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# UNIT 16 NEUTRAL VERSUS COMMITTED BUREAUCRACY

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## 16.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning and significance of neutrality and commitment;
- describe the problems in the way of achieving neutrality and commitment ; and
- suggest measures for having both neutrality and commitment.

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## 16.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this unit we shall consider how far the bureaucracy is, or should be, neutral and committed.

First we shall take up the question of neutrality. Neutrality means impartiality. The significance of neutrality of the bureaucracy in the modern democratic state is great. As has been discussed in earlier units, the bureaucracy plays an important role in policy-making as well as in its implementation. The permanence of members of the bureaucracy helps to provide them with a long-term perspective, while ministers tend to have a short-term perspective related to the elections. The bureaucracy has access to lot of confidential information, which ministers often do not possess since they lack the time to read all the official documents. Bureaucrats come to have long experience of administration, while ministers come and go. Many of the members of the bureaucracy are technically qualified, while ministers usually are amateurs. For these reasons there is considerable dependence upon the bureaucracy in all countries. In developing countries, like India, there are some additional factors making for such dependence. Thus in developing countries, interest groups and political parties are either weak or non-existent, electoral systems are often defective and the traditions and conventions of democracy have often not been well-established. Hence dependence upon the bureaucracy is greater in developing countries, making it more important that the bureaucracy should be neutral.

We shall discuss the neutrality of bureaucracy under three heads: (i) neutrality between classes, (ii) neutrality between cultural groups, and (iii) neutrality between political parties. We will discuss the significance and problems of these three aspects of neutrality and try to find out the ways of achieving neutrality.

Commitment means moral dedication to a cause. The bureaucracy should be committed to (i) human and national values, (ii) service of the people, and (iii) professional norms. Commitment on the part of the bureaucracy is important because while on one hand it is bound by rules, on the other hand it is always trying to find new ways of dealing with difficult problems. This is true in all countries. There are some additional factors in developing countries. The responsibility of bringing about development falls upon the bureaucracy to a large extent. There is widespread apathy, engendered by

participation can be obtained only through committed, and energetic action on the part of the bureaucracy. Serious problems tend to crop up in the process. Thus, the bureaucracy tends to become very powerful so that in most developing countries dictatorship by the civil and military bureaucracy is a common phenomenon. It requires a lot of commitment to exercise power in the interest of others. We shall try to find ways of inculcating such commitment.

While neutrality and commitment can go together, and indeed reinforce each other if properly oriented, they can also become antithetical if not so oriented. Thus, if bureaucrats become committed to one political party, they cannot remain neutral. We will examine such areas of conflict between neutrality and commitment.

Finally, we shall also examine methods already being adopted for having a highly committed and at the same time neutral bureaucracy in certain special areas, and consider the possibility of using these methods for a few more areas.

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## 16.2 NEUTRALITY

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The society consists of various sections, groups and classes. Each one of these tries to protect its interests. The various interests often come into clash with each other. It is the function of the government to maintain peace by keeping this conflict within limits. The government achieves this objective by trying to fulfil the just demands of each section. This involves a changing allocation of resources. Thus in most democratic countries there is progressive taxation through which the rich are taxed more than the poor; the resources so obtained are then utilised more for the welfare of the poor. In this way, resources are transferred from the rich to the poor. Thus governmental policy determines the allocation of resources among the various sections of the people. The bureaucracy participates in drawing up the policies for such allocation by negotiating with representatives of the various interests, advising ministers on the pros and cons of alternative policy proposals, and drafting reports, proposals, resolution and legislative measures. In view of such participation by the bureaucracy in policy-making, and also in putting it into effect, it is important that the bureaucracy should be non-partisan or neutral between the various sections. In our society, neutrality of three kinds is important: neutrality between classes, neutrality between cultural groups, and neutrality between political parties. We shall consider the significance and problems of each kind of neutrality; we shall also consider how neutrality of each kind can be increasingly achieved.

### i) Neutrality between Classes

The society is made up of various classes such as those of landlords, capitalists, traders and workers. The government is expected to take care of the interests of each one of them, and to allocate resources to them justly. The bureaucracy is the government's main instrument and must be neutral between classes if justice is to be done.

Justice between classes is difficult to achieve because their interests often conflict. Thus if a manufacturer pays higher wages to his workers, his profits get reduced to that extent. Similarly, if a landlord gives a higher share of the crop to his tenant farmers, he suffers a loss. It is precisely because of such conflict that neutrality between the classes is difficult to achieve. It is only if the government and the bureaucracy are seen to be neutral that the conflict can be kept within limits and peace maintained. If, however, a class has the feeling that injustice is being done to it, it may take to the war path. Thus disputes between capitalists and workers result in lockouts or strikes, sometimes there is even violence and bloodshed. Hence the neutrality of the bureaucracy, which is the main instrument of the government, is essential for the maintenance of social order.

The conflict between classes is greater in developing countries like India, than in developed ones. This is because there are greater disparities in developing countries. Thus while a few are very rich, millions continue to starve. What is more, those who are poor also lack of education, social status and political power. In other words, the poor often do not even know how to improve their condition, and even if they try, the richer and more powerful sections often thwart their efforts, because of the conflict between

of the poor and their protection from exploitation. Thus in India, workers are by and large poor, uneducated and unorganised, only about one-tenth of them are organised in trade unions. Due to the prevailing poverty, unemployment and lack of education, the trade unions also remain weak. Hence in the case of an industrial dispute the government often intervenes by requiring adjudication by a Labour Tribunal or Court. Now, a Labour Tribunal or Court performs the function of administrative adjudication: it is a bureaucratic mechanism for ensuring justice to both, the employers and the workers. It is important that this bureaucratic mechanism should be seen as being neutral between the contending parties, if peace is to be maintained. This example indicates the great significance of neutrality of the bureaucracy in developing countries.

The neutrality of the bureaucracy is important also because of its role in helping to bring about development. The government provides loans, subsidies, tax concessions, raw materials (such as steel and cement), and inputs (such as coal, electricity, fertiliser and seeds) to industrialists and farmers. The classes of big industrialists and big farmers have a lot of political and economic power and, therefore, tend to monopolise these gains. However, development requires that small industries and small farms should also prosper: they are large in number and make substantial contribution to the national product. Justice also requires that they should not be ignored. Hence it is important that the bureaucracy, which distributes these facilities, should do so impartially and justly. In other words, just support to small industrialists and farmers requires that the bureaucracy should not be influenced by the power of the big industrialists, big farmers and landlords.

For reasons discussed above, there is general agreement about the need for neutrality of the bureaucracy. However, there are some problems in attaining this ideal. One of these is related to its social background. As discussed in Unit 15, most of the higher bureaucracy comes from a single class. Thus about 70 per cent of the IAS officers come from the urban, salaried or professional, middle class. This indicates that farmers and workers, who constitute the majority of the population, remain grossly under-represented. If the bureaucracy were more representative, it would likely be more neutral. Members of every class tend to be partial to the interests of their own class. If a large majority of members of the bureaucracy come from a single class, the bureaucracy is likely to be partial to this class. This problem can be solved to some extent by making the examination for recruitment more broad based. The present examination gives preference to those who can write and speak English well, and are able to commit facts and formulas to memory. If the examination is diversified, so as to include tests of the various psychological and physical abilities, more persons are likely to be recruited from the families of farmers and workers, thus making it more representative and more neutral.

Another problem relates to the influence of interest groups. A department that serves a certain interest is, in the course of time, likely to become identified with it. It has to come into close and continuous touch with persons having this interest, and it often has to function as the advocate of this interest. Thus the department of agriculture has to serve farmers by providing various facilities, and has to obtain funds for this purpose. In this process, the farmers' lobby and the department of agriculture are likely to become mutually supportive. If the interests of farmers and industrialists clash, as they often do, the department of agriculture is likely to take the side of farmers. Hence such specialised agencies are in danger of losing their neutrality. This problem has arisen in an acute form in the United States in regard to various 'constituency agencies'. In developing countries like India, it tends to arise mainly in regard to agencies dealing with powerful interests, like those of big industrialists and big farmers. The solution to it lies in the development of organisations of hitherto weaker sections of the society. Efforts are now being made in India to help landless labour to organise itself. Similarly, if various interests organise themselves, and demand better political control over the bureaucracy, so as to ensure its responsibility and accountability, it is likely to remain more neutral also.

## ii) Neutrality between Cultural Groups

Our society consists of groups based on religion, caste, language and region. While all these groups have many common interests, they also come into conflict to some extent. This is particularly true in the case of religious and caste groups. In the United States

the blacks have remained poor and exploited. In the USSR also there have been ethnic conflicts, for example between Armenians and Azeris. The bureaucracy is required to hold the balance between the various groups. Hence it is important that it should be neutral between them. Since the conflict between cultural groups is generally greater in developing countries, the significance of the bureaucracy's neutrality is also greater in these countries. The way to the achievement of such neutrality, and also to the general reduction of conflict between cultural groups, lies through better education. If the attitudes of the people can be changed through education, so that they come to regard themselves more as belonging to the Indian nation than to a particular group based upon religion, caste, language or region, the conflict between groups can be reduced. Members of the higher bureaucracy are recruited mostly from among those who have received higher liberal education. If higher liberal education really broadens the mental horizon, members of the higher bureaucracy should be among the most broad-minded people in the society, and hence neutral between cultural groups. To some extent this is already so. Conscious effort at improving the quality of education can further help to modernise the attitudes of the bureaucracy leading to even greater neutrality.

The conflict between cultural groups is often accentuated by socio-economic factors. Thus Muslims in India have generally been poorer than Hindus. Most Sikhs in Punjab have a rural background, while most Hindus have an urban one. Members of the scheduled castes all over India are generally poorer and have a lower social status than others. Many of them are landless labourers. Conflict between cultural groups can be reduced by narrowing the disparities between them. One of the effects of such disparities is that a cultural group having a lower social and economic status has a lower representation in the bureaucracy also. Such a bureaucracy, with higher representation of certain groups than others, is often not perceived as being neutral. Hence the reduction of socio-economic disparities between cultural groups will not only reduce conflict between them, but also make for a more representative and neutral bureaucracy. Programmes aiming at poverty removal (such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme), better health and education services, and loans to small farmers and industrialists, constitute part of the governmental effort to reduce disparities. Further, if a cultural group suffers from poverty and exploitation and is unable to find adequate representation in the bureaucracy, special measures are taken to help it in getting such representation. Thus, some universities and state institutes run special courses for preparing those belonging to weaker sections for competitive examinations for entry into the bureaucracy. The Constitution of India permits reservation of posts in the bureaucracy for any backward class of citizens under Article 16(4). Under this provision, 15 per cent for scheduled tribes, that is in proportion to their population in the country. For other backward classes the quantum of reservation varies from State to State. Many of the reserved seats, however, remain unfilled due to the non-availability of candidates with requisite qualifications belonging to the weaker sections. Still, these measures are able to help in having a more representative and more neutral bureaucracy.

### iii) Neutrality between Political Parties

Competition between political parties is an essential characteristic of a democracy. If there is only one party, the voter can hardly exercise his/her choice. Democracy becomes meaningful only if the voter can choose between candidates of different parties. The exercise of choice by voters at general elections results in the formation of the government by one of the contending parties. Every party that fights an election puts forward its manifesto before the people. If it wins, it is rightly inferred that the people have approved of its manifesto, indeed, it is said that the manifesto now becomes the mandate, or command, of the people to the new government. This mandate consists of policies which the people have approved. Fulfilment of the wishes of the people requires the implementation of these policies. The main instrument of the government for the implementation of its policies is the bureaucracy. Hence it is important that the bureaucracy should be neutral between parties : such neutrality alone can ensure the fulfilment of the wishes of the people.

While the neutrality of the bureaucracy is accepted as an ideal, many problems arise in practice and come in the way of the fulfilment of this ideal. One such problem has been the spoils system, under which the winning party appoints its followers or supporters at different positions in the bureaucracy. Such a bureaucracy, naturally, lacks in merit and

efficiency. Since a new government, formed by another party, throws out the supporters of the party earlier in power, the bureaucracy also tends to lack permanence, knowledge gained from experience in the service and the motivation which the career system might have provided. The spoils system brought home the advantages of neutrality of the bureaucracy. The spoils system tends to arise with democracy but has to be curbed later on. It prevailed in the United States during most of the nineteenth century. The effort to replace it by the merit system, through selection of permanent officials by a Civil Service Commission, began with the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883. In developing countries, where democracy arose around the middle of the twentieth century, the spoils system has often tended to exist despite a Civil Service Commission. Thus if members of the Civil Service Commission themselves are chosen from among the supporters of a political party, the neutrality of those whom they select can hardly be ensured.

In India, the Constitution contains several provisions for the maintenance of the independence of Public Service Commissions. These are as follows:

- i) The Chairman or a member of a Commission can only be removed from his office by the President on the ground of misbehaviour according to the report given by the Supreme Court after holding an enquiry.
- ii) The conditions of service of a member of a Public Service Commission cannot be to his disadvantage after his appointment.
- iii) The expenses of a Commission are charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or of the concerned State.
- iv) A Chairman or a member of a Commission, on ceasing to hold office, cannot get employment under the government except at a higher post in a Public Service Commission.

Another problem which tends to interfere with the neutrality of the bureaucracy between political parties is the development of loyalty towards the politicians in power. Members of the bureaucracy who have been selected impartially by a Civil Service Commission, can later, in the course of their career, shed their neutrality and become aligned with the party, or the individuals, in power. According to the Shah Commission this problem existed during the Emergency (1975-77) in India. Some writers maintain that nowadays also, there is a tendency for the development of such relationships of alliance between ministers belonging to different political parties and senior civil servants in nowadays also in governments of different political parties in India. Thus it is suggested that the problem is not related to any particular party, but rather to the underdevelopment of our political system. The solution, then, lies in political development. Political development requires strengthening and improving the working of the various parts of the political system: interest groups, political parties, the electoral system, mass media, legislatures, the judiciary, and the political and bureaucratic parts of the executive. Thus if interest groups representing the various interests in the society put constant pressure upon the government, it will become difficult for a minister and a bureaucrat to collide for making unjust and partisan gains.

If there is internal democracy in the ruling political party, its leaders also will remain accountable to the rank and file of the party and not try to make selfish gains with the complicity of members of the bureaucracy. If the electoral system helps to elect those who can truly represent the people, elected politicians will tend to be more responsive to the people and are likely to refrain from misusing the bureaucracy. If the mass media (the press, television and radio) are healthy and powerful, they will provide for effective communication between the rulers and the ruled and help to make the will of the people prevail. Properly functioning legislatures will keep both the politicians and the bureaucracy under check and make them behave with realisation of their responsibility and accountability. In short, the growth of democratic consciousness and institutions is likely to deal with the problem of alliance between ministers and civil servants for making selfish gains.

### **Check Your Progress 1**

- Note :** i) Use the space below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) Why is bureaucracy needed to be neutral between the classes?

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2) What are the provisions for the maintenance of the independence of Public Service Commission ?

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## 16.3 COMMITMENT

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The bureaucratic form of organisation has both, advantages and disadvantages. Its main advantage, as pointed out by Weber, is efficiency. Its main disadvantage, as pointed out by Marx, is alienation. Hence we aim at reducing alienation while maintaining efficiency. This can be done, to some extent, by improving the bureaucracy's commitment, or moral dedication.

Let us examine the need for commitment in some detail. According to Weber, the main characteristics of a bureaucracy are hierarchy, division of labour, specialisation, rules and impersonality. All these factors make for efficiency. At the same time, however, a bureaucracy suffers from alienation. According to Marx, the members of bureaucracy suffer from loss of freedom, creativity, humanity, and morality. Weber agrees that members of a bureaucracy tend to function like "little cogs, little men clinging to little jobs". Other writers have also pointed out the disadvantages, or dysfunctions, of bureaucracy. Thus Merton says that bureaucratic control over officials, requiring that they should strictly follow rules, induces in them "timidity, conservatism and technicism". Hence the problem is how to maintain efficiency while reducing alienation or the dysfunctions of bureaucracy. The solution to this problem lies mainly in improving the commitment of its members. In other words, the bad effects of bureaucratic controls can to some extent be reduced if the employees are imbued with dedication.

Dedication, or commitment is required also because the employees have constantly to deal with complex problems, many of which are new. It is a mistake to think that all bureaucratic activity is routine and monotonous. Developmental activity in particular requires forecasting, planning, risk bearing, breaking new ground and experimentation. Hence, innovations have to be made all the time. The making of innovations, or creativity, requires emotional commitment.

We have noted so far that commitment on the part of the members of a bureaucracy leads to effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness means fulfilment of the organisational objectives, and efficiency means doing so with as little expenditure of resources as possible. Thus effectiveness and efficiency are aspects of the successful working of the organisation. However, the organisation consists of human beings and it is also important that they should be happy. To some extent, monetary rewards can make them happy. Equally important, however, is their need for job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the intrinsic satisfaction which one gets from doing a job. Thus the satisfaction which a painter gets from painting itself, is his job satisfaction: it is quite apart from the money that he gets from the sale of his paintings. It is obvious that job

satisfaction is related to commitment. If one paints only for money, he has little job satisfaction. The more devoted, or committed, he is to painting, the greater is his satisfaction. Thus commitment leads not only to organisational effectiveness and efficiency but also to the satisfaction and happiness of the employees. Hence commitment is significant from both, the organisational and individual points of view.

#### **i) Commitment to Values and Objectives**

Of our various commitments, the most important is the commitment to values. In the ethical sense, values are ends in themselves: they are sought for their own sake. The most important of our values are what are called human values, that is those values which are sought in all places and times. Examples of human values are truth, compassion, honesty and courage. While human values are universally sought, there are some values to which importance is attached in only some countries. The latter may be called national values. Important human and national values may be mentioned in a nation's Constitution also. Thus the following four human values are mentioned in the preamble to India's Constitution: justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These may be called human values since in no age or place has their desirability been questioned. Then there are the values of nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism which may be called India's national or Constitutional values, since they find explicit or implicit support in the Constitution. While it is expected that everyone everywhere will attach great importance to human values, citizens of India are, in addition, expected to seek to fulfil the national or Constitutional values. The bureaucracy is expected to attach even greater importance to both these sets of values than ordinary citizens. The bureaucracy acts on behalf of the state or government. If the state and government are to have a human face, that is if they are to be seen as being just and humane, the bureaucracy must show respect to human values. Again, since the constitution lays down the fundamental principles according to which the state is governed, the bureaucracy, as the agent of the state and the government, must accord the highest importance to all the values enshrined in the Constitution.

Apart from human and constitutional values, the bureaucracy must also be committed to national objectives. Some of these may be so important as to be mentioned in the Constitution, while others are stated in laws. Thus Part IV of the Indian Constitution, entitled "Directive Principles of State Policy" mentions objectives such as the following: securing just and humane conditions of work, securing a living wage, provision of free and compulsory education for all children, and the protection of Scheduled Castes and Tribes from social injustice and exploitation. However, the Constitution mentions only a few, paramount, objectives, most other national objectives are stated in laws. Their seed may be found in the demands of interest groups, they are presented to the people for their approval through the manifestos of political parties at election time, and they are adopted as national objectives after their inclusion in laws. The legislature consists of elected representatives of the people, and hence is entitled to declare the national will. Every act of the legislature contains such a declaration: the objectives which the act seeks to fulfil are mentioned at its very beginning. Thus the objectives of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, are to secure industrial peace and to ameliorate the condition of workmen in industry. Once objectives are enshrined in the Constitution or the laws, it becomes the duty of the bureaucracy to faithfully fulfil them by implementing the law. Commitment of the bureaucracy to the objectives stated in laws is thus essential for the performance of its duties.

A problem presents itself, however, if we consider the actual role of the bureaucracy. A law contains not only the objectives which are sought to be fulfilled, but also the chosen way in which this is to be done. This way can be called the policy. In other words, for fulfilling a certain objective there may be several alternative ways, or policies. Thus the objective of free and compulsory education may be achieved in either of two ways: (i) punishing parents of children who are not sent to school, and (ii) giving incentives, such as free mid-day meals, to attract children. Either of these ways may be adopted and enforced through a law: this, then, becomes the policy of the government. Now, while the objectives are, more or less, decided through the interaction of political parties with interest groups and, directly, with the people, policies are chosen on the basis of the advice of technically trained and experienced members of the bureaucracy. The role of the bureaucracy in the formulation of the policy is very important, since often only the bureaucracy knows what will work on the ground. The bureaucracy

informs the minister about the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternative policies, and advises on the adoption of the most suitable alternative. It is then for the minister to choose the policy: he may accept or reject the advice of the permanent official. In case the civil servant's advice is rejected, he faces the problem of faithfully implementing a policy which he considers to be bad, or wrong. Thus, during the Emergency (1975-77) there were, perhaps, some officials who considered the policy of using compulsion for family planning as being a bad one, since it would have achieved the desired objective. Still, they were expected to faithfully enforce the measures for compulsion.

We note, then, that there may be differences of opinion between ministers and civil servants in regard to the policy to be adopted. In such a situation, civil servants are expected to faithfully implement the policy chosen by ministers. In other words, the bureaucracy is expected to be committed to a policy even if it considers it to be faulty. Further, it is expected to become committed to a new set of policies on a change in government. It comes in for criticism if the expected change in its commitment does not come about. Paul Appleby has pointed out that the civil service in Britain is criticised for not being as responsive to policy shifts as it should be.

The justification for expecting the bureaucracy to be committed to the policies of the government of the day is inherent in democracy. It is the elected representatives of the people, and not civil servants, who are thrown out of power, and office, if the policies of the government are not liked by the people. The ministers are responsible to the people, hence they are justified in choosing policies which they think the people want. The function of the civil servant is to advise the minister freely and frankly in the formulation of the policy, however, if the policy is finally chosen by the minister, the civil servant must implement it faithfully. If the policy is proved to be wrong, the minister is likely to be punished by the people at the time of election.

#### **ii) Commitment to Service of the People**

The bureaucracy's important role in policy formulation and implementation gives it a lot of power, it participates in deciding who should get what, when and how, and then goes ahead to enforce these decisions. In developing countries, particularly, the power of the bureaucracy is considerable since the other parts of the political system are weak. Hence while the civil servant is, ideally, expected to function as a "servant" of the people, in reality he may turn out to be a master. In countries like India, this problem becomes worse due to be heritage of the colonial past, when the civil servant used to be the symbol and agent of the foreign power. After independence also, a cultural and social chasm has continued to exist between the mostly non-literate and poor people and the higher bureaucrat who often dresses, speaks, and even thinks, like a foreigner. In a democracy, however, the people are expected to exercise real power, and the bureaucracy is expected to remain under the control of the elected politicians, and serve the people. Hence commitment for providing service to the people is essential for the proper performance of the bureaucracy's role.

The bureaucracy's power, derived from its role in policy formulation and implementation, is used also for fulfilling its own interests. In developing countries, the bureaucracy is very powerful, the result often is that the bureaucracy tends to fulfil its own interest even at the cost of the interests of the people. Thus the extra profit (benefits apart from salary) remains high in most public undertakings in India even if they lack effectiveness and run at a loss. High officials play an important role in the determination of their own emoluments, and try to protect their interests by maintaining the emoluments at a high level. Service of the people requires that where there is a conflict between their own interests and those of the people, they should give priority to the people's interests.

#### **iii) Commitment to Profession**

A profession is a vocation or calling, especially one that involves some branch of science or advanced learning. Nowadays Public Administration requires persons belonging to almost all the professions, such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, scientists, managers and accountants. Obtaining professional qualifications requires long and arduous preparation on their part. They are considered to have specialised knowledge and excellence and hence have high prestige. Since their contribution to the

society comes from their specialised knowledge, it becomes their duty to keep abreast of the developments in their field of specialisation. They must also maintain the expected standard of performance. Thus university teachers must continue to read the latest publications. These are the requirements of their commitment to teaching as a profession. Similarly, other professionals must also continually update their knowledge and skill, and maintain the expected standard of performance through practice.

The duties associated with every profession required, not only knowledge and skill, but also moral dedication. Hence commitment to a profession involves adherence to its ethics and etiquette. Thus the ethics of the medical profession require that a doctor should attend to a patient even at the risk of infection to himself; its etiquette requires that he should not disclose information confided to him by his patients. Similarly, every profession has its ethics and etiquette. When a professional joins the bureaucracy, he/she must continue to remain committed to the ethics and the etiquette of his/her profession, in addition to his/her commitment to the objectives of his/her organisation. Thus even if his/her position in the organisation confers a high status upon him/her, he/she must not allow it to interfere with his/her professional duties. For example, if a specialist in clinical medicine becomes the director of a medical institute, he/she should not allow the new status to interfere with his/her duty towards the patients. His/her position may also provide him/her with opportunities for selfish gain at the cost of his/her clients. Thus, a specialist in a medical institute may be pressurised for recommending some costly and inferior equipment for purchase. His/her commitment to his/her profession would require refusal to recommend inferior equipment, whatever the pressure.

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note :** i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check Your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What are the implications of the commitment to values and objectives?

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2) Discuss the implications of the commitment to service of the people.

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3) What are the implications of professional commitment?

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**16.4 ASSESSING NEUTRALITY AND COMMITMENT**

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In this section we shall consider (i) whether neutrality and commitment are necessarily antithetical, (ii) ways of achieving neutrality and commitment, and (iii) special devices for important areas.

### **i) Compatibility of Neutrality and Commitment**

In recent years there has been a lot of discussion in India about the nature of neutrality and commitment, and particularly, whether the bureaucracy can have the two qualities at the same time. Obviously, if commitment is taken to mean commitment to a particular political party or to its leaders, it becomes antithetical to neutrality. However, commitment to human and constitutional values and national objectives, to service of the people, and to professional ethics and etiquette, is not antithetical to neutrality between classes, cultural groups and political parties. Indeed, commitment and neutrality reinforce each other if they are of the right type. Thus commitment to the human value of compassion and to the constitutional value of fraternity are likely to induce neutrality between classes and cultural groups respectively. Similarly, commitment to national objectives is likely to induce neutrality between political parties. Hence the effort should be to induce commitment and neutrality of the right kind.

### **ii) Inculcation of Neutrality and Commitment**

Inculcation of desirable attitudes in the bureaucracy requires attention to all aspects of personnel administration. At the time of recruitment and selection of candidates it should be ensured that they have received the right kind of socialisation and education in the family and school. The competitive examination for selection can include tests of attitudes towards human and constitutional values and national objectives on the one hand, and towards classes, cultural groups and parties on the other. Such tests can indicate whether the candidate has properly benefited from liberal education and has a broad mental outlook, or has merely committed materials to memory for passing examinations. After entry, desired attitudes of neutrality and commitment can be inculcated in the members of the bureaucracy through training. Various incentives, such as desired posting, visits abroad and quicker promotion, can be provided for motivating employees to develop the right attitudes. Finally, control by the political executive and the legislature can ensure that they do not deviate from the norms. Institutions like the Public Service Commission, Courts and Administrative Tribunals should ensure that the exercise of control by political authorities is done fairly and justly. Further, in a democracy, the people have the right and the duty to see that all institutions function properly.

### **iii) Special Agencies and Recruitment Methods**

Special agencies and methods of recruitment can be used for important areas requiring a high degree of both neutrality and commitment. One such special agency already in use is the autonomous university. Higher education and research constitute an area in which commitment and neutrality are both of great importance. If commitment is not there, pursuit of knowledge lacks excellence; if neutrality is not there education becomes merely indoctrination. The autonomous university aims at achieving both; it also retains the main advantage of bureaucratisation, namely efficiency, while avoiding the dysfunctions flowing from bureaucratisation due to its autonomy. Max Weber has noted that staff members of a university constitute a bureaucracy. The characteristics of hierarchy, division of labour, specialisation, rules and impersonality are to be found in a university also, and hence it has the efficiency flowing from these factors. At the same time, its autonomy permits its staff members to remain committed as well as neutral, since the rules of conduct applicable to government servants do not apply to the employees of a university.

There may be other areas requiring a high degree of both neutrality and commitment. Perhaps one such area is that of rural development. Much success was achieved by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi in this area by employing a cadre of volunteers who were marked by both commitment and neutrality. The governmental programme of Community Development, which has similar objectives, has, by contrast failed to fulfil our expectations. Some of the deficiencies of the Community Development Programme may be traced to the lack of a committed cadre. Paul Appleby has noted the need for a committed cadre for such new programmes, as follows: "usually it is not possible by the Civil Service process to quickly identify the rare individuals who would be particularly competent at many of the key jobs required for these new programmes. This is especially true in view of the further fact that it is of importance that these new agencies be staffed by people who are genuinely zealous with respect to the new

programme". Appleby has suggested the recruitment of committed cadres on a flexible and political basis for such new programmes, and their conversion later into career bodies. Perhaps this, and similar suggestions, can be experimented with, after introducing modifications appropriate to the country concerned. Developing countries, where the government must play a leading role in bringing about development, can postpone such experimentation only at great peril; for, underdevelopment increasingly tends to be associated with phenomena like widespread disturbances and violence.

**Check Your Progress 3**

- Note :** i) Use the space below for your answer.  
ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the **unit**.

1) How can neutrality and commitment be assessed ?

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**16.5 LET US SUM UP**

The bureaucracy comes to have great power due to its role in policy formulation and implementation. Hence it is important that it should be neutral between classes, cultural groups and political parties. The achievement of neutrality is beset with problems; most of these, however, are likely to be solved with development. Also, the bureaucracy has to play an important role in bringing about development. Its role requires commitment to human and constitutional values and national objectives, to service of the people and to professional ethics and etiquette. Neutrality and commitment can both be inculcated through proper education before entry into the service and training after entry, the proper use of incentives, and controls by political and independent institutions of democracy. Experimentation can be made, for example by having a highly committed, flexibly recruited, cadre for a new programme of importance, requiring commitment.

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**16.6 KEY WORDS**

**Antithetical:** direct opposite or contrast

**Commitment:** moral dedication to a cause

**Dysfunctions:** consequences that interfere with adjustment and create problems in the structure.

**Ethics:** moral principles

**Etiquette:** conventional rules of social behaviour or professional conduct which restrict professional people from indulging in activities that are detrimental to the interests of people and their colleagues and adversely effect the dignity of their profession.

**Fraternity:** ideal fraternity is enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution of India. It ensures the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

**Pendleton Act:** the reform of Civil Services in U.S. began with the Pendleton Act (1883). Its aim was to promote appointment on the basis of merit through open competitive examination and assure the appointees security of tenure. It recommended the establishment of a United States Civil Service Commission. The Act was concerned with classified positions only. Labourers, workmen and persons nominated for confirmation by the Senate were excluded from the purview of the Act.

**Values:** one's principles or standards, one's judgement of what is valuable or important in life.

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## 16.7 SOME USEFUL BOOKS.

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Kothari, Shanti and Roy Ramashray, 1969. *Relations between Politicians and Administrators at the District Level*; IIPA: N. Delhi.

Lapalombara, Joseph (ed), 1967. *Bureaucracy and Political Development*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J.

Verma, R.S. 1973. *Bureaucracy in India*; Progress Publishers: Bhopal.

### Journals

Arora, K. Satish, "Political Policy and the future of Bureaucracy" in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 18 (July–Sept 1971) pp. 355-367.

Gupta, V.P., "A Study of Conflict between Political Elite and Bureaucracy", in the *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 1. January-March, 1987.

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## 16.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

Neutrality of bureaucracy between various classes in the society, is required to ensure that

- Feeling of injustice is done away with.
- Social order is maintained.
- Development is achieved.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Method of removal.
- Condition of service.
- Expense of a Commission.
- Other provisions.

### Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Commitment to the constitutional values.
- Commitment to the national objectives.
- Commitment to the policies of the government of the day.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Conflict between interests of the bureaucracy and interests of the people.
- Commitment to the interests of the people.

3) Your answer should include the following points:

- Update one's knowledge and skill.
- Maintaining the standard of performance through practice.
- Commitment to the ethics of the profession.
- Commitment to the objectives of the organisation.

### Check Your Progress 3

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Compatibility of neutrality and commitment.
- Inculcation of neutrality and commitment.
- Special devices for important areas.