

# NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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# Introduction:

- The term New Public Administration was used to describe **the new philosophical outlook for Public Administration.**
- The traditional dogmas of public administration like 'efficiency' & 'economy' were found inadequate and incomplete goals of administrative activity.
- It began to be said that efficiency is not the soul of administration. Man is the focal point of all administrative activity.
- **The concept of new public administration has shaken the traditional concepts and views of the discipline.**
- Old public administration gave significance to '**administration**' rather than '**public**', emphasized '**principles**' and '**procedures**' rather than '**values**' and '**philosophy**', **efficiency** and **economy** rather than '**effectiveness**' and '**service efficiency**'.
- It has imparted **a wider perspective to the subject and has linked it to society.**
- The NPA movement has crept into the American life in the 1970s and after.

# Evolution of NPA:

- The periods between 1960s and early 1970s were periods of disturbance, instability and confusion in the Western countries, especially in the US.
- Due to unrest and social tensions, the earlier objectives of public administration like "efficiency" were found unsatisfactory.
- So in the late 1960's a section of scholars particularly the youth began to lay more stress on 'values' & 'ethics in public administration. They wanted public administration to be value oriented and not efficiency oriented.
- They were of the opinion that 'man' is the centre of all administrative activity.
- This new trend came to be known as 'New Public Administration'.

# Major landmarks in the growth of NPA:

- The major landmarks in the growth and emergence of NPA are the following –
  1. The Honey Report on Higher Education for Public Service, 1967,
  2. The Philadelphia Conference on the Theory and practice of Public Administration, 1967,
  3. The Minnowbrook Conference, 1968,
  4. Publication of “Towards a New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook Perspective” (ed. By Frank Marini), 1971,
  5. Publication of “Public Administration in a time of Turbulence” (ed. by Dwight Waldo) 1971.
- Dwight Waldo, Frank Marini, George Fredrickson, Joseph Uvages, Charles Lindblom, Vincent Ostrom were associated with the NPA movement.

# Meaning:

- According to Fredrickson, New Public Administration is –
- Less generic and more public.
- Less descriptive and more prescriptive.
- Less oriented toward considering what exists to be unalterable and more oriented toward changing reality.
- Less institution oriented and more oriented toward impact on client.
- Less neutral and more normative.
- No less scientific.
- According to Nigro and Nigro, NPA is **“Client focused administration is recommended along with debureaucratisation, democratic decision- making and decentralization of administrative process in the interest of more effective and human delivery of public services.”**

# Goals of NPA:

- Frank Marini summarizes the themes of NPA under five heads like –
  1. relevance,
  2. Values,
  3. Social equity,
  4. Change &
  5. Client-focus

# 1. Relevance:

- NPA points out that the traditional public administration has been interested in efficiency and economy.
- The NPA stresses that the traditional PA had little to say about contemporary problems and issues and was therefore becoming irrelevant.
- Hence, NPA demands meaningful studies oriented toward the realities of social life.

## 2. Values:

- The NPA rejects the value neutral stand taken by the traditional public administration.
- The NPA makes its basic normative concern in administrative studies.
- The NPA advocates openness about the values being served through administrative action.



# 3. Social Equity:

- According to NPA, the realization of social equity should be the objective of public administration.
- Social equity means that public administrators should become champions of the under-privileged sections of the society.
- They should use their discretion in administering the programmes to protect and promote the interests of the poor.

## 4. Change:

- The NPA emphasizes that the public officials should become active agents of social change and non-believers in status-quo.
- It does not allow enslavement to permanent institutions which become self perpetuating power centers of dominant classes.
- It suggest innovations in administrative machinery for bringing about social transformation.

## 5. Client- focus:

- The NPA advocates a client focused approach.
- It stresses not only on providing goods and services to the clients but also giving them a voice in how and when and what is to be provided.
- It requires positive, proactive and responsive administrators rather than authoritarian and ivory tower bureaucrats.

# Features of NPA:

- The features of NPA as summarised by George Fredrickson are stated as below –
  1. Change and administrative Responsiveness,
  2. Rationality,
  3. Management – worker Relation,
  4. Structures,
  5. Education in PA.

# 1. Change & Administrative responsiveness:

- The administrative organization & procedures should be responsive to the changes that are taking place in the socio-economic, political and technological environments.
- In other words, **there must be greater organizational & operational flexibility in the administrative system to meet changes in the environment.**

## 2. Rationality:

- Rationality is the main criterion for administrative decisions & actions.
- Here, rationality refers to the rationality of the administrator.
- There is a need for **the administrator to consult the citizens regarding the things to be done**, and also about what ought to be done, and also about who has to do it, etc.

### 3. Management –Worker relation:

- The smooth relation between the management and worker **enhances morale and productivity among the employees.**
- However, the main aim should be satisfaction of citizens with the performance and attitudes of the administrative employees.

## 4. structures:

- There is a need for employing a dynamic approach to organizational structure.
- Structures have to be made relevant to the changing need of the environments.
- Instead of sticking to the old standardized organizational structure, new structures such as small decentralized and flexible hierarchies can be utilized.
- These new structures prove to be more suitable for present day administrative organizations.



## 5. Education in PA:

- Public administration is heterogeneous in character as it deals with highly varied and complex public affairs.
- No single approach or theory or concept would be adequate to guide action or understand its working.
- Hence, there is a need for the subject of PA to be enriched by several streams of knowledge, concepts, ideas and insights.

# Criticisms on NPA:

- New Public Administration has been subjected to severe criticisms.
- Critics like Allan Campbell point out that there is nothing 'new' about NPA because many of the issues brought to the surface vigorously by the advocates of NPA have been raised earlier by other scholars.
- The NPA has been criticized on the grounds of anti-positivist, anti-theoretic and anti-management.
- It is anti-positivist because it rejects the definition of PA as 'value-free'

# Criticisms on NPA.....

- Then, the NPA is anti-technical, as it is against sacrificing the human beings to the logic of the machine and the system.
- The NPA is also anti- bureaucratic and ant-hierarchical.
- Carter and Duffey doubts whether the social equity is actually getting recognized as an established objective of public administration.
- Dunn and Fozuni argue that the NPA has resulted in the propagation of an illusion of paradigm shift within the field.

# Significance of NPA:

- Nigro and Nigro observe that the NPA has certainly broken fresh ground and imparted new substance to the discipline of public administration.
- The NPA has enriched the subject by linking it closely to society.
- The NPA places emphasis on innovation and change and therefore, it is dynamic.
- Through their strong emphasis on social equity and citizens participation in decision making, the supporters of NPA have greatly stressed the need for reorientation of theory and practice of traditional public administration.