

APPROACHES IN COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Paper - VIII Comparative and Development Administration

Course - M.A. in Public Administration (Sem-II)

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There are a number of approaches, models and theories presently characterising the subject-area of **Comparative** Public Administration. Particularly after Second World War, a number of approaches have emerged in comparative administrative **analysis**. Much of this effort is based on an adaptation of the developments in comparative **anthropology**, comparative sociology and comparative politics. We will now study different approaches in a nut-shell.

5.8.1 Bureaucratic Approach

The most influential of the approaches is **Max Weber's** ideal-type **bureaucratic** model. This has **structural characteristics** of hierarchy, specialisation, role-specificity, recruitment by merit, promotion by seniority-cum-merit, career development, **training**, discipline, separation between personal and official means, etc. The emphasis in the **model is on rationality and efficiency**.

There have been a number of studies conducted in a comparative context employing the **bureaucratic model** of **Weber**. Notable scholars in this area **include** Michael Crozier (on France), **Roy Laird** (on the Soviet Union) and **Morroe Berger** (on Egypt). The methodological **limitation** of an ideal-type model and specific context of a legal-rational authority **system poses constraints** in the application of **Weber's model** to the **comparative** study of bureaucracies. **Nevertheless**, for an analysis of the **bureaucracies**, of the **developed** countries, the model is still considered eminently useful. **Dwight Waldo** views **Weber's bureaucratic model** as a "paradigm" of Public Administration.

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5.8.2 Behavioural Approach

The behavioural approach emphasises "**facts**", rigorous scientific methods of **data** collection and analysis, quantification, experimentation, testing, verification **and an** interdisciplinary orientation. It focuses on the analysis of human **behaviour** in., administrative settings.

5.8.3 General Systems Approach

Further, the general systems approach views an administrative system as a **subsystem** of **the society**. It looks at various parts of an administrative system (formal organisation, **informal** organisation, roles, individuals) and examines the interlinkages among various parts. Besides, the approach analyses the dynamic interactions between the administrative **system** and its external environment.

5.8.4 Ecological Approach

One of the most **popular** approaches in Comparative Public Administration is the ecological approach which has been stressed considerably by Fred Riggs. This approach examines the interactions **between** an administrative system and its external environment. Thus the impact of the political system, economic system, social system and the cultural system, on **the** structure and behaviour of the administrative **system** as well as the influence of the administrative system on these environmental structures is highlighted in the ecological approach.

5.8.5 Structural—Functional Approach

A related approach, drawn mainly from **Anthropology** and **Sociology**, is the **structural-functional** approach. A structure, according to this approach, is a pattern of behaviour that has become a standard feature of a social system. Further, a function denotes the impact of a structure on another structure and the interrelationships among various structures.

Fred Riggs has successfully applied the ecological and structural-functional approaches in his analysis of **societies** and their administrative systems. His typology of "**agraria-transitia-industria**" systems, developed in 1957, was superseded by the typology of "**fused-prismatic diffracted**" societies that was constructed in 1959. For **the** past thirty years or so, Rigg's model of prismatic society and its administrative system known as "**sala**" has ruled **the** contemporary model-building scene in Comparative Public Administration. Despite criticisms and certain inherent methodological limitations, the prismatic-sala model has fascinated the students and practitioners of Public Administration in "developing" countries. A prismatic society, according to Riggs, is characterised by a growing degree of structural differentiation but not matched by an equal degree of integration (coordination). **This** integration lag is reflected in **almost** all aspects of the functioning of a prismatic society.

A prismatic society and its 'sala' are characterised by 'heterogeneity', formalism and overlapping. Further, overlapping has five dimensions: poly-communalism, **poly-normativism**, bazaar-canteen model, authority versus control and nepotism. These features relate to the social, cultural, economic, political and **administrative** systems of the prismatic society. The details **of** these characteristics are found in all important books on Public Administration.

5.8.6 Development Approach

A very well-known conceptual approach in Comparative Public Administration is of 'Development Administration' which has been elaborately dealt with in a separate unit. This approach focuses on certain characteristics of a **dynamic administrative** system, **e.g.** goal-orientation, change-orientation, progressiveness, innovativeness, participation and responsiveness.

Besides, **the above**, there are a number of other **less-known** approaches to comparative administrative analysis. These include "information-energy" model of John Dorsey and decision-making model of Martin Landau. Nevertheless, other models have not been able to match the comprehensiveness and acceptability of Weber's **bureaucratic** model, Rigg's prismatic model and of **course**, the construct of Development Administration.

It appears that the experimentation **phase** in model-building in Comparative Public Administration is not **vigorous** anymore. However, the enthusiasm for understanding the varieties of administrative patterns is alive in the scholarship of Public Administration. That is why, one can hope **for newer** dimensions of Comparative Public Administration emerging on the scene in the times to come.

References

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