The importance and value of a well organized governmental machinery to efficiently run the affairs of a State, in any form of government can hardly be overlooked and over emphasized. Ever since political consciousness dawned on man he has been striving continuously and progressively to devise a machinery which would ensure the proper functioning of the State and promote the best interests and welfare of the people. India boasting of a civilization thousands of years old has produced a great many political thinkers who have waxed eloquent on the science and art of government. Their accounts find corroboration in the epigraphical material available, which when put together, presents a picture, albeit non-resplendent in details, of the organization of services in ancient India. The present work is an attempt to appraise the organization of services from the Pre-Mauryan period concluding on the eve of the rise of the Guptas. The work also deals with the changes that were introduced and implemented in the services over the passage of years along with the types of services, cadres and official hierarchy, salaries and emoluments, policy of taxation, the Secretariat Office establishment etc.

In the first Chapter we see the Vedic period as an age of organizations which were popular and tribal in nature. Only the Sabha and Samiti were performing more
political activities in comparison to the other organizations. All Vedic organizations were primarily local in nature and established for the resolution of local problems.

The early Vedic organizations hint at a not so fully developed scheme of administration; but the Ratnimam Havinshi samskara reveals a developed administrative system. With an increase in the importance of the Brahmanas and the King, the tribal set up received a considerable set back; these two have been given pride of place in the list of Ratnins. On the whole the later Vedic political organization had become both territorial and socially biased.

Sometime around the 6th century B.C. the Varnavyavastha began to not only smother tribal elements but was emerging as an important force to reckon with in the fields of jurisprudence and political administration.

We can recognize three distinct stages in the organization of administrative services in the pre-Mauryan age. The period of the Rigveda was an age of tribal organizations. The next stage saw social stratification with the rise of the Varna system which spelled doom for the tribal political system. During this period the nomadic tribes settled down in certain fixed areas which helped in the development of monarchies, the taxation system and bureaucracy. The third stage saw the ascent of large
territorial kingdoms like Kosala and Magadha and some tribal oligarchies.

The fourth stage has been dealt with in the second Chapter when North India saw the rise of the Mauryas. The growing economic needs of the State formed the basis of a highly centralized administrative system which became possible with a wide network of efficient bureaucrats. From now on all areas of life could be controlled by the State.

In the third Chapter, we see a fifth stage witnessing the process of decentralization. Northern India saw the rise of cities, of feudatories and military elements in the post-Mauryan period. According divinity to the King helped counterbalance this process of decentralization to some extent. Decentralization had received an impetus from the Varna system, professional guilds and the power of the Village Chiefs.

The fourth Chapter emphasizes the fact that no government can run efficiently without the help of a well-organized and efficient Secretariat. This office was an important one and was manned by tried and trusted officers. Responsibilities in the area of policy-making, legislation and administration were shared by the King, his ministers and specialists who all worked together with public interest in mind.

The policy of taxation was an important factor on which the success or failure of the organization of services
depended, as such it has been dealt with in the fifth Chapter. The King was paid in lieu of the protection and welfare he provided to the people. These taxes varied in amount and type over the passage of time. The process of taxation was a fairly tedious one. Taxes were collected in cash and kind, strictly and carefully. There were provisions for remission, exemption and imposition of fresh taxes too.

The issue of salaries and emoluments elaborated in the sixth Chapter reveals that salaries were paid in kind, cash and land-grants. The gradation of salaries under the Mauryas has been detailed in the Arthasastra but we have no similar evidence for any other period of our study.

While appraising the organization of services we unravel several shortcomings plaguing the system but on the whole India was well governed during our period of study with the welfare of the people being the area of primary concern. Different Departments worked in unison under the monarchical system which was preferred to the republican one. There was ample scope for local self-government, the vestiges of which have been brought down to us over the passage of several centuries.

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