

RECIPROCAL ROLE PERCEPTION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK: A STUDY OF ADMINISTRATORS AND POLITICIANS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dr. Sapna K. Sharma*

Abstract

The administrators and politicians are the main stakeholders responsible for the implementations of government schemes and programmes. The study of interlinking politics and administration has become a very important aspect in the field of public administration. The reciprocal role perception of administrators and politicians becomes important while studying the relationship between administrators and politicians. The present paper is an attempt, i) to study the reciprocal role perception of administrators and politicians and ii) To analyse the opinion of administrators and politicians on responsibilities to work. The samples of 116 politicians and 104 administrators have been drawn from Chamba and Una districts of Himachal Pradesh. The study concluded cordial relation among administrators and politicians can help in implementing the Government schemes and programme in a more effective manner.

I. Introduction

A developing democracy cannot function properly when harmonious relationship between politicians and administrators are strained and if there is lack of mutual respect and absence of any identity of goals (Bhambri, 1972). The relationship between politics and administration has evolved over a fairly long period of time. It seeds were perhaps sown by Montesquiev in 1748 when he postulated the need to separate legislative and executive powers and their union would militate against individual liberty. But with time the complexities of the governmental functions increased and the concentration of politicians, administrators and academicians started over the separation and relationship between the administration and politics. The study of relationship between politics

*Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, NSCBM Government College Hamirpur, HP, email- sapna.gc@gmail.com

and administration became a very important aspect to define an identity in the field of public administration.

If politicians and civil servants are held in low esteem, if their work is derided, if abuse and invective is poured on them continuously, if loose and unsubstantial allegations are made about incompetence, dishonesty, laziness and indifference to the public interest, it is unlikely that officials will develop or display qualities of integrity, industry and public spirit (Robson, 1956). The present paper is an attempt, (1) To study the reciprocal role perception of administrators and politicians and (2) To analyse the opinion of administrators and politicians on responsibilities to work.

II. Research Framework

The present study is based on the primary data collected through a sample survey. For the collection of primary data well prepared schedules, which consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions, were administered to the respondents selected through sampling method. For the collection of primary data the present study has adopted multi stage random-cum-purposive sampling. At the first stage, two districts were selected to represent Himachal Pradesh. Out of 12 districts two districts, namely Chamba and Una were selected purposively. The selection of district was made due to the reason that Chamba was part of old Himachal and Una became part of the State after reorganization of the state. Moreover, both districts have same number of constituencies. At the second stage, two blocks, one from each district, were selected purposively. These blocks were Chamba and Haroli. At the third stage, panchayats were selected. Out of total panchayats in the selected blocks, 25 per cent of panchayats were selected from each selected block. There were 39 gram panchayats in Chamba block, out of these 39 panchayats, 10 gram panchayats (25 per cent of the total gram panchayats) were selected. In Haroli block, out of total 43 gram panchayats, 11 gram panchayats (25 per cent of the total gram panchayats) were selected. At the fourth stage, a total of 220 respondents, which includes 116 politician (56 from Chamba district and 60 from Una district) and 104 administrators (51 from Chamba and 53 from Una district) were selected.

III. Result and Discussion

(A) Administrators and Politicians: Reciprocal Role Perception

To ascertain perception in this regard a good number of questions have been asked over containing different role expectations. Each respondent was required to express his agreement or disagreement with the items that came closest to what he considered to be his role vis-à-vis the occupant of counter position. The data collected has been presented in Table 1, which reveals that majority of administrators, that is, 60.78 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 62.26 per cent of administrators in Una district and 61.54 per cent of administrators in overall sample think it quite unnecessary to involve politicians in the discharge of their duties, but 39.22 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 37.74 per cent of administrators in Una district and 38.46 per cent of administrators in overall sample like to involve politicians. It reflects that administrators do not favour any association with the politicians in this regard. They want to work independently. On the other hand, 41.38 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 34.48 per cent of politicians in Una district and 37.93 per cent of administrators in overall sample were disagreeing with it. They thought that politicians must involve by the administrators in disposing their administrative duties. But, majority of politicians (that is, 58.62 per cent in Chamba district, 65.52 per cent of in Una district and 62.07 per cent in overall sample) agreed with it.

Table 1: Administrators and Politicians: Reciprocal Role Perception

Response On		Chamba District		Una District		Grand Total	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
When disposing his duties, an administrator has nothing to do with politicians	AD	31 (60.78)	20 (39.22)	33 (62.26)	20 (37.74)	64 (61.54)	40 (38.46)
	PL	34 (58.62)	24 (41.38)	38 (65.52)	20 (34.48)	72 (62.07)	44 (37.93)
Administrator must be guided by the advice of the	AD	0 (0.00)	51 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	53 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	104 (100.00)
	PL	15 (25.86)	43 (74.14)	17 (29.31)	41 (70.69)	32 (27.59)	84 (72.41)

politicians in disposing his duties and functions.							
The administrator should consult the politicians and get their help and cooperation in carrying out the different tasks and functions.	AD	17 (33.33)	34 (66.67)	16 (30.19)	37 (69.81)	33 (31.73)	71 (68.27)
	PL	38 (65.52)	20 (34.48)	37 (63.79)	21 (36.21)	75 (64.66)	41 (35.34)
The administrator's responsibility should cease once he has explained government policies.	AD	18 (35.29)	33 (64.71)	14 (26.42)	39 (73.58)	32 (30.77)	72 (69.23)
	PL	19 (32.76)	39 (67.24)	20 (34.48)	38 (65.52)	39 (33.62)	77 (66.38)

Note: 1) Figures in parentheses represent percentage.

2) 'AD' represents 'Administrators and PL' represents 'Politicians'

Regarding next item hundred percent of administrators do not want any kind of political advice in disposing his duties and functions. They want autonomy in this respect. On the other hand, majority of politicians do not want to encroach into the sphere of administrators. In this regard 74.14 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 70.69 per cent of politicians in Una district and 72.41 per cent of politicians in overall sample disagreed that administrators must be guided by the advice of the politicians in disposing his duties and functions. They felt that administrators know how to perform administrative functions.

Out of total administrators 33.33 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 30.19 per cent of administrators in Una district and 31.73 per cent of administrators in overall sample felt that politicians should consult local politicians and get their help and cooperation in carrying out the different tasks and functions. While 66.67 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 69.81 per cent of administrators in Una district and 68.27 per cent of administrators in overall sample disagreed with it. On the other hand, majority of politicians (that is, 65.52 per cent in Chamba district, 63.79 per cent in Una district and 64.66 per cent in overall sample) agreed that administrators should consult the politicians and get their help and cooperation in carrying out the different tasks and functions.

In relation to next items it is found that 30.77 per cent of administrators and 33.62 per cent of politicians in overall sample recognized that administrator's responsibility should not cease once he has explained government policies to politicians. District-wise data reveals that 35.29 per cent of administrators and 32.76 per cent in Chamba district and 26.42 per cent of administrators and 34.48 per cent of politicians in Una district agreed with it. On the other hand, 64.71 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 73.58 per cent of administrators in Una district and 69.23 per cent of administrators in overall sample disagreed that administrator's responsibility should cease once he has explained government policies to politicians. while 67.24 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 65.52 per cent of politicians in Una district and 59.62 per cent of politicians in overall sample hold the same view in this connection.

(B) Administrators and Politicians opinion on Responsibility to Work

Another point to be noted in connection to interaction between administrators and politicians pertains to the extent to which each of the interacting groups accepts and respects the legitimacy of any pattern of responsibility to work. It is important to ascertain whether or not there is consensus in each group on what would be ideal level of division of work. The responses on selected questions, in this regard on has been presented in Table 2 (a) and Table 2 (b), which depicts that 68.63 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 60.38 per cent of administrators in Una district and 64.42 per cent of administrators in overall sample were of the

opinion that formation of broad plans and policies is the responsibility of politicians, while 23.53 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 33.96 per cent of administrators in Una district and 28.85 per cent in overall sample realized that both administrators and politicians are responsible for the formation of broad plans and policies. The responses of politicians show that they also believe that the formation of broad policies and plans is the responsibility of politicians. As much as 65.52 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 60.35 per cent of politicians and 62.93 per cent of politicians in overall sample think that formation of broad policies and plans is the responsibility of politicians. It is surprising that 31.03 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 34.48 per cent of politicians in Una district and 32.76 per cent of politicians in overall sample were of the opinion that formulation of policies and plans is the responsibility of both administrators and politicians. It is true that administrators are intimately associated with policy formulation processes.

However, this association takes the form of collecting relevant information and formulation of alternative strategies and their comparative costs. This association does not give them the right to claim to have a decisive say in policy formulation. They perform an advisory function in the context of policy formulation and it is up to the politicians to accept their advice or not. It can be inferred that majority of politicians and administrators felt that formulation of policies and plans is the responsibility of politicians.

Table 2 (a): Administrators and Politicians: Opinion on Responsibility to Work

Response On		Chamba District			Una District		
		Administrators responsibility	Politicians responsibility	Both	Administrators responsibility	Politicians responsibility	Both
Formation of broad plans and policies.	AD	4 (7.84)	35 (68.63)	12 (23.53)	3 (5.66)	32 (60.38)	18 (33.96)
	PL	2 (3.45)	38 (65.52)	18 (31.03)	3 (5.17)	35 (60.35)	20 (34.48)
Fixation of priorities for programmes	A	3 (5.88)	31 (60.79)	17 (33.33)	7 (13.21)	21 (39.62)	25 (47.17)
	PL	7 (12.07)	32 (55.17)	19 (32.76)	12 (20.69)	26 (44.83)	20 (34.48)

Implementation of programmes	A	43	0	8	41	0	12
	D	(84.31)	(0.00)	(15.69)	(77.36)	(0.00)	(22.64)
	PL	53	0	5	52	0	6
		(91.38)	(0.00)	(8.62)	(89.66)	(0.00)	(10.34)
Allocation of quotas and permits.	A	42	3	6	42	2	9
	D	(82.35)	(5.89)	(11.76)	(79.25)	(3.77)	(16.98)
	PL	45	4	9	40	5	13
		(77.58)	(6.90)	(15.52)	(68.97)	(8.62)	(22.41)
Attend the emergency situations.	A	8	2	41	7	3	43
	D	(15.69)	(3.92)	(80.39)	(13.21)	(5.66)	(81.13)
	PL	15	4	39	11	4	43
		(25.86)	(6.90)	(67.24)	(18.96)	(6.90)	(74.14)
Attend the grievances of public.	A	9	12	30	15	15	23
	D	(17.65)	(23.53)	(58.82)	(28.30)	(28.30)	(43.40)
	PL	15	19	24	17	18	23
		(25.87)	(32.76)	(41.38)	(29.31)	(31.03)	(39.66)

Note: 1) Figures in parentheses represent percentage.

2) 'AD' represents 'Administrators and PL' represents 'Politicians'.

Table: 2 (b): Administrators and Politicians: Opinion on Responsibility to Work

Response On		Grand total		
		Administrators responsibility	Politicians responsibility	Both
Formation of broad plans and policies.	AD	7 (6.73)	67 (64.42)	30 (28.85)
	PL	5 (4.31)	73 (62.93)	38 (32.76)
Fixation of priorities for programmes.	AD	10 (9.62)	52 (50.00)	42 (40.38)
	PL	19 (16.38)	58 (50.00)	39 (33.62)
Implementation of programmes.	AD	84 (80.77)	0 (0.00)	20 (19.23)
	PL	105 (90.52)	0 (0.00)	11 (9.48)
Allocation of quotas and permits.	AD	84 (80.77)	5 (4.81)	15 (14.42)
	PL	85 (73.28)	9 (7.76)	22 (18.96)
Attend the emergency situations.	AD	15 (14.42)	5 (4.81)	84 (80.77)
	PL	26 (22.41)	8 (6.90)	82 (70.69)
Attend the	AD	24	27	53

grievances of public.		(23.08)	(25.96)	(50.96)
	PL	32 (27.59)	37 (31.90)	47 (40.52)

Note: 1) Figures in parentheses represent percentage.

2) 'AD' represents 'Administrators and PL' represents 'Politicians'.

With regard to fixing of priorities for programme responses in the Table shows that 60.79 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 39.62 per cent of administrators in Una district and 50 per cent of administrators in overall sample believed that the fixation of priorities for programme is the responsibility of politicians. While 55.17 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 44.83 per cent of politicians in Una district and 40.38 per cent of politicians in overall sample were of the opinion that fixation of priorities for programme is the responsibility of both administrators and politicians. Politicians as a representative of people are responsible to fix priorities for programmes, but it is surprising that 12.07 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 20.69 per cent of politicians in Una district and 16.38 per cent of politicians in overall sample realized that it is the responsibility of administrators. Regarding first two items in the table it is found that majority of administrators and politicians were not clear about the distribution of functions.

Next item is implementation of programmes. Implementation is the specific area of administration. Administration is there to implement public policies and programmes with great success. In this regard there seems a good deal of consensus between administrators and politicians Table shows that 84.31 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 77.36 per cent of administrators in Una district and 80.77 per cent in overall sample opined that the responsibility of implementation solely lies with administrators. On the other hand, 91.38 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 89.66 per cent of politicians in Una district and 90.52 per cent of politicians in overall sample realized that implementation of public policy is the responsibility of administrators. But, the percentage of those respondents who were of the opinion that both administrators and politicians are responsible for implementation of public policies and programmes was low. It reveals that both were not clear in their mind that whose responsibility is this. As much as 19.23 per cent of

administrators and 9.48 per cent of politicians in overall sample viewed that it is the responsibility of both administrators and politicians. However, it can be inferred that majority of respondents were in the favour that implementation of public policies and programmes is the responsibility of administrators.

The next item represent those decision areas where political pressures have a much more direct bearing than anything else. In the milieu of political competition to ensure stability and durability of their political support structure, politicians have to satisfy demands of their supporters. Also prevalence of cast, religion and regional consideration in the distribution of economic benefits, allocation of quotas and permits and disposal of public grievances make decision making process vulnerable to the pushes and pulls of conflicting demands. All these factors taken together create a situation where political consideration greatly impinges on administrative decision making. In this regard 82.35 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 79.25 per cent of administrators in Una district and 80.77 per cent of administrators in overall sample were of the opinion that it is primarily for the administrators to take decision in regard to distribution of quotas and permits. While 11.76 per cent of administrators in Chamba district, 16.98 per cent of administrators in Una district and 14.42 per cent of administrators in overall sample expressed their opinion in favour of sharing this responsibility with politicians. However, 77.58 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 68.97 per cent of politicians in Una district agreed that administrators should take decision on the distribution of quotas and permits. While 15.52 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 22.41 per cent of politicians in Una district and 18.96 per cent of politicians in overall sample were of the opinion that both administrators and politicians are responsible for it.

In regard to next item, that is, dealing emergency situations, the fact that bureaucracy in the developing country, like that of our, seldom forward looking, makes for administrative confusion when it suddenly faced with some emergency situation. As a consequence, politicians and non-governmental organizations have to come forward to solve the problem. Thus it is clear that administrators alone cannot handle the problem, they

have to depend on the cooperation of politicians. This is reflected in the responses of administrators and politicians. In this regard data in Table reveals that majority of respondents (both administrators and politicians) agreed that the responsibility lies in both. As much as 80.39 per cent of administrators and 67.24 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 81.13 per cent of administrators and 74.14 per cent of politicians in Una district and 80.77 per cent of administrators and 70.69 per cent of politicians in overall sample were of the opinion that both administrators and politicians should share the responsibility of dealing with the emergency situations. But 14.42 per cent of administrators and 22.41 per cent of politicians in overall sample believed it the responsibility of administrators, whereas 4.81 per cent of administrators and 6.90 per cent of politicians felt that dealing with emergency situation is the responsibility of politicians. It can be inferred that administrators and politicians have similar viewpoint that dealing with emergency situation is the responsibility of both administrators and politicians.

With regard to the disposal of grievances it should be noted that where bureaucracy is oriented towards law and order maintenance and has to deal with increasing demands from the people for services, it fails to quickly dispose of public grievances. This results in frequent political intervention in order to ensure public satisfaction. Data in above mentioned table shows that majority of both the samples agreed that in respect of disposal of public grievances the responsibility of decision making should be shared by both administrators and politicians. As much as 66.67 per cent of administrators and 60.34 per cent of politicians in Chamba district, 58.49 per cent of administrators and 56.90 per cent of politicians in Una district and 62.50 per cent of administrators and 58.62 per cent of politicians in overall sample felt that both administrators and politicians are responsible for disposing off the grievances of public. It is important to note that 11.54 per cent of administrators and 12.07 per cent of politicians in overall sample considered it the responsibility primarily of administrators. This low percentage reflects a lack of confidence on the part of administrators in the capacity of the administrative structure to cope with the grievances of public.

IV. Conclusion

It can be inferred that a majority of administrators tend to dissociate their role performance from any necessity on their part to give consideration to what politicians think or desire. It indicates that administrators do not perceive their role as subservient to politicians. On the basis of above discussion it can be concluded that in regard to those decision areas which should legitimately fall under the jurisdiction of administrators, politicians claim the right to make decisions. Policy formulation is one of the main areas which bring administrators and politicians closer to interact and formulate policies. Both, administrators and politicians, recognized that policy formulation is the concerned area of politicians. But it is also true that administrators are intimately associated with policy formulation process. This association takes the form of collecting relevant information and formulation of alternative strategies and their comparative costs. With regard to fixing of priority of programmes there found lack of consensus between politicians and administrators. 50 per cent of administrators felt that fixation of priority for programmes is the responsibility of politicians, while, 40.38 per cent of politicians believed that it is the responsibility of both. After formulation a policy has to be implemented so that desired result could be achieved. In this respect majority of administrators as well as politicians recognized that implementation is the concerned area of administrators and they are responsible for successful implementation of policies and programmes.

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