

**COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: AN OVERVIEW****Dr D. L. Pawar**

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INTRODUCTION

This Unit discusses the evolution, meaning, nature, scope, and significance of comparative public administration. Besides, Comparative Public Administration (CPA) contributing to the science of administration by studying administrative systems in a cross-institutional, intra-national, cross-national, intra-cultural, cross-cultural, and cross-temporal studies has also been explained.

EVOLUTION OF COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (CPA)

Comparison of various political systems has been a key concern of a political thinker, since the time of Aristotle. In contemporary times, there have been published a good number of studies on comparative constitutions and governments. However, comparison of administrative system has been undertaken only rarely by scholars. When political systems are compared, there is an obvious reference to their respective administrative systems that function within them, but such studies are only sketchy. Traditional comparative government and administrative studies were confined to big powers, such as the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Italy. This was a limitation in the traditional studies. Besides, the traditional analysis focused mainly on the organization of government institutions, with a negligible emphasis on the behavioural or dynamic aspects of the government systems. Besides, most studies were descriptive in nature and not analytical or explanatory or problem-oriented. Moreover, these studies did not take into account the interaction between the government systems and their environment. Fred Riggs calls these studies the "governments of foreign countries" rather than "comparative governments".

It should be appreciated that before the Second World War, there were hardly any 'developing' nations of the contemporary times. Most of them were colonies of the western powers and hence, there was hardly any interest in studying their government structures. Interest in comparative administration was only marginal in the pre-Second World War time, yet there were a few interesting exceptions. Woodrow Wilson in his seminal article "The Study of Administration" published in the Political Science Quarterly (1887) had suggested that the USA should learn from the patterns of European administrative systems without borrowing from them their centralized monarchical political systems. This was a clear comparative orientation. Even L. D. White, who published the first text book in Public Administration 'Introduction to the Study of Public Administration' in 1926, was interested in constructing principles of administration that would provide guidelines of action in public administration of Russia, Great Britain, Iraq, and the United States. Such a broad interest in traditional comparative public administration motivated the later advanced studies and orientations. Let us look at the factors that helped in the evolution of contemporary comparative public administration.

1. Experience during the Second World War:

Several scholars of western countries, particularly of the United States, had the opportunity of holding administrative positions in certain non-western nations during the war. Their experience provided an important insight that there were noticeable differences among the western and non-western nations in the sphere of their administrative structures and behaviour. These differences were primarily because of the diversity in socio-cultural and economic contexts of both types of nations. The Philippines and Japan, which were occupied by the USA for a few years, offered eminent examples of such diversity.

2. International Technical Assistance:

Programme With the creation of the United Nations in 1945, there was a substantial emphasis on providing financial and technical assistance to the nonwestern countries that were generally economically poor. Besides, there was the Marshall Plan of the US designed to provide such assistance



the administrative system more responsive to people's needs and aspirations. Moreover, the 'throughputs' of an administrative system have made such systems more rational in their approach and functioning.

11. Overcoming False Impressions

In traditional administrative theory, a purely 'structural' approach was adopted and hence the non-western countries, not having certain conventional structures of the west, were considered to be less developed. The structural-functional approach in comparative public administration has highlighted that there are common functions being performed by administrative systems of most nations. In developing nations, there may not be one-to-one relations between structures and functions, since a large number of administrative structures in such nations are multi-functional in character. This insight has thrown new light on the competence of administrative systems in developing nations. In sum, the comparative study of public administration has positively influenced the intellectual development of the discipline of public administration and has broadened its structure, processes, roles, and behaviour, as such.

CONCLUSION

This Unit has discussed the evolution of CPA since post-Second World War time to its current status and its meaning, nature, scope, and significance. It highlights the co-existence of normative studies, empirical studies, ideographic studies, nomothetic studies, non-ecological studies, and ecological studies in the discipline of comparative public administration and this co-existence represents the nature of the discipline. The structures, processes, behaviour, impacts, environment of public administration, when examined from a comparative perspective define the scope of comparative public administration. Finally, CPA contributing to the science of public administration, re-enforcing the Inter-disciplinary and ecological orientation, calling for development administration and administrative development has positively influenced the intellectual development of the discipline of public administration and has broadened its structure, processes, roles, and behaviour, as such.

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