

Study of Values in Politics

Abstract

The term “value” denotes one’s deep basic preferences, beliefs and general assumptions about what is good or beneficial and these are expected to govern one’s decision and behavior. A value is defined as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.” Values are the driving force of human behaviour. In fact, what men do can be explained in terms of his value structure? Values help to determine one’s norms, standards and goals. They enable one to select the means to realize chosen goals or ends of action. Hence values regulate human behaviour. Values may be explicit or implicit; they may be held by an individual or a group. In any case, they constitute a code or a standard, which provides a yardstick to approve or disapprove human action.

Keywords: Values, Panchayati Raj, Panchayat Officers, Politics, Panchayati Raj Leaders.

Introduction

Values are often confused with facts. For instance, a bracelet is an object, i.e. a fact having value because it was a gift from someone special, or because it was made of gold or may be because it was a piece of antique jewellery. But, in itself, in essence, it is a value neutral. It is the owner who, knowing its worth has imbued it with a certain amount, of value. Value lies in the mind of the value-holder and is, therefore, subjective. Value is a function of the individual mind, of one’s conscious thinking. Value is something other than motive, want or need. It has been described as a concept of the desirable with motivating force. Kluckhohn has defined a value as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action.” A better way of looking at value would be as “Phenomenological entities intermediate between motive and attitudes.” Christopher Hodgkinson has coupled this definition with a diagrammatic presentation of the concept as given below.

A..... ATTITUDES
 V..... VALUE CLUSTER
 M..... MOTIVATIONAL BASE
 S..... SELF

Thus, values are important because they prompt human behavior. However, they lie in the mind and are interconnected with motives and attitudes.

Values help in understanding the behaviour pattern of a society and consequently the administration of the society i.e. public administration. In other words, to understand values in public service, it becomes necessary to have a close examination of societal, political administrative cultures of the society. The social, political and administrative cultures give rise to value cluster.

Therefore, an attempt has been made here to find out the perceptions of officials regarding political, administrative, professional and personal value of the leaders and the officials engaged in panchayat raj working.

Political values are like societal values important because administration functions in a political milieu and administrators cannot be ‘aseptic’ to political happenings. Hence they do carry political values in their mental baggage. The dominant value of political culture is the value of democracy. Democracy is to be viewed not only as a responsible and responsive government, but in terms of its underlying morality. Democratic morality upholds the dignity and worth of the individual. For man, the ultimate measure of all human values is man himself. According to Pai Panadndikar and S. Kshirsagar, “The essential values of bureaucracy are hierarchy, status, secrecy, specialization, rules and an unflinching



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obedience to authority. In contrast, democracy is built round almost diametrically opposite values of egalitarianism, non-hierarchy, open discussion and above all, dissent. The guiding principle of bureaucracy is rationality, which is essence, means efficiency. The guiding principle of democracy is popular will."

In India, developmental bureaucracy is expected to imbibe democratic and developmental values. Therefore, there is an urgent need that the bureaucracy engaged in developmental efforts must possess technical knowledge, requisite training and managerial skills to speed up development. Administrators need qualities of head and heart, a basic understanding of fellow men, and a realization that their performance cannot be delinked from citizen cooperation and participation.

People's participations in rural development programmes leads to a fall in the incidence of leakage, an increase in the political awareness of the people, easier mobilization of local resources and empowerment of the socially and economically disadvantaged people. People's participation should be encouraged owing to the fact that people in the villages know their needs better than government officials working at block, district and state levels. If communities are called upon to perform tasks while the control and decision-making remains with development workers from outside, then people's active participation may not be possible. Seventy third constitutional Amendment Act also envisaged for greater people's participation and better implementation of all development and welfare activities.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present research study:-

1. To analyze the perceptions of the administrative process as a whole.
2. To study the values and personal attitude of officials and leaders towards the administrative process of panchayati raj institution.
3. To study the perceptions and performance evaluation of administrative officials.
4. To study the impact of values on the growth and development of democratic decentralization process.

Hypothesis

1. It has been assumed that there is a lack of execution-efficiency, management-efficiency, performance-efficiency, morale-efficiency and service-efficiency due to decline of values in politics.
2. It has been assumed that there prevails corruption, delay, lack of commitment and intense political intervention in the administrative process engaged with panchayati raj institution due to lack of values
3. It has been assumed that the panchayati raj officials are differently evaluated in terms of their performance by the elected leaders and by themselves.

Research Methodology

The primary data was collected from (i) the Panchayat Raj officials (government officials) working at village level and interacting with the Gram Panchayats and Panchayats Raj officials of Panchayats Samiitis and Zila Parishads which include District Development Panchayat Officer (DDPO), XEN (PR), Programmer Officer – ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme), Mukhya Sevika, Secretary (Panchayats) and Gram Sevikas and (ii) the Panchayats Raj leaders i.e. elected of the Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samiitis and Zila Parishads.

The primary data was collected with the help of separately prepared interview schedules for each category of respondents. The secondary data was collected from various books, reports, research studies and other relevant. The appropriate statistical tools of data analysis were applied to analyze the information collected during the empirical investigation of the study.

Review of the literature

Bata K. Dey (1996) observed that the federal government in India has failed to recruit and promote the civil servants according to pretension requirements. He considers that the failure is attributed to him an element and it would not be fruitful till professional objectivity and humane consideration are added to the management of recruitment in government. Therefore he stressed the need to change the process which select the persons with standard formulations should be changed.

B.Guy Peters (1996) analysis that there are differences in the manner in which individuals in different setting consider management. There are also differences in people's minds about what the proper policy roles of administration are and what constitutes good public policy. These differences can be discovered empirically. If they are to be addressed empirically, then a good deal attention should be placed on the values held by administration. Who came into contact with citizens. This interfaces between the population and their governments an important one. Especially for democratic regime, and should be better understood in both nature and maturing democratic political systems.

According to **Jayanta Kumar Ray** (1996) only a small number of functionaries in state and semi-state agencies are engaged in strenuous efforts to preserve administrative ethics, professional excellence and public interest. A smaller number are even ready to risk their career to this culture of preservation. The vast majority has reared up the culture of destruction of professional ethics/excellence as also of public interest. Actually, this culture of the majority has given to the cult of self-aggrandizement.

K.S. Shukla (1996) made an attempt to synthesize the concept of administrative culture through the behavioral patterns prevalent in an administrative set-up at a given point of time and in a specific space. According to the author, the cultural values get manifested in a variety of ways of which the traits of a given set –up are broad indicators of the

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value system of that group. The author concludes that cultural traits of administration have both influence and impact on the people in general

P.D. Malviya (1996) illustrate that Indian administrative system is strongly power oriented and feudal in character. The author concludes that it is really in the national interest that the administrative system should produce strong. Self - reliant and self-respecting workers particularly those who are employed at the public interface. Our need is to establish a new result oriented, and people oriented administrative culture to achieve the national goals of our country.

A.P. Barnabas (1998) in his article entitled "Good Governance at Local Level" focuses on role of PRIs in bringing about good governance at the cutting edge level in rural areas. The author identifies problems pertaining to perception of role of PRIs, inadequacy of resource support, problematic of Bihar structure etc. There is confusion regarding functions in PRIs, as there is node lineation of function between the three tiers. At the district and block level there is little autonomy for planning, as nation and real and state plans have to be accommodated. The social structure and the administrative system are hierarchical. Hence there has been little scope for culture decentralization.

Hoshiar Singh (2000) in his empirical study relating to "cultural attributes of women administrators" states that the study of administrative culture in public administration was intended to answer questions concerning the consequences of differences in attitudes opinions beliefs, values and sentiments which shape administrative decisions.

Neelima Deshmukh (2000) enumerated cultural traits of Indian administrators of today as – lack of integrity, i.e. rampant corruption, resistance to change with internal logic, reutilization of administrative processes hungering responsible, self generating and demanding administration, preventing emergence of culture of innovation and lack of

adaptation to changing need of time. According to the author, administrative legacies heritage and administrative experiences as behavior pattern or interaction are the constituents of administration culture.

Ravindra Sharma and Rameshwar Lal (2000) in their empirical study of culture in recruitment practice in agriculture department came to the conclusions that there is role of nepotism, religion /caste. Top officer recommendations, intense political interventions and also major role of money in appointments. The authors states that atmosphere in India is generally vitiated by corruption, influence, patronage, abuse of power and widespread inefficiency. Corruption in the civil service is a complex phenomenon. It has sociological, economics, ethic- religious, juristic and even political roots. In recent years, Indian administration has deteriorated because of the moral decay that marks the conduct of political leaders.

Analysis of Study

The various characteristics of execution efficiency specifically related to the administrative process of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) are; recognition of democratic value by panchayati raj (PR) leaders and officials; satisfaction from the implementation of development programmes; perception of PR leaders and officials on too much dependence of rules and regulations in PRIs working; adequacy and availability of resources in the District; and perceptions of respondents regarding the percolation of benefits to the targeted groups/beneficiaries. To find out the level of recognition of democratic values by PR leaders and officials, they were asked the question "do the officers and employees of PRIs give priority to discussion, persuasions, argument with people or their elected representatives over and above their regular official work." Their response determine the level of this recognition as is evident from the data in the table 1.

Table 1
Recognition of Democratic Values by Panchayat Raj Leaders and Officials

Responses	Panchayat Raj leaders			Panchayat Raj Officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	39	37	76(38.58)	23	22	45(91.84)
No	41	24	65(33.00)	—	—	—
Sometimes	12	34	46(23.35)	1	2	3(6.12)
Uncertain	5	5	10(5.08)	1	—	1(2.04)
Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 1 reveals that nearly two-fifth of the PR leaders (38.58 percent) agreed whereas one-third of them (33.00 percent) disagree to the statement. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents (23.35 percent) opined that the officials of PR sometimes give such priority and a negligible number of them (5.08 percent) are uncertain. However, an overwhelming majority of officials of PR (91.84 percent) responded that they give priority to such discussions and only a small number of them (6.12 percent) responded that they do not always extend such priority rather profess this sometimes only. Thus, although the officials state that they recognize the

democratic values in their working but many PR leaders do not agree with them. It means the priority to discussion, persuasion and argument with the people and PR leaders by administrative officials of PR is not of expected level. Hence, much needs to be done to adopt democratic value in PR functioning.

Another factor to determine execution efficiency is the satisfaction from the implementation of development programmes. Therefore, PR leaders were asked to answer the question "could the executive officer of PRIs implement the development policies upto the satisfaction of PR leaders;

Table 2

Responses	Panchayat Raj Leaders			Panchayat Raj Officials		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	46	69	115(58.38)	25	24	49(100.00(.84)
No	46	26	72(36.55)	—	—	—
Uncertain	5	5	10(5.08)	—	—	—
Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 2 indicates that majority of PR leaders (58.38 percent) responded, "yes" whereas more than one-third of them (36.55 percent) responded "No". On the other side, all the officials of PR (100.0 percent) responded that they implement the development policies upto the satisfaction of PR leaders. These kinds of responses are expected but negative response of a large section of leaders clearly indicate the evidences of leakages and incompetence

on the part of officials to execute development programmes. Therefore, in terms of satisfaction, execution efficiency is not of desirable level.

Dependence of the bureaucracy on the rules is generally accepted in the bureaucratic performance. Therefore, the responses both the leaders and officials on this were collected and tabulated in table 3.

Table 3

Factors Affecting Participation and Cooperation between Leaders and Officials

Sr. No.	Variables	Responses	Panchayati Raj leaders			Panchayat raj officials		
1.	Necessity of consulting PR leaders	Very important	92	92	184(93.40)	20	20	40(81.63)
		Sometimes important	-	3	3(1.52)	5	4	9(18.37)
2.	Consideration on to involve people in decision making and implementation of programmes	Not important	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Uncertain	5	5	10(5.08)	-	-	-
		Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)
3.	Officials consideration regarding the necessity of people's representative cooperation	Always important	92	93	185(93.91)	21	14	35(71.43)
		Sometimes important	-	2	2(1.02)	4	9	13(26.53)
		Never important	-	-	-	-	1	1(2.04)
		Uncertain	5	5	10(5.08)	-	-	-
		Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)
		Yes		95	187(94.92)	25	24	49(100.0)
		No		-	-	-	-	
		Uncertain		5	10(5.08)	-	-	-
		Total	97	100	197(100.0)	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 3 reveals that an overwhelming majority of PR leaders (93.40 percent) responded that it is very important and only a negligible number of them 1.52 percent responded that sometimes it is important. No one negated the significance of necessity consulting PR leaders by the administrative officials. This view is further strengthened by sampled officials as very large segment of officials of PR (81.63 percent) also agreed that it is very important and another (18.37 percent) opined that sometimes it becomes important to consult elected members in discharging the responsibilities. Thus, both leaders and officials accept that practice of democratic values in the form of consulting PR leaders is an essential characteristic of PR administrative culture.

Another component to ensure people participation is consideration to involve people in

decision-making and implementation of development/welfare programmes for rural masses. To know whether the PR leaders fel that they are involved in governmental programmes meant for them, they were asked to answer the question about the consideration of the involvement of more and more people in government decision-making and implementation of programmes. The Data in table 3(2) reveals that an overwhelming majority of PR leaders (93.91 percent) responded that involvement of more and more people in government decision-making has always been very important and only a negligible number of them (1.02 percent) opined that 'sometimes it is important'. However, the officials are in favour of it and a large majority of officials (71.43 percent) responded so, but, this percentage is quite lesser than the leaders. Thus, may be not as enthusiastic as leader are. There are more than one-

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fourth of the officials (26.53 percent) who are of the opinion that sometimes it becomes important to consider the involvement of more and more people in government decision-making and implementation of programmes.

The respondent were also asked to answer the question; "do you think that administrative officials of PRIs should take the help of people's representatives in solving the problems of the people". It was asked because the help and cooperation of masses through their leaders have been very significant resource as recognized by the policy makers and planners in the country. The data in table 3(3) indicates clearly that almost all of the PR leaders (94.92 percent) responded "YES" and on the other side all the officials of PR (100.00 percent) also agreed to this statement. Thus, in total, it is concluded that consulting leaders involving people in decision making and securing cooperation of people's representative's are the necessity for successful executing the rural development programmes.No doubt, there is dilution in the responses of officials on these aspect on the part of officials but that is in real sense due to the fact of not understanding the rural society in proper manner.

The practice of political interference in day to day administration disturbs and even demoralizes many administrators. The invisible line, which is supposed to divide political from administration is sometimes hard to perceive, but there are clearly some practices, which should be considered improper interference. These are: insisting that the bureaucrat should act in a way which is contrary to the rules; insisting that a bureaucrat arbitrarily change the administration of a policy already decided upon by the lawful elected body; insisting that an administrator arbitrarily deny benefits to a person, political leaders or officer which are clearly partisan; intimidating bureaucrats by threatening to have them transferred; if they refuse to yield to improper demands or actual transferring them for such reasons. It has been a practice that political party in power appoints the officials in PRIs of their local leaders choice.

Therefore, the officials were asked to answer the question "do you feel that PRI leaders enjoys powerful patronage of political leaders of the political party in power?" The answer of officials are tabulated here in table 4

Table 4

Incidence of Reconciling the View of Elected Members by the Officials

Response	Panchayati Raj Leaders		
	Panipat	Kurukshetra	Total
Yes	11	6	17(34.69)
Sometime	4	3	7(14.29)
No	10	15	25 (51.02)
Total	25	24	49(100.0)

The data in table 4 reveals that more than one-third of officials of PR (34.69 percent) responded that it is true; some of them (14.29 percent) responded that sometimes it happens whereas more than half of the officials of PR (51.02 percent) negatively responded. Thus, it is concluded that it is

practiced only when the concerned officials create difficulties for local leaders of the political party in power. The academicians have viewed the growing powers of bureaucracy with deep concern on the other hand, a bureaucrat sees a drastic trend in the political control over the civil service. The contention is that there is too much undue interference by the political parties and ministers in the process of administration, which affects its efficiency and causes inordinate delays in the execution of policy decisions.

Suggestions and Conclusion

It has usually been found there is decay in moral values and ethics in the functioning of PRIs. Thus, there is an urgent need to raise the moral consciousness in administrative officials and leaders to fight against the forces of corruption, favoritism and malpractices. It might possibly be achieved through the introduction of qualitative value education programmes based upon the spiritual heritage of our society. Our religion teach us sacred attributes like honesty, loyalty, truth, good conduct and behaviour, transparency in work and duty which are important to bring traits like high standard of personal integrity, fairness, justice and regarding the work as Dharma. These traits need to be drilled in the thinking of officials and leaders. Thus, it is suggested that the qualitative practical training having adequate emphasis on ethics and values should be introduced for public officials and the elected representatives.

There is an urgent need to make these institutions as more democratic one. This may be possible if they are made financially independent and some sources of revenues must be endured to them. The taxation authority need not be devolved to them, as those are not capable of collecting taxes at least at this stage of time. The pattern evolved by the Haryana Government in this regard that is, creating a separate Haryana Rural Development fund, fixing a percentage of revenue collected from agriculture marketing fee, establishing state finance commission etc. are welcome steps. But, a decentralized and devolved mechanism has not been properly framed to ensure that each and every village panchayat village will get a fix amount of revenue each year. It may be taken up. Apart from these, the power of distribution of grants should be given to the elected representatives and not to the bureaucrats. These efforts will not only strengthen the democratic values but also make the bureaucracy neutral and less corrupt one, as they would not have authority to distribute the benefits/grants which make them corrupt and partial one.

Lastly, it is suggested that moral discipline, organizational integrity, moral commitment and individual's ethics which are the foundations of success and development of the state, should be evolved to improve the administrative culture of Panchayat Raj institutions.

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