CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The greatest change in public administration, after the achievement of independence, was the continuously expanding role of government. It had to move from a police state to a welfare state, from law & order and revenue collection to industrial and agricultural development.

It was widely felt that the bureaucracy in its present form would not be able to meet the challenge. "No new order can be built in India so long as the spirit of the Indian Civil Service pervades our administration and our public services", said Nehru.1

The reorientation of government personnel was required in two directions. First it had to be equipped with skills necessary to perform developmental functions like ability for project planning and management, data processing and statistical analysis, particularly with the introduction of the planning process and the five year plans. Secondly, they had to learn to work in a democratic ethos2. The personnel had to be accountable not only to the hierarchical bureaucratic authority but also to the democratic authority; not only to the minister but also to the parliamentary committees. In the field, they had also to work

with the representatives of the people.

In addition to the problems that arose from our colonial heritage, the society was in a state of transition and rapid technological changes were taking place. A dualistic situation thus existed in most developing countries where the traditional form of institutions and superimposed western models of development co-existed. All this resulted in the need for changes in personnel administration. The stress in personnel administration had to be on the training and development of employees. Special attention had now to be paid to performance appraisal due to its important role in promotion and development.

Himachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1971, and was by then impatient for progress and change. It had many employees from neighbouring states, who on the exercise of their option, became employees of the new state. It thus inherited a set of employees with differing backgrounds, differing pay scales and differing cultures and languages. This added an element of complexity to personnel administration.

Classification

We have a variety of systems of classifications of government personnel. The label of rank classification does not take into account the complexity we have.

---

Ours has been a feudal society where there has always been emphasis on a caste system. Originally said to constitute social division of labour, the caste system became an ascriptive form of social stratification in society. The caste system can perhaps be seen reflected in the present rank classification into classes I to IV with little mobility from one class to another. Division between classes is further categorised into gazetted for the first two classes and non-gazetted for the last two classes. Gazetted services are senior or superior services in contrast to the non-gazetted ones.

Classification is however also based on organised services. All-India services are controlled by the Union and their recruitment and promotion policies are also made by the government of India. The state deals with the state services which are mostly departmentwise. However, there are some generalist services like the Himachal Pradesh Administrative Service which is also the feeder category of the Indian Administrative Service for its promotional posts. Personnel of HAS are posted in various departments as Deputy Directors, in the secretariat as Under Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries, and in the field as Sub-Divisional Magistrates and as Additional Deputy Commissioners. Officials in the various departments are exemplified by Block Development Officers (development department) who work in the field with elected leaders of the Panchayati Raj institutions (rural, local self-government), Tehsildars (revenue department) who look after revenue administration, Range Officers (forest department) who look after
the environment and afforestation, Health workers & Doctors (health department) who look after preventive health and patient care, and Teachers (education department). A clear hierarchy is visible in each department and a comparative hierarchy has developed inter-departmentally also. The mixture of systems of classification results mainly in class consciousness based on the rank-in-man and not on the results produced by the man on the job.

Though academically position classification, that is, "rank in job rather than in man" has been recommended by the ARC and also the Punjab Pay Commission (whose recommendation the H.P. Government also implements), it is not easy to adopt it due to the complexity of our pay structure and service classification. With the Fourth Pay Commission, the pay structure has been simplified somewhat but the improvement overall is small.

Agencies of personnel administration

There are two agencies of personnel administration, the Department of Personnel and the Public Service Commission. The Department of Personnel is headed by the Chief Minister with the Chief Secretary as the permanent secretary in charge of the department. They have two main wings - Appointment I and Appointment II. Appointment-I deals with certain organised services like IAS, HPAS, HJS, HPPS, Heads of departments. Appointment II is the policy formulating section of the department and all instructions regarding personnel are issued from this
wing. It also acts as the advisory agency of various departments who ask for advice. The department of personnel in the recent years has come to play another important role, that is of coordinating various matters regarding employee unions and the consultative machinery at the state level.

The Public Service Commission consists of a chairman and three members. It has been provided that half of them should have held office for a period of ten years in government and for the other half no qualification has been laid down. Though the members are debarred from holding other government offices after retiring from the Public Service Commission, this has been interpreted in a narrow manner and in some states they have held office in autonomous corporations. Our study has shown that the members of the Commission have, by and large, functioned in an objective manner. The basic function of selection based on merit is being performed quite well. However, no innovation seems to be introduced.

The Public Service Commission also acts as the advisory body of the government on various issues such as promotion, retirement benefits, training, departmental examinations, recruitment rules, promotion rules and so on. The relationship seems to be good though it is a little distant. However, delays have been attributed to the Public Service Commission. In most developed countries, the Department of Personnel and the Public Service Commission have been merged though some autonomy is still retained by the latter in some of the countries. However, it has yet to be examined in our country whether any useful purpose is
being served by keeping them separate.

Recruitment

The recruitment, that is identification and securing of employees, is done through the Public Service Commission and by the departments on the basis of names sponsored by the employment exchanges. Whereas in Haryana the Public Service Commission succumbs to "strong political pressures and the commission is not able to maintain high standards of objectivity", the H.P. Public Service Commission has been able to carry the mandate of merit. The domicile requirement of being residents of H.P., however, has provincialised the services. This prevails to some extent in other states too but is more marked in Himachal Pradesh and is linked with the history of a feeling of exploitation at the hands of the neighbouring state of Punjab.

Generally, class I and II officers are recruited through the Public Service Commission. Recently class III posts have also been brought within its purview. The other posts are exempted from the purview of the H.P.P.S.C. and recruitment is done by the departments. The method of giving marks in interview is laid down by the Government by instructions issued from time to time. The candidates however have to be sponsored by the employment exchange which sponsors them on priority based on their date of registration. The method for creation of a post is long and cumbersome. The mode of recruitment, that is, whether direct recruitment or promotion or deputation, the

qualification, education, experience, age and so on are all laid down in the recruitment and promotion rules made for each post or each service. After selection, an employee goes through a medical fitness test and a police verification. He is then placed on two years' probation. However it is seen that rarely is probation terminated in H.P.

Reservations

Though our constitution provides for equality of opportunity for services, it also provides for reservation in services in consonance with maintenance of efficiency. Reservation is provided in government services for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes candidates, for ex-servicemen and also to a small extent for the physically handicapped, sons and daughters of freedom fighters and outstanding sportsmen.

Reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was meant to be a measure for the uplift of classes who had been cut off from the mainstream of life. However, even families who have attained a higher social status continue to get benefits from reservation. This causes resentment among the other candidates. Also, by providing for reservations in promotion, those who are already in government service supersede their seniors who are not reserved candidates. This creates a lot of heart burning and resentment. However, the government finds it difficult to get out of the situation as "reverse discrimination" has also become a political issue.
One of the steps taken by the government has been to provide for some reservation to economically backward families. These families are identified under the Integrated Rural Development Programme Scheme and reservation is provided to them.

Reservation is also provided to ex-servicemen in direct recruitment on the basis of service rendered by them and based on the fact that they retire early from the armed forces. The age limit in their case is relaxable and it is laid down that they should have been eligible when they joined the armed forces. Their names are registered with ex-servicemen exchange which generally sponsors one candidate for each vacancy. There is no reservation in promotion.

Reservation is often seen as diluting the principle of merit. However it is in consonance with social economic democracy. It is not really the principle but the rigidity, the way in which it is operated, and the benefit not going to the really deserving cases that is in disrepute.

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a yardstick to measure the performance of an employee. This is recorded on yearly basis in a document called the annual confidential report wherein various traits of personality of an employee were recorded but is now attempted to be substituted with the performance of an employee. The forms have been amended to provide for self assessment to be done by the employee himself before the reporting officer writes
this report.

Detailed instructions have been laid down on most aspects of these reports, like, time when it is to be written, who are to be the reporting, reviewing and accepting authorities, how the integrity column is to be filled, when adverse remarks are to be given and so on. However, neither the employees (who view it with suspicion) nor the controlling officers (who postpone writing it till the last moment and shirk the responsibility of making an honest appraisal) have used it as an effective instrument to evaluate performance.

Promotion

The Human Resources Development (HRD) approach attempts to coordinate the goals of the individual and the goals of the organisation. One of the ways of developing an individual is to provide promotional opportunities. However promotion as a method of recruitment cannot be the only method as there is also a need to induct fresh blood into the system.

Promotion can be by merit or by seniority (here called merit-cum-seniority or seniority-cum-merit). In promotion by merit those who are more efficient are selected above those who are less fit. In promotion by seniority, seniors are promoted subject to rejection of the unfit. A factor that influences promotion by merit is the field of consideration. The higher the number of candidates considered, the more is the chance of someone with outstanding merit from a lower down position superseeding those above him. This has varied from time to time. At present,
three employees are considered for one post. Most of the employees seem to prefer promotion by seniority as it puts no strain on them. Also they are suspicious of the yardstick of merit. They tend to mix merit with subjectivity as they find that appraisal is often not based on merit alone. The government however would like to promote employees, at least at higher levels, by merit. However, it finds that problems faced after promotion by merit are far greater than those of allowing promotion by seniority. Though rules provide for promotion by merit in higher posts, in actual fact, most promotions are done by seniority thereby revealing the difference between 'form and reality'.

Transfer and Placement

A detailed transfer policy is laid down in Himachal Pradesh. Certain aspects of it for example, posting of couple cases is implemented whereas other aspects like categorisation of stations and a rotational posting in these categories have not been implemented. However, the areas which come under heavy criticism are the tenure and the pressures used in transfer. With short periods of posting no employee can be expected to understand the problems and achieve results. It is only recently that H.P. Government started giving importance to an incumbent completing the minimum prescribed period of 3 years at one place. However, political pressures are still used widely for transfers and placements. The fact that with the change of government, large-scale transfers are done changing most of the
top government personnel, suggests a comparison with the system in the USA where the top level resigns with the change in government.

There is also a controversy regarding placement of secretaries (permanent) to government from technical services and Himachal has tried this experiment twice with some success.

Training

Training may be seen as some kind of a saviour insofar as an employee can be trained and equipped with the necessary skills to meet the requirements of the job. Though not a magic wand by itself, training can be used as an instrument to mould the attitudes and equip the employees with necessary skills to meet organisational goals. The Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) established in 1971 is running a number of foundational, professional and inservice courses. It also organises short term management courses and courses for specialists such as engineers and doctors. It has organised courses for class III and class IV employees too. It runs district training centres and periphery training centres to meet the requirements of the field and far flung areas. However it is noticed that it still uses outmoded methods of training and needs to do follow-up evaluation once the employees go back to their jobs to see if training helps them there.

The Heads of Departments also do not give sufficient importance to training. Frequent transfers of directors, not
sponsoring capable employees for training, and not making placements to utilise the training gives evidence of this.

A pre-examination coaching centre for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe candidates has also been started in HIPA which has started taking in other candidates also and has seen limited success. The need of imparting some training to political leaders has yet to be thought about.

Training has also not yet been made an effective tool to develop the employee. The personnel functions was seen to be declining in the 1980s and it is the Human Resource Development (HRD) that has come to its rescue. John Ingalls, while outlining the decline and fall of the personnel, function, said that the 1980s will be the decade in which personnel, as it has traditionally been known, will cease to exist. He went on to say that the personnel function lacks a defined body of knowledge like engineering or accounting. "It has no unique technology to drive it forward" he said and "its only claim to fame is its ability to foster, implement and support bureaucratic management methods". He predicted rise of HRD to replace it which would foster continuous development of increased human capacity and performance with a competence based management system.

HRD began with training but has come to include performance appraisal and counselling. However, it has yet to pick up in Himachal Pradesh where career management and development of employees does not seem to be a priority. Also the political and administrative norms for administrative
efficiency in a democracy are still in the transitional stage. We have a long way to go before we can reach the ideal of the civil servant which Sardar Patel eulogised in Parliament as second to none.