BLOCK 4

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

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THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 10 ECOLOGICAL APPROACH*

Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to :

- Examine the concept of ecology;
- Examine the Agraria and Industria Models given by Riggs;
- Discuss the Model of Fused-Prismatic-Diffracted societies;
- Bring out the characteristics of the Bazaar Canteen Model; and
- Analyse the Riggsian Model of economy.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

With Globalisation in its full bloom, the face of modern governments has undergone several structural changes.Public administration has acquired a multi-faceted approach towards meeting the roles and goals of any progressive society. Consequently, various theories have become important in understanding the problems that are prevalent and are being faced by the modern governments in today's world.One of them is the Ecological Approach.This Approach came into existence when Western Approaches were found to be inadequate in addressing problems of the developing nations and simultaneously many scholars were of the view that the Western Models and Theories were a complete misfit in the Third World countries.

After the second world war, many countries in Asia, Africa, which got liberated from Colonial Rule got more concerned with the task of nation building and social transformation. Most literature on development centered on development of first world countries. This realisation resulted in the conceptualisation of new concepts and approaches, which would serve the requirement of theThird World or developing

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countries and this paved the way for the Ecological Approach, which focused on studying the ecology of various environments of countries and designing conducive policies thereof. This Unit will explain the concept of ecology. It will bring out the nature of Agraria and Industria Models that preceded the Riggsian Fused-Prismatic-Diffracted Models. It will also examine the characteristic features of Prismatic societies.

10.2 CONCEPT OF ECOLOGY

The word 'ecology' has been borrowed from biology, which connotes the relationship between animal species and the natural environment. John.M.Gaus stressed on the need to study the concept of ecology to study the relationships between bureaucracy and its environment (*Cited* in Arora, 1984).The Ecological Approach is the forerunner of the General Systems Approach, which was given by Talcott Parsons in sociology. Fred Riggs being a sociologist himself developed the concept of Ecological Approach, which studied dynamic interactions between administrative system and its environment.Riggs was of the opinion that an administrative structure cannot function in isolation of its existing environment and that is how he assumed that the administrative system is a sub-system of society, which is influenced by other sub-systems and in turn influences them. Ecological Approach, therefore, states that administrative system exists in a cultural context, which has a two-way communication.

Riggs believed that a society has to perform certain functions and these functions compel the individuals to form structures, which may be social, economic, political, communicational and symbolic.Therefore, administration is culture-bound. Fred Riggs in his Book entitled "The Ecology of Public Administration"(1961) has explored the dynamics of interaction between public administration and its external environment. However, the adoption of this Approach was first suggested by Dwight Waldo in 1955.To understand the Ecological Approach in a larger perspective, it is important to study the *two* important categories of models of Riggs and these are the Agraria and Industria Models and the Fused-Prismatic- Diffracted Models.

10.3 AGRARIA AND INDUSTRIA MODELS

Riggs classified societies into agricultural and industrial societies i.e., the Agraria and the Industria. The Models were developed to study the political and administrative transition in these societies. China and America are examples of Agraria and Industria Models respectively. Riggs assumed that all societies transformed from Agraria to Industria at some point of time in history.

The features of the *Agraria* Model are as follows:

- Predominant ascriptive, particularistic and diffused patterns.
- Limited social and spatial mobility and stable local groups.
- Relatively simple and stable occupational differentiation.
- Existence of differential stratification system.

Similarly, the characteristics of a "modern industrial society" i.e.,Industria were given as follows:

- Predominantly universalistic, specific and achievement norms.
- Higher social and spatial mobility.

- Well-developed occupational system insulated from other social structures.
- "Egalitarian" class system based on generalised patterns of occupational achievement.
- Prevalence of "associations", i.e., functionally-specific, non-ascriptive structure.

Soon the realisation dawned that these Models were two extremes of prevalent societies and were not helpful in studying the transitional societies i.e., the societies, which were not yet fully industrialised, but far more industrialised compared to the agrarian economies. Therefore, to address this problem, Riggs developed an equilibrium model 'Transitia' for the transitional societies which were less developed.The 'Agrarian-Industria' Model was criticised on the grounds that the 'Industria' does not exist in isolation, but has 'Agraria' included within it. Therefore, two separate polar type of societies could not exist.This Model assumed a unidirectional movement of the agrarian society to the industrialised society.The classification of the societies into two types of societies proved to be too abstract and general.

The analysis of the administrative sub-system was not dealt with in detail.On the contrary, the environment of the administrative sub-system was explained more extensively. Therefore, it was realised that the transitional societies could not be studied with the help of these Models.Riggs soon abandoned these Models and developed the concept or Model of 'Fused-Prismatic-Diffracted'for developing societies.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the Unit.

1) Explain the features of Agraria-Industria Model.

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10.4 FUSED-PRISMATIC-DIFFRACTED MODEL FOR DEVELOPING SOCIETIES

The ideal models of Fused, Prismatic and Diffracted societies aimed at studying the pre-historic, developing and developed societies. While explaining the concept of Structural-functional Approach, it was mentioned that social structures may perform a large number of functions in some societies. This was called 'multi-functionality' and such social structures were called 'functionally diffused'. On the other hand,'functionally specific' social structures performed only prescribed limited functions. Riggs called functionally diffused societies as 'Fused' and the functionally specific societies as 'Diffracted'. The society that was intermediate of these types of societies was called 'Prismatic'. Prismatic society had features of both Fused and Diffracted societies. Riggs emphasised that all societies are generally Prismatic and no society

could be called purely Fused or Diffracted. It is to be noted that Riggs developed Fused-Prismatic-Diffracted models only as parameters, and their exact characteristics are not found in any actual society.

Now, if we look at the Prismatic societies, they had the following features, which stood between those of Fused and Diffracted societies:The focus of Riggs's Model was the study of administrative sub-system,which he termed '*Sala'*. He studied the interaction of *Sala* Model with other social structures. The primary concern of Riggs was the study of administrative problems of the developing or transitional societies.The basic characteristics of the Prismatic societies were:

Heterogeneity

Heterogeneity refers to the simultaneous presence of different kinds of systems, practices and viewpoints. It means presence of features of both Fused and Diffracted societies e. g., presence of sophisticated intellectual class in urban areas, while in rural areas, traditional rural elders still have many political, religious, administrative roles etc. This may happen due to uneven social change. Similarly, the administrative sub-system of prismatic societies *Sala* exists along with modern 'bureau' and traditional 'courts' or 'chambers'.

Formalism

Formalism refers to "the degree of congruence between the formally prescribed and the effectively practiced i. e., between the norms and the realities."(Arora, 2008,*op.cit.*). Opposite of Formalism is called Realism. For example, government officials are bound by certain rules and regulations in any given organisation. However, they act in a different way considerably. The Diffracted and Fused societies have a high degree of Realism. Due to Formalism, the public officials have a lot of discretion in implementing the laws. The broad reason why such Formalism develops in a prismatic society is due to lack of ability of the society to guide the performance of the institutions respectively, i.e., lack of awareness in public, lack of commitment towards the societal objectives etc. This type of formalistic behaviour encourages corruption in a Prismatic society.

Due to such a 'Formalism-Realism' dichotomy between the Prismatic and Diffracted societies, administrative reforms can be brought out in Diffracted societies, which may lead to the desired changes in administrative system. However, in the Prismatic societies as the public officials indulge in behaviour, which is quite different from the officially prescribed one, administrative reforms have only a superficial impact.

Overlapping

This refers to "the extent to which formally differentiated structures of a Diffracted society coexist with the undifferentiated structures of a Fused type"(Arora, *ibid.*). In a Diffracted society,there is no overlapping as the various structures of the social system perform the specific functions in a more or less autonomous way, while in a Fused society all the functions are performed by the same social structures. There is no scope of overlapping in Fused societies as well. However, in a Prismatic society though new social structures are created still the society is dominated by the undifferentiated structures. In the administrative sub-system *Sala* overlapping means that the actual administrative action is determined by 'non-administrative' criteria such as social, cultural, political, economic or religious factors etc. Overlapping is manifested in a Prismatic society by many features e.g., Nepotism, Poly-communalism

or 'Clects', Poly-normavativism, lack of consensus, separation of authority and control. These are described below:

Nepotism

In a Prismatic society, the considerations of caste, religion, family and loyalty etc., are the deciding factors of official recruitment. Such factors exist despite being prohibited.However, in a Diffracted society, universalism is the criteria for official recruitment. This is due to the fact that in a Prismatic society 'Selectivism', which is intermediate between 'Universalism' and 'Particularism' prevails i.e., sometimes Universalism is followed, while sometimes Particularism is followed. This totally depends on the people that are to be selected and the favours they find with the selecting authority.

Poly-communalism or 'Clects'

Poly-communalism refers to the simultaneous existence in a society of various ethnic, religious and racial groups, which remain quite hostile to each other while in existence. These groups represent various interest groups existing in the community. These groups are termed as 'Clects' by Riggs and they are characterised by Attainment norms, Selectivism and Poly-functionalism. Clects are functionally diffuse and carry out semi-traditional type functions, but Clects are organised in a 'modern' way.

According to Riggs, ecological factors affect the administrative system also, so the existence of Clects affects *Sala'* also. As a result, the public officials develop a loyalty toward the community more than the government. However, during the course of official recruitment, the minority community gets disproportionate representation, therefore to balance it the "quota system" was started but that said Riggs generally results in mutual hostility among the various groups existing in the society. The *Sala* officials develop close nexus with some particular Clects and start functioning as their 'agents'. This affects the functioning of the government very badly and in turn generates corruption.

Poly-normativism

Poly-normativism is a unique feature of the prismatic societies, which means that the traditional behaviour pattern co-exists with 'new' sets of norms. This results in lack of consensus on norms of behaviour that affects the *Sala* also. *Sala* officials though publicly claim to follow objective, universalistic and achievement-oriented norms, but in reality they follow subjective, particularistic and ascriptive behaviour. The recruitment of public officials is generally done from certain groups only. Even if recruitment is done based on merit, the career advancement of the officials is affected by ascriptive values. The relationship between the citizens and *Sala* officials is also affected by Poly-normativism. Though the citizens expect the public officials to be honest and rule abiding, yet they do not have these virtues and avail benefits out of turn.

Separation of Authority and Control

In a Prismatic society, the authority and control structures are separated. Though such type of societies have highly centralised and concentrated authority structures in the society, still the control system is highly localised and dispersed.This means that there is a separation of "de-jure" authority (i.e., legitimate power) from "de-facto" control (i.e., illegitimate power). This control system finds roots in society's culture of Poly-communalism, Clects and Poly-normativism.

The politician-administrator relationship in a Prismatic society is thereby affected and results in "unbalanced polity" in which the *Sala* officials extensively influence the policy making process. Here the dominance of bureaucrats in the exercise of power makes the political process weak and the administration becomes unresponsive in prismatic societies. According to Riggs, in such a scenario if the public administration in transitional societies is strengthened, then it blocks the political development. The *Sala* officials become too powerful as authorities,but weak as administrators. This results in nepotism in recruitment, corruption and inefficiency in the administration of laws. Riggs then went on to develop the Bazaar Canteen Model, which was mostly driven by market forces prevailing in a prismatic society which further defined the ecology of society.

10.5 BAZAAR-CANTEEN MODEL: THE BASIS OF PRISMATIC ECONOMY

In transitional or prismatic societies, the economy is represented by *Bazaar Canteen* Model as propagated by F.W.Riggs.It was the economic sub-system of Prismatic society that was termed as *Bazaar Canteen* by Riggs. *Bazaar* is the market, which has demand-supply price determinancy, but the *Canteen* represents the state of price indeterminancy of the agrarian set-up.(Singh, 2002).Market forces of supply and demand determine the prices in a Diffracted society, but in a Fused society 'arena' factors (considerations which determine balance of power, prestige, solidarity, other religious, social and familial factors) dominate. In a Prismatic society, both market and arena factors interact in such a way that they produce a state of price indeterminacy and a price which might be called "common to all" that cannot be determined for a service or commodity.

The economic sub-system in Prismatic society behaves as "subsidised canteen", where the goods and services are provided at lower rates, for the members of special Clects or for politically influential groups who have 'access' to the canteen and as 'tributary canteen', where higher prices are charged, to the 'outside' members. This means that in Prismatic societies, the prices charged for the public services vary according to the relationship between the *Sala* official and his clientele (Sahni and Vayunandan, 2010).

This "bargaining" trend that is prevalent in the economic sub-system of the prismatic societies affects the financial administration, particularly areas such as budgeting, accounting, auditing, collection of taxes etc. The collection of government revenues also gets adversely affected resulting in low emoluments to the public officials. Such an atmosphere breeds corruption by the public officials to increase their income.

After analysing the main features of prismatic societies , it is also important to study the process of change in societies. If change is caused by external pressures like technical assistance programmes, the change is called "exogenous", on the other hand the change emanating due to internal processes is called "endogenous" change. "Equi-genetic" change results when both external and internal pressures for change act in equal measure. In Prismatic societies, both exogenous and endogenous changes take place. However, if the process of diffraction is more exogenetic then the prismatic phase has more formalism, heterogeneity and overlapping. Such societies are called 'exo-prismatic' societies. In 'endo-prismatic' societies, the Prismatic phase is more 'endogenetic' and the 'effective' behaviour precedes the formation of new institutions, while in exo-prismatic societies, first the formal institutions are created and then it is

expected that the behaviour of social structures will change according to the newly prescribed norms.

10.6 EVALUATION OF THE RIGGSIAN MODEL

The Riggsian Prismatic-Sala Model was also not spared from being criticised and the grounds for criticism are as follows:

Firstly, Riggs was criticised for using terms from physics, such as diffracted, refracted and prismatic, which do not explain the nature and functions of societies. *Secondly,* the Ecological Approach fails to explain the process of administrative reforms in the third world countries. In Riggsian analysis, the major focus is on the impact of external environmental factors on the administrative sub-system and not the other way round. For any study to be called ecological, it has to study the "interactions" of the system with its environment i.e., the effect of external environment on the system and system's effect on the environment.

Riggs has considered the impact of external socio-cultural, economic and political factors on *Sala,* but he has not considered the impact of *Sala* on socio-cultural and economic factors though the effect on political environment has been considered to some extent.In Prismatic societies, the administrative sub-systems are relatively autonomous capable of directing socio-economic change, the effect of such autonomy on socio-cultural dimensions also needs to be studied.

The Prismatic model gives a vivid picture of social system in a transitional society,but not that of the components and details of the administrative sub-system. The environmental factors affecting the administration have occupied much space in Riggsian models rather than the administrative sub-systems i.e., analysis of work output efficiency of different administrative sub-systems in different contextual settings of various organs of administration etc.Riggsian models do not look into the possibility of relative independence of various "social structures". It may be possible that a transitional society has 'prismatic' socio-cultural sub-systems, while a 'diffracted' bureaucratic sub-system. Such is the case in countries like India and Malaysia.

Thus, Prismatic society cannot be considered to have all the components as Prismatic, there may be cases when some social structures in such society are relatively diffracted in comparison to the other. So, there is a need to consider 'mixed categories' in a Prismatic Model.Most importantly, USA has been treated as a role model of a Diffracted society , although it is found to be more of a Prismatic society and the Ecological Approach tends to reflect the American psychology in which the Third World countries were generally looked down upon as backward, underdeveloped and their salvation was only possible if they moved towards the American model of *industria* society.

It cannot be generalised, as has been done in Riggsian models, that Formalism always enhances the "power" of the bureaucrats or that power of administrators is indirectly proportional to the administrative effectiveness. Much depends on the way the terms like 'power' are defined.Inter-relationships among several structural conditions should have been taken into account by Riggs to make his study more effective. Overlapping is not necessarily dysfunctional and sometimes it brings along with it "new ideas and interesting change".

In fact, countries like United States sometimes set up two or more competitive agencies, whose areas of function overlap and result in some wastage but also

bring out some new innovations. It has been observed that one of the effective ways of administrative reforms was to duplicate functions, to start competition with old bureaucracy or to bypass it altogether. Thus, overlapping per se does not always mean dysfunctionality and wastage of resources and Riggs should have considered this aspect to increase the investigative purpose of his study.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Describe the features of Prismatic societies.

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2) Write a note on the Bazaar Canteen Model.

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10.7 CONCLUSION

The Ecological Approach to study comparative public administration differs in regard to the number of ecological elements incorporated in it. In the Riggsian Model, the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the administrative ecology are discussed in a much more wider context. Riggs was mainly interested in studying the problems of administrative sub-systems *(Sala)* of developing countries in transition. The administrative patterns of fused or diffracted societies were not his prime consideration. Still, Riggs's contribution to development administration has been his ecological models, but his contribution to the study of comparative public administration has also been phenomenal.

The ideal type Models of Riggs have influenced much research in comparative public administration.They are designed to suggest certain relationships among the different variables they incorporate. Ecological models help only qualitative comparisons among various societies. Their utility is limited as they use such categories that are more or less Prismatic in the problems faced while measuring diffraction. In spite of these and other operational problems, the Ecological Model has brought consciousness of interaction between administrative system and the social environment around it. Riggs brought in a new perspective of environment into the domain of public administration, which has given much food for thought to other scholars and has certainly made the Ecological Approach an important component of public administration.

10.8 GLOSSARY

Stratified Differentiation : Structured inequalities between different groupings and not just a system of inequality. Within an unequal system, more inequalities based on birth, sex and ethnicity.

Poly-normativism : Traditional behaviour pattern.

Universalistic Norms : It means that norms practiced have a universal application and coexist with new sets of norms. As 'Poly' means many, it means many types of norms.

10.9 REFERENCES

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10.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:
   - Ascriptive norms in agrarian societies.
   - Limited social mobility.
   - Simple occupational differentiation.
   - Differential stratification.
   - Industria would show just the opposite features.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:
   - Heterogeneity
   - Overlapping
   - Formalism

2) Your answer should include the following points:
   - Both market and arena factors determine the economy.
   - Economic sub-system functions as a subsidised canteen.
   - Bargaining is prevalent.
   - Corruption rules the roost.

UNIT 11 NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION APPROACH*

Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Define public administration;
- Discuss the evolution and phases of public administration;
- Describe the concept of New Public Administration;
- Explain the themes and features of New Public Administration; and
- Analyse the importance of New Public Administration.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Before we go into understanding New Public Administration, it is important to first understand the nature of public administration. You already have a fair idea about it as this has been explained in the first Unit of this Course. Public administration refers to the administration, which is carried out in the form of services that are rendered for the welfare of the people. Therefore, public administration is the implementation of government policy and is also an academic discipline. Public administration as a discipline emerged in the year 1887, when Woodrow Wilson,first formally recognised public administration in an Article entitled "The Study of Administration".

Wilson's Article is considered to be an important landmark for the beginning of public administration as a discipline. Wilson's vision on administration as a separate discipline to study government in action gave an impetus to public administration. Owing to the impact of his Article, Wilson is considered to be the father of public administration. But, Wilson's Article cannot be considered as the first serious and

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systematic study of government in action. Prior to Wilson, there were a number of events and structures, which undertook a serious study on government in action. Some of the examples are Ramayana, Mahabharata, and excerpts from Austrian and German Scholars.

Public administration consists of the multifarious activities undertaken by a government to look after its people, or to manage its affairs. Keeping in mind, the various interpretations of the concept of public administration, it is important to understand the meaning of the terms 'public' and 'administration. The word 'public' stands for the people of a definite territory or State. As the will of the people of a State is represented by the government of the State, the word 'public' also has a specialised, governmental meaning. Therefore, the acts of administration performed by the government are called 'public administration'.

11.2 PHASES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

However, gradually the discipline of Public administration gained impetus,Thereafter, the evolution of public administration as a specialised field of study falls into a number of critical stages.

We can broadly divide the history of public administration into the following *five* periods:

- Period I (1887 – 1926)
- Period 11 (1927-1937)
- Period III (1938 – 1947)
- Period IV (1948 – 1970)
- Period V 1971 – continuing

Period I (1887-1926) Public Administration Dichotomy

The discipline of public administration was born in the USA. The credit for initiating it as an academic study of public administration goes to Woodrow Wilson, who was teaching Political Science at Princeton University and who later became the President of USA. Wilson is regarded as the father of the discipline of public administration. In his Article entitled "The Study of Administration", published in 1887, he emphasised the need for studying public administration as a discipline apart from politics. This was known as the principle of politics-administration dichotomy, i.e., a separation between politics and administration. Politics-administrative dichotomy is often traced to the Wilsonian call for a science of administration.

Functionally, administration was separated from politics. Evolution of public administration, it has been argued, is concerned with implementation of policy decisions taken politically. Frank Goodnow sought to conceptually distinguish the two functions. According to him."Politics has to do with policies or expressions of the State will" and "Administration has to do with the execution of these policies." Apart from this analytic distinction, the institutional locations of these two functions were differentiated. The location of politics was identified as the legislature and the location of administration was identified as the executive arm of government, the bureaucracy.

Period II (1927-1937) PrinciplesofAdministration

The central belief of this period was that there are certain 'principles' of administration, which are required to increase the efficiency and economy of public administration. This was the time when the Industrial Revolution period was in full swing, and all

that countries were concerned with was increasing production at any cost in order to earn big.With this came, rapid expansion of industries and also a plethora of problems in management that were unforeseen and therefore difficult to solve. That's when F.W. Taylor and Henri Fayol stepped in and generated their principles of administration/management. They were successful administrators in their own right and therefore their views held a lot of importance.This period was the golden period of 'principles' in the history of public administration when it commanded a high degree of respectability.

Period III (1938-1947) Era of Challenges

The main theme during this period was the advocacy of 'Human Relations' and Behavioural Approach' to the study of public administration. The idea of politics-administrative dichotomy was rejected. It was argued that administration cannot be separated from politics because of its political nature and role, Administration is not only concerned with policy decision but it deals with the policy formulation. Similarly, the principle of Administration was challenged. During this phase, both the first and the second phase were challenged. It was observed that:

1) **Politics and administration could never be clearly separated** because in practice, there is a close nexus between politics and administration. In 1950, a scholar wrote, "A theory of public administration means in our time a theory of politics also." And hence, Nicholas Henry says, "With this declaration, the dichotomy died."
2) **Principles of administration were not something big enough**. Herbert Simon and Robert Dahl were in support of the above two objections. In 1947, Herbert Simon in his Book, "Administrative Behaviour" wrote that *"A fatal defect of the current principles of administration is that for almost every principle one can find an equally plausible and acceptable contradictory principle".* In Simon's conclusion, principles are unscientifically derived and no more than proverbs. He also rejected separation between politics and administration and argued for 'logical positivism' in the study of policy-making and relation of means and ends. He observed that decision-making must be derived from the logic and psychology of human choice.

While Robert Dahl in his essay, "The Science of Public Administration" expressed three problems in the evolution of science of public administration –Exclusion of normative consideration from public administration. Exclusion of the study of human behaviour from the science of public administration. Exclusion of the varying historical, sociological, economic and other conditioning factors from the science of public administration. By 1950s, both the objections were completely rejected by scholars of public administration. This rejection left public administration without identity, and thus a new phase of evolution of the discipline of public administration took birth.

Period 1V (1950-1970) The Crisis of Identity or Public Administration as Political Science :

In this phase, public administration was re-established into the mother discipline, political science. But there were several issues such as:

- Absence of comprehensive intellectual framework for public administration as a separate discipline.
- Willingness of political scientists to engulf public administration into political science.

- During 1960s, the American Political Science Association moved officially to rid itself of public administration. So, a scholar pointed that political science seems to have less utility in the education of public administrators. Political science educates for **"intellectualised understanding"** of public administration, whereas public administration educates for **"knowledgeable action".**

Period V (1971-continuing) Public Administration as Management

As public administration was struggling for its identity, a few public administrationists began searching for an alternative. They found it in 'management', called either 'administrative science' or 'generic management' , which holds that sector, culture, institution, mission, so on and so forth have little consequence to efficient and effective administration, and that "a body of knowledge" – statistics, economics, accounting, operation research, and organisation are often needed, and exists common to the field of administration. But it is noteworthy that "management's focus is exclusively technical, whereas public administration's focus is both technical and normative.

Finally, it was becoming increasingly clear to public administrationists that neither political science nor management addressed their interest, nor could they. With this, a new phase began.

Public Administration as Public Administration (1970-present)

Public administration eventually parted ways with political science and management, and it emerged as an autonomous field of study and practice. So, in 1970, public administration declared it as an independent discipline with the birth of National Association of Schools of Public Administration (NASPAA).

11.3 CONCEPT OF NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

New Public Administration traces its origins to the first Minnowbrook Conference held in 1968 under the patronage of Dwight Waldo. This Conference brought together the top scholars in public administration and management to discuss and reflect on the state of the field and its future. USA at that time was grappling with unusual social and political unrest. In this context, Waldo concluded that neither the study nor the practice of public administration was able to address the problems of those times and a general mistrust had become associated with public administration itself.

Therefore, the need of the hour was to revamp the ethical obligations of the service sector that was necessary in rebuilding the public's trust of government and bureaucracy, which had been plagued by corruption and nepotism and scholars were of the opinion that public administration should act as an instrument of initiating and sustaining social change. This gave way to a new dimension and approach of public administration which was called the New Public Administration Approach.

New Public Administration states that public administration does not function in a vaccum and the administration is responsive towards the needs of the society at large which therein caters to the problems and malaise of the society. It was therefore an anti-positivist, anti-technical, and anti-hierarchical reaction against traditional public administration. The focus was on the role of government and how they can provide the essential services to citizens.

The rise and growth of the concept of NPA can be traced to:

- Honey Report on Higher Education for Public Services, which highlighted the institutional shortcomings in the area of public administration between the scholars and practicing administrators. Besides this, it also focused on the uncertainities and confusion over the status of the discipline.
- Philadelphia Conference on the Theory and Practice of Public Administration, 1967. This Conference emphasised the role of Public Administration in terms of addressing social problems and promoting social equity with the progressive transformation of the State from a Police State to a Welfare State.
- Minnowbrook Conference, 1968 held under the chairmanship of Dwight Waldo critically reviewed the study and practice of public administration in a changing environment.The Conference advocated a normative approach instead of a value-free approach to address the economic, social and psychological evils of the society.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What do you understand by New Public Administration?

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2) Trace the evolution and growth of Public Administration.

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3) What are the factors that gave rise to New Public Administration Approach?

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11.4 THEMES OF NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The themes of the New Public Administration Approach have been:

Relevance: It stated that traditional public administration has too little interest in contemporary problems and issues. Social realities must be taken into consideration. i.e., people should see changes as relevant meaning thereby that changes should be specific to the needs of the area and the need of the people. Earlier approaches to NPA neglected the rationality of the people. However, NPA suggested the inclusion of rationality of the people too in the process of policy formulation. It advocated that the whatever issues are addressed pertaining to the activities of public administration, should be relevant keeping in mind the prevalent societal concerns of the country and the citizens.

Values: Value-neutrality in public administration is an impossibility.Values are a prerequisite of development.Value centricity should be an organisational goal, and is to be taken into account when conducting all public policy formulation The citizens, their problems have to be catered to with value sensitivity and orientation which in turn makes the organisation more effective and efficient. Avoidance or failure to achieve transparency can cause significant damage to the relationship between the state and the people they are aiming to serve.

Social Equity: Realisation of social equity should be a chief goal of public administration.The main objective of any organisation is to treat all citizens at power irrespective of caste, creed, colour or race.Social equity is an important component for any organisation to prosper and flourish and this was propagated by the New Public Administration Approach.

Change: Change is an inevitable part of the society and every organisation should adapt itself to the changing scenarios of the prevalent times.This change infuses a sense of newness and fosters adaptability only to keep the citizens and their welfare at bay.Thus, operational flexibility and organisational adaptability encompassing the environmental changes should be in-built in the administrative system.

Management-Worker Relations: There should be equal emphasis both on efficiency and humane considerations. This new Approach focuses on both the efficiency and the human relations criterion in order to achieve growth and success.

NPA provides solutions for achieving these goals, popularly called the 4 D's i.e., Decentralisation, Debureaucratisation, Delegation and Democratisation.

11.5 FEATURES OF NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The main features of New Public Administration have been:

- **Responsiveness**: The administration should bring about certain internal as well as external changes so that public administration could be made more relevant to the social, economic, political and technological environment. For this to happen the administration has to be more flexible and adaptable to the various changes.
- **Client Centricity**: This means that the effectiveness of the administrator should be judged not only from the point of view of the government, but from that of the citizens. If the administrative actions do not improve the quality of life of

citizens then they are not effective notwithstanding whatsoever rationality and efficiency they may have.

- **Structural Changes in Administration**: The New Public Administration Approach calls for small, flexible and less hierarchical structures In administration, the citizens-administration interface can become more flexible and comfortable and the organisational structure should be in consonance with the socially relevant conditions.

- **Multi-disciplinary Nature of Public Administration**: Knowledge from several disciplines and not just one dominating paradigm build the discipline of public administration. The political, social, economic, management and human relation approaches are needed to ensure the growth of discipline.

The Second Minnowbrook Conference was held after a gap of twenty years in 1988, which was attended by sixty eight scholars and practioners of Public administration and other disciplines such as History, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, and so on. The Conference however focused on the changing role of State and government, privatisation, contracting out and the increasing role of non-state actor in the government. It examined the theory and practice of public administration and by balancing the business and public sector.

This was followed by the third Minowbrook Conference, which was was held under the chairmanship of Rosemary O'Leary and organised when the American economy was down the hill and global terrorism had starting showing its first effects.It called for global concerns like global terrorism, economy and ecological imbalances etc. Participants were invited from other countries as well. Hence, it was global in approach focussing upon global challenges and problems of public administration. It upheld the structural and functional reforms or second generation reforms that gave rise to the concept of 3 E's – Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. The proceedings were published in "The Future of Public Administration Around the World: The Minnowbrook Perspective" by Rosemary O'Leary, David M. Van Slyke, and Soonhee Kim.

In a nutshell, it can be said that New Public Administration did bring forth some newness in the concept of public administration which was challenged by various critics. Many of the scholars were of the opinion that when time lapsed, the newness of that particular aspect or issue would go away, secondly it was not new in content but new in form. Some issues were taken up consecutively, which meant that they had not been achieved .

11.6 CONCLUSION

Thus, it cannot be ruled out that the New Public Administration did give a new dimension to public administration. It came at a time when the discipline was struggling for survival and was loosing its identity. It was then that New Public Administration focused on the societal issues and problems owing to which the public at large was facing undue unrest and upheaval. It brought back the importance of values in any given system, without which the society cannot prosper as a whole. The focus had become more public oriented, more client oriented and normative at the same time. Emphasis was also laid on combining the best of the worlds that is public as well as private.This Approach paved the way for a better understanding and growth of the discipline of public administration and the concerns of the society at large and with this approach the status of public administration makes a comeback to sustain and grow in the years to come.

11.7 GLOSSARY

Anti-Positivist : It means that we need a different perspective to look at social sciences as the methodology of natural sciences relies too much on scientific method of investigation. The nuances of human interactions are integral to social sciences and can only be studied contextually.

Debureaucratisation : Transfer of powers and functions from the government or bureaucracy to non-government organisations and private sector.

Delegation : Assignment of responsibility or authority from one person or position (delegator) to the other (delegatee). The delegator, however, remains responsible and accountable for all the delegated tasks.

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11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answers should include the following points.

- Public administration does not function in a vaccum.
- Administration is responsive towards the needs of the society at large which therein caters to the problems and malaise of the society.
- It is an anti-positivist, anti-technical, and anti-hierarchical reaction against traditional public administration.
- The focus is on the role of government and how they can provide the essential services to citizens.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- We can broadly divide the history of public administration into the following *five* periods:

  -Period I (1887-1926).

-Period 11 (1927-1937).

-Period III (1938-1947).

-Period IV (1948-1970).

-Period V 1971 – continuing

3) Your answer should include the following points:

- Honey Report
- Philadelphia Conference
- Minnowbrook Conference

UNIT 12 PUBLIC CHOICE APPROACH*

Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of Public Choice Approach (PCA);
- Discuss the chief propositions of PCA;
- Describe the features of PCA;
- Elucidate the contribution of various Schools of Thought on PCA;
- Examine the seminal work of the proponents of PCA; and
- Appraise the relevance of PCA in the current context.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

During the decades of 1960s and 1970s, there emerged a time when the bureaucracy-run governance and the role of the State was highly criticised on the grounds of the State's inefficiency in undertaking diverse roles. To check the natural tendency for over-government and to limit the activities of government, various measures were suggested, which included Constitutional reforms to limit the growth of government, decentralisation of political power, etc. One such measure was the adoption of 'Public Choice Approach', which aimed at improving efficiency by applying economics to the study of political processes, institutions and public policy.

In this Unit, you will be introduced to the perspectives of Public Choice Approach (PCA) or Public Choice Theory (PCT), which gained prominence in the discipline

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of public administration in the 1970s. The emergence of PCA is considered an important landmark in the growth of the discipline of public administration. The following sections of this Unit will explain the basic tenets of PCA and highlight its chief features. Some of the chief propositions of PCA viz., methodological individualism, rational choice, institutional pluralism, etc. will be discussed. It will further describe the various schools of thought under PCA and reflect on the notion of State and bureaucracy in the context of Public Choice Theory as put forward by various proponents of this Approach. It will also bring out the critical views expressed by other scholars on PCA.

12.2 MEANING OF PUBLIC CHOICE APPROACH (PCA)

The term Public Choice Approach (PCA) was coined in the late 1960s and it gained prominence in the discipline of public administration in the 1970s. Vincent Ostrom, one of the pioneers of PCA considers this Approach as the most appropriate one to the study of public administration and states that the public administration scholars should turn away from traditional Bureaucratic Approach and move towards Public Choice Approach. The Public Choice Approach basically applies economics to the study of political processes, institutions and public policy and when economics is applied, the focus shifts to efficiency and rationality.

This connotation is very clear from the words of Dennis Mueller, who defines PCA, as "the economic study of non-market decision-making, or simply the application of economics to political science. The subject-matter of Public Choice is the same as that of political science: the theory of the State, voting rules, voter behaviour, party politics, the bureaucracy and so on. The methodology of Public Choice is that of economics, however"(Mueller, 1979). The Approach further looks at the behaviour of a typical bureaucrat in drawing inferences and constructing its theoretical framework.

Basically, PCA is in favour of democratic administration. That is, the simple idea of democratic administration is to give people what they want. PCA studies the processes by which people indicate preferences and choices and the approach thus emphasises on widening the choices that people or citizens have. In fulfilling the ideal of popular choice, the actions of the government should be consistent with the values and interests of the citizens.Thus, while discussing about the actions of government towards the expansion of popular choice, the approach makes *two* underlying assumptions: (a) individuals act rationally with adequate information and order of preference; (b) individuals are utility maximisers.

The basic premise of this Approach is that every individual is driven by self-interest and thus focuses on maximising his/her own self-interest, as a rational person. When this assumption is applied to the role of government and bureaucracy, PCA makes an important inference. The politicians or bureaucrats do not act out of benevolence or that they have the public interest in mind. Rather, as an individual, rational thinker, they think about self-interest first and try to maximise self-interest. For instance, politicians may think of actions that would help them to get re-elected or win a party ticket for election. Similarly, a bureaucrat may have career promotions or increase in status and power in mind when undertaking actions.Thus, civil servants are self-aggrandising bureaucrats interested only in expansion of activities under their charge, while political leaders are vote seeking politicians maximising their votes for perpetuating their stay in power. Further, the Approach assumes individuals to be egoistic, self-regarding and as those who seek maximum possible benefits or personal gains from the decisions they take involving least costs.

The Approach believes that a variety of different organisations can be involved in providing different public goods and services and such organisations can be coordinated through various multi-organisational arrangements. This is how Public Choice School, locates public administration within the domain of politics. It can thus be understood that PCA is essentially a State reducing and market expanding doctrine, justified by its view that government decision making is based on collective interest, rather than individual citizen's interests.

12.3 BASIC FEATURES OF PCA

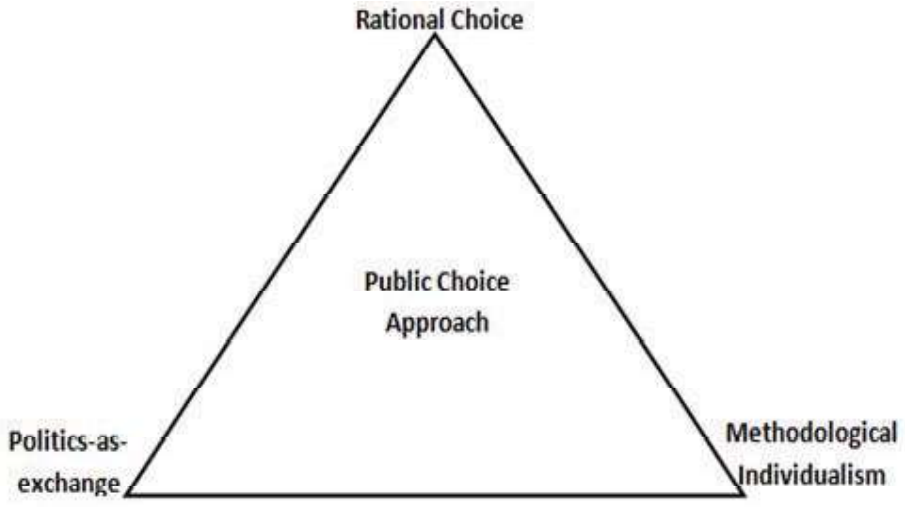
12.3.1 Methodological Bases of PCA

The methodological bases of the Public Choice mode of analysis are as follows:

- The notion of rationality is considered the basic premise of PCA and it considers political actors to be inherently rational.
- PCA is anchored in the framework of methodological individualism; and
- The definitional characteristic of PCA is *politics-as-exchange*.

***Notion of Rationality*:** As discussed earlier, the fundamental idea is that people try to do the best they can, given the constraints that they face. People are assumed to be able to rank alternatives in order of preference and choose the most preferred alternative—and also be consistent in their choices. Applying this logic to politics, the basic implication that Public Choice theorists make is that politics should not be analysed from a 'public interest' perspective, but from an 'individual gain-maximising' one. All participants in the political arena –politicians, bureaucrats, voters and stakeholders act to maximise their own gains.

***Methodological Individualism*:** Methodological Individualism is a term coined by Joseph Schumpeter. It rejects viewing society as an organism and considers a holistic approach misleading. PCT argues that even while studying collective entities or groups, the individual should be the unit of analysis, both as the basic unit of decision-making as well as the unit for whom the decision is made. Groups, organisations or even societies, are nothing more than the (sum of the) individuals comprising them. While many other approaches talk of group decision-making, the PCA denies the legitimacy of decision-making at the group level.



***Politics-as-Exchange*:** PCA considers that realisation of certain ends arises as a result of bargaining and exchange among individuals. However, the exchange takes place in the political or public sphere, rather than the market sphere. That is, the exchange is just not in terms of apples for oranges, but the exchange takes place in the political realm between various players to gain mutual benefits. For instance, donations offered by corporates and other businessmen to political parties to meet election expenditure are an exchange for services that the party would offer the corporate agencies when they come to power. In such a trade, each participant secures the benefits of order, thereby reducing the need to exchange his/her own resources. Proponents state that in the politics-as-exchange model, the focus should be on the process itself, rather than on the outcome.

All such propositions, lead to an additional proposition of '*institutional pluralism*' in the delivery of public goods and services. That is, the Approach states that a variety of institutional arrangements are required to provide different goods and services. Thus, this Approach stresses about avoiding the institutional weakness created by a dominant bureaucratic form. When there are more institutions, the people have more choice, which helps in meeting the consumer preferences. This also helps in reducing the monopoly of State. For instance, Indian Railways is one such example, where State is the only player and the people do not have any other choice.

12.3.2 Features of PCA

From the discussion made above, it becomes clear that PCA aims at giving greater choice to individuals and it encourages the government to provide a plurality of institutional choices or quasi-markets. It promotes competitive market arguing that if the bureaucracy monopolises service delivery, the result will be over-supply and inefficiency. By breaking the monopoly of the monolithic State as the provider and by introducing choice and participation, this Approach seeks to redefine the power equations between the State and the citizens. Based on the basic propositions of this Approach, the characteristic features of PCA can be deduced as:

- It is an anti-bureaucratic approach. It sees bureaucracy as an absolute evil, as it seeks its own selfish interests, at the expense of public interests.
- It is a critique of the bureaucratic model of administration. It assumes that the self-seeking administrator (bureaucrat) and the vote-maximising politicians, instead of acting in public interest, produce goods and services for their own benefit. As a result, the collective interest of society suffers.
- It encourages institutional pluralism in the provisions of public goods and services.
- Plurality of governments and public agencies is supported on the ground of consumer preferences.
- It applies economic logic to the problems of public services distribution.
- It stands for diverse democratic decision-making centres, decentralisation and popular participation in administration. This is suggested on the ground that it creates opportunity for the promotion of competition among government agencies, and in the process, the individual citizen's choice increases.
- It promotes more competition in the delivery of public services.
- It emphasises privatisation or contracting out to reduce wastage.

- It encourages dissemination of more information for public benefit about the availability of alternatives to public services offered on a competitive basis, and at competitive costs.

PCA thus advocates political approach to public administration by locating public administration within the domain of politics. In the last 2 to 3 decades, it can be observed that with the influences of approaches like PCA, the private sector has expanded and the State sector has shrunk, both in direct administration as well as through privatisation of public enterprises. There has been widespread adoption of private practices in the public sector, for which PCA also has a major role to play.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What do you mean by Public Choice Approach?

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2) Define the term 'Methodological Individualism'.

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3) Explain the model of 'Politics-as-Exchange'.

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12.4 THE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON PCA

Various thoughts on the lines of Public Choice emerged in places like Rochester, Chicago, Virginia, etc., in different periods of time. Some of the Public Choice Schools of Thought are discussed below, which also, to some extent, overlaps with the discussion made earlier:

Rochester School of Public Choice

The thoughts of Public Choice that emerged in Rochester is called Rochester School of Public Choice. This Approach states that the study of groups, rather than individuals is meaningless. It further states that the political studies using Public Interest perspective rather than Public Choice is misleading. The chief contributors of the Rochester School are William H. Riker and Peter Ordeshook.

Chicago School of Public Choice

This School of Thought emerged in the works of economists of Chicago University in America. The PCA propagated by this group is based on politics and government activities. The work of the Chicago School is basically in the field of regulation. Earlier contribution in this regard was to regulate the monopolies, so that efficiency can be increased and costs reduced. Stigler (1971) put forward a different theory of regulation, whereby those who are regulated by the State, themselves capture the regulatory process and actually earn benefits at the cost of consumers. Big business or large farmers often benefit from regulation by getting subsidies, by being protected from competition and price control which ensures large demand. The chief contributors of Chicago school are Milton Friedman and Robert Lucas.

Virginia School of Public Choice

The intellectual leaders of this School are James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock who included the elements of political and moral philosophy. To the analysis of political processes, this School added the concept of 'politics-as-exchange'. While believing in rational choice, this School points out that utility maximisation is fine at the individual level, but vacuous in a broad social sense because the society is not an entity that maximises. This Approach though advocates the use of economics to the study of political science, it considers both to be different. It states that the individual choices made in the market as consumers, are different from the collective choices made by people in political voting processes. Further, Buchanan points out *six* differences between the individual choices and the collective choices.

Individual Choice and Collective Choice

In the market, individual chooses for herself/himself and relevant outcome for her/him is determined by her own choice. In the political voting process, the relevant outcome for the individual is determined by the choice of all. There is greater uncertainty and the individual has less control over the final outcome.

In the market, individual feels that price, sales, total amount on offer by sellers are beyond the control of individual. The individual cannot influence the organisation or the alternatives in the market. Market is quite impersonal for the individual. In collective choice, the voter knows that his/her vote has a determining role in the final social outcome. Hence, the individual might use different values and subjective preference scale in making choices.

In the market, since the decision made by individual impacts the individual, she/he feels responsible. Since decision-making through voting is dependent on the choices of all, the sense of responsibility is absent. Hence, individual may not even turn to cast vote.

In market, the consumer is provided wide alternatives to make choices, and based on budget the individual can order the alternatives and purchase a combination of goods and services. In the political environment, choice offered to individual is mutually exclusive. Further, voter has to choose one alternative or the other.

Each unit spent by an individual goes towards the purchase of some good and nothing goes waste. In political environment, voting may be made for a candidate who loses. All individuals who tend to vote for the loser, turn out to be the minority whose preferences eventually do not determine the political agenda. Thus, an individual is compelled to accept the result contrary to his/her preferences. Such coercion is never present in the market.

In market, there is unequal purchasing power and distribution of income. In political sphere, there is equal distribution of votes. On the whole, the Virginia School of Thought rejected the Welfare Model of State and observed that the public sector has been suffering from inherent systemic failure in terms of policy making and implementation.

12.5 PROPONENTS OF PCA

There have been many scholars who have contributed to the theory of Public Choice and some of them include Gordon Tullock, Vincent Ostrom, William Niskanen, James Buchanan and Patrick Dunleavy. These proponents strongly focused on the concept of 'self-interest' and did not take cognizance of the concepts such as public interest, public spirit and public service. Their chief propositions were on the reduction of government and bureaucracy and establishing the reliance on market structures by creating flexible structures and incentives. Their propositions strongly emphasised on the reduced role of State, restricting their interventions to the provision of bare minimum functions. The proponents considered markets to be more accountable than bureaucracy and laid importance on the aspects of privatisation, outsourcing of services and contracting out.

These proponents had developed the theory of 'administrative egoism' suggesting that the real life bureaucrat is characterised by self-aggrandisement, resource manipulation and interest generally antithetical to public interest. Apart from the chief arguments on PCA, there were other concepts that emerged in the works of these scholars, some of which have been discussed here:

Knut Wicksell and Public Choice

The foremost contributor who made early remarks on PCA was Knut Wicksell in 1896 and his contribution is considered a seminal work on this theory, which was later revived by Buchanan in 1949. Wicksell was the first to suggest that a collective decision or a public sector decision emerged from a political process rather than emerging from the mind of a benevolent politician working with public interest in mind. In his dissertation, he expressed his concern for the injustice and inefficiency that emerged from unregulated majority rule in parliamentary assemblies. He stated that the majority rule seemed to impose cost or damage on the large segments of tax payer or citizens. He thus questioned why the minorities who face discrimination should lend their support to democratic political structures? The solution that he offered was the direction of unanimity-agreement of all persons in the voting group to implement collective action, so that it would guarantee that all persons secure net gains.

Gordon Tullock on PCA

Gordon Tullock's work is considered to be among the earliest contributions to the Public Choice Approach. His stricture against self-serving nature of bureaucracy and his critique with Buchanan of party competition and its consequences may be

said to have laid the basis for a debate on the dangers of the power of bureaucracy and the politicisation of the public policy. For him, the study of politics, policy planning and bureaucracy should be based on the same assumptions,which might be used to explain the behaviour of firms, business people and consumers. From this could emerge the following set of generalisations:

- Political parties contesting elections make excessive promises to get votes.
- Politicians in power maximise the likelihood of winning elections through manipulating economy.
- The power of bureaucracy has increased by serving itself rather than the public interest.
- The political processes of liberal democracy are failing to supervise and control the growth of political and bureaucratic power.
- Politicians in government, will attempt to manipulate and stimulate the economy before an election and deflate the economy after the election (examine the spending made by government for various schemes before and after an election).

Another important contribution made by Tullock is the'rent-seeking'concept. Rent-seeking extends the idea of profit motive from the economic sphere to the sphere of collective action. It presupposes that if there is value to be gained through politics, then persons will invest resources in efforts to capture this value. This concept also demonstrates that at an aggregate-value sense, the investment made is wasteful. Because, rewards can be offered to only few groups and the resources invested by other groups for goods and services are wasted. It can thus be understood that the modern politics is mostly based on rent-seeking activity. Examples of rent seeking include lobbying by interest groups to gain from some policy, creating artificial monopolies that generate rents, etc.The conclusions led to the introduction of market forces to control political and bureaucratic power. Tullock, in common with other advocates of PCA, recommended the introduction of competition into bureaucracy through contracting-out, privatisation and increasing competition between government departments by rewarding performances.

James Buchanan on PCA

James Buchanan, a Nobel Prize winning economist and a scholar in Public Choice Approach, has argued that individuals come together in politics for their own mutual benefit, just as they come together in the market place. He has stated that, "As the case with efficiency, persons are not likely to express interests in abstract distributional ideals for the society in general when in political decisions. They are likely, instead to seek to further their own well-defined interests" (Buchanan, 1988). Thus, according to Buchanan, individuals come together in politics for their own mutual benefits.

In Buchanan's view, there are *two* normative rules, which are constitutive of the Public Choice Approach: (i) Politics as Exchange, and (ii) Economic Constitutionalism or Contractarianism as the basis of public policy making. In Politics as Exchange, the trade among persons is not the simple exchange of apples and oranges. Rather, in politics, a set of people come together for a set of agreed-upon mutual benefits.

For instance, reservation of one-third of seats for women in Panchayats or even 50 per cent reservation in some states may be an exchange that certain interest groups might have had with the respective government. The second normative principle 'Economic Constitutionalism', states that 'existing constitutions or structures or rules

are the subject of critical scrutiny', which means that the provisions given in the Constitution are subject to critical review. Best example of this is the enforcement of the Right to Education Act in 2009. It is just because of the critical scrutiny, that the non-justiciable provision given in Directive Principles of State Policy to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years has got a legal sanctity.

Anthony Downs' Views on PCA

Anthony Downs' contribution to PCA is related to the study of bureaucratic behaviour. Downs' model shows how bureaucratic growth takes place as a result of laws and how the motivations of officials and bureaucracy in the way in which they set about maximising their interests. Downs in his Book *Inside Bureaucracy,* assumes that decision-making in bureaucracies is informed by the pursuit of self-interest. Downs argues that the motivations of individual officials are diverse such as power, money, income, prestige, personality, loyalty and security. He categorises bureaucrats into *five* types:

i) *Climbers*: are concerned with power and prestige. Such bureaucrats just want to move ahead in the political or bureaucratic ladder and they are not concerned with ethics, people or anything.

ii) *Conservers*: are concerned with minimising change. They keep things as it is and retain the traditional mode of working.

iii) *Zealots*: are highly motivated officials committed to push for a policy or programme and are filled with enthusiasm.

iv) *Advocates*: are concerned with maximising the resources of their bureau, be it personnel resources or financial resources; and

v) *Statesmen*: has a sense of public interest, which may be advanced by increasing their power so as to realise their goals.

William Niskanen's Contribution to PCA

Niskanen's work was the first systematic effort to study bureaucracy within the Public Choice framework. Niskanen in his book *Bureaucracy and Representative Government* also argues that those who work in bureaucracies or bureaux seek to maximise their budgets and the size of the bureau. He contends that it is only by increasing the budget that they can maximise their self-interest. To limit the evils and discretion of bureaucrats, Niskanen prescribed certain checks, which are as follows:

- Stricter control on the bureaucrats through legislature and executive interventions.
- Increase in competition in the delivery of public services.
- Privatisation or contracting out to reduce wastage; and
- Dissemination of information about the availability of alternatives to public services.

Vincent Ostrom on PCA

Vincent Ostrom is the chief proponent of PCA and he advocates for the replacement of the traditional doctrine of 'bureaucratic administration' by the concept of 'democratic administration'– that is people should have the power to decide and their demands should be the priority. Further, he states that "Bureaucratic structures are necessary, but not sufficient structures for a productive and responsive public service economy". In addition, he argues that the best structures for satisfying individual preferences are not centralised bureaucratic agencies, but rather more fragmented, multi-

organisational arrangements. Thus, according to him, decentralisation creates diversity and offers more opportunity for citizen's choice. He further observes that decentralisation means the existence of diverse democratic small decision-making structures for providing different public goods and services. Ostrom further proposes debureaucratisation of all administrative units and states that decentralisation and democracy enhance participation at the work place and grass-roots level empowerment of the people.

In his Book, "*Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration*" (1974), Ostrom questioned the central assumptions of classical public administration: (a) politics-administration dichotomy, (b) a single centre and source of power in all governments, (c) hierarchical ordering maximising organisational efficiency. He urged the need for diverse democratic decision-making structures, popular participation in administration, dispersed administrative authority and decentralised organisation. He further demonstrates the desirability of: (a) decentralised model of democratic administration, and (b) organisational competitiveness. To stimulate healthy and democratic competition among government agencies, multi-organisational arrangements are better than monocratic hierarchical administrative structures (Basu, 2004).

Patrick Dunleavy on Bureau-Shaping Model

A more sophisticated Public Choice Model of bureaucracy has been developed by Patrick Dunleavy, referred to as 'bureau-shaping' model. This Model refutes the earlier thinking that bureaucrats attempt to maximise budgets. On the contrary, it says that apart from them managing a large organisation, bureaucrats tend to maximise their status by rendering advice to the politicians (Medury, 2016).On the whole, the general recommendations made by various scholars of PCA include: (a) organisational reform, (b) reduction of the role of State and the discretionary power of politicians, (c) curbing the power of government monopolies, (d) Constitutional checks curbing the power of politicians and civil servants from running budget deficits or imposing taxation beyond a certain level. The advisory, regulatory and delivery functions of bureaucracy should be kept separate wherever possible. The size of bureaucracies should be reduced, functions offloaded, expenditures controlled, and competitiveness among public agencies should be encouraged. These are the standard recommendations given by the entire group of Public Choice theorists (Basu, 2004, *op.cit.*).

12.6 APPRAISAL OF PUBLIC CHOICE APPROACH

From the points discussed in this Unit, it can be understood that application of the propositions of Public Choice Approach has become the order of the day and the practices of pluralism, corporatism and elitism as put forward by PCA is visible in measures of various developed and developing countries. Most of the countries have moved towards downsizing government, contracting out services to private players, resorting to public private partnership in delivering various goods and services, right from education to health. However, it is critical to get into the ground reality and reflect on the pros and cons of this Approach.

Some of the scholars reflect on the various questions, that remains unanswered under this Approach: (a) even if the notion that bureaucratic model as dysfunctional is accepted, it does not clarify how alternative administrative structures would best serve the 'general interest' (can public needs be realised by the private provider, which is essentially driven by private motive); (b) the statement that the politicians or bureaucrats are always self-aggrandising is again an exaggeration and caricature of

administrative-politico reality. The role of public spirit in public service has been unnecessarily underplayed. There are areas of social life, which only public agencies can best take care of.

Some of the critical remarks made by various scholars on PCA are as follows:

- Public interest and Welfare State are rejected by the Public Choice writers; yet human development in history has been towards these concepts. The ideas of Communitarianism and people's welfare have not evaporated from our societies; rather indications are that ideals of healthy collective life in the global village are gaining more and more acceptance.
- Application of PCA proposition and resorting to State minimalism, especially in the Third World countries, may turn out to be disastrous. Rolling back the State is simply unrealistic, where crucial development sectors such as health, education, poverty alleviation and social welfare are all functions of the State and despite bureaucratic overload, handing over them to the private sector agencies, cannot always be a more ethical option. Further, market has no sympathy for those who cannot afford (simply guided by the concern of profit). This is a cause for concern in developing countries, which have a larger number of poor people.
- The 'public' which the PCA seeks to cater to, are not always the elite or the middle class and needs of the low income group with poor purchasing power can never be met by the market. Lacking a philosophical or ethical foundation, the PCA is neither socially inclusive nor offers an integrative view of the economy and polity.
- As highlighted by Michael M.Heamon and Richard T. Mayer, 'the market's role should be judged not only in terms of values that it may help to realise, but also based on values that it cannot, which includes, equity, community, human development, etc., which can be achieved through social processes characterised by trust and mutual respect rather than competition'(Basu, 2004 *op.cit.*; Haemon and Mayer, 1986).
- PCA, is deficient in its conceptualisation of human decision-making, as being essentially driven by individual as a self-interested maximiser. Self-interest cannot be the major motivating factor in decision making, Galbraith has argued that the real world of capitalism is shaped by management decisions of big corporations and big producers, rather than by the interplay of producers and consumers. While producers manipulate demands of consumers, the large corporations manipulate the decisions of politicians and bureaucrats. Further, human beings make most of their decisions, not in terms of individual self-interest, but in terms of the perceived interests of the groups, families, organisations, ethnic groups and national states with which they identify and to whom they are loyal *(Bhattacharya, 2010; Fadia & Fadia, 2012)*.
- PCA is too sweeping a statement that takes values and public spiritedness completely out of administration. Replacement of public administration by market exchange is too simplistic an idea to be taken seriously.
- The State monopoly could be substituted by more dangerous private monopoly.
- To say that efficiency is the sole aim of the government is to trivialise government. It has higher goals such as equality, equity and welfare, which is oriented towards public interest.

- The market mechanism does not automatically ensure competition. Big multi-national companies (MNCs) first establish and then exploit the market dominance to eliminate other players. Citizens' choice is thus constricted.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What are the key contributions of different Schools of Thought of PCA?

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2) Explain the concept of 'rent-seeking'.

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3) Highlight the five categories of bureaucrats as put forward by Anthony Downs.

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4) What are the main contributions of Vincent Ostrom?

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12.7 CONCLUSION

As observed by Buchanan, Public Choice exerted a major influence in providing a coherent understanding and interpretation of what could be observed everywhere. The ills of government or government failure was visible throughout and it was found

that the government was not able to offer the promised collectives. Public Choice gave the foundation for such an understanding. At the same time, there are empirical evidences across the world, which showcase the ill-effects of markets too, which has created fragmentation, rather than providing holistic solutions. The real issue is how to make the State more democratic and citizen-friendly and not to relegate it to the background altogether and install the new God of 'market' in its place (Fadia&Fadia, 2012, *op.cit.)*

In this Unit, we were thus exposed to the Approach of Public Choice, which emerged as a critical perspective against the role of State and bureaucracy. The suppositions of Public Choice Approach such as methodological individualism, politics-as-exchange, institutional pluralism, rational choice, etc. was also introduced. Apart from the exploration on the basic concepts of PCA, the Unit went through the various Schools of Thought on Public Choice. Though the central tenets of such schools were the critical perspective of State and bureaucracy, it led to the thinking process on individual and collective choices and the ways of regulating the State. The seminal works of key contributors were also discussed in this Unit, which introduced new concepts such as 'rent-seeking', 'economic constitutionalism', various types of bureaucrats, etc. Finally, the Unit made some reflections on the critical views expressed by various scholars on PCA, the chief of which was the limitation of PCA in replacing the role of State in meeting certain key functions and the question of ethics and values.

12.8 GLOSSARY

Self-Aggrandisement : A process of promoting oneself as being powerful. The objective is to increase one's own power or assets aggressively.

Contractarianism : The concept relies on social contract involving certain ideal conditions.It is based on the belief that individuals make the right choices under a hypothetical social contract.

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12.10 ANSWERS TOCHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:
   - Basic premise is notion of rationality.
   - Anchored in methodological individualism.
   - Politics-as-exchange is one of the characteristics.
   - Self-interested bureaucracy.

2) Your answer should include the following points :
   - The term was coined by Joseph Schumpeter.
   - It rejects society as an organism.
   - It denies decision-making at group level.

3) Your answer should include the following points : among individuals.
   - Bargaining and exchange/at the political level.
   - It focuses on process rather than outcome.
   - Bargaining in political realm.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Rochester School of Public Choice observes that study of groups rather than individuals is meaningless and public interest perspective in political studies is misleading.
- The work of Chicago School is basically in the field of regulation.
- Chicago School believes that those who are regulated by the State themselves capture the regulatory process.
- Virginia School has given the concept of politics-as-exchange.

2) Your answer should include the following points.

- Lobbying by Interest groups to gain from policy.
- Creating artificial policies that generate rents.

3) Your answer should include the following points:

- Climbers
- Conservers
- Zealots
- Advocates
- Statesmen

4) Your answer should include the following points:

- Democratic administration.
- Decentralisation creates diversity.
- Multi-organisational arrangements.

UNIT 13 PUBLIC INTEREST APPROACH*

Structure

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Elaborate on what Public Interest means;
- Explain the views on Public Interest, as put forward by different scholars;
- Examine the various approaches to Public Interest;
- Describe the current and future responsibilities towards Public Interest;
- Discuss how Public Interest has been practiced in various domains; and
- Critically evaluate the Public Interest Approach.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In any activity that takes place for personal/social or commercial reasons, an element of 'public interest' is given consideration and various actors of our society, the legislature, executive, judiciary and even the civil society and the media intervene out of 'public interest'. As the term suggests, 'pubic interest', is just about having a consideration on what is good for the common mass. Sometimes, though many interventions are projected as measure taken in Public Interest, there might be some hidden personal interest in such interventions. In this process, the laws, regulations and other such interventions of various actors come as a benevolent source to protect the Public Interest.

Traditionally, the State used to be the supreme player, that initiated various activities in Public Interest, as the very Approach of the government was welfare-oriented. However, in due course of time, with the coming up of plurality of institutions, the

* Contributed by Dr. Poornima M, Assistant Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi.

notion of 'public interest' has come under serious threat, wherein every measure initiated for the benefit of public good also seems to have some element of private benefit and it is critical to have an evaluative eye on various measures. In this Unit, we will discuss what Public Interest is and explain how various scholars have defined Public Interest. In addition, the different theories of Public Interest will also be discussed. Some scholars consider Public Interest as a moving target, whose content changes with change in time-frame. In this context, the current and future responsibilities of Public Interest are discussed in this Unit. The manner in which Public Interest is pursued practically by State, judiciary and civil society by way of Policies, Acts, Public Interest Litigation, etc., will be explained.The Unit will also bring out the critical views of scholars on the Public Interest Approach.

13.2 CONCEPT OF PUBLIC INTEREST

The concept of Public Interest can be said to be in vogue right from time immemorial, where people started to live together as a society, which in itself is a measure taken to protect each other's welfare. Both in the ancient and the medieval times of both the world and the Indian history, traces of decisions being made in pursuit of Public Interest can be noticed in the actions of few kings who ruled the people. For example, in ancient times, when Cyrus the Great ruled Persia, it was a belief in that land, that a ruler should know how to govern the people, so that they have all the necessities of life in abundance. Plato, after 200 years of Cyrus, stated that 'public officials' should place the interest of the society above their own and later, Aristotle noted that society comprises communities that come together for some good, mostly for well-being of citizens (ICAEW, 2012).

In the Indian context, close reference can be found in the works of Kautilya's Arthashastra and Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural. Kautilya avers that the State has its obligation towards the broader population and public welfare is a measure by which a State is assessed….the welfare of the ruler lies in the welfare of the people (Duraiswamy, 2014). Thirukkural states that, "an enlightened administration is one that works with focus on beneficence, benevolence, rule of justice and people's welfare". It also states that, "an administration would be respected if it is courteous, friendly and protective of citizen's interest"(Raghunathan, 2007).

The welfare of the people was considered as Public Interest in the past. However, in recent times, the connotation of Public Interest has changed, wherein the inconvenience to the public good was spoken about. For example, in 1609, a French Satirist, Mathurin Regnier, used the term Public Interest, to denote the action taken by the government to invoke justice for an unjust or illegal action. The Industrial Revolution Movement of the 17th and 18th century, started promoting individual interest and individual welfare, which promoted Capitalism, and the focus was more on increased Individualism and self-interest. The notion of Public Interest was thus done away with during the Victorian Era. In contemporary times too, the notion of Public Interest is thus diluted with the modern approaches in public administration like the 'New Public Management', wherein promotion of private sector principles can be found in the public sector too. The role of State that focused on public interest or the welfare of the people was questioned on grounds of inefficiency and the State was just asked to be a facilitator rather than being a 'doer'.

In such a context, 'public interest' as a concept assumed a change in its meaning, from something that was concerned with the duties and values, that has to be addressed by intervention in the theoretically free market state (ICAEW, 2012). In the study of

public administration, public interest is associated with sound government and action in Public Interest is prescribed for the State officials (Alexander, 2002).

The term Public Interest has been officially under discussion right from the 1950s onwards and it carried different meanings for different players and in differing contexts. Some related the validity and the applicability of the concept of Public Interest to political process and policy making. The Public Interest is thus anything that is of interest to the public. Public Interest is interchangeably used with other terminologies such as 'public welfare', 'public good' 'public service' and the 'common good' and hence, as stated by Lewis (2006) ambiguity exists in defining Public Interest.

According to Alexander, the origin of Public Interest can be identified with the origin of the word *'republic',* which means 'the public thing'. The dictionary of political science, states that Public Interest is something that refers to "the aggregate of individual interest, whatever that is". According to Bealey (1999), like 'common good' and 'general will', Public Interest is something, which is easier to talk about than to determine what it is. Public Interest is also considered as an effort to identify particular interests with general interests or to camouflage self-interested advocacy. The OECD in 2003, while recommending for dealing with conflict of interest in public service, states that, "serving the Public Interest is the fundamental mission of governments and public institutions" (OECD, 2003).

Although, the term 'public interest', does not occur in the American Constitution, it is used frequently in various pronouncements, such as statutes, judicial opinions, etc. In the field of public administration and political science, the concept of Public Interest is regarded as "a basic norm of political responsibility and standard to guide official decision-making". Yet, the concept of Public Interest has:

- No agreed upon meaning.
- Most of those who use the concept leave it undefined and amorphous; and
- Those who do attempt to define it are in basic disagreement, not only as to what should be the substantive content of the concept, but also as to whether it is possible to postulate any substantive content for it (Schubert, 1957).

There are other scholars who have defined Public Interest in the following way:

According to Bentham, "an action of a government is in Public Interest, when the tendency it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any it has to diminish".

According to Rousseau, "Public Interest consists of universally shared private interests" and something is in Public Interest if the general will wills it'.

Brian Barry, in his work ' Political Argument', combines the definition of both Bentham and Rousseau and states that 'Public Interest is a sub-class of common interest and something is in Public Interest, if and only if, it is in the interest of each and every member of the public (*cited* in Benditt, 1973).

According to W.J. Ree, 'Interest of a Public, is the interest of a group the unity of which is "determined by its organisation, under a common public authority" (*quoted* in Benditt, 1973).

According to Benditt, "Something is of Public Interest if and only if it is an interest of anyone who is a member of the public, that is, if and only if it is essential for the protection, and even for the improvement, of anyone's welfare or well-being, where

the means for protecting or improving this interest are out of the hands of most of the members of the public and is likely to be achieved only if the public takes a hand".

Further, Benditt states that there are *two* types of Public Interest, called 'Course-of-Life Interest' and 'Improvement Interest'. Course-of-life Interests are those aspects that includes those sort of things that are essential for health and sanity, which includes food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, employment, recreation, etc. On the other hand, Improvement Interests covers those aspects that improves a person or his/her life, thus improving his/her chances for achieving happiness. For example, for all the Course-of-Life Interest, if someone aims the next level of achievement for the same, then that is considered an improvement interest. Benditt states that, though it might not seem like a Public Interest, these interests are important, which greater numbers of people are lacking.

According to Johnston (2017), Public Interest is 'slippery' and 'ambiguous' and it is an expression which is widely used, but poorly defined. On the whole, the literature in general states that Public Interest should be identified on a case-by-case basis, defined within specific, time-framed context, rather than having a single definition for all .

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Differentiate between the current and the past meaning of Public Interest.

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2) How have various scholars defined Public Interest?

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13.3 APPROACHES TO PUBLIC INTEREST

Public Interest Approach was promoted as a scholarly work in the twentieth century by scholars such as Theodore M. Benditt, Clarke E. Cochran, Walter Lippmann, etc. From the interpretation of different scholars, it can be understood that Public Interest Approach did not have any consensus among scholars on the discussion of Public Interest. While some scholars looked into the form of Public Interest, some looked into the application of Public Interest, while some even questioned the existence

of Public Interest. However, despite this lack of agreement, the Approach still received wide attention among various disciplines including public administration and it has picked up momentum because of the relevance it holds in today's context.

Scholars such as Barry Bozeman, C.E. Cochran, Jane Johnston, etc., have discussed the theoretical typologies of Public Interest. The different Approaches to Public Interest, as discussed by Cochran (1974) and Johnston (2017) are as follows:

Abolitionist Approach of Public Interest

As the term suggests, many of the scholars such as Bozeman, Cochran, Glendon A. Schubert, Frank J. Sorauf, etc. were critical of Public Interest Approach and tried to abolish the concept of Public Interest on grounds of lack of scientific rigour in it. According to them, Public Interest Approach does not have a meaning or validity in it and is too unwieldy, ambiguous, anachronistic and unachievable. Hence, as per this view, Public Interest should be abolished, as there exists only private interest.

Normative Theory of Public Interest

Public Interest as per this Approach becomes the ethical standards for evaluating specific public policies and this Approach was put forward by scholars like C.W. Cassinelli, Herbert W.Schneider and Walter Lippmann. The basic premise of this Approach is the conception of common good, which it sees as a normative concept and the general norm is the relevant good of the whole community. This Approach thus states that a policy should be evaluated against normative standards and try to find out whether a policy contributes more to the common good than private good(Cochran, 1974).

Consensualist-Communitarian

As highlighted by Johnston (2017, *op.cit.*), this typology focuses on majority interest or negotiated consensus. Anthony Downs (1962) proposes the idea of 'minimal consensus' as necessary for the operations of a democratic society. As per this Approach, 'anything that is in the long-term detrimental to the majority of citizens cannot be in the Public Interest, unless it is essential to the protection of those individual rights included in the minimal consensus. This Approach is thus in favour of the government's approach of having some basic rules for carrying out social policies, which goes into protecting the rights of the individuals in minority. This Approach focuses on providing the individual's rightful place in the political culture.

Process Theories

Process theories are composed of theorists who define Public Interest by looking into political process through which policy is made. As per this typology, there are *three* theories to Public Interest, each focuses on how Public Interest is served during the process of compromise or accommodation. The basic premise of this Approach is on 'how many interests/individuals are served, rather than single interest/ individual (Cochran, *op.cit.*). In general, conflict of interest is unavoidable. However, decision-making should be arrived upon based on practical and logical grounds, beyond moral principles. The *three* theories within this typology include aggregative, pluralist and procedural:

- ***Aggregative Model*:** This Model equates Public Interest with an alternative to government interests. The limitation of this Model, lies in the inability to provide a valid aggregation of interests, due to power imbalances. Thus, in the process of aggregation, some tend to have the privileges over others.

- ***Pluralist Model:*** This Approach talks about the existence of multiple interests, which comprises various self-interests. The competing and demanding interest are weighed against other interests. As per this Model, Public Interest is seen as compatible with the idea of the need to balance interests. The conflict of interest as per this Approach is balanced on democratic lines and thus this Model, by taking a pluralistic view, tries to accommodate the interests.
- ***Procedural Model*:** This Model sets a standard to balance the interests, which is based on adopting procedures.

13.4 RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS PUBLIC INTEREST

In general, Public Interest is expected to be pursued by professionals engaged in public service, like the government, administration, judiciary, etc. The basic expectation is that, while pursuing Public Interest, *two* concerns are to be addressed. *Firstly*, it is the duty of the professionals to reflect on the various perspectives that emerge from broad representation and dialogue. *Secondly*, the professionals are expected to engage in those aspects of Public Interest that meets the concerns of democracy, mutuality, sustainability and legacy. While the former two, encompasses the current responsibility of professionals towards Public Interest, the latter is about future responsibilities. Thus, the current and future responsibilities towards Public Interest, as put forward by Carol Lewis (2006) is about:

- Democratic concerns and individual interest on the one hand.
- Mutual interest and ethics on the other hand.
- Preserving resources and ensuring the capacity to sustain life to ensure a viable future; and
- Preserving and transmitting civilisation's cultural, intellectual, artistic and historical legacy.

i) ***Meeting Current Public Interest***

Public Interest and Democratic Values

In the first place, Public Interest Approach should try to evoke democratic values, which tries to sum up the variety of private interest on a particular issue. The different interests are aggregated into public action. When the focus is on democratic values, the methods used in identifying Public Interest is based on opinion poll, cost-benefit analysis, etc. For example, in deciding whether Lok Pal Bill is needed or not, opinion poll can be the deciding criteria to determine the level of Public Interest. In meeting the democratic values, one of the core problems faced is the tyranny of the majority group due to which voices of the minority receives little attention, which should be taken care of. For example, in the Constitution, democratic values like justice, equality, social welfare are the key concerns specified and the Public Interest Approach should look into these aspects while evaluating public and private interests (Lewis, *op.cit.*).

Mutuality and Civic Interests

Public Interest in this context is promoted by focusing on what is good for the society as a whole, rather than promoting individual or minority interests. The common good is thus considered as the aggregate satisfaction of individual interests. For example, while constructing dams and other development projects, some of the people

are displaced. But still the government is engaged in the task on the premise that the project would be beneficial to the common good. In this context too, if democratic values are to be upheld, ethical concerns should also be given consideration in pursuing public interest. The advocates of Public Interest, it has been observed, should thus act as ethical agents or as a statesman and try to adopt a course of action that takes into account a greater number of interests in the perspective of a longer period of time. In general, people working in public domain get carried away by particular interests and miss out the other.

While pursuing both these perspectives, sometimes Public Interest is confused with the very preferences and biases of the advocates of Public Interest.

Table: Current and Future Responsibilities towards Public Interest

	Current		Future	
	Democracy	**Mutuality**	**Sustainability**	**Legacy**
Focus	Sums up diverse private interest and aggregates demands	Makes Constitutional analysis and looks into civic virtues, social needs, common goods, etc.	Looks into Ecology, Biology, Universality, Physical Viability	Focuses on culture, history, civilisation
Method	Looks into popular preferences, Cost-benefit analysis and public opinion polls	Makes analysis of Constitutional values, Professional values	Engages in preservation, protection	Uses methods like preservation, transmission, education
Administrator's Role	Act as agent or delegate duties	Acts as a Statesman, Trustee	Acts as a Steward, Sustainer	Acts as a Steward, Custodian
Core Problems	Tyranny of majority, Exclusion	Elitism, Representation, Individual Liberty	Economic Development, Irreversibility	Selectivity, Resources, Irreversibility
Core Proscriptions	Corruption	Bias, Conflict of Interest	Ignorance, Error, Demagoguery	Arrogance, Insensitivity, Misjudgement
Core Prescriptions	Responsiveness, Accountability, Neutral Competence	Civic Virtue, Impartiality, Citizenship	Fiduciary responsibility for life chances	Fiduciary responsibility for common values

Source: Lewis, 2006.

ii) ***Meeting Future Public Interests***

Sustainability

While protecting Public Interest, interests of future generations also should be given consideration. E.g., Environmental concerns and climate change issue or water scarcity is highlighted in the light of future requirements. E.g., UNESCO's measure of Convention of International Heritage adopted in 1972 and the recent measure towards promotion of Sustainable Development as the development agenda is a measure in

this regard. In this perspective, the vulnerability of the future generations is taken into account while taking current decisions, to deal with irreversible repercussions. The challenge here is the trade-off between current interest and future requirements and our acceptance or willingness to oblige to future requirements. This can be understood from the saying that "we do not inherit the land from our ancestors but have borrowed it from our children".

- *Legacy:* The concern of Public Interest advocates is also on conserving, restoring and preserving the artifacts. When Public Interest is to be served it is also important to anticipate the inescapable tensions between current uses and future needs and also between private interest and mutual interest. The National Academy of Public Administration has adopted ethical guidelines for thinking about the future aspects of Public Interest, which includes the following principles:
- *Trustee Principle*: Every generation has obligation to protect the interest of the future generations;
- *Sustainability Principle:* No generation should deprive the future generation of the opportunity for a quality of life comparable to its own;
- *Chain of Obligation Principle*: Each generation's primary obligation is to provide for the needs of the living and succeeding generation;
- *Precautionary Principle*: Actions that pose realistic threat of irreversible harm or consequences, should not be pursued unless there is a compelling, countervailing need to either benefit current or future generations.

13.5 PURSUIT OF PUBLIC INTEREST

In practical terms, Public Interest has been pursued in various domains and in particular, institutions such as the State, judiciary, civil society, media, etc. play a major role in protecting the Public Interest, whenever it is found that the action of an individual or a group is against the Public Interest. In this Section, we discuss the way in which Public Interest has been pursued by way of policies/Acts, laws, media, etc.

Public Interest in Public Policies/Acts

Public Interest is pursued by the State, by way of legislation and implementation of policies that are of Public Interest. A policy can be of benefit to the public, if and only if some interest of the public is promoted or protected. A policy can benefit people, without benefiting the public; and a policy can disservice some of the interests of some people without disserving the interests of the public. Policies can be evaluated in terms of realisation of Public Interest. Not all Acts and Policies are in the overall interest of all the members of the public. But still, the concept of Public Interest is applicable even where the policy is not in everyone's overall interest. For example, in the Right to Education Act, the provision of no detention of children within class VIII may be of general interest to majority of the public. But still, there is a special interest group who might not be in favour of having 'no detention' policy. This is an example, where a Policy or Act is not in everyone's overall interest.

Similarly, there might be a legislation in general to clear the unauthorised colony from the vicinity, which may be of interest to majority of the public. However, there might be a small group, that might have a common interest in opposing the legislation, as it affects the rights of the minority or marginalised. Thus, what is in Public Interest is not what is in interest of each of the members of the public, but instead what is in the interest of most of the members of the public.

Sometimes it becomes difficult to determine which of two policies, is more in the Public Interest, when different interests are being served by competing policies, and in different degrees. In such cases, public interest considerations are not always determinative, and other considerations like fairness, liberty and even feasibility are relevant (Benditt, *op.cit.*; Johnston, *op.cit.*).

Public Interest in Legal Pursuits

- *Public Interest in Legal Profession:* In practical terms, Public Interest is pursued in particular in the application of law. As a part of the legal profession, there is 'Public Interest Law'. As highlighted by Johnston (*op.cit.*), under Public Interest law, Public Interest is pursued in *three* different ways: i) Law tries to aid the poor; ii) There is representation of political and cultural groups and new radical movements, and (iii) through Public Interest Litigation, substantive but neglected interests are pursued, which may include environmental protection, women's rights, etc. In practice, it can be thus observed that Public Interest is served, *firstly*, by providing assistance to those in need; and *secondly*, by highlighting inequalities by placing issues of equality, access and transparency within the justice system.

- *Public Interest in Legislature and Judiciary:* On the other hand, in the broader contexts, law has a role to play in legislation and judiciary and in both the contexts, Public Interest is pursued. Through Public Interest Litigation (PIL), the judiciary serves the interest of core issues that involves the stake of the public and simultaneously gives voice to the public. For example, when Delhi was severely hit by pollution in the beginning of the 21st century, the judiciary through judicial activism ordered for the use of CNG in public vehicles instead of petrol/diesel, which had gone into reducing the pollution levels in Delhi.

Public Interest and Media

As highlighted, the media too pursues Public Interest in various ways and basically tries to publish or report news that are closely in defence of Public Interest. In this process, the pursuit of media includes but is not limited to: i) detecting or exposing crime or serious impropriety; ii) protecting public health and safety; iii) preventing the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation (Johnston, *op.cit.*). However, in the current times, it can also be observed that media tries to address private interests, at the cost of diluting Public Interest.

13.6 CRITICISM OF PUBLIC INTEREST APPROACH

Public Interest Approach has been criticised on various grounds, basically for the ambiguity that exists in it. The individualistic view of Public Interest is found to be promoting only the market interventions, which in the long-run affects Public Interest. This leads to failure of meeting even the bare minimum basic requirements of the society. Anthony Downs and William Niskanen, argue that the bureaucrats and politicians cannot be trusted for promotion of Public Interest other than their own self-interest. The early critic of Public Interest, Anthony Downs observes that if Public Interest is considered as a concept rather than a function, then there is no obligation to define it (*cited* in Johnston, *op.cit.*).

Thus, Public Interest Approach has been rejected by many scholars and empiricists, because of the lack of definition in it and the ambiguity that exists. Scholars like

Anthony Downs, Schubert, Sorauf rejected the concept of Public Interest Approach, as they considered it as 'too vague, too value-laden, too utopian, and too inconsistent with the policies of group accommodation to be of much value (cited in Johnston, *ibid.)*. Further, Schubert regarded Public Interest Approach as 'childish myth' while Cochran considered it as 'ideal ghost'.

In spite of all the criticisms and limitations, Public Interest Approach holds a place of prominence in public administration, because of the role it plays in political thinking, planning, policy making, etc., especially when it tries to protect the rights of the sub-groups or minor groups.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What are the various approaches to Public Interest?

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2) Write a note on the 'Pursuit of Public Interest'.

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13.7 CONCLUSION

We may conclude by saying that public administration is for the 'public' and therefore for 'public interest'. Even when public policies do not get implemented properly and their inherent Public Interest is not met, the concept of Public Interest underlining these policies cannot be negated. We must remind ourselves of what Adam Smith wrote in his famous Article titled 'An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations', way back in 1776 . He observed " it is not from the benevolence of the butcher or baker that we expect our bread, but from regard of their own self-interest". It means that businesses are run for profit and not for Public Interest. The government or State sector does have Public Interest as a primary objective,but opening up of core services to Non-state actors has brought this goal under the scanner. Proliferation of Non-state Actors and Private sector in the activities, which were hitherto performed by government or State have diluted the concept of Public Interest. This Unit gave us a fairly good idea about the nature of Public Interest. It brought out the various themes and approaches to Public Interest. It also delved into the manner in which Public Interest can be pursued.

13.8 GLOSSARY

Individualism : The belief in 'self' and 'self-worth'. In the societal and political context, it is a belief that an individual has the freedom and capacity to make her or his own choices and decisions. It shuns the State control over individuals.

Feduciary : It deals with matters involving trust, especially with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary.

Self-Aggrandizement : An action or a process through which self-promotion and power mongering for self is established and perpetuated.

13.9 REFERENCES

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13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- The welfare of the people was considered as Public Interest in the past. However, in recent times, the connotation of Public Interest has changed, wherein the inconvenience to the public good was spoken about.
- For example, in 1609, a French Satirist, Regnier, used the term Public Interest, to denote the action taken by the government to invoke justice for an unjust or illegal action.
- The Industrial Revolution Movement of the 17th and 18th centuries, started promoting individual interest and individual welfare, which promoted Capitalism, and the focus was more on increased individualism and self-interest.
- The notion of Public Interest was thus done away with during the Victorian Era.
- In contemporary times too, the notion of Public Interest is thus diluted with the modern approaches in public administration like the 'New Public Management', wherein promotion of private sector principles can be found in the public sector too.
- The role of State that focused on Public Interest or the welfare of the people was questioned on grounds of inefficiency and the State was just asked to be a facilitator rather than being a 'doer'.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- As per Alexander, in the study of public administration, Public Interest is associated with sound government and action in Public Interest is prescribed for the State officials.
- According to Bentham, "an action of a government is in Public Interest, when the tendency it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any it has to diminish".
- According to Rousseau, "Public Interest consists of universally shared private interests" and something is in Public Interest if the General Will wills it'.
- According to W.J. Ree, 'Interest of a Public, is the interest of a group the unity of which is "determined by its organisation, under a common public authority" (*quoted* in Benditt, 1973).

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Abolitionist Approach of Public Interest.
- Normative Theory of Public Interest .

- Consensualist-Communitarian Approach.
- Process Theories or Approaches.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Public Interest in public policies.
- Public Interest and Media.
- Public Interest in legal pursuits; legislature, judiciary and legal profession.