used of Information Technology in the interaction between the Government and its users have gained importance and familiarity through the pandemic we have been experienced recently. It will serve to be a good administrative reforms tool in the future as well.

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