



READINGS IN

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

English Program – First Year – Second Part : English Section
Week 11

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Chapter Two:

Scope, significance, and challenges of Public Administration

Learning Objectives

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After reading the current chapter you would be able to:

- ❑ Discuss the role of public administration.
- ❑ Discuss the impotence of public administration.
- ❑ Define the Public Officer's role.
- ❑ Discuss Public Officers' General Working Conditions.
- ❑ Discuss the challenges to the public sector and solutions.
- ❑ Discuss the key challenges facing public sector leaders.
- ❑ Learn what public sector leaders need to respond to challenges.
- ❑ Learn about the need to reform the public sector.

Role and Importance of Public Administration

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The significance of the public administration can be scrutinized from three points of view, namely;

- i) its significance as an instrument of governance;
- ii) its significance as an instrument of development and change; and
- iii) its significance in modern domestic welfare state.

Significance of Public Administration as an Instrument of Governance

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- The core function of the Government is to govern i.e. to maintain peace and public order and to ensure the safety and security of the life and property of the citizens. It has to ensure that the contracts are fulfilled by the citizens and their disputes settled. This most significant role of the government is to be fulfilled through the instrument of public administration.
- Public administration is an instrument for implementing public policies and governs.
- *Dear reader, worthy note that “governance” is not just “government”. Yet, it is true, that sometimes governance and government are used interchangeably. One possible reason that “governance” and “government” happen to be interchanged is mentioned by B. C. Smith (2007).*
- Finally, Public Administration is a stabilizing force in society.

Significance of Public Administration as an Instrument of Development and Change

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- The public administration has to play a very significant role as an instrument of development and change. The administration of the country reflects the genius of its people and embodies their qualities, desires and aspirations. Whenever the people decide to proceed on the road to development, their main instrument is public administration.
- *The public administration is the authority techniques to manage the national resources in order to build the nation and create a better quality of life for its people*
- *Public administration is also an instrument of social change and development*
- Public administration's role as a change agent is particularly crucial in developing nations. It is expected of the state at present to work for accelerating socio-economic change and not to be a passive agency to maintain the status quo.

Significance of Public Administration as an Instrument of Welfare State

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- According to *Gerald Caiden* public administration has assumed the following crucial roles in contemporary modern society: preservation of polity; maintenance of stability and order; institutionalization of Socio-Economic changes; management of large scale commercial services; ensuring growth and economic development; protection of the weaker sections of society; formation of public opinion and influencing public policies.
- *Prof. Wallace Brett Donham* has rightly said, “*If our civilization fails, it will be mainly because of administration*”.
- The welfare State has to identify these problems and devise solutions for them. The formulation of these schemes and their implementation is another significant function of public administration. The welfare of the people depends very much on the way the public administration functions.

The Public Officer's role

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A Public Officer, in his capacity as a government employee, can be described as follows:

- ***The public officer is a government employee***

The public officer works for the government. Different clerical officers, administrative and permanent secretaries in different ministries do all supervisory or executive tasks. Basically, a public officer attaches to a Ministry.

- ***The public officer serves in the different departments of the government***

The public officer works in different ministries. The incumbent is subject to mobility across or within the departments where he/she is entitled to work based on competencies and qualifications.

The Public Officer's role

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- ***The public officer works for the government and is entitled to such a duty for 24 hours***

According to public service regulations, any public officer should firstly comply with his allocated job.

- ***The public officer usually holds a permanent, pensionable job***

All public officers' jobs are permanent because once they join a ministry; they work on a probationary period for one year or two before becoming a fully-fledged employee. The job is then 'permanent' as it lasts until retirement.

Public Officers' General Working Conditions

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This section broadly speaks of the general employment conditions that public officers are entitled to in the common workplace settings. They could be basically similar in most countries:

- ***Permanent and pensionable job***

Jobs at public sector are permanent and pensionable. People like to feel secure when they are doing a job even if the salary offered to them is fairly low.

- ***Regulated work hours***

Generally speaking, hours of work are regulated. In Egypt, the weekly working days in ministries, government departments, public bodies and local administration units are five days a week, with Friday and Saturday as official holidays, at most governmental bodies the formal working hours are from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Public Officers' General Working Conditions

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- ***Relatively service-based, less cumbersome (exhausting) jobs***

The general perception is that jobs are less demanding and less challenging in government than in the private sector.

- ***Status and recognition***

Employees in the public service can claim themselves “white-collar” officers.

- ***Decent salaries***

The government shall be a decent employer as every job bears a salary structure including the entry point, the top salary along with increments and other progress through the job.

- ***Central location jobs***

Most jobs are done in the capital city and strategic locations of a country.

