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Positivist leads of the Minnowbrook Conference-1 and its application in the Indian perspective: a conceptual analysis

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ABSTRACT

The Indian gubernatorial is cosseted with rife challenges of Policy Formulation (PF) and Policy Implementation (PI). The Minnowbrook Conference-1 has provided some positivist and pragmatic tangential regarding the efficiency factors in managing the political and permanent executives. The conundrum on the question of laying ones suzerainty on the permanent executive's part takes a heavy toll on the bona fide en masse and a nostrum to this can be achieved by a thorough analysis of the Minnowbrook conferences and refine the prime cream of Public Administration. Politics, Administration, Meritocracy, Aristocracy, Bureaucracy and Human Resource Management and Mobocracy (PAMABHRMM) have to make a non noxious venn diagram which is both magnanimous and genial to public opinion—for core competence to be achieved. An eclectic mix of variegated streams of thoughts deliberated on a litany of issues and this paper attempts to rummage through the critical appraisals and positives and precipitate the kernel which may be of prime importance to the Indian style of Public Adminstration.

Keywords: Minnowbrook Conference-1, Human Resource Management, Public Administration, Core Competence

I. INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION

Woodrow Wilson wrote an essay named "The study of Administration" and with this had laid the terra firma to the fact that there was a dire need for the subject of Public Administration to be administered asunder and to be studied in a dedicated way and required to be extracted from its parent cell called Political Sciences for to be kept in the spotlight for detailed examination. With this journal he set in stone the story of the annals of what we pronounce as the modern day Human Resource Management. Managing humans or in an atavistic tone it would be pertinent to denote that the orchestration of the workforces in order to solve a specific purpose in the most efficient way was the core concern of any organization. But this theory had worked well and relied completely on the principle of coerced motivation i.e. by the sheer strength of pelf or an extrinsic motivator a psychology or demeanor of an individual could be modified to suit ones particular need and fulfill a stated objective. Taking a dip in the retrospective, we in more facile way can see that man was being treated akin to an animal—where one can be regimented and trained to perfection in order to execute a particular work order in a fashioned and tailored way in order suit one perfectionist's needs.

This quest of gaining efficiency in works processes lacked a vision and was light years away from veracity. There was a triumvirate system of stringent hierarchy which led this administrative apparatus to set in motion. The three rules are discussed as follows:

1. There are dedicated experts who brainstorm and during these brainstorming sessions, only the issues which lead to a slack were taken. They were rather lopsided in this concept and were vouching for the fact that as there were cognitive limits and time constraints, it was not feasible to digest and process a huge clutter of micro information and hence what majorly affects the organizational efficacy was only to be addressed. Addressing of the issue became the core principle and the result that ensued was hamartia. The assumption was that every man had the same desire i.e. to maximize his self gains in form of pelf pooling. The organizations in order to satiate his needs required some form of contributions and this individual organizational contribution has worked wonders for the capitalist and colonialist era government.

2. The opinions of the experts were to be laid in stone and tone was set by them only. There was no room for deflection from their established STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP's) and hence the SOPs had to be blindly implemented in both letter and spirit by every person without raising a voice in reprisal. This theory gives an

imprimatur to even the most vegetative veterans to turn a blind eye where real welfare has to be taken. The person can be castigated and berated for not showing acquiescence and obedience to the high command orders. This order feeding-digesting mechanism works wonders in military tactics where there are tactical plans but public can't be considered or compared on the same plank. The mechanism which is used for decimation can in no universe be implemented for peoples welfare but the processes can be aped and modified that abets the managerial processes. The allegory that the services shall be less business like is a doomed one and more normative perspectives shall be explored in the Indian context.

3. The steel façade nature of the decision making body and decision implementation body precluded the prospects of even taking constructive suggestions from grassroots level. This was done as public opinion was considered as a clumsy nuisance and that again too much of information processing was a sheer waste of both time and endeavors. The anglophilic administration in India had been able to strengthen its grip on its Indian vast territories by using the steel cage irony but in a democratic nation, how can one ill afford to indulge into non conducive policy formulation and implementation.

II. MINNOWBROOK CONFERENCE-1

Under the aegis of Dwight Waldo in the year 1968 at the Minnowbrook Conference Centre of the Syracruse University was the first Minnowbrook Conference held. It was found that neither the study nor the practice of Public Administration was responding in appropriate manner or measure to the mounting turbulence and critical problems of the day. This emboldened statement was oozing of the fact that there was something amiss with the ways and means of treatment of Public Administration as both a discipline and practice. The scholar's fraternity demanded a pro-radical approach for a ginormous change in the way Public Administration was accessed. There was a call for radical reorientation of Public Administration and a clarion call was given for a more "SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION" and eschewing with the traditional techniques of efficiency, maximization, corpulent production and stringent compliance with the rules, regulations and stern code of conduct. The triumvirate essence of the conference had many offshoots of pertinent importance. The first one is focus on equity i.e. unequal distribution for unequal faucets of the masses. The second is values in administration i.e. the non-scientific nature of management. The third and final is the instrumental role that the gyrate of management has to play in order to initiate the change that it wants to ensure within the society. The change has to be internal first and the trickledown effect will automatically ensue.

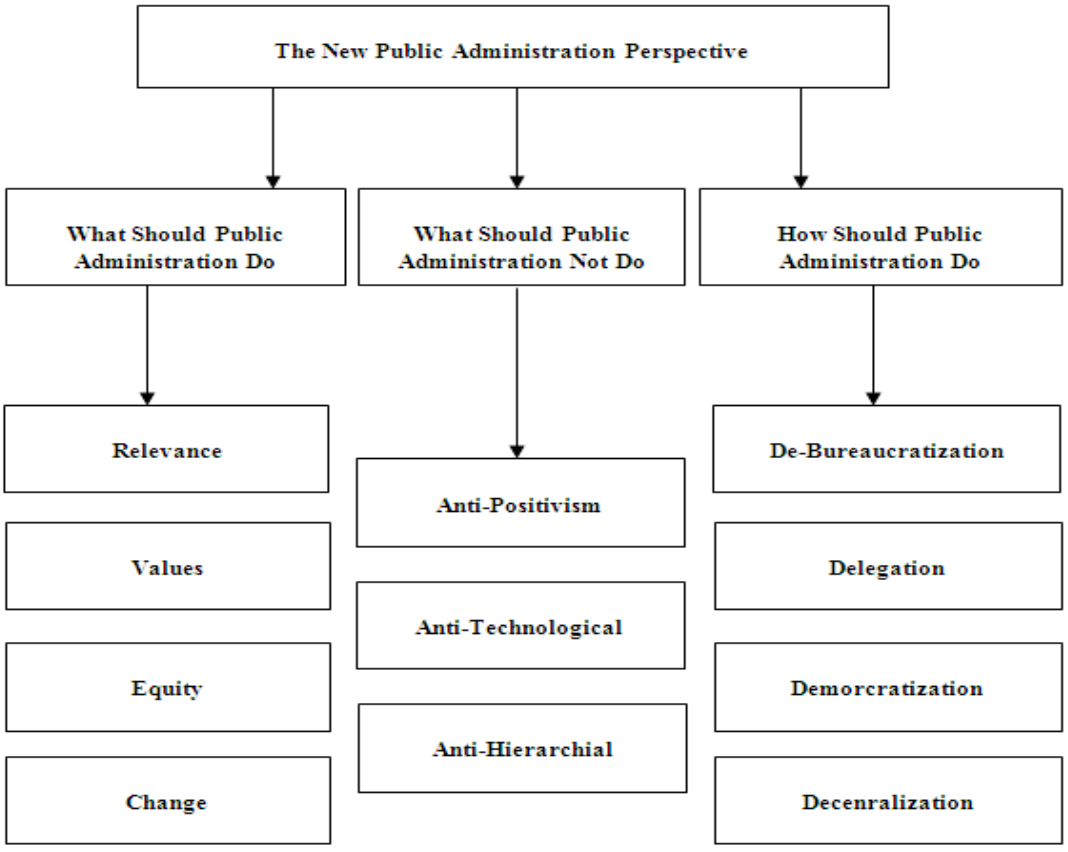

Figure 1: A schematic diagram containing the elixir of the Minnow brook Conference-1 (Source: Authors Compilation)

III. WHAT SHOULD PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DO:

A. Relevance

Public Administration had no relevance and was not pertinent to the immediate case of concern. The fact that Public Administration showed a dormant phase of rigor mortis had to change and hence there was a demand that the relevance canvass had to be stretched further to wider reaches of the masses and not to be contained into a bubble of the numero unos. The public part of the administration was completely evanescent and no good could come out of any system if it was obviating the humane or human part of the supra system. In simpler tone and tenor, it is facile to state that the public had to now play a more pronounced role in a democratic nation. India being the world's largest democracy could not afford to be blind and deaf to public opinion and public opinion in a democratic nation doesn't work as gently as homeopathy but brutally and mercilessly as surgeon's silverware. The contemporary ruling dispensation in India has taken a pro-active step in this faction and the result is the formation of a new think tank called as the NAITONAL INSTITUTE FOR TRANSFORMATION OF INDIA (NITI) which takes suggestions is a symbiotic form i.e. from ground level. If the people for whom the policies are not consulted, it's obvious that they won't be very welcoming and receptive on the policies that are willy-nilly foisted upon them. There implementers seems to suffer from a means-ends reversal syndrome where they become so obsessed with the rules and regulations that they forget the ultimate purpose for which the rules and regulations are made. The Social Values aiming at social equity and social change and social welfare must be at the core.

B. Value

It was argued that till now the field of Public Administration was concentrated more on "value neutrality" and under the garb of positivism/professionalism, the value part has been totally obfuscated. Public Administration must address the relevant questions pertaining to the veracities of public life and take a normative or value driven perspective. Public Administration scholars argued that administration as a proactive institution for equity and change can only be created once there is relevant and normative orientation. Frederickson captioned that The New Public Administration is less generic and more public, less descriptive and more prescriptive, less institutional oriented and more client oriented, less neutral and more normative yet no less scientific all the same. Frederickson argued that value orientation seeking social equity is not mutually exclusive with scientificness—Science is not the goal but only means to achieve social goals.

C. Equity

According to Frank Marini, The purpose of PA is the reduction of economic, social and psychic harrowing and the enhancement of life opportunities for those inside and outside the organization. The Administration should not be infirm itself but for the weak by the medium of equity. That means that in an unequal societal stratum, there must be differential treatments and the most to be preponderated on the pariah class of the society.

D. Change

Suddenly there appeared that there was a volte face in the face of fiery discussions and was found that man is prone to adaptation but does resist even an iota of change. The New Public Administration advocated for a radical change and due to the cause that the penultimate aim of Public Administration shall not be business as usual but how the ends are being fulfilled i.e. the ultimate beneficiaries welfare was kept at the helm. Transformation in Public Administration has to be veracity and shall be able to address the critical issues of the day so that the ailments can be given a palliative pill. In other words, there was an epiphany that there was actually no fixed apparatus for delivery of the services to the ultimate beneficiaries but it was the sheer purpose that should be fulfilled through the people itself and that too in a suggestive and constructive manner. The change has to be twofold and that too in a chronological order i.e. the change has to first happen in the mindset of the bureaucrats and then the change will seep down to the masses itself. It was taken for a given that the change within the policy formulating and implementing agencies will lead to further changing the society at large.

IV. WHAT SHOULD PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION NOT DO

The Three Anti-Goals Are:

I. **Anti-Positivism** i.e. the New Public Administration rejects administration without value orientation.

II. **Anti-Technological** i.e. New Public Administration rejects any model of administration which treats human as non emotive, non creative cog in the machine—rejected the machine model and argued the PA is dealing with humans, not machines. Hence this is contrary to Woodrow Wilson's theory of the means being "less un-business like."

III. Anti-Hierarchial i.e. what is needed is an open flexible and symbiotic organization where lateral thinking is present. The suggestions are not discarded and opinion of everyone matters which leads to better decision making and policy formulation. This is based on the modern type of hybrid organizations that work on Artificial Intelligence. There is an advantage of the anti-hierarchal framework that it expunges even the slightest prospect of self aggrandizement and usurpative tendencies.

V. MANAGERIAL SIGNIFICANCE

This research paper has given us an insight of how there has been a quest to find the best way of doing things in the best way possible and that too by keeping every domain satiated. Equity and value laden concepts have been the core of Minnow brook conference-1 and it was found that rather than concentrating on the administration part, it would be sensible to focus on the public part of administration. But, we must tread with caution because the one-size-fits-all does not do wonders in disparate ecologies. There is a saying that if you see a thief sharpening his knife, we must borrow only the skills in which he sharpens the knife and not his heinous intention of killing or murdering.

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