

Book Review

Jamil, I., Dhakal, T. K. and Oaudel, N. R. (eds.) (2019). *Civil Service Management and Administrative Systems in South Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan

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“The reform of civil service should be thorough, radical and complete” (Rutherford B, Hayes)

Civil service and reforms are the two parts of a coin which is often tossed on the surface of a society. The value of this coin remain intact if the two faces shines at the same pace, any blur can devalue it. Same is the relation between civil service and reforms. Both, if goes hand in hand then the society grow and develops as a civic society.

The present book is written in the context of civil service management and administrative systems of South Asian countries. It reflects a substantial hard work of the authors who are the eminent scholars and administrators. Their vivid understanding of the topic and vast experience enable them to present different colours of civil service and the reforms as hard dreams. The analytical discourse of this book opens the many folded secretes of the success and failure of the civil service management and administration . The readers of this book can easily find a valuable and authentic material arranged in an understandable way. The layout of the book is divided into fourteen chapters in order to cover the civil service practices in South Asia.

First chapter one is written for the basic understanding of the civil service in South Asia. Here the authors have mentioned here the interesting notions of civil service pertaining to specific norms, standards, values and cultural attributes of the region. Although the purpose of civil service is found almost the same everywhere but the matter of ways and approaches actually make it different in a look.

Second chapter describes the conditions of civil service in Bhutan. Author here mentioned the weaknesses of the civil service by calling it an improper articulation of the system. The other important thing is that the reforms are made by every one other than the true reformers. For this reason lack of compatibility with the existing problems can be easily noticed. Along with it the

constitutional monarchy and semi-democracy are found inefficient to create an effective civil service. The author suggested that the patronize civil service must be changed and be developed on merit based principals.

In third chapter authors have portrayed a vivid picture of the Bangladesh's civil service. A clear projection of all the reforms has made the presentation important along with the description of the situations and the barriers that have created hindrances during the implementations. Especially political scenarios are discussed in the light of civil service agenda.

Fourth chapter covers the practices of civil service in India. It involve the steps taken by British East India Company and the author refers those things which are still in practice. The role of civil service is also addressed in the wake of country's independence in 1947, The author also mention the basic challenges and matter of corruption for the civil service of India. This chapter reflects the various turnings of Indian civil service during the passage of time.

In fifth chapter civil service management in Napal is discussed. The author pointed out that in the beginning the civil service was based on ad hoc basis and due to this policy of ad hocism civil service remained under great stress and failed to generate any sort of tangible results.

Sixth chapter is written in the continuity of chapter three. Here author raised two important issues. One is the role of bureaucracy after introducing the affirmative policies and other is to see which extent bureaucracy attracts positive evaluation of the citizens. The aim of this chapter is to develop a critique on the history of civil service management in Napal and identify researchable content.

Seventh chapter exposes the nature of civil service reforms in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The comprehensive analysis helps the reader to understand the nature and scope of civil service in Pakistan. The chronological and concise presentation of ups and down in the civil service while discussing the sociopolitical situations makes it an informative document.

In eighth chapter New Statuary Civil Service in Maldives is discussed. Maldives, being an emerging democratic country has faced great challenges in the shape of ongoing contest between politics and administration. Although the situation is getting better with the passage of time, but still many issues like delegatory powers and decentralization of human resource model is still at the verge of political interventions. Keeping in view the situation authors manage to suggest a number of procedural and operational measures for the Maldivian civil service management system along with the legal frame work to sustain the current delegation of powers reform initiatives.

In chapter ninth, authors have done an analysis of existing bureau-pathology of Sirilankan administration. This has been done by addressing the periods of evolution, trends, and challenges in public personnel management. In doing so, it is pointed out the Sirilankan society has gone through three phases i.e the pre-colonial phase, the colonial and the postcolonial phase. In colonial phase public service was highly centralized and based on traditional social values and

attitudes. In colonial phase some touches of professional public administration were included. In the post colonial phase improvements of pre-colonial disposition regarding various reforms and constitutional amendments have been introduced in 1956, 1970, 1972 and in 1978. Authors put emphasis on visionary decision making in following the true spirit of public service reforms.

After chapter nine, authors devoted rest of the chapters till chapter thirteen to get a bird eye view of the situations regarding the impact of civil service reforms. They have looked minutely all the situations in South Asia and develop concrete observations in the way of bringing the reforms and implementations. The salient feature of this part is the author's fact based description of success and failure of these reforms.

In tenth chapter authors have discussed the scope of reforms, implementation and the results. Under the comprehensive administrative reform commission of the World Bank in 1997, a New Public Management (NPM) Program was initiated in Bangladesh. But lack of streamline regulations, laws, high degree of politicization and bureaucratic dominance create hindrances in the achievement of objectives mentioned in NPM. The shaky capabilities of leadership in building solid institutional frame work, weakness in rule of law and paralyzed civil service system become a cause of its failure.

In eleventh chapter authors have recorded the efforts made by Nepalian society after the declaration of the constitution in 2015 and after the general election of 2017. Finally, the long standing of unitary administrative system is divided into three levels i.e the federal model of administration, the local and provincial levels of administration. The confusion among the political and bureaucratic agents makes the process of distribution more difficult and unattainable. This raises the uncertainty and fear among the civil servants at all levels. In the state of indecision, the country introduces new constitution for the sake of making administrative system performance oriented

In twelfth chapter the author has presented the true picture of all the reforms of Indian civil service and local administrative system. The writer focuses the concept of grass root democracy at both the rural and urban levels and concluded that for some reasons it has not flourished in the true sense and direction as expected. The author identifies major challenges in the implementation of reform programs are the politicization of administration, criminal elements in elected bodies, rampant corruption, caste and group divisions and the electoral bad practices. Whenever reforms are made, illiteracy and poverty more or less demise their positive effects. The author pointed out that a strong local government is the only choice for us to secure social justice and foster corporate life in the Indian society.

In thirteenth chapter structure, reforms and management practices of Sirilankan public administrative machinery is discussed. Reforms in Sirilankan history is remained a myth than a reality due to the elements of inefficiency, corruption, over centralization, highly politicized

system and status quo culture of being rule oriented rather than result oriented. Authors have also mentioned that due to the involvement of general public, things are now changing at all levels.

Fourteenth chapter is written on the Chinese administrative reforms. Writers have mentioned some wonderful steps that are taken both politically and administratively to establish a meaningful relationship between the society and the state. It is mentioned that the success in economic and administrative reform is based on the commitment that is shown by political leaders and the administrative agents. There is a mark of difference is found in the approach. In China a matter of continuity is seen in the efforts of implementations. It is proved that the episodic administrative reforms are not enough to provide the solutions of the multidimensional problems. China's vision 2020 can become a example for the South Asian countries in order to establish a modern public administrative system.

The authors of this book have followed a descriptive and narrative style of writing. The logical facts are framed with the help of authentic secondary data collected from respective countries. The descriptive and inferential statistical methods are used in the development of tables. Regression analysis is used for describing the relationship between various variables. The results are presented in an understandable way even a reader having no back ground of statistics can easily understand the point of view of the authors.

This book has shown a capacity of attention on account of its coverage of civil service management and administrative system at South Asian level. In fact the collective efforts of the writers have made it a state of the art piece in the realm of written literature in the field of civil service management and administration. This single document is quiet enough for having an idea of the civil service practices, problems and challenges in this part of the world. Along with this, it has raised many cross questions which can become a good source of research for scholars and academia can built a substantial debate on them. Above all, this book in its essence is a valuable reading for potential candidates of the competitive examination and learners of public administration for comprehensive understanding of the topics as well as regional account of civil service system in the specific context of South Asia.