

D Ravindra Prasad, et al., *Administrative Thinkers*, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2017), Price: Rs. 350.00, Pages: 310.

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With the expansion of the discipline of public administration, the need for literature on administrative theory is being increasingly felt. This book is an attempt to fill this gap; albeit in part. The book provides an account of the ideas and contributors of twenty-one thinkers to the discipline. Each chapter covers an outline of the thinker's life, writings, principal contribution to the theory and a critical evaluation. This volume is weaved the study and teaching of public administration, political science, sociology and management. It offers a single source of reference on the theory of public administration; particularly the contribution of select thinkers. In this second and revised edition one chapter on administrative theory and two thinkers have been added. All chapters have been revised.

Kautilya's Arthashastra mainly discusses three aspects of the science of public administration, viz., the principles of public administration, machinery of government and management of personnel. He gave the concepts of Monarchy as the best form of government, Absolute powers to King, Saptanga theory of elements of state along with principles of public administration.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* written over 2500 years ago to date remains one of the most influential works ever produced. It talks about the concepts of mission, vision and purpose as the common denominators binding the organisation, strategy, leadership and their qualities, information management, process of decision making, responsiveness to the institutional environment, flexibility needed to adopt in crises, conflict management, etc., these treatise form the basic tenets of modern government.

Woodrow Wilson was a Former President of America and Political Scientist. Wilson's ideas of significance of study of administration as science, politics and administration dichotomy along with public administration as 'Government in action' are also discussed.

The book then moves on to talk about the Classical Thinkers and their perspectives. The classical, or structural, theory of public administration does not normally admit of multiple theories, but centers around a complex set of variables, ideas and concepts that govern public administration, or state bureaucracy. Classical administration theory centers round the 'division of labour'. This theoretical approach defines "modernity" as the increasing specialization of labor. This means that a central bureaucracy must exist that keeps these functions coordinated and connected through an impersonal chain of command.

Classical Thinker, Henry Fayol the French engineer regarded as the father of classical theory, defined authority as "the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience". His principles of management along with the general theory of management which includes the gang plank jumping concept.

FW Taylor also called the father of scientific management talks about the principles of scientific management, functional foremanship, etc.

Gulick and Urwick go on to identify the four bases of departmental organization as purpose, process, persons and place or the 4-P formulae, they also coined acronym POSDCORB.

Lastly, the classical perspective includes the work of Max Weber a German Sociologist and Political Scientist who gave the form of authority, legal-rational bureaucracy and protestant ethic.

The book then moves on to thinkers beyond the Classical Perspective. The authors that came under the post-classical theorists were plenty. Important work had started happening in the areas of Human Relations by the likes of Elton Mayo, his Hawthorne experiment threw interesting light on social and psychological forces in work situations. So the importance of attitudes, feeling, sentiments and social relations, work group dynamics etc started influencing the vey formal structure and way of working; present and preferred by the public organizations.

Mary Parker Follett, who was a bridge between the classical approach and the behavior-human relations approach to organization, discussed constructive conflict, integration, and depersonalising orders.

George Elton Mayo the founder of human relation movement- mostly concerned with analyzing the problems of fatigue, monotony, morale, work environment and their impact on the worker. He focused his attention on the behavior of the workers and their production capacity keeping in view physiological, physical, economical and psychological aspects, called this approach a clinical approach.

Chester Bernard regarded as the spiritual father of the social system school gave the concept and principles of formal organization as a cooperative system. Three elements he gave were communication, willingness to cooperate and common purpose.

Herbert Simon talks about administration as decision-making, bounded rationality and zone of acceptance. Abraham Maslow gave the hierarchy of needs, self-actualisation and peak experiences. Douglas McGregor gives the theory “X” and Theory “Y” along with discussing the management education from cosmology to reality and giving the transactional influence.

Chris Argyris focuses on the Maturity – Immaturity theory, T-Group techniques, single loop and double loop learning and organisational learning. Rensis Likert gives the Management systems and Linking pin model.

The Post-Classical Thinkers gave way to some new wider perspectives which includes many thinkers like; Fred W. Riggs gave the prismatic society and Sala Model of Administration and development as diffraction and integration.

Dwight Waldo, an American political scientist and “defining figure” in public Administration looked at public administration as political approach, gave the professional orientation to public administration and the concept of New Public Administration. Yehezkel Dror gave the societal direction system as a mega-knowledge system and “Optimal Model” of policy making along with paradigms of policy science. Lastly, Peter Drucker looked at Management by objectives and talked about restructuring government or New Public Management along with Knowledge society and knowledge workers.

Towards the end, the book discusses the contribution of Karl Marx and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Karl Marx was a German Revolutionary Philosopher and Political Economist. He viewed bureaucracy as an exploitative class instrument, gave a materialistic interpretation of history and promoted the alienation of bureaucracy.

BR Admbedkar’s social justice view of state and administration provided a new perspective to understand the casual factors of administrative structure and practices. His socio-political vision can be summed up as social justice.

Ambedkar viewed social justice as a goal, constitution as a mediating system and state and administration as agents of change.

With the advent of technology in every walk of life and a common consensus amongst authors and scholars that both public and private administration are similar in many manner, the management science approach to public management has into existence. The newest approach is that of policy analysis approach since the government is venturing into new areas and different activities with increased involvement in welfare programs, the process of making public policies and its analysis, the measurement of the output etc became the new areas of study for the scholars and subject matter experts.

The thinkers included in this volume have through their studies and researches, generated a large number of ideas, concepts and theories and wrote extensively on organisation, administration and management. Over the years the book gained recognition and has become a compulsory reading to the students and scholars of public administration. It is also an important source book for those appearing for the competitive civil service examinations at national and state levels in public administration and management.