Preface

This is a study on one of the important institutions of the erstwhile Soviet state, namely Public Administration. Moreover, it is focussed on a crucial period of major developments in the Soviet Union from 1985-1991, the period of Gorbachev’s reforms that finally led to the disintegration of Soviet social and state system in 1991. We have attempted in this study at investigating the state of Public Administration against the backdrop of the process of Gorbachev’s reforms, a process which indeed turned out to be a process of disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Like all other aspects of the former Soviet Union this process of disintegration deeply affected the entire edifice of Soviet Public Administration as well. We have endeavoured to show in our study how this process, as it unfolded itself stage by stage affected the state of Soviet Public Administration, and in the final stage like the state itself it collapsed, notwithstanding its essential continuity in some aspects even during post-disintegration Russia.

Our study is divided into five chapters. We begin by a critical analysis of the state of Public Administration as in 1985,
and thus, in Chapter one, we provide a backdrop of our main study.

The initiation of the reforms, and the years from 1985 to 1987 namely the first stage of perestroika is examined in Chapter two. The impact of reforms on Public Administration in this stage was primarily that of reduction in the number of both the administrative structures and personnel and curtailment of the privileges and powers of the administrative staff.

The major changes in the Public Administration came with the political reforms during the second stage of perestroika in the period from 1988 to the coup in August 1991. Chapter three analyses the impact of power shift from the party to the state and from the Union to the republics on Public Administration.

Chapter four discusses the August Coup and the short period ending with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The administrative structure had no focus and was fast disintegrating and all efforts to save the Union proved futile.
Chapter five summarizes and gives an overview of the impact of disintegration on the Soviet Union on Public Administration. In effect, the Union administrative structures have been passed on to the new republics with most of the old features still in place, functioning under a paradigm of continuity and change.

Throughout these chapters, as mentioned above, our endeavour has been an investigation of the state of Public Administration in the USSR during 1985-1991 against the background of the very process of disintegration of the Soviet state, and thus we have sought to focus on the impact factor.

The documents and materials from the different Party Congresses, Plenums, Conference and Supreme Soviet Sessions in the period from 1985 to 1991 have been used as primary sources besides translations from the Soviet newspapers in the Current Digest of the Soviet Press and other documentary serials.

I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Zafar Imam who has been very understanding and kind to me through these five years of research. It is his guidance and interest in my work that enabled
me to complete this work. The scholarship from UGC has
provided the financial sustenance to carry out this study. The
library staff of JNU, Teen Murti, IDSA and IIPA have been very
helpful in tracing the materials relating to my topic.

I thank all my friends for the cheer, encouragement and
help I have received from them over the last few years. Mummy,
Thomachen and Chackochen have ever been supportive. Prasad
my husband is a special blessing from God in my life. For all that I
am, and have been able to achieve the glory goes to God alone.

Finally, for all the views expressed in this thesis and any
lacunae therein, I take full responsibility.

Bonnie Miriam Jacob

Bonnie Miriam Jacob