

REFORMS IN GOVERNANCE: SIX DECADES OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

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Reforms in Governance: Six Decades of Administrative Reforms*

One of the major legacies of the British rule was the strong bureaucratic structures and personnel manning them. The initial reforms in the post-independence period thus focused on the structure as well as the bureaucracy, which was designed to serve as the vehicle for ushering in good governance. The ‘locus’, ‘where’ of the field was largely the government bureaucracy. The focus of this paper is on Administrative Reforms. It analyses Six Decades of Administrative Reforms and examines the recurring themes over the decades.

Reforms and innovations in governance can be initiated at two levels – the philosophical and at the structural/systems levels. Reforms at these two levels aim to address structures, functions, delivery mechanism, values, attitudes and orientations.

Post Independence Reforms

The emphasis in the post-Independence period was on nation building. The “public” remained elusive. The first phase of reforms in the post independence period was led by the United States Foreign Aid Programme with modernization/development as its main objectives. Modernization became the ideology for the development model. Modernization at the intellectual level, involves expansion of man’s knowledge regarding his environment. It involves diffusion of knowledge made possible through increased literacy, education and mass communication. Modernization at the psychological level involves a basic shift in attitudes, values and expectations. In the economic sphere

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modernization implied diversification of activities from simple to complex tasks, enhanced occupational skills, increase the capital to labour ratio and a shift from subsistence agriculture to market agriculture¹.

The emphasis was on the transfer of “rational” tools and techniques to make administration more efficient. Tools were a major component of Main Field American Public Administration for export to developing countries to help them modernize. Tools included ‘processes’ and techniques of administration. The Administrative package was thus tool and technique oriented. Efficiency was its philosophy. The only problem was that it was designed to work in a vacuum since political development was expected to take its own course. An added contradiction was the absence of any clear-cut definition of development administration. It was generally interpreted as the development of the administrative apparatus².

Theoretical and practical problems existed from the outset. In the midst of overt politically, economic, and administrative development, the term “public” remained elusive. The problem of finding a suitable definition of “public” was readily acknowledged by Riggs. He observed that the function of representing people may be exercised with or without their formal approval³.

Several committees devoted attention to the structures and machinery of government such as the N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar report (1949), which recommended that the central ministries be clubbed - into a bureau of natural resource and agriculture, bureau of industry and commerce, bureau of transport and communication and bureau of

¹ Huntington, 1968 pp.32-33.

² Singh, Sujata (1995). Paradigms of Development: Implications for Comparative and Development Administration, Doctoral Dissertation, Auburn University, USA.

³ Riggs, Fred W. (ed) (1970). Frontiers of Development Administration, Durham, NC: Duke University press.

labour and social services⁴. Other committees such as the Gorwala Committee appointed by the Planning Commission focused on the efficient conduct of Public Undertakings⁵. An important landmark in the area of administrative reforms goes back to Paul H. Appleby's two reports on Indian Administration. The survey of Public Administration (1953) made a general survey of public administration in the country. Among the major recommendations was the setting up of an O&M Organization in the central government and the setting up of an institute of public administration, which was adopted immediately. Appleby's second report – a reexamination of India's Administrative System with special reference to the administration of the government's industrial and commercial enterprises was submitted in 1956. The O&M division was basically created to simplify administrative procedures and initiate changes to make government organizations work better. Its theoretical underpinnings can be traced back to the Scientific Management Movement and its emphasis on a Time and Motion Study. After all, the ultimate aim was to find the “one best way” for performing a task. The Indian Institute of Public Administration was set up to serve as a “Think Tank” to the Government of India. It was entrusted with the task of conducting research studies, undertake consultancy assignments and organise training programmes for senior civil servants. The Department of Administrative Reforms was established in March 1964⁶.

A major effort towards reforming governance was made in 1966 when the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) was set up. The ARC in turn set up 20

⁴ Ayyanger, N. Gopalswami (1949). Report on the Reorganization of the Machinery of the Government, Government of India.

⁵ Gorwala A.D. (1951). Report on Public Administration, Planning Commission, Government of India.

⁶ Appleby, Paul H. (1953). Public Administration in India: Report of a Survey, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.

Study Teams, 13 Working Groups and 1 Task Force. In all it submitted 20 reports to the government, making a total of 581 recommendations, in a period spread over 1966-70.

The Reports were on the following subjects: Machinery of Government of India and its procedures of work (Part 1 & 2); Personnel Administration; Problems of Redress of Citizen's Grievances; Centre-State Relations; State Administration; Administration of Union Territories and NEFA; Machinery for Planning (Interim & final Reports); Public Undertakings: Economic Administration; Finance, Accounts and Audit; Delegation of Financial and Administrative Powers; Railways; Post & Telegraph; Reserve Bank of India; Life Insurance Corporation; Small Scale Sector; Central Direct Taxes Administration; Treasuries; and Scientific Departments.

As the ARC reports indicate the thrust of the reforms was on organization and functioning of ministries and departments as also on reform in the Civil Services. The ARC was assisted by three study teams focusing on personnel management namely the Thorat Committee, Nagarkatti Committee and the Patil Committee. An important recommendation of ARC was accepted by the government when it created the Department of Personnel in August 1970 and placed it in the Cabinet Secretariat. The whole idea behind its creation was to focus attention on Central Personnel Management. Prior to the creation of this nodal agency, personnel management functions were shared by the Establishment Wing, the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry. The Department of Administrative Reforms however continued to remain in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Central Personnel Agency was charged with the responsibility for formulation of overall personnel policies and overseeing their implementation, planning, career development, talent hunting and development and Selection of personnel for senior

levels. Under its charter, the Department of personnel has to serve as the focal point for research on personnel matters. The ARC proposal contemplated that the Department of Personnel should not administer itself any service cadre so that it could devote itself to policy making without holding a brief for any service interest⁷.

Recurring Themes in Administrative Reforms

An in-depth analyses of the various committee reports appointed from time to time reveals an interesting pattern in that some core themes are found to recur over and over again. One such question is the issue of providing lateral entry which has been receiving attention since the '60s. The Estimates Committee, in its 93rd Report (1965-66), recommended a central administrative pool to provide officers for manning senior administrative posts under the central government and suggested that the pool should be developed into the main source from which officers may be drawn to man senior administrative posts under the central government. It also suggested that the selection of officers to the pool should be made by the Union Public Service Commission and be based on the performance of the officers in the posts held by them under the State/Central Government. The Estimates Committee, at the same time, emphasized the need to induct a larger number of officers with technical backgrounds, training and experience, as administrative heads of institutions, department/ministries dealing with scientific, industrial and technical subjects⁸.

The ARC was also in favour of the lateral entry of persons with certain skills and expertise which may not normally be available within government departments. This

⁷ Refurbishing of Personnel Administration – Scaling New Heights, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Tenth Report, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, November 2008.

⁸ Government of India, Estimates Committee 93rd Report, Third Lok Sabha 1965-66

was specially true in the area of Science and Technology where a larger number of entry points were in evidence⁹.

Even after four decades this issue continues to be debated with both the Second ARC and the Sixth Pay Commission revisiting it. The Second ARC recommends the setting up of a Central Civil Services Authority which, among other things, would formulate guidelines for appointments at the ‘Senior Management Level’ in Government of India. It would also identify posts which could be open for recruitment from all sources. For positions at a higher level, it would, in consultation with Government, earmark positions for which outside talent would be desirable¹⁰. The Sixth Pay Commission recommends that certain posts in the Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) and Higher Administrative Grade (HAG) requiring technical or specialized expertise and not encadred in any of the services be filled by suitable officers within the Government as well as by outsiders on contract. It suggests a shift from career based to post based selection in the higher echelons of Government in order to get the best domain based expertise. Further, the creation of additional posts in the Senior Administrative Grade/equivalent/higher grades in future to be strictly on functional considerations, with such posts invariably being created outside the cadre to be filled by open selection including contractual appointment from within or outside the Government. Additionally, it argues for a market driven compensation package for young scientists and posts requiring special expertise and professional skills¹¹.

⁹ Hanumanthaiya, K. (1969). Report on Personnel Administration, Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India.

¹⁰ Refurbishing of Personnel Administration – Scaling New Heights, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Tenth Report, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, November 2008.

¹¹ Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Report of the Sixth Pay Commission, 2008.

The question of providing lateral entry and inter-service mobility is closely intertwined with whether there is a need to specialize and if so at which stage in a civil servant's career. An examination of earlier commission reports provide useful insights on this issue. .

The Need for Specialization

The Need for specialization was emphasized by the ARC as well as its study teams. They also spelt out how it should be operationalized. The Nagarkatti committee was of the view that Specialization in skills and knowledge should be built up in the Services by allowing persons to continue in particular areas or fields of administration for a minimum period of 8 to 10 years. Transfers at short intervals from one branch to an altogether different branch of work should be avoided as far as possible.

Since in the present day personnel system, the need for posting a person according to his aptitude is not fully met, the placement policy of Government should be revised and in spite of the present rigid Service barriers, opportunities should be provided for inter-Service mobility in accordance with the aptitudes and skills of persons, the Study Team pointed out¹².

For manning the posts at higher levels in the Secretariat and other similar organizations which were being filled by persons from only a few Services, the Study Team suggested that selection of persons of ability and talent should be made from as wide a field as possible. To achieve this, there should be no reservation quotas for one or two Services alone.

¹² Nagarkatti, K.N. (1967). Report of the Study Team on Promotion Policies, Conduct Rules, Discipline and Morale Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India.

The selection of candidates for these posts, it suggested, should be made from amongst all the technical, professional, specialist and non-technical Services, on the basis of an examination to be conducted by the Public Service Commission in which those who have put in nine to twelve years of service may compete and for this purpose, the bio-data of the eligible persons should be maintained by the Personnel Agency entrusted with the selection¹³.

The ARC observed:

- (a) The functions of Government have become greatly diversified. Wherever the numbers involved in a particular function are viable, the posts should be grouped into regularly constituted services.
- (b) A functional field must be carved out for the IAS. This could consist of Land Revenue Administration, exercise of magisterial functions and regulatory work in the States in fields other than those looked after by other functional Services¹⁴.

After taking into consideration the recommendations of the Patil¹⁵ and Deshmukh¹⁶ Study Teams on personnel administration, the ARC spelt out 8 specialisms:

- a) Economic Administration;
- b) Industrial Administration;
- c) Agricultural and Rural development Administration;
- d) Social and Educational Administration;
- e) Personnel Administration;
- f) Financial Administration;

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ K. Hanumanthaiya, op.cit.

¹⁵ Deshmukh, C.D. (1968). Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India And its Procedures of Work, Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India.

¹⁶ Patil, R.K. (1967). Report of the Study Team on Personnel Planning, Staffing of Public Sector Undertakings and Personnel Management, Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India.

- g) Defence Administration and Internal Security; and
- h) Planning¹⁷.

The ARC also emphasized that personnel for these specialisms should be drawn from all sources and efforts should be made to bring in from all sectors those who have shown promise of managerial capabilities in the initial part of their careers. Since such capabilities can emerge out of all Services, the selection should be made from among the best out of these services. Persons thus selected from the above mentioned 8 areas of administration would be concerned with policy and management to a greater extent than those at similar levels in the purely “functional” areas. It also emphasized the need to stay longer in the different specializations so that full advantage may be taken out of the growing expertise. They would constitute a policy and managerial pool, which will be available to the Centre for a very long period and which should partly feed the senior management of the government of India in relevant areas. The Commission accordingly recommended that the tenure of deputy secretaries in the policy and managerial pool should be 6 years, excluding the period spent under training¹⁸.

The Selection Process and Mid-Career Examination

The Commission recommended that, after 8 and within 12 years of service in his functional area, every class I officer (All India and Central) should be eligible to move to a post outside this functional areas at the headquarters.

The Committee on Personnel Administration, aided by its Study Teams, analyzed in great depth and detail various problems that plague the Indian System and highlighted areas where reforms were urgently needed. On the lines of the Fulton Committee of the

¹⁷ K. Hanumanthaiya, op.cit.

¹⁸ Ibid.

U.K., the ARC also highlighted the fact that there was too great a reliance on the ‘generalist’; that the technical, scientific and other specialist personnel were not participating directly in policy formulation and the top posts had not been brought within the reach of all those who have the capacity to hold them. Above all, there was no clearly conceived and articulated policy on personnel management. It detected serious shortcomings in the staffing pattern at the highest levels in government. According to the ARC, an effort has to be made to match jobs with men possessing the needed qualifications, that the preference for the generalist, should be replaced by a preference for those who have acquired competence in the concerned field. A new approach was therefore necessary which would integrate selected specialists into the administrative hierarchy and enable them to participate more directly in the process of policy formulation, so that they can fit themselves adequately to the task which they have to perform in their own special fields or related fields in the higher administration. The ARC suggested reforms on the following lines:

- (i) A rational system of filling policy-advice positions with men possessing the required qualifications and competence had to be devised. This will mean a fuller use of different Services for Secretariat work, as also the adoption of special measures to build the needed specializations in the headquarters personnel.
- (ii) Senior management will need to be selected from all the relevant sources – generalist and specialist – and, for this purpose, talent needs to be discovered and developed in all the cadres, specially among those who have not hitherto been inducted into the higher administration to any sufficient degree.

- (iii) A rational structure needs to be adopted so as to reflect actual responsibilities borne in each job.
- (iv) In order to tone up morale throughout the personnel system, much greater scope than now exists needs to be created for talent in the lower ranks to move up to higher positions in the Civil Service, on the basis of competence and performance¹⁹.

The Surendra Nath Committee (2003), also stressed the importance of providing domain expertise. It carved out eleven domains for officers under the central staffing scheme. Out of the eleven domains, officers may be assigned a maximum of three domains, the Nath Committee felt. These included:

- (1) Agriculture and rural development;
- (2) Social sectors (Education, Health, Tribal Welfare, etc.);
- (3) Culture and Information;
- (4) Natural Resource Management including the Environment;
- (5) Energy and Environment (brown side);
- (6) Communication systems and Connectivity Infrastructure;
- (7) Public Finance and Financial Management;
- (8) Industry and Trade;
- (9) Domestic Affairs and Defence;
- (10) Housing and Urban Affairs; and
- (11) Personnel and General Administration, Governance Reform and Regulatory systems.

The Surendra Nath Committee suggested that assignment of Domains could be made a part of the empanelment process at JS/AS levels wherein officers due for consideration may submit a write-up indicating their academic background, training courses undergone, research experience and other significant achievements and

¹⁹ K. Hanumanthaiya, op.cit.

recognitions relevant to the Domain areas. The Empanelment Committee assisted by eminent experts/academics in the concerned areas may then scrutinize the write-ups²⁰.

The need to assign domains continues to receive attention in the absence of Government taking any decision in this regard. The Second ARC suggests that the Central Civil Services Authority should assign domains to officers of the All India Services and the Central Civil Services on completion of 13 years of service²¹. Thus, committee after committee has been emphasizing the need to specialize. This indicates not only that the issue needs urgent attention but also the failure on the part of successive governments to take tough decisions while framing personnel policies.

Whereas the trend is towards a higher intake of technical graduates (as the following table indicates), the training package does not seem to be taking note of this development. The government policy continues to follow the classic “incremental approach”. It may be argued that the incremental approach can justifiably be adopted only so long as requirements in a particular field change marginally, in which case minor adjustments would suffice. Instead of turning specialist into generalists the government needs to ensure that recruits with a specialized background, on joining the civil services, stay in touch with developments in their respective fields. This should not wait till such time that the officer reaches ‘mid career’, by which time the officer would be totally outdated in the fast changing technological age. They need to constantly update their

²⁰ Nath, Surendra (2003). Report of the Group Constituted to review the system of Performance Appraisal, Promotion, Empanelment and Placement for the ‘AIS’ and other group ‘A’ services, Department of Administrative Reforms, Government of India.

²¹ Refurbishing of Personnel Administration – Scaling New Heights, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Tenth Report, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, November 2008.

knowledge in their respective field of specialization. Their expertise can then be utilized for policy analysis in their respective field of specialization²².

Technical Intake in All India Services (From 1997 to 2002)

Qualification	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
BA	37	11	26	26	22	19
BA(Hons)	31	20	12	11	11	12
B.Com	11	5	9	7	7	7
B.Com(Hons)	2	7	6	7	8	2
B.Sc.	19	12	17	17	12	11
B.Sc.(Hons)	18	6	5	13	8	2
B.E/B.Tech/B.Sc. Engg.	206	155	127	96	81	84
B.Sc. (Agri)	4	4	2	5	6	3
LLB	4	14	10	10	11	11
B. Vs & AH	1	1		1	2	3
BDS		1		2	3	2
MBBS	24	27	23	39	46	24
MA	138	107	89	124	112	87
M.Com	6	7	13	5	19	11
M.Sc.	56	49	36	31	38	12
M.Sc. (Agri)	11	8	12	11	20	10
M. Tech	47	24	15	10	4	5
M.Vsc. & Ah.	3	7	4	5	3	1
LLM	1	1	2	1		2
Md				3	2	1
PhD	2	2	3	3	2	
BMS		1				1
Total	621	469	411	427	417	310

Source: Annual Reports, UPSC.

The 2nd ARC's line of thinking on tackling this very important issue of specialization in the Civil Services, is through providing channels of (a) lateral entry; (b) liberal revolving door policy; and (c) creation of a Senior Executive Service (SES) wherein positions will be filled up by applying the merit principle at higher levels and not just the entry level. This also includes providing the selected person a fixed term contract of 5 years and with differential remuneration packages depending upon the job to be performed. It visualizes the setting up of a body such as a Merit Protection Authority to

²² Singh, Sujata (1997). Training for Higher Echelons of Administration: Prospects and Challenges, IJPA, Vol XLIII, No. 3, July-September.

ensure that the Merit Principle is strictly followed and to hear complaints. This work could also be assigned to the UPSC. On the pattern followed in the Armed Forces, people not making it to the SES can retire at the lower level²³.

The provision of fixed tenures to civil servants calls for immediate attention. It has to be borne in mind that frequent changes of government, both at the state and central levels does not involve rotation of officers with each change. Unless fixed tenures are assured, specialization will remain a distant dream and the market will ultimately be the main beneficiary, lapping up bright officers to the detriment of public administration.

Providing fixed tenures is again a recurring theme over the decades. Fixed tenures are important not only from the point of view of building specializations but also for ensuring the accountability and neutrality of the Civil Service. The Hota Committee emphasizes to ensure good governance, civil servants be appointed to posts on the basis of objective criteria, be assured of minimum tenures and be held accountable for performance²⁴. However, providing fixed tenures should not be restricted to officers of the All India and other higher Civil Services. The havoc caused by mass scale transfers of IAS and IPS officers gets reported. What happens when there are mass scale transfers at all levels in the hierarchy, down to the Block Development Officers, goes largely unnoticed.

During field work in Rajasthan in 1998-99 which coincided with a change in government, it was observed that there were mass transfers from top to bottom, effecting all hierarchical levels. The field work was in connection with the evaluation of the Million Wells Scheme in Rajasthan. The first casualty was the Secretary Rural

²³ Singh, Sujata (2007). Civil service Reforms Report of the Workshop organized jointly by the Administrative Reforms Commission and Indian Institute of Public Administration.

²⁴ Hota, P.C. (2004). Report on Civil Service Reforms, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.

Development & Relief Commissioner, followed by the Project Directors of District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs), down to the BDOs.

Under these circumstances, how can we accept the bureaucracy to stand firm and upright? If one party can reward the civil servant for a particular decision he or she takes, another party can punish the civil servant for the very same act. Unless the government addresses politically unpleasant issues, no reform can succeed²⁵.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its Report on “Refurbishing of Personnel Administration” has made some important suggestions. These include:

Stage of Entry: National Institutes of Public Administration should be established to offer Bachelor's Degree Courses in public administration/governance/management. These courses should include core subjects such as the Constitution of India, Indian Legal System, Administrative Law, Indian Economy, Polity, History and Culture. Graduates of these special courses would be eligible for appearing in the Civil Services Examination. Graduates in other disciplines would also be eligible provided they compete a ‘Bridge Course’ in the core subjects from the same selected National Institutes/Universities.

Stage of Entry – interim period: Pending implementation of the reform measures suggested above, the existing structure of Civil Services Examination needs to be changed for compressing the examination cycle. For this, the Preliminary and Main Examinations need to be conducted together and evaluation of papers for the Main Examination should only be done in case of candidates securing a threshold level of marks in the Preliminary Examination.

Alternatively, the number of candidates selected for appearing in the Main Examination could be restricted to two to three times of the number of vacancies

²⁵ Singh, Sujata (2000). Concurrent Evaluation of Million Wells Scheme in Rajasthan, Indian Institute of Public Administration.

available so that the Personality Test and the Main Examination are conducted simultaneously.

Age of Entry/Number of Attempts: The permissible age for appearing in the Civil Services Examinations should be 21 to 25 years for general candidates, 21 to 28 years for candidates from OBC and 21 to 29 years for candidates from SC/ST and physically challenged candidates. The number of permissible attempts should be three, five, six and six respectively. In case of officers from the State Civil Services, the Union Public Service Commission should conduct an annual examination for officers who have completed 8 to 10 years of service in Grade ‘A’ posts.

Capacity Building: Every Government Servant should undergo a mandatory training at the induction stage and also periodically during his/her career. Successful completion of training should be necessary for confirmation in service and promotions. A strong network of training institutions at the Union and State levels needs to be created.

Civil Services Law: A new Civil Services Law needs to be enacted which would incorporate civil service values, code of ethics, recruitment and conditions of service. Fixation of tenures, dismissal, removal etc. of civil servants, creation of executive agencies etc.

The Civil Service Law should also provide for the constitution of a Central Civil Services Authority which would review the implementation of Civil Service Values. Assign domains to officers of the All India Services and the Central Civil Services on completion of 13 years of service. Formulate guidelines for appointments at ‘Senior Management Level’ in the Government of India. Recommend names for posting at the ‘Senior Management Level’. And identify the posts therein which could be open for recruitment from all sources. For placement at the Middle Management Level, the Central Civil

Service Authority should invite applications from all officers who have completed the minimum qualifying years of service, for assignment of domains. The Department of Personnel and Training should identify all vacancies at this level in advance and the concerned Ministries should give a brief job description for these vacancies. On receipt of nominations, the DoPT should prepare an offer list and seek approval from the competent authority.

For placement at the Top Management Level, the Central Civil Services Authority should invite applications from eligible officers of the All India Services and Group ‘A’ Central Services participating in the Central Staffing Scheme. This would be applicable for positions at the Joint Secretary/SAG level. For positions at a higher level, the Central Public Service Authority should, in consultation with Government, earmark positions for which outside talent would be desirable.

The Authority would stipulate the eligibility criteria, the required domain expertise etc. and short list suitable officers for these posts. Government should make the final selection on the basis of the short list. Performance Management System: Performance Appraisal Systems for all Services should be modified on the lines of the recently introduced PAR for the All India Services. The format should be made job specific. Performance Appraisal should be the year round and provisions for detailed work plan and a mid-year review introduced. Annual Performance Agreements should be signed between the departmental Minister and the Secretary/Heads of Departments providing details of the work to be done²⁶.

²⁶ Refurbishing of Personnel Administration – Scaling New Heights, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Tenth Report, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, November 2008.

Reorganization of Ministries and Departments for Streamlining Administration

Reorganization and reduction in the number of ministries has been a central issue. This has a direct correlation with downsizing staff strength. The N. Gopalswami Ayyanger report (1949) on “Reorganization of the Machinery of Government” highlighted the need for bringing together allied departments to facilitate financial and administrative coordination of plans and policies²⁷. The same concern received the attention of the Estimates Committee in its Second Report on “Reorganization of the Secretariat and Departments to the Government” (1951)²⁸. It again recommended the clubbing together of related ministries and departments in the interest of better coordination and unified control over allied subjects.

The same argument was carried forward by the ARC (1966) in its report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work. The ARC recommended for the Centre an overall scheme of reorganization of ministries and Departments into 16 ministers’ portfolios and 38 departments (including ministries without any department) as against 19 ministers’ portfolios and 40 departments existing in September, 1968. The ARC visualized 16 super ministries. The government took the view that, while the cabinet ought to be a compact team, its size (as well as that of the council of ministers) could not be determined on the basis of any rigid pattern²⁹.

The Second ARC submitted 16 reports. The 13th report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission focuses on the organizational structure of the Government of India. The report examines the issue of reorganization of ministries and

²⁷ Ayyanger, N. Gopalswami (1949). Report on the Reorganization of the Machinery of the Government, Government of India.

²⁸ India, Parliament: Estimates Committee. Second Report on Reorganization of the Secretariat and Departments of the Government of India (1950-51).

²⁹ Deshmukh, C.D. (1968). Report of the study team of the machinery of the govt. of India and its procedures of work. Part II Vol.1, Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India.

departments by revisiting and redefining the role of ministries and departments in view of the evolving role of governance. It also examined the framework for areas wherein there is a need for governmental regulation and the role of regulators therein.

The Report highlighted the weaknesses in the existing structure which include: (a) Undue emphasis on routine functions instead of policy analysis and policy making functions; (b) Proliferation of Ministries/Departments resulting in illogical division of work as also lack of an integrated approach; (c) Too many levels in the hierarchy which do not contribute to the decision making process; (d) Tendency towards risk avoidance; (e) Rigid hierarchical structure hampering team work; (f) Inefficient delivery of services on account of fragmentation of functions; and (g) Considerable weakening of the autonomy of committees and boards.

So far as the rationalization of the functions of the government was concerned, it emphasized the need for the Government of India to focus primarily on the core functions such as: Defence, International Relations, Public Order, Justice and rule of law; Human development through access to good quality education and healthcare to every citizen; Infrastructure and sustained natural resource development; Social security and social justice; Macro-economic management and economic policy; National policies in other sectors.

Its other important suggestions are: (i) Grouping together departments performing closely related functions under one Ministry to be headed by a First or Coordinating Minister which would thus result in a sharp reduction of Ministries in the Government of India; (ii) Each Department to focus on policy evaluation to be carried out at the end of prescribed periods; (iii) The member of levels through which a file passes for a decision not to exceed three; and (iv) Creating an effective Regulatory framework wherein each

Ministry/Department should evolve a ‘Management Statement’ spelling out the objectives and role of each regulator as also guidelines governing their interaction with the government.

There is need to carry out a detailed analysis of the functions/activities in each Ministry/Department.

This should be followed by restructuring which may include decentralization/delegation or hiving off activities. The concept of a Ministry would have to be redefined. A Ministry would mean a group of departments whose functions and subjects are closely related and is assigned to a First or Coordinating Minister for the purpose of providing overall leadership and coordination. This concept of a Ministry and the Coordinating (or First) Minister may be explicitly laid down in the Allocation of Business Rules. Adequate delegation among the Ministers would have to be laid down in the Transaction of Business Rules. A consequence of this, rationalization of Secretary level posts wherever required may also need to be carried out. Individual departments or any combination of these could be headed by the Coordinating (or First) Minister, other Cabinet Ministers/Minister(s) of State. For example, the Ministry of Local Government could include the following Ministries/Departments:

- i. Rural Development
- ii. Drinking Water Supply
- iii. Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
- iv. Urban Development
- v. Panchayati Raj.

Further, the following Ministries/Departments could be clubbed under the Ministry of Transport:

- i. Shipping
- ii. Road Transport and Highways
- iii. Civil Aviation
- iv. Railways.

Similarly, the Ministry of Energy would include the following Ministries/Departments:

- i. New and Renewable Energy
- i. Petroleum and Natural Gas
- ii. Power.

As a consequence of this exercise, the Commission expects that the number of Ministries in Government of India could be reduced from about 55 at present to about 20-25. The Allocation of Business Rules should first provide a Statement of the mission of the department followed by a list of subjects and functions. Each Department should introduce a system of policy evaluation to be carried out at the end of prescribed periods. All relevant policies should be updated in the light of the findings of such evaluations.

The number of levels through which a file passes for a decision should not exceed three.

In cases where the Minister's approval is required, the file should be initiated by the Deputy Secretary/Director concerned and should be moved through the Joint Secretary (or Additional Secretary/Special Secretary) and the Secretary (or Special Secretary) to the Minister. Cases requiring approval of the Secretary should go through just two levels (e.g. either US and Director, US and JS or Director and JS). Cases requiring approval of the JS/Director/DS should come through just one level³⁰.

³⁰ Organisational Structure of Government of India, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Thirteenth Report, April 2009, Government of India.

Though reorganization and streamlining of ministries/departments and grouping together related functions has received serious attention by committees starting with the N. Gopalswami Ayyanger report submitted in 1949 to the second ARC with all these reports emphasizing on rational distribution of work, the outcome has been the opposite. Successive governments have been tinkering with ministries and departments by renaming them and by shifting departments from one ministry to another and ‘reshifting’ them again. The classic example is that the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj which had all along been an integral part of this ministry. The creation of a separate ministry for Panchayati Raj in 2004 defeats the very idea of giving focused attention to related functions. The result is, the same programmes are being monitored by both the Ministry of Rural Development as well as the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Rationality is thus being conveniently forgotten.

Measures for Downsizing

The economic crisis saw a renewed focus on the need to downsize. Among the prominent committees that examined this issue are The Economic Administrative Reforms Commission (1983) headed by L.K. Jha, the Fifth Pay Commission and the Expenditure Reforms Commission.

Economic Reforms Commission 1983

The Commission Headed by L.K. Jha, a retired ICS Officer, submitted 37 reports covering: tax administration; economy in public expenditure; the relationship between government and public enterprises etc.

It recommended: slashing down government activities; change in the style of governmental functioning; minimize harassment to citizens and delays to business and industry³¹.

The Fifth Pay Commission, which was set up in 1993, submitted its report in 1997. The Commission emphasized steps for delayering so as to reduce delays; Developing the Group 'D' personnel as multi-skilled functionaries; computerization of office's work. The number of Central Ministries and Departments should be reduced drastically; The size and constitution of Central Ministries and Departments should be redefined in order to fit them for their newly stated roles; Recruitment to the different services may be reduced; The Government office itself will need a heavy dose of restructuring; The financial management and budgetary system will have to be totally rewritten. There will have to be a simplification of procedures and formulation of accountability norms in Government; The reduction in Government will have to be achieved through dismantling of excessive controls; disinvestment in the public sector; corporatization of departmental undertakings, privatization and contracting out of many services that are presently being performed directly by Government. Government's role will be more in evolving the policy of governance and less in the actual governance itself.

Measures for downsizing:

It recommended abolishing the backlog of 3.5 lakh vacant posts; a freeze on further employment of Junior Staff; a sharp cutback in the intake of executives; it emphasized the need for a perspective manpower plan to bring about a reduction of numbers by 30 per cent over a ten-year period; A Voluntary Retirement Scheme with the

³¹ Jha, L.K. (1983) Economic Administrative Reforms Commission, Report on Economy in Public Expenditure, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.

golden handshake as well as compulsory retirement of those found corrupt and incompetent; raising the retirement age from 58 to 60 years; it suggested going back to the six working days per week³².

The Expenditure Reforms Commission

The Expenditure Reforms Commission was set up in February 2000 under the chairmanship of Shri K.P. Geethakrishnan; It submitted ten reports; The focus was on down-sizing.

Measures for Downsizing:

A cut of 10% of the staff as on 1.1.2000 to be carried out by the year 2004-2005. A screening committee consisting of the Secretary of the concerned ministry, a representative of DOP&T and a representative of Department of Expenditure to prepare annual direct recruitment plan for all cadres, with the approval in respect of group A posts, being accorded by a committee consisting of the Cabinet Secretary, concerned secretary, Secretary (DOP&T) and Secretary (Expenditure). It also suggested a total ban on creation of new posts for two years and a freeze on direct recruitment in all cadres for five years. The staff declared surplus to be transferred to the Surplus Cell to be redesignated as the Division of Retraining and Deployment, who will pay their salary, retirement benefits etc. In these centres, where the number of surplus staff is quite small, the present practice of the parent organizations making these payments may be continued.

Surplus staff should be made eligible for a liberal Voluntary Retirement Scheme recommended by the Fifth Central Pay Commission with the exception that commutation entitlements will be as at present and the ex-gratia amount will be paid in monthly installments covering a five year period. However, those who do not opt for Voluntary

³² Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Report of the Fifth Pay Commission, 1997.

Retirement Scheme and are not redeployed within one year to be discharged from service. The redeployment of Group D will be handled by DOPT and not DGET. Group A official opting for Voluntary Retirement Scheme will not be required to seek approval for commercial employment after retirement³³.

³³ Geetakrishnan, K.P. The Expenditure Reforms Commission, Ministry Of Finance, Government of India, 2003

**Highlights of the Recommendations on Downsizing and Reorganisation by the
Expenditure Reforms Commission**

Ministries	Directorate/offices	Sanctioned	Actual	Vacant	Surplus	To be abolished
I&B		52319		8135		5603
I&B	AIR & DD	44540		7727		
I&B	Secretariat	85				56
Coal	Secretariat	171				
Coal	CMPF	1603	1346	257		
Coal	CIL	562071			19658	118414
Eco Aff	NSO	3404	1191	2213		
Eco Aff	Economic Division	51				42
Eco Aff	GIC	683				623
Eco Aff	Banking Division	220				
Eco Aff	IIC	126	87	39		106
Eco Aff	Mints & Presses	25000				16250
SSI & A&RI	Main Ministry	56				
SSI & A&RI	DC (SSI)	3586	3289	297		481
SSI & A&RI	NSIC	1451				602-849
SSI & A&RI	KVIC	4631				1349
SSI & A&RI	Coir Board	501	457	44		134
HI		214	210	4		
Posts		292672\$				
Posts	Civil wing	1341				
Posts	Accounts organization	7859				5182
Supply		177	172	5		148
Supply	Finance wing	31	31	0		20
Supply	DGS&D	3540	2876	664		1194
Supply	CCA	1036				921
Supply	NTH	794		133		
Steel		642				40
Steel	JPC	265	205	60		
P&NG		314	296	13		
C&PC		257		25		
C&PC	Petrochemical Div (Secretariat)	16				11
C&PC	Chemicals Div (Secretariat)	14				8
C&PC	office of Welfare Commission	1547		545		
C&PC	NPPA	60		13		
Fertilizers		272	255	17		
Fertilizers	Secretariat	59	56	3		29
Mines	Ministry	228				87
Mines	IBM	1743	1599	143		143
Mines	Coal Wing	1455	1455			1275
Mines	GSI	16310	13041	3269		
CA,F & PD						

CA,F & PD	NISST	155	21			
Cons Aff		215	204	11		
Sugar & Ed oils	BIS	2600	2100	500		
Sugar & Ed oils					20	16
NPC	NPC	651	530	121		150
Agr & Coop		7059				385
Agr & Coop	Economic Administration					41
Agr & Coop	NRMD	105				58
Agr & Coop	Rainfed Division	51				
Agr & Coop	All India Soil & Land Use Survey	511				254
Agr & Coop	Cooperation & Credit Div	105				52
Agr & Coop	Directorate of Plant Protection		1813			123
Agr & Coop	Direc of Agriculture Marketing		1377			94
Agr & Coop	NCDC		798			82
Rural Dev			550			
Ex Aff			6640			
RT & H	Road Transport & Highways					57
RT & H	Road Wing					58
Shipping						16000
Shipping	main ministry	329		13		
Shipping	Secretariat	89				41
HRD	Secretariat	62	57	5		
SecEdu	NCERT		2946			1834
SecEdu	UGC		883			265
w&c welfare		296	274	22		
YA & S		122	124	-2		
Sports		51	43	8		
E & F	Main Ministry	699	645	54	54	54
E & F	NRCD	117	126	-9		34
E & F	NAEB		91			30
E & F	ICFRE		2800			936
Culture		329	280	49		
Commerce			147			85
Commerce	MPEDA		428	28		
Commerce	Tea Board		150			37
Commerce	Coffee Board		1100			330
Commerce	Rubber Board					450
Commerce	dept proper		671			32
Commerce	sub offices		1560			67
UD & PA	Land & Dev Office					50% of C&D
UD & PA	Town & Country Planning Org					30% of C&D
Urban Dev	Directorate of Plant Protection					20
Urban Dev	Directorate of Printing	12764				6421

Pers& Pub Gr	documentation div					28
Civil Aviation		696			166	166
Civil Aviation	Commission of Railway Safety	162	162	0		50%
Tourism	DG, Tourism		242		28	28
Ind Pol & Prn		990				450
Ind Pol & Prn	Salt Commissioner office					800

Source: Expenditure Reforms Commission, Ministry of Finance, 2000.

List of Departments/ Division/offices that need to be wound up

Ministry/Departments	Recommend to wound up	
Information & Broadcasting	NFDC	
Information & Broadcasting	DD & AIR	To be shifted to Prasar Bharti Corporation
Information & Broadcasting	Film Division	
Information & Broadcasting	Children's Film Society	
Information & Broadcasting	Directorate of Film Festivals	
Information & Broadcasting	Directorate of Field Publicity and Song & Drama Div	
Information & Broadcasting	Photo Div	Functions to be transferred to Press Information Bureau
Information & Broadcasting	Publication Division	
Coal	CIL	
Small Scale Industries	Small Industries Service Institutes	
Small Scale Industries	Productiion Centre (SIDO)	
Heavy Industries	BIFR	
Supply	Inst of Supply & Quality Mgt (DGS&D)	
Supply	DCI&S	
Economic Affairs	Board for Industrial & Financial Reconstruction	
Economic Affairs	Appellate Authority for Industrial finance Reconstruction	
Steel	Office of Devt Commissioner for Iron & Steel	
Mines	NIRM	
Mines	NIMH	
Mines	BGML	
Cons Affairs, Food & PD	Directorate of Vanaspati, Veg Oils and Fats	
Cons Affairs, Food & PD	Directorate of Sugar	
Cons Affairs, Food & PD	Indian Grain Storage Mgt &Research Inst	
Cons Affairs, Food & PD	National Institute of Sugar & Sugar Tech (Mau)	Agriculture University or Training Centre
Cons Affairs, Food & PD	HVOC	
Cons Affairs, Food & PD	Tariiff commission	
Agriculture & Cooperation	National Oil Seeds & Veg Oils Dev Board	
Agriculture & Cooperation	Coconut Board	
Agriculture & Cooperation	Directorate of Oilseeds	
Agriculture & Cooperation	Directorate of Pulses	
Environment & Forests	Environment wing	
Environment & Forests	ICFRE	
Culture	Centre for Cultural Resource & Trainning	
Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation	National Building Organisation	

Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation	Government of India Stationery office	
Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation	National Building Organisation	
Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation	HPL	
Industrial Policy & Promotion	Office of Salt Commissioner	
Road Transport & Highways	Indian Road Construction Corp Ltd	
Shipping	Tariff Authority for Major Ports	
Human Resource Development	National Institute of Adult Education	
Women & Child Dev	CSWB	
Women & Child Dev	CSWD	
Personnel, PG & UPSC	Documentation & Dissemination Division	

Source: Expenditure Reforms Commission, Ministry of Finance, 2000.

Recent Initiatives towards Rightsizing

A new scheme - ‘Optimization of Direct Recruitment to Civilian Posts’ was introduced in 2001. All requirements of Direct Recruitment were to be scrutinized to ensure that fresh recruitment is limited to one per cent of the total Civilian staff strength. This Scheme was initially to be implemented for a period of five years.

It covered all Central Government Ministries/Departments/Organizations including the Railways, Dept. of Posts, Telecom, autonomous bodies wholly or partly financed by the Government, statutory Corporations /Bodies, Civilians in Defence and non-Combat posts in Para Military Forces.

Since about three per cent staff retires every year, this measure was expected to reduce manpower by two per cent per annum, with a reduction of ten per cent in five years.

Each Central Government Ministry/Department was required to prepare an Annual Direct Recruitment Plan covering the requirement of all cadres managed by it. Any indent for Direct Recruitment was to be placed on the Recruiting Agency only after a certificate of clearance for the vacancies had been obtained from the appropriate Screening Committee.

This Plan was to be scrutinized by a Screening Committee comprising the Secretary of the Concerned Ministry, along with the Financial Advisor and Joint Secretary (Administration) of the Department. The Committee was also required to have one senior representative each of the Department of Personnel & Training and the Department of Expenditure. For Group ‘A’ posts, a separate Screening Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary, was to consider proposals.

Ministries/Departments/Units have to obtain a ‘No Objection Certificate’ from the Surplus Cell of the DOPT & DG, Employment & Training that suitable personnel were not available for appointment against posts for direct recruitment. Posts to be abolished under recommendations of the Staff Inspection Units (SIU) and the Expenditure Reforms Commission (ERC) were outside the purview of the scheme and not to be included in these calculations.

The initial response was rather poor. Whereas 42,612 posts were required to be abolished as per the recommendations of the ERC, only 18,682 posts have actually been abolished as on 1.1.05. The implementation of the Scheme has since gained momentum, with 85 Screening Committee Meetings having been convened upto January 2005. A total of one lakh five thousand and thirty seven (1,05,037) posts have been abolished so far. The approximate savings comes to Rupees eight hundred and two crores per annum.

This is a recurring annual saving which over the next five years would result in a saving of rupees four thousand and ten crores. However, most of these abolished posts were vacant and the resultant savings will not immediately be reflected in reduction of the Wage Bill. In the long run these will have the effect of pruning the bureaucracy and keeping down the Wage Bill.

The Screening Committee meetings helped Ministries/ Departments identify areas of redundancies, overlapping functions, sub-optimal utilization of manpower, critical areas of shortages, areas in which simple technological interventions could release more staff etc³⁴. The scheme has been withdrawn on 31.03.2009.

³⁴ Kashyap, Vidhu ‘Rightsizing Issues in Central Government: An Evaluation of the Scheme for Optimisation of Direct Recruitment of Civilian Posts’, Unpublished APPPA Dissertation (2004-05).

Recent Public – Centric Initiatives

Among the various public – Centric initiatives taken by the Government of India, three stand out – (1) The 73rd and 74th amendments providing constitutional status to local governance; (2) The Right to Information Act, 2005, promoting transparency in administration; and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, which aims to provide social security to the rural poor.

Decentralized Governance – The Panchayati Raj System

The evolution of the Panchayati Raj system can be traced to the Community Development Projects inaugurated on 2nd October, 1952. However, when the Community Development Projects and the National Extension Service failed to take off, a committee under the chairmanship of Shri Balwantry Mehta was appointed to pin point the causes of failure of these institutions. The lack of community participation was held responsible for the failure of the Community Development Projects. The Balwantry Mehta Committee recommended a three tier Panchayati Raj system – the Zilla Parishad at the District level, a Panchayat Samiti at the Block level, and a village panchayat at the village level. There was direct election only at the village level.

The Panchayati Raj system produced mixed results in that no real powers were given to these institutions; elections were not held regularly; and government officials continued to dominate elected functionaries. In some states the District Collector was the ex-officio Chairmen of all the standing committees.

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, 1993, seek to give more powers to local bodies. Elections have been made mandatory and 1/3 seats reserved for women. However, the functioning of these institutions has not been uniformly satisfactory. States like Kerala and West Bengal appear to be doing much better than the other states. The

reservation of seats for women remains a farce in the backward northern states where the husband or son exercises the power on behalf of the women.

Administrative Accountability

Maintenance of professional ethics and standards of the bureaucracy is at the core of personnel management. Though the Department of Personnel and Training provides the guidelines for maintenance of the integrity of the public services and eradication of corruption, the Ministries/Departments and offices of the Government of India, have the direct responsibility for maintaining discipline and integrity of their staff.

The Central Vigilance Commission was set up in February 1964, on the recommendation of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption headed by K. Santhanam. Conceived as the apex vigilance organization, the CVC has been kept free of control from any executive authority. The Commission monitors all vigilance activities under the Central Government and advises various authorities in Central Government Organizations in planning, executing and reviewing vigilance work. The vigilance units in the departments/organizations, to which the advisory jurisdiction of the CVC extends are headed by the Chief Vigilance Officers.

Second ARC Recommendations:

All offices with a large public interface should have an online complaint tracking system. If possible, this task of complaint tracking should be outsourced.

There should be an external, periodic mechanism of ‘audit’ of complaints in offices having large public interface.

Apart from enquiring into each complaint and fixing responsibility for the lapses, if any, the complaint should also be used to analyse the systemic deficiencies so that remedial measures are taken.

Risk profiling of officers should be done by a committee of ‘eminent persons’ after the officer has completed ten years of service, and then once in every five years. The committee should use the following inputs in coming to a conclusion:

The performance evaluation of the reported officer. A self-assessment given by the reported officer focusing on the efforts he/she has made to prevent corruption in his/her career. Reports from the vigilance organization. A peer evaluation to be conducted confidentially by the committee through an evaluation form. Supervisory officers should assess the integrity of his/her subordinates based on his/her handling of cases, complaints and feedback from different sources. This could then become an important input for risk profiling of officers.

A national database containing the details of all corruption cases at all levels should be created. This database should be in the public domain. Identified authorities should be made responsible for updating the database regularly. There should be profiling of officers. The capabilities, professional competence, integrity and reputation of every government servant must be charted out and brought on record. Before proceeding against any government servant, reference should be made to the profile of the government servant concerned.

A special investigation unit should be attached to the proposed Lokpal (Rashtriya Lokayukta)/State Lokayuktas/Vigilance Commission, to investigate allegations of corruption against investigative agencies. This unit should be multi-disciplinary and should also investigate cases of allegations of harassment against the investigating agency. Similar units should also be set up in States³⁵.

³⁵ Ethics in Governance, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Fourth Report, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, January 2007.

The Right to Information Act, 2005

The Right to Information Act is perhaps the single most important mechanism designed so far to ensure the accountability of administration. The main aim of the Right to Information Act, 2005 is to provide a regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, with a view to promoting transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority. It envisages the constitution of a Central Information Commission and state Information Commissions. The Act states that every public authority should make a constant endeavour to provide information to the public at regular intervals through various means of communication, including the internet, so that the public have minimum resort to the use of this Act to obtain information.

The Right to Information Act (RTI) covers central, State and local governments, and all bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed; non-government organization substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government. Thus, it covers the executive, judiciary and the legislature. The Act is a major improvement on the Freedom of Information Act, 2002, which never came into force. The RTI was passed on May 12, 2005. However, intelligence and security agencies like the IB, RAW etc. are outside its purview. Also, the government, under pressure from the bureaucracy, has agreed that notings by officials on government files should not be made public under the Act.

“Information” has been defined as any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks,

contracts, reports, papers, and data material held in any electronic form. No fee is to be charged from people falling below the poverty line (BPL).

Information is to be provided within 30 days; 48 hours where life or liberty is involved 40 days where a third party is involved and 45 days for human rights violation information from listed security/intelligence agencies. There is also provision for penalties for unreasonable delay, which is Rs. 250 per day, upto Rs. 25,000.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission, in its First Report titled “Right to Information: Master Key to Good governance” has recommended that the Official Secrets Act, 1923 be repealed and substituted by a chapter ion the National Security Act. It has also suggested that the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 be amended to be in consonance with the RTI Act, 2005 with regard to evidence derived from official records. It pointed out that the Manual of Office Procedure be revised in the light of the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005 with regard to ‘Communication of Official Information’. It further highlighted the need for amending the Manual of Departmental Security Instructions in order to provide a system of classification of documents, which is in consonance with the RTI Act. The ARC also suggested that Members of Parliament and Members of State Legislative should be declared as “Public Authorities” under the Right to Information Act, accept when they are discharging legislative functions³⁶.

A study conducted by RTI Assessment & Analysis Group (RaaG) and National Campaign for People’s Right to Information (NCPRI) covered over 35,000 people in villages, towns and cities across ten states and Delhi. Also 1027 public authorities’ offices were inspected both in the rural as well as urban areas. The study reveals that an

³⁶ Right to Information: Master Key to Good Governance, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, First Report, June 2006.

estimated 400,000 applicants from the villages of India filed RTI applications in the first two and a half years of the RTI Act. At the same time an estimated 1.6 million applications were filed in urban areas in the first two and a half years of the RTI Act. Among the participants, about 30% of the rural sample applicants and 15% of the sample applicants belonged to the economically weaker sections of society, having a below-poverty-line (BPL) or Antyodaya ration card. Nearly 65% of rural and 85% of urban had above poverty line (APL) cards.

The major findings of the survey indicate:

- Over 40% of the rural respondents and nearly 15% of urban respondents stated that the most important constraint they faced in exercising their right to information was harassment and threats, non-cooperation from officials.
- Nearly 30% of the villagers filing RTI applications reported that they were discouraged by the PIO from filing the application.
- They found it very difficult to get addresses of PIOs, especially for district and sub-district levels.
- It was found that there are 88 different sets of RTI rules in India but they are not all available at one place. Differing rules mean differing amounts of fee to be paid, different modes of payment and even of filing applications.
- Some states insist on sending even letters in the state's language, making it impossible for people from other states to access information (despite section 4(4) of the RTI Act).

The study highlighted that though data supplied by the government indicates a success rate of 70/100, with a full mark for providing complete information and half a mark for part information, their own experience with the RTI applications, success rate

becomes 55/100. Whereas government claimed that 90% of the time information was provided in time, their own experience suggested 40%³⁷.

State Level Reforms

The first ARC recommendations so far as the state administration are concerned were basically on the same lines as those made for Government of India. This includes its observations on oversized ministries and a proliferation of personnel under the State Governments that had to be checked. The Growth in the number of departments at the state level has indeed the phenomenal. The state ARC's echo the same concerns as the Central Government appointed committees³⁸. A detailed examination of the various Reforms Commission Reports of State Governments reveals certain common themes. An issue common across states is over staffing, especially at the Group C and Group D levels. As the Orissa Report points out "the irony of the bureaucracy is that it is bloated where it should not be and too slender where it ought to be robust." For instance in an Engineering Department, Engineers constitute only about 10% of the total manpower.

The problem of overlapping functions and clubbing similar activities together is yet another challenge faced by most states. State reports have highlighted this problem. The list of departments provided in the web sites of different States illustrates this fact. This is a challenge facing all states.

As the Karnataka Reforms Committee has pointed out, bifurcation of certain departments have resulted in sharp increase of officers and staff. For instance, the

³⁷ Safeguarding the right to information, Report of the People's RTI Assessment 2008, RTI Assessment & Analysis Group (RaaG) and, National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), July 2009

³⁸ Hanumanthaiya, K. (1968). Study Team on State Level Administration Report, Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India.

Department of law, prior to bifurcation had four additional secretaries which increased to seven after bifurcation. Similar was the case with other departments.

It points out that a proliferation of departments has led to overlapping of work, schemes, waste of resources and confusion in the administration. Also, there is no clear delegation of powers in some of the departments which have more than one secretary. Rightsizing the administration is a must for arresting the fast growing administrative expenditure, the Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission pointed out³⁹.

The Staff and Expenditure Reforms Commission (Tamil Nadu) recommended that the work of all group B category staff may be progressively outsourced and entrusted on contract basis. In Kerala from a total number of 48 sections in 1956-57, the number rose to 455 sections in 2001. The Kerala Administrative Reforms Commission emphasized the need for reducing the number of departments and merging them. Rationalization of recruitment and the need for manpower planning have been recommended over and over again by successive committees⁴⁰.

The Assam Administrative Reforms Commission highlights the urgency for reducing levels in the hierarchy; merger of schemes similar in nature and scientific assessment of direct recruitment vacancy. Many of the recommendations made by the central committees such as the Surendra Nath Committee and Hota Committee seem to have influenced the Assam ARC⁴¹.

³⁹ Administrative Reforms Commission, Karnataka, Interim Report, January 2001

⁴⁰ First Administrative Reforms Committee, 1957, Kerala, Chairman: Sri E.M.S. Nambudiripad Ninth Report Of The Administrative Reforms Committee, Kerala, May 2001

Report of the Administrative Reorganisation & Economy Committee, 1965-67, Kerala, Chairman: Shri M.K. Vellodi.

⁴¹ Report of Assam Administrative Reforms Commission, 2005.

Similarly, the Rajasthan Administrative Reforms Commission calls for a thorough restructuring, recasting and reduction in the administrative machinery⁴².

This issue needs to be addressed urgently. Perhaps an exercise on the lines of the new scheme adopted by the Central Government, namely the “Optimization of Direct Recruitment to Civilian Posts” introduced in 2001, would be useful. Such an exercise would help the State Governments in identifying areas of redundancies, overlapping functions, sub-optimal utilization of manpower as well as critical areas of shortages.

The need for Simplification of Rules and Procedures is yet another common theme across states. The role of I.T. in promoting good governance figures prominently in all the State Reports. How much of this is actually being implemented is another matter.

The ICAER Report captures the E-readiness of different state governments. According to it, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Kerala and Chandigarh are the leaders.

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Goa are “aspiring leaders” to become leaders. In the Expectant Category are the states of Rajasthan, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Mizoram, Orissa, Pondicherry, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Uttarakhand are considered “Average Achievers”.

Among the “Below Average Achievers” are Assam, Nagaland, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

⁴² Report of the Administrative Reforms Committee (1995), Rajasthan.

Bihar, Tripura, Manipur, Daman & Diu, Jammu & Kashmir, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Arunachal Pradesh are placed at the very bottom, in the “Least Achievers” Category.

It is interesting to note that an earlier survey conducted by ICAER had placed Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Goa in the “Aspiring Leaders” Category.

However, according to the 2006 survey Kerala is among the Leaders whereas Maharashtra which was an earlier leader is now in the aspiring leaders category⁴³.

There is an urgent need for a mechanism for sharing innovations so that States lagging behind can catch up.

We can also observe that State Governments tend to accept recommendations which involve minor changes. The action taken on the recommendations of the High Level Committee for Administrative Reforms and Prevention of Corruption headed by Justice G. Ramanujam clearly illustrates this.

The Justice Ramanujam Committee (Tamil Nadu), pointed out that; exemptions under RTI were too large and that there is a need for a small study group to evolve suitable amendments to this Act. This suggestion was not accepted by the government.

Another important recommendation regarded postings and transfers wherein the Committee had recommended that postings and transfers of Officers at the level of Head of Department or Secretary to Government, may be decided by the Chief Minister on the recommendation of a Committee of three officers which may be called as the “Personnel Committee” made up of the Chief Secretary and two senior most officers in the Government of equivalent rank. This Committee, it said, may also be empowered to deal with postings and transfers of Collectors and Superintendents of Police in the Districts.

⁴³ India: e-Readiness Assessment Report, 2006, National Council of Applied Economic Research.

The suggestion was not accepted by the Government on the ground that it was not ‘practically feasible for compliance’.

The Committee’s recommendation regarding ‘A Civil Services Act’ which would codify some basic principles that should govern the working of all public services and also lay down the liability of all appointees to Civil Services to serve in any public body in the State as and when directed by the competent authority in public interest, was also not accepted by the Government of Tamil Nadu⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ High Level Committee for Administrative Reforms and Prevention of Corruption Headed by Justice G. Ramanujan, Tamil Nadu, June 1997.

Second ARC's Recommendations on State Level Reforms

The Second ARC's Recommendations on State Level Reforms were more or less on the same lines as those for the central government. It may be mentioned that the first ARC too suggested a similar set of reforms to be carried out at the central and the state levels. This was specially the case so far as rationalization of the number of the secretariat departments in the state governments.

The Second ARC was of the view that a small and compact Secretariat in which all related activities and functions are kept together in one department with more responsibilities devolved on local governments and executive work (not related to policy making and broader monitoring), hived off to executive agencies, is a sine qua-non for good governance at any level of public administration. Hence, there is need to rationalize the number of Secretariat Departments in the State Governments.

The Commission recommended that all States attempt such a rationalization exercise as illustrated above keeping in view their specific requirements.

Recommendations:

- a) It suggested that the number of Secretariat Departments in the States should be further rationalized on the following basis:
 - i) The existing departments covering inter-related subjects, activities and functions should be merged;
 - ii) Need for synergy between the activities of various departments;
 - iii) Devolution of a large number of functions to the PRIs/ULBs;

- iv) The role of Secretaries to be redefined; to be divested of non-essential responsibilities and executive work and larger delegation of power to the executive departments/agencies; and
- v) Need for streamlining the decision making process.

It proposed the enactment of the State Civil Services Law on the lines of the proposed Union enactment. The proposed State Civil Service Authority to deal with matters concerning appointment and tenure of senior officers of all ranks in the State Governments (including the Chief Secretary, Principal Secretaries, Engineer-in-Chiefs, other Agency Heads and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests).

Till the time that such an Authority is constituted, the following mechanism may be adopted for appointment of the Chief Secretary and Principal Conservator of Forests in the States:-

- i) There should be a collegium to recommend a panel of names to the Chief Minister/Cabinet for these two posts. For the post of Chief Secretary, this collegium may consist of (a) a Minister nominated by the Chief Minister, (b) the Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Assembly and (c) the incumbent Chief Secretary. For the selection to the post of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests the collegiums may consist of (a) The Minister In-charge of Forests, (b) the leader of Opposition in the State Legislative Assembly and (c) the Chief Secretary.
- ii) There should be a fixed tenure of at least two years for both these posts.
- iii) The selection for the post of Chief Secretary and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests should be widened to include all officers above

a specified seniority (e.g. 30 years). All officers with a seniority higher than a prescribed limit should be eligible to be a part of the panel.

It also recommended that the organization of the Vigilance Commission/Commissioner in the State should be structured on the patterns of the Central Vigilance Commission. In larger States, the State Vigilance Commission should be a three Member Body with Members who have been experts in their respective fields. In smaller States, it may continue to be a single Member Body⁴⁵.

Information Technology (IT) and Administrative Reforms

Information Technology (IT) is emerging as a major instrument in administrative reforms. Public Administration as a discipline has been overly concerned with making it scientific and rational to enhance its legitimacy. Finding the one best way would help the Internationalization of Public Administration. The trends in this direction can be discerned starting with the Scientific Management Movement and its impact on the Administrative Science Movement and the coining of POSTCoRB. The Weberian bureaucracy presented the world with the universally applicably model of organization. The IT revolution once again highlights the importance of universal application of technology. The Government of India as well as the State Governments has been in the forefront in bringing about the IT revolution. The objective is to empower the citizens as well as the administrators.

National e-Governance Plan

A major initiative taken by the Government for ushering in e-Governance on national scale, called National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) was approved on 16th May,

⁴⁵ State and District Administration, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Fifteenth Report, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, April 2009

2006. The NeGP consists of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) encompassing 9 central MMPs, 11 State MMPs and 7 integrated MMPs that span multiple backend Ministries/Departments. It also includes 8 program support components aimed at creating the right governance and institutional mechanisms, core infrastructure, policies & standards and the necessary legal framework for adoption of e-Governance in the country. It is implemented at the Central, State and Local Government levels.

The Government has also approved the Scheme for establishing State Wide Area Networks (SWAN) across the country in 29 states/ 6 UTs at a total outlay of Rs 3334 crore including GIA component of Rs.2005 crore over a period of five years. This Scheme aims at providing technical and financial assistance to States for establishing SWANs from State Headquarters up to the block level with a minimum bandwidth capacity of 2 Mbps. At the same time the Government has approved a Scheme for establishing 100000 + CSCs, primarily in rural areas of the country. These Centres would be Broadband Internet Enabled and would provide all government and private services at the doorstep of the citizen. The scheme is being implemented on Public - Private Partnership mode. The scheme has been approved at a total cost of Rs 5742 crore with the Government of India contribution being Rs 856 crore and State Governments contribution being Rs. 793 crore.

The India Portal Project is a Mission Mode Project under the NeGP which aims at providing a single window access to the information and services of the Indian Government at all levels from Central Government to State Government to District Administration and Panchayats for the Citizens, Business and Overseas Indians.

Assessment

The Assessment component of NeGP has two independent streams of study – Impact Assessment and e-Readiness Assessment. The Impact Assessment Study is a continuous effort as a part of the NeGP objectives to assess the impact of various e-Governance initiatives on the lives of the citizens. The report of the first phase was released on the 19th of November 2008 and is a public document available on the MIT website. The findings of the reports have been presented to line ministries, state nodal officers and other stakeholders.

As a part of the first phase of the three-phase impact assessment schedule, three state level e-Government projects – vehicle registration, property registration and land records were selected for assessment in twelve states across India. Three national-level projects implemented by the Income Tax Department, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), and the issue of passport by Regional Passport Offices were also assessed during the first phase.

The key findings of the study across projects show that:

- (i) The number of trips to Government offices has reduced from 8 trips to 1-2 trips.
- (ii) Waiting time at the offices has reduced in the range 20-40%.
- (iii) People show strong preference to computerized systems.
- (iv) There has been direct cost saving to citizens in the range of Rs. 50 – 100.
- (v) In Land Records project, there has been a significant improvement in the perception of citizens.

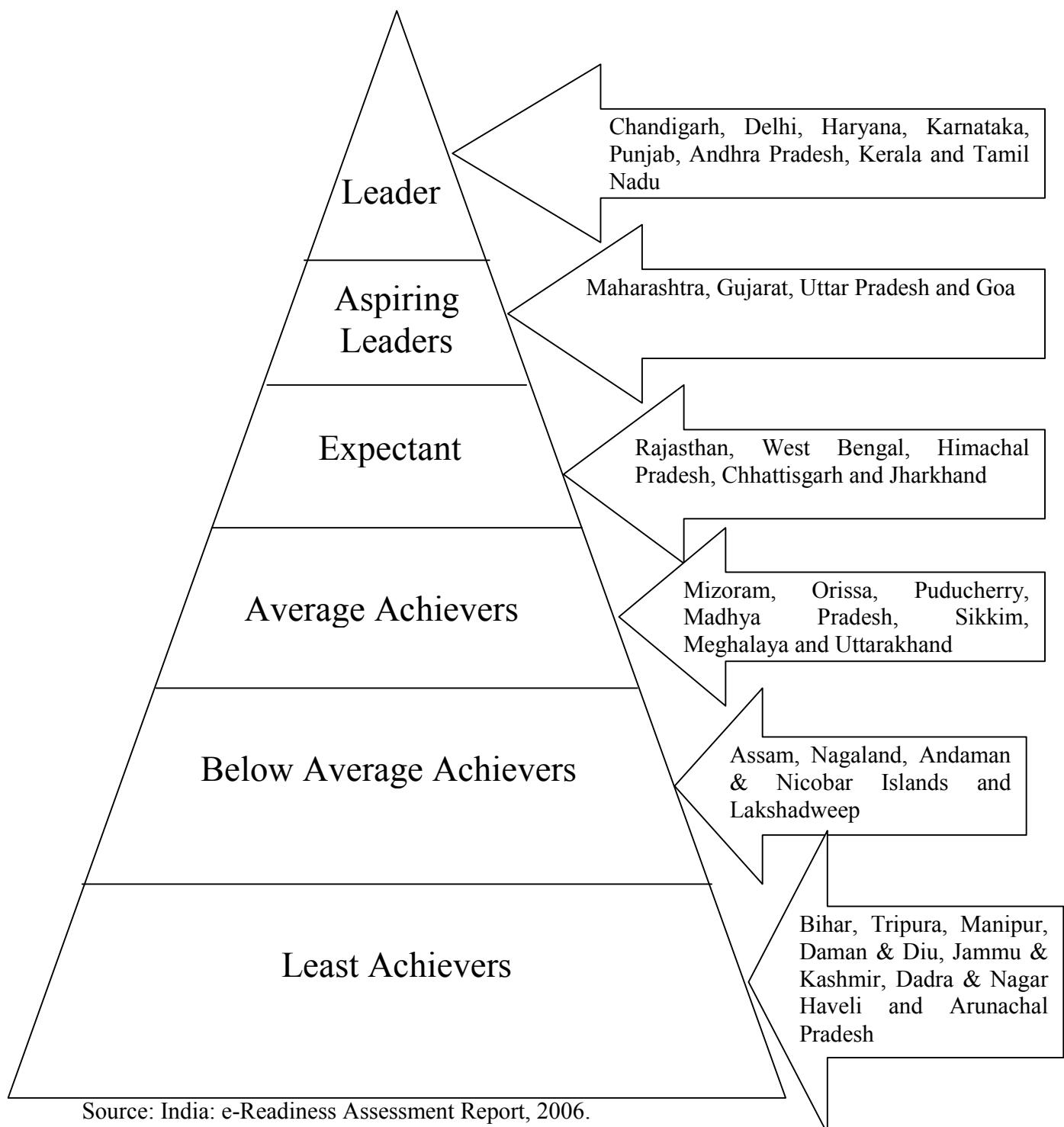
In the second phase, which began in January 2009 and will continue through to the next financial year; primarily three projects are being assessed. These include:

- (i) e-Governance initiatives under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), as requested by Ministry of Urban Development,
- (ii) e-District baseline study and
- (iii) Commercial Tax state project

e-Readiness Assessment

E-Readiness was defined as “the capacity of the states to provide governance equitably and cost effectively, to improve the degree of integration of deprived segments of society through ICT application, and to provide business, the capacity to participate in the provincial and national level digital economies.” The e-Readiness assessment was first commissioned by the Department in the year 2005. Presently the e-Readiness 2008 assessment study is ongoing⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ Impact Assessment of e-Governance Projects, National e-Governance Plan, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, 2008.

E- Readiness – Indian states

Source: India: e-Readiness Assessment Report, 2006.

Features of Schemes

Basic Project Profile

Project	Income Tax Portal	MCA21 e-Governance Project	Online Passport Services
Service Delivery Launch Date	2005-06	2006	2006
Targeted Beneficiaries/ Users	Individuals, Corporates, Chartered Accountants	Businesses, Professionals (Chartered Accountants and Company Secretaries), Public users and Investors, Financial Institutions, Employees	Residents of India, Agents authorized to facilitate passport services
Online Services Offered	E-filing by Individuals and Corporates PAN/TAN application by Individuals and Corporates e-TDS filing by Corporates OLTA5 for Corporates	Registration and incorporation of new companies Annual and event-based filings Download of e-forms Application for Director Identification Number (DIN) Payment of penalty and fees and tracking the status of payment processing Viewing and obtaining certified copies of public documents Online registration, tracking and redressal of investor grievance Viewing, creation and modification of index of charges	Download of passport application forms Obtaining information on services and procedures Online applicant registration and confirmation of appointment for interview Verification of PNR status
Extent of Computerization in Service Delivery	End-to-end delivery of online services requires that users obtain Digital Signatures and Credit Cards. Use of the online mode for e-filing and e-TDS is mandatory for Corporates.	End-to-end delivery of all services is online. E-filing of all documents is mandatory.	Only the process of applying for issue or reissue of passport is online. Online services are also provided through the offline mode.
Service Delivery Channels	Income Tax Website (www.incometaxindia.gov.in), Income Tax offices, NSDL Website, NSDL and UTISL offices	Virtual Front Office/MCA21 Portal (www.mca.gov.in), Physical Front Offices (53), Certified Filing Centers (550)	Regional Passport Offices and Passport Offices (34), Websites of Passport Offices

Computerization of Land Records

State	Electronic service delivery launch date	Scale of electronic service delivery	Scale of Operations (Annual volume of transactions or beneficiaries/ users)
Delhi	Launched in 2007. Rollout across other centers is still going on.	One center of each of the 4 districts – South West, West, North and North West Delhi	The total number of RoRs issued since launch is 4,235 and beneficiaries include close to 20,000 land owners across 226 villages in Delhi.
Gujarat	Pilot project was launched in Gandhinagar in 1989. Rollout to all other talukas began in 1995-96.	All land records have been computerized. Services are available from e-Dhara Kendras only.	Annual transaction volume is about 3.3 million ¹ . Revenue collection from issue of RTCs and forms during 2006-07 was Rs. 16,684,278.
Haryana	2003	Operational at 40 delivery centers in 40 tehsils across 20 districts. Though service delivery is primarily through computerised service centers, a large proportion of rural people still take copies from the village Patwaris.	Number of beneficiaries across all delivery centers was approximately 20,000 in 2005-06 and about 50,000 in 2006-07.
Himachal Pradesh	Implementation of the software began in 2003. Most of the computerized delivery centers have been operational since the last three years.	The computerized system is available in 83 tehsils (65 percent of all tehsils and sub-divisions) covering all 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh.	In 2006, the total volume of Nakals issued, mutations attested, Jamabandis generated and Khasras ² printed was 145,741. The project covers 2200 Patwar circles and 914,856 agricultural land holdings.
Madhya Pradesh	Most of the CLR offices started functioning between 1998 and 2004.	Currently operational in all 265 tehsil headquarters spread over 48 districts.	About 1.33 million copies of RoR and Khatauni were issued in 2006-07. 35 million Khasras of 11 million landowners have been computerized.

Orissa	September 2005	Operational across all 171 tehsils of the state.	
Rajasthan	Most centers have been delivering service since the last seven years.	Service delivery through district NIC centres (32), Apna Khata Kendras (247) and authorized private kiosks / cyber cafés (900) is currently operational in all 32 districts and 247 Tehsils. RoRs can also be obtained from the website (http://apnakhata.nic.in)	In 2006-07, the number of RoRs issued by all delivery centers was 1,045,526.
Tamil Nadu	Started as a pilot programme in one district in 1991.	Operational in all 206 taluka offices while 127 rural taluks also have touch screen kiosks for viewing land record details.	2,325,275 copies of land record extracts were issued in 2005-06.
Uttarakhand	November 2004	At present, all 84 tehsil centers covering the 13 districts of Uttarakhand are computerized.	In the two years since the project was launched ¹⁰ , about 840,000 transactions have taken place across all delivery centers.
West Bengal	April 2001	It is currently operational in all 18 districts and 341 blocks of the state covering 40782 mouzas.	Close to 100 thousand users have availed services between 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Source: Impact Assessment of e-Governance Projects, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India.

1. Calculated as 16,684,278 (revenue collection) / 5 where Rs. 5 is the charge per copy of RTC

2. Feedbook or 'Khasra' is an index to the map , in which changes in the field boundaries, their areas, particular of tenure-holders, methods of Irrigation, cropped area, other use of land etc are recorded in detail.

Computerization of Property Registration

State	Electronic service delivery launch date	Scale of electronic service delivery	Scale of Operations (Annual volume of transactions or beneficiaries/ users)
Delhi	May 2002	Operational at 10 delivery centers in 8 districts.	
Gujarat	25 sub-registrar offices were computerized in May 2005 while the remaining 125 offices were computerized in April 2007.	Operational at all 150 subregistrar offices of the state.	
Haryana	Computerized service delivery was launched in September 2001 but not statewide at one go.	112 delivery centers across 20 districts covering 67 tehsils and 45 sub-tehsils.	The number of beneficiaries across all delivery centers was approximately 175,000 in 2005-06 and about 200,000 in 2006-07.
Himachal Pradesh	Implementation of the project began in 2005 and the software was successfully implemented in 10 out of the 12 districts by April 2007.	The computerized system is available only in 40 out of the 129 tehsils (31 percent of all tehsils and sub divisions).	21,937 registrations were done through computerized offices in 2006.
Kerala	The pilot was launched in 2000.	There are 268 computerized registries covering 14 districts, 63 tehsils and 548 villages. The remaining 41 are yet to be computerized.	1,289,176 documents were registered during 2006-07 while revenue collection during 2006-07 was Rs 139,933,000.
Orissa	May 2006	Computerized centers are operational at district headquarters of 14 (out of 30) districts.	The total collection of stamp duty and registration fee in computerized SROs during 2006-07 was Rs 1,297,581,000.
Punjab	Rollout of project began from Sangrur	The project has been implemented in more than 130	About 60,000 deeds are

	district in April 2005 while the statewide rollout was done over the next two years.	SRO offices until now. During the first phase that ended in October 2004, District Administrations were responsible for preparing the environment for actual implementation of project (first stage computerization and changing mindset) at 110 out of 153 registration offices.	registered annually through the SROs.
Rajasthan	The project was launched in March 2003 while anywhere-registration became functional in Jaipur in April 2006.	It is currently operational at 67 SROs and 132 Ex-officio ¹ centers located at the tehsils.	The number of documents registered in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 was 503,309, 755,177 and 762,355 respectively while the income for SROs across all 32 districts was 11,742,680,000 in 2006-07.
Tamil Nadu	February 2000	450 out of the 558 offices have been computerized until now.	The total number of documents registered during 2006-07 was 2,491,340 while revenue during the same period was Rs 32,973,107,000.
Uttarakhand	The project was first launched in 2003 and became operational in most computerized centers by July 2006.	6 SROs across 3 districts.	Annual number of registrations taking place across the computerized SROs is about 62,760.
West Bengal	5 delivery centres in Hooghly district have been operational since 2005-06 while 12 others across three other districts started in 2006-07. Market value digitization was launched in early 2007.	Operational in 19 delivery centres across 4 districts. Market value digitization has been done in 3 districts - Burdwan, Malda and Purba Midnapur.	32,000 citizens had availed property related services across 9 centres in 2006-07.

Source: Impact Assessment of e-Governance Projects, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India.

1. Ex-officio centers are at the tehsil level. They are headed by Tehsildars instead of Sub-Registrars. Tehsildars holds additional responsibility of property registration apart from his responsibilities related to the Revenue Department.

Computerization in the Transport Department

State	Electronic service delivery launch date	Scale of electronic service delivery	Scale of Operations (Annual volume of transactions or beneficiaries/ users)
Delhi	2001	Computerized services are operational in 11 RTOs across all 9 districts and 2 sub-divisional offices of Delhi.	566,154 citizens availed services in 2005-06, of which the number of drivers licences issued was 404,616 while 67,452 vehicles were registered.
Gujarat	Issue of the 'Smart' card driving licences with computer chip came into effect in 1998.	Permanent driving licences and Optical Registration books are issued by all RTOs.	The number of smart card driving licences issued in 2005-06 (as on 30/9/2005) was 439,442.
Haryana	Computerized service was launched in Gurgaon in December 2004 and in other centers since. Most of the centers have been delivering service for 1-3 years.	41 delivery centers across 20 districts and 40 tehsils.	The number of beneficiaries across all delivery centers was approximately 80,000 in 2005-06 and about 95,000 in 2006-07.
Himachal Pradesh	October 2003	40 computerized centers across all tehsils and subdivisions of Kangra, Bilaspur and Mandi districts.	23,231 driving licences (4,525 professional and 18,706 nonprofessional driving licences) were issued in 2007.
Kerala	2000	Operational in 18 RTOs and 42 sub-RTOs across all districts.	The number of vehicles registered annually is around 462 thousand.
Madhya Pradesh	2002-03	All 45 RTOs are computerized.	The total number of registered vehicles during 2006-07 was 447,477 while an estimated number

			of 1,990,000 people have received services from the RTOs between June 2006 and May 2007.
Orissa	Launched in November 2006. Most computerized RTOs have been delivering service since the last one year.	26 RTOs located at district headquarters across the state have been computerized	
Punjab	June 2005	Computerized services are delivered through 9 centers - District Transport offices and e-Suvidha centers.	
Rajasthan	April 1998	Issue of driving licences has been computerized in all 37 DTOs across the state while a few sub-district offices also deliver computerized services. Registration of vehicles and cash receipts has been computerized in 33 DTOs whereas only 4 offices - Sikar, Churu, Jhunjhunu and Bharatpur - are doing it manually.	The number of licences issued and vehicles registered during 2005-06 was 1,170,177
Tamil Nadu	Computerization was done in 3 phases - February 2000, October 2005 and April 2007.	71 transport offices, including 32 RTOs.	The total number of registered vehicles in the state as on 1/4/2006 was 8,221,730.
Uttarakhand	November 2003	8 in the 5 districts of Almora, Dehradun, Haridwar, Nainital, Pauri Garhwal.	Annual volume of transactions through computerized delivery centers is about 100,000.
West Bengal	2001	4 RTOs - Howrah, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Kolkata – across three districts.	About 55,000 transactions have taken place through these RTOs in last two years.

Source: Impact Assessment of e-Governance Projects, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India.

Impact on Key Dimensions

Project	Income Tax Portal (E-Filing)			MCA21 e-Governance Project (Authorized Signatories/ Professionals)			Online Passport Services	
	Manual		Online	Manual	Online		Manual	Online
Number of trips	Individual	1.8	1.6	2.2	PFO	1.6	2.5	2.2
	Corporate	1.0	0.75		CFC	1.5		
Waiting time (Minutes)	Individual	37.8	26.6	75.0	PFO	29	98.0	88.2
	Corporate	26.0	16.7		CFC	25		
Total elapsed time in availing service (Days)	Individual	11	8	N.A. ⁹	N.A.		43	41
	Corporate	10	4		VFO	1.4		
Proportion paying bribes (Percentage)	Individual	4.1	1.9	20.1	PFO	10.8	42.4 ¹⁰	48.1 4.4
	Corporate	N.A. ¹²	N.A. ¹³		CFC	4.4		
Proportion using an intermediary (Percentage)	Individual	9.6	10.6	21.2	VFO	10.2	34.8	33.6
					PFO	29.0		
					CFC	52.8		
Overall service quality score (5-point scale)	Individual	3.9	4.1	3.6	4.4		3.5	3.6
	Corporate	3.1	3.9					
Overall governance score (5-point scale)	Individual	3.8	4.0	3.3	4.2		3.3	3.5
	Corporate	3.1	3.9					
Composite score ¹⁴ (5-point scale)	3.9		4.0	4.0			3.1	3.2
Preference for computerized system (Percentage) ¹⁵	75.0			92.0			59.4	90.4

⁹ Data on total elapsed time was not captured and reported for MCA21.

¹⁰ Proportion paying bribes to the police during the verification process

¹¹ Proportion paying bribes to the passport office employees

¹² CAs filing on behalf of corporations failed to report data on corruption.

¹³ CAs filing on behalf of corporations failed to report data on corruption

¹⁴ Composite score in case of MCA21 represents improvement in the computerized system vis-à-vis the manual system. The improvement was measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'much worsened', 3 means 'no change' and 5 means 'much improved'. Composite scores of the other two projects represent overall assessment of the manual and computerized systems respectively on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means 'very poor', 3 means 'neither poor nor good' and 5 means 'very good'.

¹⁵ The percentage reported in MCA21 reflects the preference of users for the computerized system over the manual system based on their experience of having used both. In case of Online Passport Services in which separate samples of manual and online users were interviewed, preference of manual users for the online application system is purely hypothetical since they have no experience of the online system. Similarly, preference of online users for the computerized system over the manual one is hypothetical since they have no experience of the manual system.

Impact on Key Dimensions Averaged over all States

	Land Record			Property			Transport		
	Manual	Computerized	Change ¹	Manual	Computerized	Change	Manual	Computerized	Change
Number of trips	2.77	1.84	1.00	3.96	2.37	1.61	3.44	2.43	1.00
Travel cost	20.59	24.23	(7.83)	26.82	27.81	(1.97)	54.75	50.05	6.48
Waiting time (Minutes)	142.28	98.54	39.95	147.66	87.49	62.01	130.62	98.17	36.40
Wage loss (Rs)	157.24	122.68	27.25	308.72	263.28	51.28	206.71	208.21	9.80
Service charge paid (Rs)	44.20	46.12	0.42	6,643.35	7,554.06	(945.46)	404.15	518.56	(122.77)
Cost of preparation of documents (Rs)	102.74	124.39	(17.67)	3,820.39	3,430.30	413.59	252.42	296.55	(60.75)
Total payment made (Rs)	207.32	231.22	(35.55)	13,872.77	15,351.32	(1,403.46)	774.58	990.30	(193.45)
Total elapsed time in availing service (Days)	21.29	15.43	5.35	32.66	12.87	20.32	23.47	15.61	7.99
Error rate (Percentage)	4.28	4.50	(0.16)	6.61	3.82	2.76	4.57	3.62	0.81
Overall service quality score (5-point scale)	2.98	3.81	0.93	3.03	3.99	1.11	2.84	3.72	0.94
Proportion paying bribes (Percentage)	38.80	22.99	15.84	23.18	17.06	6.13	16.93	12.79	4.18
Amount of bribe paid (Rs)	128.69	89.03	32.71	1,069.17	1,081.97	(376.62)	195.87	183.45	22.79
Overall governance score (5-point scale)	2.86	3.72	0.76	2.83	3.82	0.97	2.80	3.53	0.54
Composite score (5-point scale)			3.56			3.67			3.45
Preference for computerized system (Percentage)		91.46			96.38			88.49	
Proportion using an intermediary (Percentage)	17.92	21.35	(3.44)	49.81	46.74	3.07	55.82	54.04	1.78
Service charge paid to intermediaries (Rs)	141.00	115.72	18.96	2,010.74	2,556.11	639.47	317.13	383.85	(56.91)

¹ Average values for manual and computerized systems are computed for all respondents who had used the two systems respectively. However, change is computed as the difference between computerized system and the manual system (Computerized – Manual) averaged over all respondents who had used both the systems. Therefore change is not simply the difference between the means of the computerized and manual systems reported in the table above. Numbers in parentheses indicate that the change was negative.

Direct Cost Savings to Citizens

State	Land Record			Property			Transport		
	Manual	Computerized	Change	Manual	Computerized	Change	Manual	Computerized	Change
Delhi	397.06	291.98	105.08	376.92	389.47	(12.55)	297.28	252.57	44.71
Gujarat	57.70	92.44	(34.74)	500.81	323.31	177.50	231.94	289.73	(57.78)
Haryana	683.93	324.71	359.21	1,455.17	915.19	539.98	994.87	674.28	320.59
HP	28.86	28.10	0.77	119.47	57.27	62.20	85.31	163.52	(78.21)
Kerala	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	222.80	199.94	22.85	211.86	206.08	5.78
MP	272.29	399.02	(126.73)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,031.82	700.02	331.80
Orissa	86.15	104.58	(18.43)	587.22	609.64	(22.41)	264.40	251.41	13.00
Punjab	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	552.54	378.15	174.39	350.84	376.59	(25.75)
Rajasthan	316.14	163.49	152.65	621.51	799.13	(177.61)	446.27	354.68	91.58
Tamil Nadu	246.62	160.40	86.21	693.06	562.73	130.33	296.55	376.63	(80.08)
Uttarakhand	397.22	190.97	206.25	1,781.47	1,443.43	338.04	484.20	274.49	209.71
West Bengal	278.79	216.69	62.11	232.65	235.82	(3.17)	360.54	340.50	20.05
Average	276.48	197.24	79.24	649.42	537.64	111.78	421.32	355.04	66.28

⁸ The components of total savings are: travel cost per trip multiplied by number of trips plus wage loss plus proportion paying bribe multiplied by average bribe amount

Key Indicators for Assessing Impact on Client

Indicator	Manual		Computerized	
	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Land Record				
Number of trips	4.18	1.35	2.98	1.00
Waiting time (Minutes)	372.85	43.47	355.74	20.22
Total elapsed time in availing service (Days)	106.95	0.43	101.39	0.04
Proportion paying bribes (Percentage)	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Composite score (5-point scale)	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00
Property				
Number of trips	6.23	2.07	3.80	1.23
Waiting time (Minutes)	225.59	83.47	128.44	43.15
Total elapsed time in availing service (Days)	88.57	2.06	61.73	0.51
Proportion paying bribes (Percentage)	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Composite score (5-point scale)	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00
Transport				
Number of trips	6.95	2.10	3.73	1.60
Waiting time (Minutes)	237.15	76.10	165.75	50.19
Total elapsed time in availing service (Days)	69.14	4.47	46.17	1.52
Proportion paying bribes (Percentage)	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Composite score (5-point scale)	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00

Though the measures taken towards e-Governance appear to be promising, attention has to be paid on issues such as manipulation of the system. For instance, computerized list of beneficiaries is supposed to facilitate the implementation of anti-poverty programmes, on several occasions the computerized list has means people have not heard about and do not exist in reality. Unless there is a change in attitude and work

ethics the progress of IT would be hampered. After all, the survey of Asian civil services finds India at the very bottom⁴⁷.

Recent Decisions taken by Government

The Government of India has taken a decision to replace Annual Confidential Reports by Performance Appraisal Reports for the IAS. Performance Appraisal will also be utilized for career development, promotions, employment and postings. Intensive review of the Officers' performance will be done at two stages – 15 and 25 years of service. Mandatory mid-career training for IAS officers will be introduced for upgradation of their skills. The government has decided to introduce Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration to motivate civil servants.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that committee after committee stressed specific issues which have not been resolved by the government so far. These include the question of providing domain expertise; providing lateral entry into the civil services; downsizing the bureaucracy and reducing the levels of consideration, to name a few. The pertinent question is why successive governments have been appointing committee after committee to examine the same burning issue and putting the suggestions in 'cold storage'. The "incremental" approach which has dominated the theory and practice of Public Administration basically implies a step by step process, fails to capture the Indian situation. We will have to innovate a new "static model" of administration wherein nothing changes.

⁴⁷ Indian Bureaucracy worst in Asia: Survey, Silicon India News Bureau, June 4, 2009 and Reuters, June 3, 2009. Websites: http://www.siliconindia.com/shownews/Indias_bureaucracy_worst_in_Asia-nid-57601.html <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/indian-bureaucracy-the-worst-in-asia-survey/470601/>

The foregoing analysis highlights that recurring issues have dominated the reforms agenda. One major recurring theme centres around the need to provide “domain” expertise. It was the first Administrative Reforms Commission which emphasized that the road to the top should be open to every competent public official. That for manning higher positions in the Secretariat, talent had to be drawn from every cadre and class of personnel. Accordingly, the Commission envisaged entry into the middle and senior management levels in the secretariat from our services. It felt that where regularly constituted services already existed to attend to specific functions, the middle and senior level posts in the corresponding areas in the secretariat had to be normally manned by members of the concerned functional services. However, in non-functional areas, middle level personnel were to be drawn through a mid-career competitive examination from all sources, on the basis of equal opportunities for all. These personnel were to be required to acquire knowledge of, and experience in, one of the following broad areas of specialization such as economic administration; industrial administration; agricultural and rural development administration; social and educational administration; personnel administration; financial administration; and defence administration and internal security and planning. The Surendra Nath Committee (2003) came up with similar domain areas for civil servants to specialize.

The following 11 domains may be adopted for assignment to officers for selection to Central Staffing Scheme posts:

Agriculture and rural development; Social sectors (Education, Health, Tribal Welfare, etc.); Culture and Information; Natural Resource Management including Environment (green side); Energy and Environment (brown side); Communication systems and Connectivity Infrastructure; Public Finance and Financial management;

Industry and Trade; Domestic Affairs and Defense; Housing and Urban Affairs; Personnel and General Administration, Governance Reform and Regulatory systems Officers may be assigned to a maximum of three domains out of the eleven given above.

Similarly, the Second Administration Reforms Commission has suggested that for placement at Middle Management level, the Central Civil Service Authority should invite applications from all officers who have completed the minimum qualifying years of service, for assignment of domains. Four decades after the first ARC's recommendation in this direction, it continues to remain a recurring theme.

The Sixth Pay Commission made some interesting recommendations which involves certain posts in the Senior Administration Grade (SAG) and Higher Administrative Grade (HAG) which require technical or specialized expertise to be opened up for being filled by suitable officers both within the government as well as by outsiders on contract. These posts are not to be encadred in any of the services. It proposed a shift from area based to post based selection in the higher echelons of government to get the best domain expertise. Another interesting suggestion coming from the Sixth Pay Commission relates to providing market driven compensation package to young scientists and for post requiring special expertise and professional skills.

Contractual appointments and market driven pay package would involve taking a giant leap from a base which is far from ready for this. Over the last several decades, a large number of technical and professional persons are joining the civil services at the entry level. However, there is no plan in place to build on their technical base once they join the civil service. After converting them into generalists how can they compete for

positions carved out for lateral entry, with professionals joining at the senior levels as suggested by the various committees?

A similar dilemma has been dodging various committees so far as the levels of consideration is concerned. A major recommendation of the first ARC was on reducing the number of hierarchical levels traditionally involved in decision-making in the government. It suggested that there should be only two levels of consideration below the minister. Each level should be required and empowered to dispose of a substantial amount of work on its own and be given the necessary staff assistance. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008) has recommended that the number of levels through which a file passes for a decision should not exceed three. In cases where the minister's approval is required, the file should be initiated by the Deputy Secretary/Director concerned and should be moved through the Joint Secretary (or Additional Secretary/Special Secretary) and the Secretary (or Special Secretary) to the Minister. Cases requiring approval of the Secretary should go through just two levels (e.g. either US and Director, US and JS or Director and JS). Cases requiring approval of the JS/Director/DS should come through just one level.

The Issue of providing fixed tenures has again been a burning issue and several committees have highlighted the importance of providing fixed tenures to civil servants. The Hota Committee pointed out that if civil servants are given tenures and targets and the political executive respects neutrality, integrity and hierarchy of service, the civil service can be expected to play its proper role in a parliamentary democracy. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his meeting with Chief Ministers had brought up the issue of fixed tenures. Most Chief Ministers were not in favour of this move including Chief Ministers of Congress run states like Andhra Pradesh. At the core of the fixed tenure

issue lies the friction between the political executive and the bureaucracy. Sharing of power has been very painful experience. At the time of Independence the bureaucracy was well entrenched. In many states, the Collector was the ex-officio Chairman of all Standing Committees of Zilla Parishad. This domination of the bureaucracy was at all levels which later saw ugly turf wars to gain supremacy. One of the outcome was politician using transfers as a weapon to gain supremacy.

. The question of designing a liberal revolving door policy is built on the assumption that civil servants, when provided with an exposure of working with NGO's, academia as well as the Private Sector, will come back enriched with experience gained there. This issue was also discussed at the Seminar organized by the Second ARC in collaboration with IIPA in March 2007. Opinion was divided specially on the question of conflict of interest. At the same time, some thought needs to be given to the question as to how well the civil servants availing this opportunity will adjust to the work culture of private sector organizations as well as readjust back in the governmental set up. After working in the private sector they might find the work environment in governmental organizations extremely frustrating. The first ARC had highlighted the work culture then prevalent in governmental offices, marked by what it called "Late Coming and Early Leaving as well as idling at office desks". The pertinent question is whether we can observe any significant change in the work culture four decades after the first ARC made those comments.

The issue of downsizing of the government staff became a major concern especially after the fiscal crisis of the '90's. Overstaffing specially at the lower levels has been a recurring theme in several reports. Their basic argument is that there is massive overstaffing at the level of supporting and auxiliary staff and the need to move towards

an office-oriented organizational structure. The economic administrative reforms commission headed by L.K. Jha suggested fewer posts at lower levels and more posts at higher levels would result in greater economy and efficiency. Again, work at the clerical levels should be less rigidly divided into distant compartments such as dairying, dispatch, typing, and record keeping etc. so that the total quantum of work can be attempted to by fewer people. The need to cut back was also emphasized by the 5th Central Pay Commission. Amongst its recommendations were, developing Group ‘D’ personnel as multi-skill functionaries, computerization of office work and small, business-like desks in place of unwieldy sections. The Fifth Pay Commission has been blamed for the financial burden it imposed on the Central and State governments. It has to be noted that government has made major departures from the recommendations of the Commission. These include the government’s reluctance to come up with a clear cut policy on the downsizing issue. The government very selectively implemented the recommendations of the Commission in that it turned a blind eye to politically sensitive issues such as reverting back to the six day working week etc. It was quick to accept the Commission’s recommendation for raising the retirement age from 58 to 60 years. Logically it was premature on its part to raise the retirement age without first restructuring and downsizing government. The global efforts at downsizing focus on a lean and efficient work force, specially trained to handle the complex tasks of government. Implied in the argument is the justification for high public investment in building a “smart bureaucracy” and then drawing maximum returns from it. However, it was left to the Expenditure Reforms Commission headed by K.P. Geethakrishnan to conduct a detailed exercise to rationalize staff strengths in various ministries and departments. The Expenditure Reforms Commission together with recommending drastic reduction of government staff

strengths, recommended that each ministry/department should prepare annually direct recruitment plans covering the requirements of all cadres, whether manage by that ministry/department itself or manage by the Department of Personnel and Training. A new scheme - ‘Optimization of Direct Recruitment to Civilian Posts’ which was introduced in 2001 was terminated on March 31, 2009. It covered all Central Government Ministries/Departments/Organizations including the Railways, Department of Posts, Telecom, Autonomous Bodies wholly or partly financed by the Government, Statutory/Bodies, Civilians in Defence and non-Combatised Posts in Para Military Forces. Whereas the government figures indicate that substantial saving has resulted from implementing this scheme, it should be remembered that most of the abolished posts were vacant and will not be immediately reflected in reduction of the wage bill. The restructuring and reduction in ministries/departments is closely connected with the question of downsizing. Here again several committees have emphasized the need for drastic reduction in the number of ministries and departments. This is applicable both at the central government as well as in the states.

Mechanisms for enforcing accountability continue to remain one of the most elusive issues in Public Administration. As the recent study of Asian Countries reveals, Indian bureaucracy has been rated as the most corrupt. However, the silver lining on the horizon is the Right to Information Act and the avenues it offers for citizens to hold civil servant accountable. At the same time the RTI could make the civil service more rigid and rule bound in the Weberian sense in that they may opt to exercise minimum discretion. The RTI, in combination with IT enabled services, may lead to improved governance. However, IT is no magic wand unless there is a concomitant change in the attitudes of the civil servants.

