

# A Critical Appraisal on New Public Administration

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**Abstract:** *Nation is dynamic. In the changing pace of time and society it proceeds toward new dimensions. New public administration also is such result of socio economic and political transformation. The new public administration as movement in American administration emerged in the sixth decade of the twentieth century. In this period American public administration faced certain setbacks due to murder of Martin Luther king, John F. Kennedy, protest against Great society programme, unemployment, Vietnam war, cold war, resignation of president Johnson, suicide of young generation, frustration etc. In this vortex of social situation many intellectuals blamed existing public administration for its failure in solving unexpected challenges. It encouraged intellectuals to think of alternative to traditional public administration. In such way, concept of new public administration has been appeared. The proposed article is an attempt to basic tenets of new public administration.*

**Keywords:** Administration, dynamic, transformation, intellectuals, alternative etc

## 1. Introduction

Public administration is an integral part of modern welfare and democratic nation. The word public administration is the combination of two words—public and administration. In every sphere of social, economic and political life there is administration which means that for the proper functioning of the organisation or institution it must be properly ruled or managed and from this concept emerges the idea of administration. Nation is dynamic. In the changing pace of time and society it proceeds toward new dimensions. New public administration also is such result of socio economic and political transformation. The new public administration as movement in American administration emerged in the sixth decade of the twentieth century. In this period American public administration faced certain setbacks due to murder of Martin Luther king, John F. Kennedy, protest against Great society programme, unemployment, Vietnam war, cold war, resignation of president Johnson, suicide of young generation, frustration etc. In this vortex of social situation many intellectuals blamed existing public administration for its failure in solving unexpected challenges. It encouraged intellectuals to think of alternative to traditional public administration. In such way, concept of new public administration has been appeared. The proposed article is an attempt to basic tenets of new public administration.

### 1.1 Objectives of the study

Main objectives of the proposed study are:

- 1) To analyse meaning of new public administration
- 2) To understand basic factors for the growth and development of new public administration
- 3) To focus on principles and nature of new public administration.
- 4) To make a critical evaluation of new public administration in the light of its limitation and relevance to present context.

### 1.2 Methodology and Materials

The proposed study is a historical and analytical one. Logic used here both deductive and inductive. It is an attempt to

unveil a new emergence in the domain of public administration with the help of secondary sources. The sources of data used here is secondary –books, journals etc.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1 Meaning of New public Administration

In simple sense, the administration which is purely people oriented and responsible to public and nation is called new public administration. It is new because it looks people and their genuine problems in a new way and approach. The term '**New Public Administration**' included into the American dictionary in 1967.<sup>1</sup> It was used to describe the new philosophical outlook for Public Administration. The traditional principles of public administration like efficiency & 'economy were found inadequate and incomplete goals of administrative activity. It began to be said that efficiency is not the soul of administration. Man is the focal point of all administrative activity. The concept of new public administration has shaken the traditional concepts and views of the discipline. Old public administration gave significance to 'administration' rather than 'public', emphasized 'principles' and 'procedures' rather than 'values' and 'philosophy', efficiency and economy rather than 'effectiveness' and 'service efficiency'. It has imparted a wider perspective to the subject and has linked it to society. The NPA movement has entered into the American life in the 1970s and following period.

### 2.2 Development of New Public administration;

The historic development of new public administration can be traced to the periods between 1960s and early 1970. This period was full of disturbances, instability and confusion in the Western countries, especially in the US. Due to unrest and social tensions, the earlier objectives of public administration were found unsatisfactory. So in the late 1960's a section of scholars particularly the youth began to lay more stress on values and ethics in public administration. They wanted public administration to be value oriented and not efficiency oriented. They were of the opinion that 'man' is the centre of all administrative activity. This new trend came to be known as 'New Public Administration. In this

reference a good number of pioneers like Dwight Waldo, Ferriny F.W.Taylor, Francis Coker, Abraham Maslow, M.P.Follet tried to reform and reconstruct public administration with new, progressive and dynamic approach. Of course, the two books "Towards a New Public Administration, the Minnow-brook 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. Development of new public administration must be understood in the light of some significant intellectual movement like Honey Report, Minor brook Conferences, Philadelphia Conferences etc.

### 2.3 Philosophical Foundation of New Public Administration

Being the critic of traditional administration new public administration emerged with new and progressive orientation and ideology. It was based on certain philosophical foundation. First of all pioneers of new public administration rejected the definition of public administration as 'value-free. They argued that administration is an integral part of human life. It is related to people in general. It cannot be studied and understood by freeing values from human life. They rejected any definition of public administration that was not properly involved in policy. The New Public Administration is anti-technical—that means they decry the human being sacrificed to the logic of the machine and the system. It is more or less anti-bureaucratic and anti-hierarchical. Intellectuals of new public administration stressed the central role of personal and organizational values or ethics and morality. There is an essential relationship between the structures and processes of administrative efforts and their ends and goals.<sup>2</sup> The New Public Administration considers mankind as having the potentiality of becoming perfect. Humans are not static factors of production. 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.<sup>3</sup> In this context, statement of prominent administrative thinker Frederickson can be cited. He argued that "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"<sup>4</sup>. Similarly another couple of thinkers Nigra and Nigra observes that '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"<sup>5</sup>.

### 2.4 The major landmarks in the development and emergence of new public administration

There are certain historic landmarks which helped in the growth of new public administration. Those are as follows --

#### a) The Honey Report on Higher Education for Public Service, 1967

Honey Report of 1967 is a major landmark in the history of new public administration. Professor John C. Honey submitted a research report on problems and its solutions regarding existing public administration. This report found a number of problems of existing administration as follows –

- 1) Insufficient resources at disposal of the discipline (students, faculty and research funds).
- 2) Intellectual argument over the status of the discipline .
- 3) Institutional weakness (inadequacy of public administration departments).
- 4) Gap between scholars of public administration and the practicing administrators.

On the basis of the aforesaid problems Honey suggested certain recommendation for addressing the same as follows -

- 1) The establishment of a National Commission on Public Service Education to exert broad leadership in meeting the needs of government for educated manpower.
- 2) A substantial fellowship programme for post-graduate students who are preparing for public service at the masters and doctors levels and also including preparation for professional degrees.
- 3) Internship programmes to operate at federal state and local levels for post-graduate students and advanced undergraduates preparing for public service careers.
- 4) A special fellowship programme for those planning to become teachers in schools and programmers of public administration and public affairs.
- 5) A programme to, provide opportunities for practical governmental experience to university faculties engaged in public affairs teaching and research.
- 6) A programme of assistance to universities for public affairs curricular experimentation and development.
- 7) Support for university personnel engaged in research on governmental and public affairs issues.

#### b) Philadelphia Conference, 1967

Philadelphia conference also can be a major landmark in the emergence of new public administration. It was held in 1967 at Philadelphia in America. This conference was organised for dealing with theoretical and practical relevance of public administration. Scholars found out problems of existing administration as ---

- 1) Public administration fails to give actual definition and scope of it.
- 2) It should focus on burning problems of the society.
- 3) There should be training system in administration.
- 4) Public administration has certain theoretical drawbacks.
- 5) Inter personal relation should be encouraged in public administration.
- 6) Bureaucracy should be studied functionally as well as structurally.
- 7) Public Administration as a profession should remain separate from the profession and discipline of political science.

#### c) Minnow brook Conference 1968

The first minnow brook conference held in 1968 had a far reaching impact upon the growth of new public

administration. This conference stood against problems of contemporary administration existed specially in America. It is a revolutionary achievement in the history of new public administration. Basic features of this conference were as follows --

- 1) It was organised in the backdrop of anger and unrest against the Government.
- 2) It was organised in opposition to Philadelphia Conference.
- 3) It had participants from department of Political Science. Hence its approach was narrow and limited.
- 4) Its focus was Change, Relevance, Social Equity and Value.
- 5) It gave rise to the concept of Public Administration.
- 6) New Public Administration failed in practise.
- 7) Its theme, tenure, tone and temperament was more radical and anti Government.
- 8) Its proceedings were combined in a report by Frank Marini in 1971 named "Toward a New Public Administration: The Minnow Brook Perspective".
- 9) It was held under the chairmanship of Dwight Waldo.

#### d) Second Minnow brook Conference, 1988

After a few years second Minnow brook conference was held in 1988. It brought a new development in the field of public administration.

- 1) It was organised when the economy of USA was upbeat and a sense of euphoria was present among the masses.
- 2) It was organised for the support and expansion of US Public Administration.
- 3) Its participants were from field of Public Administration, Political Science, law, management, administration etc. Hence it was more broad-based and liberal.
- 4) Its focus was LPG - Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation.
- 5) It gave rise to the concept of New Public Management.
- 6) New Public Management proved to be successful.
- 7) It was highly encouraging and supportive.
- 8) All its proceedings were published in the essays in the Minnow Brook tradition edited by Richard T. Mayor and published by Timmy Bailey - "Public Management in the Inter-Connected World: Essays in the Minnow Brook Tradition .

#### e) Third Minnow brook conference, 2008

The last Minnow brook conference was held in 2008. This conference took place during September, 2008. It was organised when American economy was downgrading and global terrorism had shown its first effect. It was chaired by Rosemary O'Leary.

- 1) **Global Concerns:** - global terrorism, economy and ecological imbalances etc.
- 2) **Participation:** - This invited participants from other countries as well hence it was global in approach focussing upon global challenges and problems of Public Administration.
- 3) **Main Focus:** - Its focus was upon structural and functional reforms or second generation reforms.
- 4) **Concept originated:** - It gave rise to the concept of 3 E's - Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness.

## 2.5 Features of New Public Administration

**Main features of new public administration can be discussed under following heads.**

- 1) **Change & Administrative responsiveness:** The administrative organization and procedures should be responsive to the changes that are taking place in the socio-economic, political and technological environments.
- 2) **Rationality:** Rationality is the main criterion for administrative decisions and actions. Here, rationality refers to the rationality of the administrator. There is a need for the administrator to consult the citizens regarding the things to be done, and also about what ought to be done, and also about who has to do it, etc
- 3) **Management –Worker relation:** The smooth relation between the management and worker enhances morale and productivity among the employees. However, the main aim should be satisfaction of citizens with the performance and attitudes of the administrative employees.
- 4) **Structures:** There is a need for employing a dynamic approach to organizational structure. Structures have to be made relevant to the changing need of the environments.
- 5) These new structures prove to be more suitable for present day administrative organizations.

## 2.6 Positive Aspects of new public administration:

There are certain positive directions of new public administration. These are ----

- 1) New public administration is related with practical problems and situations of daily life of people. It is closely relevant and practical.
- 2) It is positive and active for solving the needs and problems of public.
- 3) Another important aspect of new public administration is that it gives importance upon administrative morality.
- 4) It tries to establish justice and equity through its administrative activity and function without any biasness and corruption.
- 5) New public administration always aware of interests and need of public. It is always ready for addressing grievances Of public.

## 2.7 Limitation of New Public administration.

In spite of having strong philosophical background and rich intellectual foundation new public administration is not free from limitations. Critics have observed its limitations from different perspectives. Certain limitation of new public administration is as follows –

New public administration is different from traditional one is just in definition not any content. 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."<sup>6</sup>

- 1) 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.

- 2) According to James C. Charles worth, “Public Administration theory has not caught up with emerging problems, like the huge military industrial complex, riots, labour unions and strikes, public school conflicts, slums, the impingement of sciences and developing countries”<sup>7</sup>
- 3) New public administration remained at the level of discussion only. Erstwhile American government was hardly concerned with implementing principles and policies recommended by intellectuals of new public administration.
- 4) Another shortcoming of new public administration is that it failed to suggest practical methods and way for the improvement of traditional public administration. It was limited to theoretical observation only.

### 3. Evaluation

The above discussion reveals outstanding philosophy and purposes of public administration. It is not just an administrative reformation but consequences of painful time and situation prevailed in contemporary America. Frustration and dissatisfaction among citizens and civil society moved intellectuals to think of an alternative to traditional administration because it was nearly unsuccessful in meeting erstwhile problems of society. But even after having many attractive and positive aspects new public administration is not free from criticism. Many scholars claim that new public administration is not based on reality. Tools and techniques for implementing new public administration are not sufficient. Another thing is that without legislative and executive assistance new public administration will not be practicable. However, its importance in creating a new ideas and innovative trend cannot be denied. Moreover, new public administration has brought a new thought regarding relation between public and administration. New public administration was limited within books and theory for a long period. Moreover, it is blamed as an expensive method since it kills time and wealth subsequently. However, its importance and relevance never can be thrown out because new public administration was an intellectual revolution in the concerned area. It encouraged administration to be social and people oriented. It extended the scope of public administration and made it more dynamic and logical.

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