In the year 1989, when I decided to work on the topic, there was a process of rapid transformation going on in the Soviet Union. Democratization was being carried effectively under the leadership of Gorbachev. The changes which were taking place in the field of politics and administration, in particular, and in society, in general, were highly radical and to some extent they were even contradicting the basic tenets of Soviet Marxism and its official practices. In the above given context a study of changing pattern of politico-administrative system of the Soviet state became relevant.

This study is basically a study of continuity and change of Soviet administration since its foundation after the Bolshevik revolution and ends with the Gorbachev's resignation as president of the former USSR. Structural aspects of Soviet administrative institutions and its operational dimensions are the main elements in the study. This thesis takes into account how various Soviet leaders theorized to legitimize government institutions at different periods including their political practices.

In order to study the government and its administration, normally the discussion of a political party remains outside its ambit. But in the case of the
Soviet Union, the situation was altogether different. The Communist Party was a pivotal point for the running of Soviet administration. Amalgamation of a party functionary with the administrative institutions was so complex that no demarcation line could be drawn between them. Consequently the dynamism of administration could not be studied properly without the reference of the Communist Party. 

Nomenklatura system of the party was unique and any such illustration could be hardly traced out in a pluralistic system. Through this system CPSU was in a position to control and direct every level of Soviet administration. Therefore it was essential to study the development of Communist Party in some detail.

Study of CPSU's role was also essential because it was the sole looser due to democratization and decentralization process initiated by the Party itself under the leadership of Gorbachev. Study of the rank and file towards reforms was undertaken.

Four years back, when I decided to take up this topic, no body expected the collapse of Soviet Union so swiftly. However, study of the causes and consequences leading to the collapse is beyond the scope of this study.

The first chapter deals with the theoretical foundation of Soviet administration. Soviet state was
based on Marxism, it was claimed, therefore a
discussion of theory of state by various Marxist
thinkers is incorporated in this chapter. Trotsky's
interpretation of (degenerated) Soviet state under
Stalin, and Weber's theory of bureaucracy in the
context of Soviet administration in particular, and
Marxism in general, has been examined. Besides
Brezhnev's innovation of the theory of "developed
socialism" and the "all people's state" as well as
rejection of this doctrine by Gorbachev are also
discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter examines the institutional
structures and its functioning within the overlapping
patterns of administration of the party and the
government as agencies.

The third chapter deals with the consolidation of
very centralized command administration under the
prolonged regime of Stalin and his administrative
methods of power consolidation. Furthermore it also
discusses the process of democratization and
decentralization of administration as carried out by
Khrushchev and reversal of such policies by the
Brezhnev and Kosygin team. This was a period of
enormous growth of bureaucracy.

The fourth chapter basically highlights the
negative repercussions of command administration.
Stagnation in Soviet society, various social ills, bureaucratic involvement in the crimes and corruption and the process of degeneration in the realm of social and cultural life of Soviet society are the main themes of this chapter. Most importantly, Gorbachev's onslaught on the command administration and its negative impacts is also included.

In the fifth and sixth chapters, the process of democratic decentralization is the central theme which was initiated by Gorbachev under the policy of glasnost and perestroika. Its impact on Soviet society and ultimate result of such reforms are also discussed.

Finally, the concluding chapter attempts an overall assessment theoretical and practical dimensions of the Soviet administrative set up.

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I alone am, of course, responsible for any shortcomings that may be noticed in this work.

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