

# Evolution of Public Administration

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# Introduction

- Public administration can be found in the ancient texts of Kautilya which dealt with the principles of administration and the machinery of government. The Arthashastra discussed various aspects of public administration. European thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle described the style of administration in Greek city states, and by Machiavelli in his book 'Prince.'
- In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the discipline began to emerge in 18<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century France emerged as the leading country to recognize public administration.

## Phase I

- As a discipline public administration is said to be born in the USA. Woodrow Wilson in 1887 wrote a piece called 'The Study of Administration.' Wilson stated that public administration is a systematic execution of public law. Wilson proposed the politics-administrative dichotomy. He stated that politics and administration are separate. Administrative questions are not political questions. He stated that politics is the job of a statesman and administration that of a technical official. Hence politics and administration have different functions. Wilson's essay is considered the birth of public administration as a recognized field of study.
- This was further elaborated by Frank Goodnow in 'Politics and Administration.'

## Phase II

- This stage is marked by value free approach to public administration. This period focused on efficiency. This was elaborated by F.W Taylor in his book 'Principles of scientific management.' Taylor developed tools and techniques to aid both the worker and the manager. Hence there was focus on organization. This was elaborated by Willoughby in his work 'Principles of Administration.' in this work Willoughby attempted to use techniques of science to provide solutions to the problems of administration.

## Phase III

- The previous phase triggered reactions against the mechanistic concept of administration. Herbert Simon was critical of this phase and them 'proverbs.' Out of this phase grew human relations approach to public administration through the Hawthorne experiments. This approach gave importance to informal organizations and focused on leadership and coordination among groups. This approach brought out the limitations of mechanistic concept of administration. Chester Bernard's 'Functions of the Executive,' also gave importance to informal organizations on administration.

## Phase IV

- This phase grew after the second world war. This phase was marked by behaviouralism. This phase focused on individual, leadership, group dynamics, motives and satisfaction. Chester Bernard looked at psychological aspects of management. He stated that authority is the acceptance of the role of the superior by the subordinate. He believed in persuasion rather than coercion. He stated that leadership is an important factor in an organization.
- Herbert Simon in his piece ' Administrative Behaviour , ' gave importance to scientific analysis of administration. In this boom Simon stated that authority is the acceptance of the superior's role by the subordinate. He stated that decision making is the heart of the administrative set up. He gave importance to persuasion as a means of motivation rather than coercion. He stated that one should focus on empirical approach to administration and excluded value judgements and concentrated on facts and data. He stated that decision making is in the heart of administration.
- In this phase the concept of development administration also emerged to refer to the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

## Phase V

- This phase is called 'New Public Administration.' This developed on the minnowbrook conference under Dwight Waldo. This phase focused on the involvement of younger scholars in the administration. It stressed on normative approach and social concern. As stated that the traditional approach to public administration is too formal. This view condemns value free social science. Frank Marini, 'Towards a new public administration,' and Dwight Waldo in the book 'Public Administration in a time of Turbulence,' discusses these issues.

## Phase VI

- This phase began from 1980s onwards this looks at entrepreneurial government through improving public management, reducing budgets, downsizing the government, contracting and privatization. This phase is marked by transparency and citizen friendly administration. There was also the emergence of New Public Administration which focused on primacy of the market and private sector management.