



- The Secretariat in India referred to the office of the Governor General in British India.
- However, the size of the Central Secretariat & the scope of its activities have undergone considerable change over the last two hundred years, with the changes in the aims, objectives & nature of the central govt in India.
- At the end of the eighteenth century the central govt consisted of a Governor General & three Councillors & the Secretariat of four departments.
- Each of them was under a Secretary, and there was a Chief Secretary heading them all.
- From Montford Reforms in 1919 to 1939 the Govt of India consisted of a Governor General & seven members & there were nine secretarial departments.
- Prior to 1919, the Central Govt, while administering certain subjects directly like the army, posts, telegraphs & railways, had left the task of implementation of other subjects to the local provincial governments.
- Montford Reforms 1919 which for the first time, made a division of functions between the Central & provincial govts.
- Both the Central & provincial governments became responsible for both policy & administration.
- Resultantly the role of the secretariat began to change from a policy-formulating, supervising & coordinating agency to that of an executive agency as well.
- The provincial autonomy in 1937 & the outbreak of the Second World War accelerated the above process.
- There was a four fold increase of the Central Secretariat & its total strength rose to about two hundred.
- The Govt of India was still struggling with the post-war problems of demobilisation and reconstruction, when Independence came, accompanied by the partition of the country.
- In 1947, New govt faced with tremendous problems like rehabilitation of refugees from Pakistan, external aggression in Jammu & Kashmir, integration of princely states into the Indian Union, internal security, shortage of essential articles, at a time when there occurred serious shortage of personnel due to the British Officers returning home & many Muslim officers opting for Pakistan.
- After, the adoption of principle of welfare state made unprecedented demands on the overburdened administrative machinery.
- The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 started the process of a vast expansion of the public sector.

- The vast expansion, in the functions & responsibilities of the govt was a marked increase in the number of departments, and personnel.
- Thus, the number of departments in the secretariat, which stood at four in 1858, 9 in 1919, 10 in 1939, 18 in 1947 had risen to 74 by 1994. Correspondingly has also multiplied.

STRUCTURE

- The Central Secretariat is a collection of various ministries & department.
- A ministry is responsible for the formulation of the policy of govt within its sphere of responsibility & the execution & review of that policy.
- A ministry is divided into the following subgroups with an officer in charge of each of them.
 - Department — Secretary/Additional /Special Secretary.
 - Wing — Additional Joint Secretary.
 - Division - Deputy Secretary.
 - Branch - Under Secretary.
 - Section - Section Officer.

ROLE OF THE CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

- The Secretariat assists the ministers in the formulation of governmental policies.
- Ministers finalise policies on the basis of adequate data, precedents and other relevant information.
- The Secretariat makes these available to the minister, thus, enabling him to formulate policies.
- Secretariat assists the ministers in their legislative work too. The Secretariat prepares legislative drafts to be introduced in the legislature. It engages in the collection of relevant information for answering parliamentary questions. & also, for various parliamentary committees.
- It scrutinises problems & forming a comprehensive viewpoint on it., If required getting approval of other lateral agencies like the Ministry of Labour & the Ministry of Finance; & also, consulting other organisations concerned with a particular matter
- It is a clearinghouse of preliminary to govt's decision
- It functions as the main channel of communication between the government & other concerned agencies like the Niti Aayog, Finance Commission, etc.
- The Secretariat also ensures that field offices execute, with efficiency and economy, the policies & decisions of the Govt.
- The Central Secretariat system in India is based on two principles:
 - 1) The task of policy formulation needs to be separated from policy implementation.

2) Maintaining Cadre of Officers operating on the tenure system

- The Central Secretariat is a policy making body of the govt & is not to undertake work of execution, unless necessitated by the lack of official agencies to perform certain tasks.

DEPARTMENT

- The distinction between 'department' and 'ministry' may be explained by referring to 'ministry' as the minister's charge and 'department' as the secretary's charge
- The administrative divisions of a ministry are not uniform.
- A ministry may not have a department: or may have one or more than one department in which it is formally divided
- While secretaries, although they get the same salary, are not necessarily of equal 'rank'.
- Although all of them are secretaries, the additional /joint/deputy & under secretary are subordinate to the Principal secretary who, in addition to his own work, coordinates the work of these secretaries of departments/segments of work within the ministry.

FUNCTIONS

- Assisting the minister in the discharge of his policy making & parliamentary functions.
- Framing legislation, rules & principles of procedure.
- Sectoral planning & programme formulation.
- Budgeting and control of expenditure in respect of activities of the ministry or department.
- Securing administrative and financial approval to operational programme and their subsequent modifications.
- Supervision and control over the execution of policies and programmes by the executive departments or semi-autonomous field.
- Formulating steps to develop greater personnel & organisational competence both in the ministry/department and its executive agencies.
- Assisting in increasing coordination at the Central level.

FUNCTIONS OF DIFFERENT GRADES OF OFFICERS

- Secretary ; Additional Secretary ; Joint Secretary; Deputy Secretary; Under Secretary .
- The first three grades constitute the 'Top Management' while the grades of deputy secretary & under secretary, are referred to as the 'Middle Management'.
- The Secretary is the administrative head of the ministry department & the principal adviser to the Minister.
- She represents her ministry department before the committees of Parliament.
- She is supposed to keep herself fully informed of the work of her ministry/department by demanding weekly summaries on the nature of cases disposed of by lower levels and the manner of their disposal.

- Where the charge of a Secretary is too large, she may be assisted by a joint or additional secretary who formally functions as Secretary in relation to the subject allotted to him in the ministry or department.
- The function of the joint & additional secretary is to relieve the Secretary of a bloc of work & to deal, where necessary, direct with the minister.
- The Secretary, however, is invariably kept informed on all these direct . dealings with the minister, for he is not formally relieved of his responsibility as head of the ministry/department.
- The deputy secretary is an officer who, as her designation implies, acts on behalf of the Secretary. She should dispose of as many cases as possible on her own. Only on more important cases she should seek the Secretary's instruction either by referring to him in writing or discussing with him orally.
- The under secretary should dispose of minor cases on his own. He should submit more important matters to the deputy secretary in such a form that the latter is able to deal with them quickly.
- The Secretary, is the Secretary to the Government of India, not to his minister alone. This is true of lower levels as well.

TENURE SYSTEM

- The system of filling senior posts in the Secretariat by officers who come from the States (or from the Central Services) for a particular period and who after serving their tenure, revert back to their parent States or services is known as the tenure system.
- It has been a principle of Secretariat staffing since 1905 and continued by the Government of India, even after Independence.
- The reasons for the continuance of the system may be summed up as follows :
 - A joint pool of officers at the reserve of both the centre & the states helps in administrative coordination at the centre & state level and exercises a unifying influence on the functioning of our federal policy.
 - The Central Secretariat benefits from the administrative experience of a number of bureaucrats who have first hand work experience at the district and state levels.
 - A prolonged stay in the Secretariat may get senior bureaucrats out of touch with actual administrative reality at the field level.
 - The tenure system enables them to get a constant feedback from the field & from the general public
- The states also benefit from having at their service senior experienced officers with a wide national perspective on all problems.
- Under the tenure system most officers are promised a chance of work at the Secretariat thus equalising opportunities for all.
- It strengthens the independence of the civil service.

- It is a check against the possible dangers of subservience by a few to the political masters for narrow personal gains.

CRITICISM ON TENURE SYSTEM

- Bureaucratic work in the Secretariats is gradually becoming specialised. The tenure system is essentially based on the myth of the superior efficiency of the generalist civil servants.
- District experience is really not necessary in many areas of Secretariat work.
- The tenure system has led to the bureaucrats getting too dependent on the office establishment to get things done. This had led to 'over . . . bureaucratisation' of the Secretariat.
- The tenure system, was never prevalent in all the departments of the Government of India.
- Foreign Affairs, Indian Audit & Accounts, Post & Telegraphs, Customs & Income Tax Departments had been the Well-known exceptions even during the British-period
- The creation of the Central Secretariat service has, thrown a new challenge to this practice even in departments where tenure system officially operates.
- The specialists whose numbers are increasing in the Secretariat are also not subject to rotation to areas away from the Secretariat
- The creation in 1957 of the Central Administrative Pool has also made a significance impact on the system.
- This 'Pool' was established by the selection of officers from the Indian Administrative Services.
- There are two categories of posts in it - general purpose and specialised
- The 'Pool' system was meant to overcome the uncertainties in the matters of quality and quantity inherent in the tenure system.
- Despite the tenure system, there are numerous officers in the Secretariat who have never gone back to their parent State.
- Therefore, the original intention of the tenure system does not necessarily hold good in the changed conditions today.

EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

- All over the country, there are various types of administrative agencies which are meant to carry out the policies of the government as decided upon in the secretariat. Such agencies are called executive agencies and can be grouped into various categories
- Under the Secretariat there are a network of agencies which are responsible for the execution of the government policies.
- With the steady expansion in, and increasing complexity of, the governmental functions, the executive agencies have been variously organised to suit the requirements of the job.

CLASSIFICATIONS

- The executive agencies may be classified into the following types:
 - 1) An attached office (e.g., The Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi)
 - 2) Subordinate office (e.g., Inspectorate of Explosives, Nagpur)
 - 3) Departmental undertaking (e.g., Ordnance Factories)
 - 4) A company registered under the companies Act (e.g., Hindustan Steel Limited)
 - 5) A Corporation or Board set up under a special statute (e.g., ONGC, Tea Board, etc.)
 - 6) A society registered under the Societies Registration Act (e.g., Institute of Foreign Trade)
- There are also instances of executive agencies functioning as an integral part of the ministry itself e.g., Directorate of Exhibition in the Ministry of Commerce. These are, however, exceptions.

EXECUTIVE AGENCIES & THE SECRETARIAT

- Development administration must necessarily move towards decentralisation which means that effective power & authority must be possessed by the executive agencies.
- Though the number of executive agencies have steadily risen over the years there has not been an increase in their power corresponding to their responsibilities.
- Secretariat performs a lot of policy executing tasks of an original nature which could readily be passed on to the executive agencies.
- However, the relations between the Central Secretariat and the executive agencies have been quite strained & tension-ridden instead of gradually becoming cooperative and amiable.

SIX PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP

- There are six principal patterns of relationship developed at the Central level, between the secretariat and the executive agencies.
 - 1) There is complete merger between the ministry and heads of executive departments. The examples are the Railway Board and the Ministry of Railways, the Posts & Telegraphs Board and the Ministry of Communications. This pattern is most suitable for organisation undertaking work of an operational or commercial nature.
 - 2) In the second pattern, a senior officer of the ministry concurrently operates as head of the executing department. In this way she becomes responsible both for formulation of policies & for its implementation with the assistance of the common office located in the Ministry. The Additional Secretary in the Department of Agriculture is the Director-General of Food. But the main disadvantage of this pattern is that the system completely blurs the functions of the Secretariat and the head of an executive department.
 - 3) The ministry's office is merged in the office of the executive department. The common office serves

both the Secretariat offices & the officers of the executive office.

The advantages of this arrangement are that any administrative proposal is examined only once, thus, expediting the disposal of cases, and, secondly it results in sizeable economy - office maintenance becomes more economical.

4) The ministry & the executive department continues to have separate officers but have common files and common file bureau, all located in the organisation of the executive agency. This pattern has significant advantages but it does not do away with the problems of separate offices with duplicate staff and double scrutiny. A good example is the Ministry of Defence & the Air Force Headquarters

5) The ministry & the executive departments continue to have separate offices and separate files but the head of the Executive Office is given an ex-officio Secretariat status. Thus, the Textile Commissioner is the ex-officio Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce.

Under this arrangement, there is considerable saving of time as well as the paperwork, as every matter does not travel up to the Secretariat for finalisation.

Also, the accepted policy is implemented in a more efficient manner, as the head of the office, because of his secretariat status is fully aware of the background in which the policy was framed. Its major drawback, however, is that it is avoiding the separation of policymaking from policy implementation.

6) Both the Ministry and the executive agency have separate and distinct offices and files of their own, and consultation between them occurs through self-contained letters.

This is the standard pattern both at the Centre and in the States. An example is the Directorate General of All India Radio in relation to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

- This arrangement provides for a division of work between the Secretariat and the executive agencies.
- The disadvantages of this arrangement is that, this scheme is processed twice in two different offices. This involves duplication of work and cause delay.

SUBORDINATE OFFICE

- A Subordinate Office functions as the field establishment or as the agency responsible for the detailed execution of the decisions taken by the Government.
- A Subordinate Office normally functions under an Attached Office. But where there is no Attached Office under a ministry, it operates directly under the ministry.
- The Subordinate Office are neither well defined nor consistently followed.
- Subordinate Office has been accorded a distinctly inferior status, as is indicated by the label, 'Subordinate'.
- The pay scales of personnel in the Subordinate Offices are the lowest; and their future prospects are not bright.
- The employees in these offices very often do the same type of work and possess the same qualification as the Secretariat personnel.