

# Crisis of Introduction of Public Administration as a Discipline in Indian Colleges and Universities: A Study of Himachal Pradesh

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## Abstract

The introduction of public administration as a discipline in Indian academics has had its share of challenges and crises over the years. This discipline, which focuses on the study of government organizations, their functions, and their interaction with society, faced several obstacles during its early development in India. The introduction of Public Administration as an academic discipline in Indian colleges and universities has witnessed a profound crisis in recent years. This crisis is marked by several key challenges that impede the effective development and delivery of public administration education. This abstract provides a succinct overview of the crisis, highlighting the central issues that need to be addressed. The crisis surrounding the introduction of Public Administration as a discipline in Indian colleges and universities is multifaceted, encompassing curriculum inconsistencies, faculty shortages, technological deficits, internship shortcomings, and a deficiency in ethical training. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complex and ever-evolving landscape of public administration in India. The revival and revitalization of the discipline are vital for nurturing competent, ethical, and efficient public servants who can contribute effectively to the nation's governance and development. This paper explores some key aspects of the crisis related to the introduction of public administration as a discipline in Indian academics.

**Keywords:** Public Administration,1 Crisis,2 Academics,3 Indian Universities & Colleges4.

## 1. Introduction

As a discipline, Public Administration did not receive scholarly attention at the outset presumably because it hardly had takers in the academia though students were taught some of the theories of administration as part of Political Science courses. So, it had a silent beginning. Since it was part of Political Science the discipline was always conceptualized as integral to Political Science. As a result, it had the same weaknesses that Dwight Waldo had referred to in his address before the 1968 Minnowbrook Conference-I by saying that “neither the study nor the practice of public administration is responding in an appropriate measure to the mounting turbulence and critical problems of the day”

Public Administration is an orphan discipline in India since it has not been properly mentored by the academicians who are otherwise keen to pursue their interests in other areas of social sciences. There are various factors. Prominent among them is lack of keenness to explore Public Administration as an organic discipline capable of persuasively explaining the peculiar public administration in India. In order to understand the complex nature of India's system of governance, it is incumbent on the analyst to

adequately grasp the context in which it has evolved. Besides the prevalent social, economic, political and institutional contexts, one needs to be sensitive of the colonial influences simply because they continue to remain decisive in the decision making in public administration. The task is gigantic, but not insurmountable because it involves: (a) an appropriate dissection of the context and (b) an anchorage in broader social science interactional field. Once this is taken care of, one is likely to evolve meaningful theories and concepts enabling the analysts to understand and explain the nature of Indian administration in a special socio-economic milieu.

This is perhaps the most apt description of the discipline of Public Administration in Indian universities and other academic institutions where the issues of public administration usually receive serious attention. While academicians do not seem to be zealous in pursuing serious researches in the discipline, the Government of India is far more enthusiastic, as evident in the growing number of reports on administration which are produced to address issues of governance and administration. There is a mismatch between the academic zeal and governmental enthusiasm in comprehending administrative malice and its possible solution.

This mismatch also reveals that there exists a schism between government bureaucracy and the academicians seeking to understand its functioning. What is also striking is also the absence of dialogue between these two stakeholders who do not seem to have appreciated the value of mutual borrowing of concepts, theoretical tool and descriptive details despite obvious advantages out of this dialogical interaction. Nonetheless, it can safely be argued that the governmental reports on vital issues of public administration always remain an important source of conceptualization and theoretical enrichment. In that sense, they are useful and intellectually provocative. The story narrating the evolution and gradual consolidation of Public Administration as a discipline cannot thus be complete without taking into account the importance of government reports in grasping the Indian administrative issues.

## **2. Evolution of Public Administration as a Discipline in India**

Till 1937, Indian universities did not appear to be welcoming to Public Administration as a separate discipline which was usually taught as part of Political Science. The ice was broken with the decision by the University of Madras to offer a diploma in Public Administration from within the department of Political Science. Within a year in 1938, Allahabad University also formalized a course on self-government. In course of four years since the appearance of Public Administration as an independent discipline in 1937, four major Indian universities – Lucknow University, Patna University, Osmania University, and Aligarh Muslim University – began offering diploma in Public Administration. As is evident, these initiatives represented a watershed in the study of the discipline which now has gained an independent status in the field of social sciences. Given its intimate linkages with Political Science, Public Administration was, at the outset, usually considered as integral to Political Science, and, as a result, the courses in the discipline were generally structured around the institutions of governance, primarily local governance. The jinx was over in 1949 when Nagpur University established a full-fledged department of Public Administration independent of the department of Political Science. It was a remarkable development especially when the discipline was still embryonic in its approach and methodologies.

Nonetheless, the scholars keen to unravel the dynamics of Public Administration as a separate discipline believed that the training in Public Administration, besides imparting knowledge about

intricacies of governance, would also equip the students to stand out in competition for jobs in government and private sectors.

### 3. Crisis of Introduction of Public Administration in Academics

- **Colonial Legacy:** Public administration as a formal discipline in India has its roots in the colonial administration system. During the British colonial rule, Indian civil servants were trained in public administration at institutions like the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The discipline, therefore, had colonial baggage, and many Indian scholars and leaders were initially skeptical about adopting it.
- **Resistance from Traditionalists:** Traditionalists in Indian academia, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, were resistant to the introduction of public administration. They argued that this discipline was too focused on Western models of governance and lacked cultural and contextual relevance to India.
- **Lack of Indian Theoretical Frameworks:** Public administration, as a discipline, was perceived as Western-centric and did not have a robust Indian theoretical framework to address the unique challenges faced by the country. This led to a crisis of identity and relevance.
- **Political Influence:** The field of public administration has often been influenced by the political establishment. This has resulted in the discipline sometimes being used to serve political interests rather than being an objective, academic pursuit.
- **Quality of Education:** In the early years of its introduction, the quality of public administration education in India faced criticism. Many institutions lacked adequate resources, faculty, and infrastructure. This crisis in education quality hampered the growth and recognition of the discipline.
- **Bureaucracy-Centric Approach:** In India, public administration was often seen as a discipline primarily catering to the training needs of the civil services, particularly the IAS. This limited perspective hindered its broader development and applicability.
- **Ethical and Corruption Issues:** Public administration in India has also grappled with ethical issues and challenges related to corruption. These crises have brought negative attention to the field.
- **Globalization and Modernization:** The discipline of public administration has had to adapt to the changing global and technological landscape, which has posed challenges in terms of curriculum development and research.

### 4. Present Scenario of Public Administration in Indian Universities:

Public administration education was started in India towards the late 1940s when the University of Madras started a Diploma Course in Public administration and the University of Allahabad started a diploma course in Local self-government. The University of Nagpur started a two-year program in public administration in the year 1949. In the year 1955, the University of Nagpur set up a separate Department of Public Administration and the suit was followed by other universities like the University of Rajasthan, Osmania University, Punjab University, South Gujarat University, etc. Even then it can be stated that some universities were teaching public administration as a part of political science and such a trend is visible in Central Universities where public administration is a part of the department of political science. Public administration education got boost with the establishment of Indian Institute of Public Administration in the year 1954 which to act as a forum for the exchange of experience among practitioners and teachers of Public Administration. To enhance such an exchange among civil servants

and private sector managers, the Administrative Staff College of India was established in the year 1960. Public Administration is organized at the post-graduate level as a part of instructions given in the Political Science Departments in some Universities. 56 Universities teach Public Administration at the Master's level in Political Science courses. Of these, 47 Universities have Public Administration being taught as a compulsory elective course. 8 Universities teach Public Administration as a compulsory subject, and 9 Universities provide Public Administration as an elective in the course. It is also interesting to note that most of the Universities provide only one course in the compulsory stream at the MA Political Science level in Public Administration. This course mostly deals with the principles of Public Administration.

## 5. Importance of Public Administration

The study of administration assumed significance, according to Woodrow Wilson, as a consequence to the increasing complexities of society, growing functions of state and growth of governments on democratic lines. This exhaustive list of functions made to think as to how and in what directions these functions should be effectively performed. To this Wilson suggested that there was a need to reform the government in the administrative field. As per Wilson, the object of administrative study is to discover what government can properly and successfully do and how it can do these things with utmost efficiency and the least possible cost either of money or of energy. The importance of public administration as a specialized subject can be attributed to the following reasons:

- One of the important reasons is the practical concern that the government today has to work towards the public interest. The first and foremost objective of public administration is to efficient delivery public services. In this context, Wilson Ian definition of the subject as efficiency promoting and pragmatic field was the first explicitly articulated statement on the importance of a separate discipline of public administration. During the first half of the century, a number of countries have appointed committees to look into the problems of administration and recommended suitable administrative machinery to respond to diverse public needs.
- Administration is looked at, in the social science perspective, as a cooperative and social activity. Hence the concern of academic inquiry would be to understand the impact of government policies and operations on society. What kind of society do the policies envisage? To what extent administrative action is non-discriminatory.
- Public administration has a special status in the developing countries. Many of these countries, after independence from the colonial rule have stressed upon speedy socio-economic development. Obviously, these countries have to rely on government for speedy development.
- Public administration, as witnessed holds a place of significance in the lives of people. It touches them at every step. For most of their needs, the citizens depend upon public administration. In view of the important role of public administration in the lives of people, the citizens of a country cannot ignore. Therefore, its teaching should become a part of the curriculum of educational institutions. People must get to know about the structure of government, the activities it undertakes and the manner in which these are actually performed. The study of public administration will contribute to the realization of the values of citizenship.

The viewpoint of eminent scholars, as referred to below, amply reflect the significance of public administration,

**Woodrow Wilson:** “Administration is the most obvious part of government; it is government in action, it is the executive, the operative and the most visible side of the government.” **W.B. Donham:** “if our civilization fails, it will be mainly because of breakdown of administration.”

## 6. The role of Public Administration in various facets is noted below

- **Basis of the Government:** A government can exist without a legislature or an independent judiciary. But no government can exist without administration.
- **An instrument for providing services:** public administration mainly concerned with the performance of various activities performed by government in the public interest.
- **A stabilizing force in society:** public administration is a major force for bringing stability in society. It has been observed that though government often changes, but violent change is seldom experienced by administration.

## 7. Objectives of Study

- To analyze the present situation of Public Administration in Indian Universities and colleges.
- To study the crisis of introduction of public administration as discipline in academic in India.
- To provide suitable suggestion for introduction of discipline in academics.

## 8. Methodology

The present study is descriptive and analytical based on secondary data. Qualitative data method has been used to in-depth study. The current study uses a descriptive research design taking into consideration the objective of the study. In this study, secondary data are used as part of a descriptive analysis. Various books, journals, articles, newspapers were used to collect secondary data for the present study. And in-depth analysis of the research study is done in order to have a greater degree of accuracy.

## 9. Discussion & Suggestion

### Public Administration as a Discipline in Himachal Pradesh

The Department of Public Administration at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla was established in the year 1987. The department is presently running M.A., M. Phil, and Ph. D in Public Administration discipline.

Currently, only **37 colleges** out of **137 government colleges** of Himachal Pradesh, Public Administration is running as a discipline in Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, there are only 29 seats are filled up of teachers in these colleges. There are several colleges in Himachal Pradesh where public administration is not introduced as a discipline which is very unfortunate. There are thousands of students and scholars who have attained the post-graduate and doctorate degree and also qualified National Eligibility Test and State Eligibility Test for teaching in colleges, but they are still unemployed. Government of Himachal Pradesh is failed to provide employment for students of Public Administration which is regrettable.

It is also very disheartening for students as well as teaching faculty of Public Administration in Himachal Pradesh that on Recommendation of Tekta Committee Report 1997 Government through its notification No. EDN-A – Kha (I) -8/94-Loose Government of Himachal Pradesh Education Department had made the cadre of Lecturers in Public Administration in the Plus two schools a dying cadre and the



future vacancies in this cadre were also not filled up. There was not a single representation from discipline in Anita Tekta Committee.

**Table 1.1**  
**Detail of M. A. Pass out Students from Himachal Pradesh University**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>
June, 2015	151
June, 2016	95
June, 2017	188
June, 2018	100
June, 2019	198
June, 2020	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>829</b>

*Source: Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla*

Thousands of students have earned an M.A. in public administration throughout the past five years, according to the table above. However, there are no opportunities for public administration positions in Himachal Pradesh. Additionally, hundreds of students met the requirements for both state and national eligibility tests to be hired as assistant professors at the college or university level. Unfortunately, Himachal Pradesh does not currently have any open positions in the field of public administration.

**Table 1.2**  
**Following Table has shown the Data of M. Phil Students Pass out from Last Five Years in M. Phil.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>
2015	2
2016	5
2017	15
2018	6
2019	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

*Source: Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla*

According to this data, many students have earned valid M.Phil. degrees in public administration throughout the past five years. Additionally, a large number of students with competent Ph.D.s in public administration were unemployed at the time of writing. This investigation has revealed that the state government has little regard for the future of public administration students.

**Table 1.3**  
**Academic Status of Public Administration in Himachal Pradesh**

Currently Public Administration Running as a discipline in Colleges of Himachal Pradesh	<b>37</b>
No. of Seats are Sanctioned in this Discipline	<b>37</b>
No. of Seats are Filled in this Discipline	<b>37</b>
<b>Total Govt. Degree Colleges of Himachal Pradesh</b>	<b>137</b>

*Source: Directorate of Higher Education Himachal Pradesh*

The public administration status at Himachal Pradesh's colleges is shown in the above table. It has been discovered that only 37 colleges in the government of Himachal Pradesh are now being run by the public administration. The state government has authorized only 37 seats in public administration courses at college level. It has also been discovered that just 37 of the 137 institutions in Himachal Pradesh offer public administration as a subject. Although this discipline has a lot of potential in the state, the government is not supporting it appropriately.

To address these crises, Indian academics and institutions have gradually worked to Indianize the field of public administration, emphasizing its relevance to the country's unique context, fostering research on indigenous models of governance, and incorporating ethical and anti-corruption components into the curriculum. Additionally, efforts have been made to enhance the quality of education and research in the discipline. Despite the initial crises, public administration in India has evolved and continues to be an important field of study given the country's vast bureaucracy and governance challenges.

## 10. Suggestions

Introducing a curriculum on public administration in Indian colleges and universities is a positive step towards preparing future leaders and administrators. Here are some suggestions for effectively introducing public administration in the academic system:

- **Introduction of Subject:** Public administration ought to be taught at all of Himachal Pradesh's colleges by the government. There is a wide range of public administration at the college level because there are currently only 37 colleges that offer public administration courses. Additionally, public administration ought to be reinstated at the school level since, according to the Tekta Committee's proposal, it has been declared a dying topic there.
- **Curriculum Development:** Start by developing a comprehensive curriculum that covers the fundamental principles of public administration, governance, and policy analysis. Include courses on public policy, public finance, organizational behaviour, and public sector ethics. Ensure a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills through case studies and real-world projects.
- **Faculty Expertise:** Recruit and retain experienced faculty members with expertise in public administration, public policy, and governance. Encourage faculty to engage in research and publications related to contemporary public administration issues.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration with other departments like law, economics, sociology, and political science to provide a holistic understanding of public administration.
- **Internships and Practicum:** Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations to offer students internships and practicum experiences. These practical experiences can bridge the gap between theory and real-world application.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Organize seminars, conferences, and guest lectures featuring prominent public administrators, policy experts, and academicians to expose students to the practical challenges of public administration.
- **Research and Innovation:** Establish research centres or think tanks within the institution to facilitate research in public administration and policy analysis.

- **Technology Integration:** Incorporate the use of technology and data analysis tools to help students develop skills relevant to modern public administration practices.
- **Collaboration with Government:** Foster partnerships with government bodies to ensure the curriculum remains up-to-date with the latest developments and administrative needs.
- **Global Perspective:** Incorporate a global perspective, highlighting international best practices in public administration, to prepare students for diverse challenges.
- **Ethical and Leadership Education:** Promote the development of ethical leadership and decision-making skills among students to foster integrity in public service.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Establish a feedback mechanism to continually evaluate and improve the curriculum and teaching methods based on student and employer feedback.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage students to participate in community engagement and public service initiatives to apply their knowledge in practical settings.
- **Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** Public administration is an evolving field, so the curriculum should be flexible and updated regularly to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.
- **Support for Research and Publications:** Provide incentives and support for faculty and students to publish their research findings and policy recommendations in reputed journals and policy platforms.
- **Scholarships and Financial Support:** Offer scholarships and financial aid to deserving students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, to ensure inclusivity and diversity in the field of public administration.

## 11. Conclusion

Introducing public administration in Indian colleges and universities is essential for building a skilled and ethical cadre of public servants who can effectively address the complex challenges facing the country. It should be a collaborative effort involving educational institutions, government bodies, and the private sector to provide a well-rounded and contemporary education in public administration.

Public administration completed a long journey of its origin in academic field since its dichotomy from political science in 1887. In India public administration introduced in 1940 as a separate discipline.

Public administration is a dynamic discipline. It is a set of process, organizations, groups, society, as well as individuals associated with implementing laws and other rules administered by judiciary, legislatures, and executives. The concept of public administration has been gradually changed with time and made accordingly to the necessities of organizations, societies, as well as individuals. It also varies with the context of the country.

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