Enhancing Public Administration: Short Review of Current Best Practices in India

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Abstract

Public Administration in India has undergone significant transformations in recent years, driven by technological advancements, policy reforms and citizen-centric governance models. The methods used are literature review, text synthesis, and description of current best practices. This short review highlights e.g., key best practices that are shaping the landscape of public administration in current India. Notable initiatives include the integration of digital platforms and enhancing transparency and accessibility for citizens. Additional programs have streamlined welfare distribution and financial inclusion in this South Asian Country. The focus on data-driven decision-making, capacity-building programs for civil servants, and public-private partnerships have further optimized public service delivery. By doing so, India is setting benchmarks for innovation and efficiency in public administration in South Asia Region.

1. Introduction

This research explores current best practices in public affairs and administration in India, focusing on strategies to address persistent challenges and enhance governance efficiency. Public administration in India has a crucial role in Socio – Economic and Political development. Emerging solutions, including e-governance, public-private partnerships and human resource development, have shown promise in improving service delivery and transparency.

The main aim of this review research paper is to present selected current best practices in Indian Public Administration. This aim of this review research paper is justified by the need to identify and disseminate effective practices within Indian public administration.

Given the complex socio-political and economic environment in India, public administration is pivotal in ensuring efficient governance and efficient public service delivery; by focusing on selected current best practices, this research provides a framework for understanding what works well in addressing challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and resource constraints.

2. Literature Review

Public administration is a socially beneficial activity which is conducted by diverse entities such as state and local authorities (Al-Atti, 2018). Over time, the concept of public administration has shifted from a state-centric model to a service-oriented (citizens-oriented) approach, focusing on public interest and the implementation of state policies (Ziboreva, 2021); key features of public administration include its professional framework, legal regulation, and the allocation of competencies among various actors to prevent functional overlap (Ziboreva, 2021).

Public administration systems are shaped by cultural influences, demographic demands, and the country's developmental trajectory; recommendations for improvement of public administration systems often focus on expanding pension coverage, enhancing benefits, raising retirement ages, and modernizing social welfare programs to ensure long-term sustainability as Vrba implies in his previous research (2023). Additionally, Huynh (2023) also puts significance of culture and local-economy aspects such as street vendors for local communities and local administration consequently.

In India, the public sector is affected by issues such as bureaucratic inefficiency, and inadequate infrastructure. However, opportunities for progress exist through initiatives like e-governance, human resource development, and public-private partnerships as highlighted by Panja (2021).The incorporation of public administration as an academic discipline in Indian Universities faces challenges, including inconsistent curricula, a lack of qualified faculty, and technological limitations (Kumar, 2023). Currently Public Administration in India is researched by various centers, departments, and institutions such as Indian Institute of Public Administration and Department of Anna Centre for Public Affairs by Public State University of Madras.

Following chapters present current good practice in Indian context given India's cultural, political, societal, and economical needs. Presented current best practices in India's Public Administration are proofs that India goes in the right direction for more inclusive, more effective, and more accessible public administration, even if there may be long road ahead.

3. Current Best Practices in Public Administration in India

Examples of current good practise in Public Administration in India can be divided into three parts which are General Initiatives supported by governments, Non-government Organisations and Initiatives and Local Communities Support.

A) General Initiatives supported by Government of India

Capacity building for Public Administration Officials in rural areas

Such as training is the one provided by the government-owned Indian Institute of Public Administration, for instance; trainings for enhancing initiative and drive, key behavioural traits, drive change and impact governance; public administration, especially in India, operates in unique environments, distinct from private systems; good governance relies on civil servants' proactive efforts and in underdeveloped regions, personal initiative influences societal survival and development, underscoring its importance for achieving governance goals. These training are usually focused on good governance, proactive efforts and personal initiatives in survival and development of communities (Indian Institute of Public Administration, 2024).

Increasing accessibility and transparency of Public Administration Offices

The Indian Government has launched transparent, user-friendly e-portals like My Government Portal and National Portal India, fostering citizens' engagement and accountability; these platforms provide easy access to information, enable public participation in decision-making and enhance governance efficiency, reflecting the government's commitment to digital empowerment and inclusive policy implementation (Government of India, 2024a; Government of India, 2024b).

B) Non-Government Organisations and Initiatives

Fight against corruption in the Government

Non-governmental organizations such as Anti-Corruption Board of India (ACBI) also contribute to combating corruption through advocacy and support for governmental reforms. It focuses on creating awareness, assisting in investigations, and ensuring accountability within public and private sectors. While it is not a statutory body, ACBI collaborates with various stakeholders to support transparency and ethical practices (Anti Corruption Board of India, 2024).

Supporting Public Policy Oriented Research

For instance, Centre for Public Policy Research which is a prominent think-tank committed to enhancing governance and public policy through research, advocacy, and capacity-building; it is based in Kochi in Kerala and it works across sectors including urban governance, education, health policy, law, and international relations; Centre for Public Policy Research conducts evidence-based studies, provides policy recommendations, and organizes training programs for policymakers, students, and civil society(Centre for Public Policy Research, 2024).

C) Participation of Local Communities for Efficient Public Administration in India

Village and Tribal Councils play an important role in local communities since they plan and help to implement development programs in each commune area (e.g., village, or city). For instance:

- **Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala (Women empowerment)** – mission of Village Councils in Kerala which is active since 1998 and focuses on poverty eradication and women empowerment. Results: more than 4.3 million women took part in this programme and as consequences established more than 2,600 small business enterprises (Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala, 2022).
- **Pani Panchayats, Odisha(Water councils)–** so-called Water Councils in Odisha which helped to manage and distribute water resources across Odisha. Practical results included e.g., improving agricultural productivity, strengthening grassroots governance, and self-reliance in rural areas(Odisha Local Government, 2024).

Self-help Groups (SHGs) – sometimes supported by Government – which help to empower communities and are especially focused on woman who are encouraged in decision-making process; for instance, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) which promotes Self-help Group to improve governance at the local levels (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, National Rural Livelihoods Mission, 2024).

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are also the potential platform which helps the people (local community) to attain the common goal through collective effort. The main aim of CBO is to facilitate and accelerate the local planning and development based on the needs of the community. They concentrate on three main areas i.e., livelihoods of people, infrastructure development (area development) and civil development programmes (welfare policy measures). Further, it also creates awareness and mobilizing the involvement of local community. Examples: SEWA in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission, etc.

Another important communities-level organisation is **Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs)** which improve on waste management, water conservation and improving local infrastructure. While RWAs were initially focused on neighbourhood issues, they have expanded their role in public policy decision-making, especially in Delhi through the Bhagidari program (Chakrabarti, 2007).

Notable is also for instance national-wide program such as **Swachch Sagar, Surakshit Sagar**; In 2022 India launched a 75-day long campaign to clean 75 beaches nationwide as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, celebrating 75 years of independence. This promoted environmental conservation and commemorating the nation's milestone of 75 years of independence (Times of India, 2022).

4. Suggestions for Improvement

- ➢ Public Administration offices include for instance improves and facilitates digitalization, smoothen administrative processes, adapt transparency and open-government models.
- ➢ The government includes for instance promoting to implement good governance practices, empowering local and state governments and encouraging PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships).

> Need to improve more institutional collaboration buy involving multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process particularly to provide additional grant for good governance research in higher learning institutions and research centers, promoting collaboration with international partners and encouraging multi-disciplinary studies on public administration and policy process.

> Finally, establishing the network of institutions which promotes the inter institutional co-ordination and its several stakeholders to solve various policy issues and enhance the quality of delivery mechanism.

5. Conclusion

This research highlights the importance of identifying and disseminating current best practices in public administration in India, acknowledging its pivotal role in social development and governance. Indian public administration, despite facing persistent challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency and inadequate infrastructure, has made significant strides through initiatives like e-governance, public-private partnerships, and human resource development.

The evolution of public administration in India from a state-centric model to a service-oriented, citizen-focused approach signifies progress toward more responsive and effective governance. By incorporating cultural, demographic, and developmental considerations, the system adapts to India's unique needs. The literature highlights the importance of professional frameworks, legal regulations, and collaborative governance to ensure efficiency and avoid functional overlap.

The recommendations provided, spanning public administration offices, government, and academic institutions, offer a comprehensive roadmap for continued improvement. These include enhancing digitalization, empowering local governments, fostering public-private partnerships, and investing in governance-related research.

While challenges remain, the ongoing implementation of these practices and recommendations positions India on a promising trajectory toward achieving an inclusive, efficient, and accessible public administration system, essential for addressing the nation's socio-economic complexities and fostering sustainable development.

Acknowledgement

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