

STUDY OF MODUS OPERANDI OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Navanath Bhagawan More, Deputy Engineer, Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Pune & Research Scholar, Dept of Political Science. Shivaji University, Kolhapur.
Mo. 9922111959. E-mail ID - navanathmore122@gmail.com

Abstract

We inherit model of bureaucracy from British rule. Organisation of all departments is based on hierarchy i.e. line agency. One such important department is 'Public Works Department' of Government of Maharashtra. It is entrusted with providing infrastructures like roads, buildings and bridges. The works carried out by this department and its working is always criticized by the public. To have citizen centric and accountable administration. 'Administrative Reforms Commission' has suggested to revamp the administrative structure. But very less is done in this direction. In this paper, study of modus operandi of Public Works Department is carried out to find solutions to the problem of accountability of an organisation of Public Works Department towards the citizens.

1. INTRODUCTION:- Public Works Department is one of the important department of Government of Maharashtra. It is entrusted mainly with the works of construction and maintenance of roads, buildings and bridges. It also works as the technical advisor to the Government of Maharashtra. To carry out these works the main human resource in this department consists of civil engineers along with ancillary staff like clerks, auditors, accountants, draftsmen, tracers, etcetra. The department has a glorious history of about 150 years and spends about 50,000/- crores each year to provide infrastructures like roads, buildings and bridges, helipads, monuments, etcetra. The organisation of this department is based on line agency as shown below in the official hierarchy.

Table 1.1: Structural – Functional set-up of an organization.

No .	Designation in hierarchical set-up	Number of Engineers			Jurisdiction / span of Control
		In Mantralay	In rest of the Maharashtra	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Additional Chief Secretary ↓ Secretary (Roads)↓	1 1	- -	1 1	Maharashtra state. Maharashtra state.
	Secretary (Works)	1	-	1	Maharashtra state.
2.	Chief Engineer ↓	1	9	10	Region contain -ing 5 to 10 Districts.
3.	Superintending Engineer ↓	4	35	39	One District with some exceptions.
4.	Executive Engineer ↓	6	238	244	One division having 3 to 8 Sub Divisions under its con- -trol /some part of the district.
5.	Deputy Engineer/ Sub Divisional Engineer/ Assistant Engineer Grade-I↓	11	1258	1269	Generally one Taluka or some specific part of Taluka.
6.	Junior Engineer /SectionalEngineer/As sistant Engineer Grade-II	1	4174	4175	Select roads, buildings in a Sub Division as per the situations.
	Total	26	5714	5740	Maharashtra State.

The base for the organisation of this department is 'Process.' The works carried out by this department goes through various stages / processes namely –

Stages of work:

(a) Demand for work: - The demand for a work is made directly by the people or through their elected representatives on the basis of local need.

(b) Budget provision:- Financial provision for the demanded work is made by the authority with whom such powers are vested. This provision is made on the lump sum basis, approximately.

(c) Administrative approval:- As per site conditions, block plans and estimates are prepared and submitted for administrative approval. Administrative approval is given by concerned authority. It depends upon one's position/rank in official hierarchy and amount of estimate.

(d) Technical sanction:- After getting administrative approval, detailed plans and estimates are prepared and submitted for technical sanction. Technical sanction is given / accorded by the competent authority.

(e) Display of tender notice:-After according technical sanction, tender notice by the competent authority is published in leading newspapers. The interested contractors in a particular work submit their bids/ offers to the concerned office. Though, the right to accept or reject any or all the offers is reserved with the government authority, generally, the lowest offer is accepted.

(f) Work order:- After accepting the lowest offer, its contractor is advised to remit necessary security deposit, earnest money etcetra. Then he is given the work order instructing him to start the construction work under the direction and supervision of concerned Engineer-in-charge.

(g) Actual construction work:- Then the contractor starts the work, tries to complete it as per tender conditions and within a stipulated period. From start to end of a work, he follows the instructions of concerned Engineer-in-charge. Concerned Engineer-in-charge is of the rank of the Junior Engineer/ Sectional Engineer /Assistant Engineer, grade-II. He is primarily responsible for that particular work, along with 100% checking of his superior authority, i.e. Deputy Engineer. The decisions taken by lower officer are either ratified or modified or set aside by higher officer. This is where the systemic corruption originates leaving aside accountable administration. There is no constitutional remedy to check systemic corruption.

This department is always criticized by public works department, because of poor quality works. It suffers lack of accountability to the people while "performing the expected quality works, due to lack of proper contractors, lack of management training and lack of encouragement to innovation."¹(www.mahapwd.com.)

Like other departments this department also undergoes the problem of corruption. "The solution to the problem of corruption has to be more systemic than any other issue of Governanace."² (Veerappa Moilee, preface to the second administrative Reforms Commission). The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended that, "a system of rewards and incentives for simplification and streamlining of procedures may be introduced in each government organisation."³ (IVth Report of IInd Administrative Reforms Commission, P.140) Therefore it necessitates studying the modus operandi of an organisation of this department.

(2) OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:- To study the modus operandi of Public Works Department of Maharashtra.

(3) CLARIFICATION / SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:- Public Works Department is very important department of Government of Maharashtra.

Construction of new roads, bridges, buildings and its maintenance is the main activity of this department. Hence the process (i.e. construction and maintenance) becomes the base for formation of this department. Alongwith construction and maintenance, this department also works as a technical advisor to Government of Maharashtra. Following few points reveal the importance of the study.

(i) Judicious use of public fund:- The Public Works Department is entrusted with developmental activities and spends about rupees 50,000 crores per year. All this revenue is collected from the people through direct and indirect taxes. Hence its judicious use is the need as well as right of the people. This study would suggest the remedial measures in this direction.

(ii) Acceptance of the inadequacies by the government:- Common people are The beneficiaries of Public Works Department. To serve them by performing quality works is the objective of this department. However, “expected quality works are not done due to lack of proper contractors, lack of management training and lack of encouragement to innovation.”^{3a} [www.mahapwd.com] In light of this fact study of the organization is important and necessary

(iii) Intermittent functional review necessary:- According to Peter Drucker, “every organization should examine their aims, objectives and modus operandi & modify accordingly after every five years.”⁴ (Khopade Suresh, 2004). This department has a glorious history of about 150 years. But well-organized and planned efforts to have public accountability are inadequate.

(iv) Directions of ministry of human resources development :- Ministry of Human Resources Development of Government of India has suggested to start ‘Organization and Method’ as a separate wing in each department for suggesting administrative reforms. But there is no such separate wing in Public Works Department. At present, “the two secretaries of the department, along with their other multifarious duties, are expected to suggest administrative reforms in this department.”⁵ (Please see Annexure-2 of Maharashtra Government Circular No.210/ 2009/ Pra.Kra.271/Prakashan-2, dated 29th July, 2009). This study would provide a concrete alternative model suggesting action plan to keep pace with changing time.

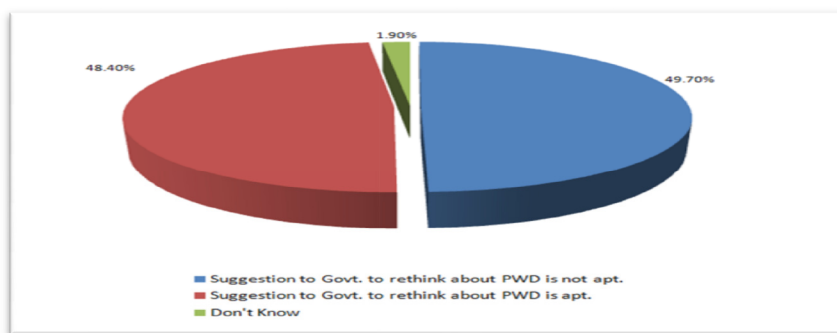
(v) Gladden’s opinion and status of public works department:- It has been aptly said by E.N. Gladden that, “An organization that ceased to change is moribund”⁶ (Gladden E.N. ‘An Introduction to Public Administration’, P.105, London, Staples press, second Edition). In an Organization of Public Works Department no structural or functional changes have taken place during last 150 years. Hence to keep pace with the time and meet the changing needs of the society systematic study of the organization of Public Works Department is significant to have public accountability.

(vi) To avoid dangers of rigidity of bureaucracy:- various government departments have become a rigid frame work of their own. We have inherited the bureaucratic pattern from Britishers. After seventy years of our independence, very little changes have taken place in modus operandi of the organizations. On the other hand Socio-economic changes in the society are taking place rapidly. To meet the changing needs of new society systematic study of the public works department is necessary. Renowned journalist and thinker Neelkanth Khadilkar in his editorial ‘Prashasan Vyavastha Kalbahya Zali Ahe Kay?’ (Whether present administrative setup is outdated) of Marathi daily NAWAKAL dated 13th May, 2008 "emphasized the need of research to be undertaken by working bureaucrats for efficient and citizen centric administration to have public accountability."⁷ (Khadilkar Neelkanth, P.7)

(vii) Retired P.W.D. secretaries in favour of reforms:- Retired Public Works

Department Secretaries Dharap M. G. and Atre, R. T. commented that, “It is unwise to wind up the Public Works Department, but improvements are necessary.”⁸ (Dharap, M.G. and Atre, R. T., 20-7-2005. ‘Daily Sakal’ Pune, Abhijit Pratap Pawar, Vadaki, Tal. Haveli, Dist. Pune, P.6). This statement by high officials signifies the importance of the study. Hence study was undertaken to know the ground realities regarding recruitment, training, promotion, transfer and modus operandi of this department to have public accountability.

(viii) Public opinion in favour of reforms in P.W.D. :- Sharad Pawar, former Cabinet Minister, Department of Agriculture, Government of India, once said, “Government of Maharashtra may rethink about the Public Works Department.”⁹ (Pawar Sharad). His focus point was whether this department should be wound up or continued to be in existence? Few days after the comment of Sharad Pawar, Marathi Daily, ‘Sakal’ undertook survey in this regard. “48.40 Percent people registered their opinions in line with the thought of Shard Pawar.”¹⁰ (Public Opinion, 20-7-2005),’ Daily Sakal, Abhijit Pratap Pawar). It means 48.40% people expect improvements and reforms in Public Works Department of Government of Maharashtra. This people’s urge and will underlines the importance of the study.



(4) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY RESEARCH:

"Junior / Sectional / Assistant Engineer, Grade-II is the back bone of this organisation."¹¹ Hence written feedback through questionnaire has been obtained from this class who is working at the grass root level. This facilitated to get realistic and dependable data for arriving at valid conclusions. Important conclusions about recruitment, training, promotion, transfer, modus operandi are as given below.

(5) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) According to 38% respondent engineers alongwith educational qualification and experience 'commitment to society' should also be given weightage at the time of recruitment.
- 2) All engineers should be probationers till successful completion of rigorous induction training.
- 3) 73% respondent engineers are of the opinion that present rules and regulations governing promotion should be changed. In this connection, it is suggested that strict examination instead of seniority should be the criteria for promotion.
- 4) There should be lottery system for transfer of engineers in this department.
- 5) Engineers should be revolved around the works i.e. stages of work given previously instead of assigning works to engineers from preliminary survey to completion of work. This will facilitate to break the vicious nexus between contractors and misuse of power vested in authority to carry out the works.

6) REFERENCES :-

- 1) www.mahapwd.com.
- 2) M. Veerappa Moilee, Preface to Fourth Report of Second ARC, Jan.2007, P.
- 3) Second Administrative Reforms Commission, (Fourth Report), Government of India, 2nd Floor, Vidyan Bhavan Annex, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi - 110011, Jan.2007, P.140.
- 3a) www.mahapwd.com.
- 4) Peter Drucker, Khopade Suresh, 'Polis Prashasanachi Navi Disha, Sneh Prakashan Pune, 2004, P.
- 5) Maharashtra Government's circular No.210/2009/ Pra.Kra.271/ Prakashan-2; dated 29th July, 2009.
- 6) Gladen, E. N., 'An Introduction to the Public Administration', 9 Grape Street London WC₂, Avasthi and Maheshwari, 'Public Administration' 26th revised & enlarged edition, Laxmi Narayan Agarwal, Agra - 3, 2002, P.105,
- 7) Khadilkar Neelkanth, 'Prashan Vyavastha Kalbahya Zali Aahe Kay?' Editorial of Daily 'Navakaal' dated 13th May, 2008, P.7.
- 8) Dharap, M.G. &Atre, R.T., Daily 'Sakal'(Marathi) dated 20-7-2005.
- 9) Pawar Sharad, Daily Sakal,
- 10) Public Opinion, Daily Sakal, dated 20-7-2005.
- 11) Kapoor, D.N., Kapoor Commission's Report, Public Works Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1985, P.8.