

Department of Administrative Reform



A Citizen's View

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1. Abstract

Administrative Reforms is emerging as the buzzword in India. With the economic reforms taking off in the early years of the nineties, there is a building consensus that the government needs to now unshackle its functioning with a rapid emphasis on a transparent bureaucracy, efficiency in working and procedures followed and above all an overall shift in the mindset which will improve delivery in governance.

Administrative Reforms has a huge ambit and is a wide topic hence we tried focusing on the reforms that can be implemented in any state to improve the functioning and service delivery. The Department of Admin Reforms was chosen because it functions as the nodal agency for Reform process in the Govt. of Delhi. The project wanted to inquire how does a reform come into existence. Who proposes, where is it discussed and how is it implemented. The hypothesis was to understand reforms at a micro level so that we can paint a macro picture.

The research project reviewed the functioning of the Administrative Reforms department. Remedial measures, interesting case studies from different states were taken into account and some policy recommendations were also made to speed up the functioning of the department.

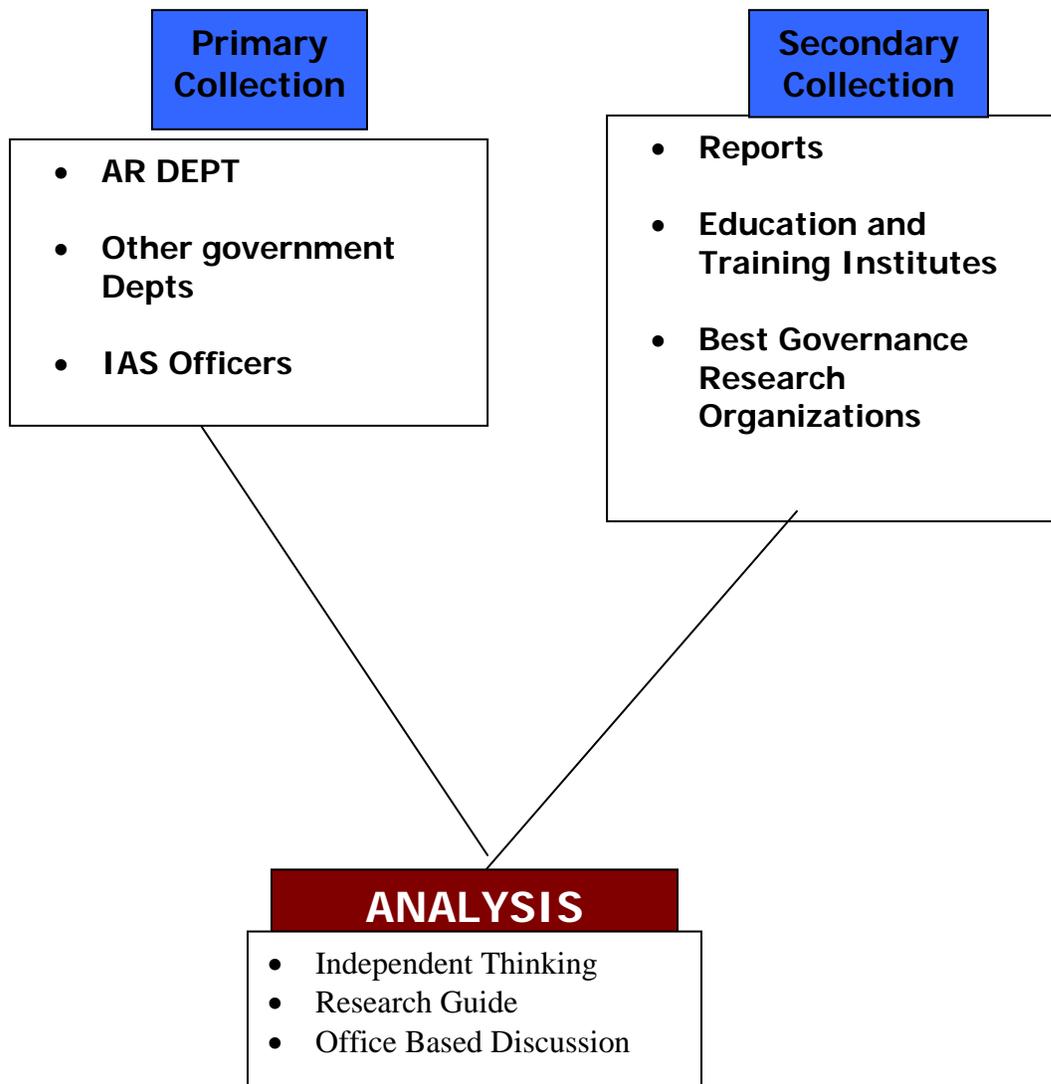
Contents

1. Abstract	2
2. Contents.....	3
3. Objectives of Research	4
4. Research Methodology	5
5. Need for Reform- Introduction.....	6
6. Department of Administrative Reform- A Reality Check.....	8
a) Information Dissemination	8
<i>i) Manuals.....</i>	8
<i>ii) Personal Interactions.....</i>	12
b) Structure and Functions of the Department	13
<i>i) Nodal Agency DRTI</i>	13
<i>ii) Lokayukta.....</i>	13
<i>iii) Public Grievances Commission.....</i>	14
<i>iv) Award Schemes.....</i>	14
<i>v) Citizen Charter.....</i>	14
<i>vi) Punctuality Drives</i>	14
<i>vii) O & M Instruction</i>	15
<i>viii) Manual of Office Procedure Test</i>	15
<i>ix) Plan Scheme (Strengthening of department).....</i>	16
<i>x) Post Creation.....</i>	16
7. Case Studies.....	17
a) Government of Himachal Pradesh.....	17
<i>i) REFNIC - References Monitoring System.....</i>	17
<i>ii) E -Gazette</i>	17
b) Business Process Reengineering- Income Tax Department (ITD)	18
8. A Framework for Reform	20
a) Understanding the Role of the Bureaucracy	20
b) Demand-Driven vs Supply Driven Reform	20
c) Authority vs Discussion	21
d) Transparency equals Efficiency	21
e) Business Process Reengineering/Simplification.....	22
9. Conclusion and Recommendations for the Department and Government	23

3. Objectives of Research

- Demystify the functioning of the Department of Administrative Reform
- Analyze the various functions of the Department, as to whether they are needed or not, and being executed or not
- Describe the vision as a young person of administrative reform
- Enlist recommendations for the path ahead to achieve the afore-mentioned vision
- Compile analysis into articles for the Delhi Citizen Handbook 2009, newspapers, media agencies

4. Research Methodology



5. Need for Reform- Introduction

"They have done so much and can do so much more, but as the proverb says there can be no protection if the fence starts eating the crop. We have government servants who do not serve but oppress the poor and the helpless; police who do not uphold the law but shield the guilty, tax collectors who do not collect taxes but connive with those who cheat the state and whole legions whose only concern is their private welfare at the cost of society. They have no work, ethic, no feeling for the public cause, and no involvement in the future of the nation, no comprehension of national goals, and no commitment to the values of modern India. They have only a grasping, mercenary outlook, devoid of competence, integrity and commitment."

- Rajiv Gandhi

As a background to the analysis presented in this paper, it is important to understand the setting up of the department, and its purpose.

In an interview with the Chief Minister Smt. Sheila Dikshit, when asked what was the one thing that she felt was Delhi's biggest problem, her instant reaction was- "a slow bureaucracy".

One of the most prominent debates of this age is about the role of the government, and the extent of its involvement in peoples' daily lives. An important aspect of this is the quality of the government and its activities. India's archaic government structure severely cripples efficient functioning. While officials sit in comfortable offices, the procedures involved in getting government service are tedious enough to intimidate the most determined person. For example, all government employees need the permission of the government to travel out of the country. This letter has to go through at least 25 people at several different levels of administration, each requiring regular visits to request people to look at the file. The entire process takes up close to a month by itself. Apart the matters which involve life or death and something we have all heard :the classic pensions not being disbursed even after years of service are some insights into the horrible state governance and administration works in this country

A government's role is to maintain frameworks for its various undertakings. It is by far the most powerful institution in existence, in authority as well as resource. It is imperative therefore that this structure remain accountable. We took the Dept. of Administrative Reforms as we wanted to restrict our universe to the state of Delhi and wanted to analyse how do the reform process start, what are the players involved and how does it function. Unfortunately, as we realised during the course of our internship reforms seemed to be a distant word but nonetheless steady progress is being made. With instruments like the RTI the governance model is changing and will definitely move towards better reforms.

As young people, we have tried to bring out our vision and aspiration about the functioning of the government, firmly backed by the real, prevalent situations and not a mere ideal that is impractical to attain. The young represents dynamism, ideas, vigor, optimism and an urge to redress what has been wrong since long. This initiative is an

effort to understand a small process and the outcomes of this interesting journey is documented in the next few pages.

6. Department of Administrative Reform- A Reality Check

a) Information Dissemination

i) Manuals

The RTI Act 2005 makes it mandatory for all the public authorities or institutions to make certain minimum information available for the general public and should be put on the public domain. The Act says

"Every public authority shall - publish within one hundred and twenty days from the enactment of this Act - "a statement of the boards, councils, committees and other bodies consisting of two or more persons constituted as its part or for the purpose of its advice, and as to whether meetings of those boards, councils, committees and other bodies are open to the public, or the minutes of such meetings are accessible for public;"

- (Section 4(1)(b)(viii) of RTI Act)

Dept. of Administrative Reforms¹

The Department of Admin Reforms has put up the following 17 information manuals which are present on the Delhi Governments website. These 17 manuals are dealing with various aspects of the department which aim at providing the basic information to any concerned citizen about the fundamental functioning of the department in reference with its working, powers and functioning, staff employed, procedure followed in the decision making process. It also makes proactive disclosures like the budgetary allocation and other miscellaneous information. The list of Manuals available-

1. Particulars of organization
2. Power and duties of officers/Employees
3. Procedure for Decision Making
4. Norms for discharge of functions
5. Rules, Regulations for discharge of functions
6. Statement of categories
7. Details of consultative committees and other bodies
8. List of boards, councils, committees and other bodies
9. Directory of officers/employees
10. Monthly remuneration of officers/employees
11. Budget allocated to each agency
12. Execution of subsidy program
13. Particulars of recipients of concessions, permits
14. Information available in an electronic form
15. Facilities available for obtaining information
16. Particulars of PIOs
17. Other information Prescribed

¹ <http://delhigovt.nic.in/RTI/default.asp.16/6/09>, 12:42 PM)

Analysis of Manuals

The first thing that should be applauded is that the manuals provide a wide range of information on the functioning of the department. It is the first window for any information seeking individual concerned about the department. Nevertheless the "proactive disclosure" isn't on the Website of Dept. of AR and one has to go through the RTI website to find these manuals. In this section we evaluate each manual and try to focus on two parameters i.e. Information provided and what information could have been provided or hasn't been provided. We conclude the latter part by analyzing the Manuals of other departments of the Delhi Government and other state governments and also on the fact that we visited this dept. to crosscheck the information provided.

Manual 1

This Manual defines the Aims and Objectives, Mission and Brief History of the Department. In addition it also gives a brief data on its organisation work and the Business Allocation (what work the department is supposed to perform).

Analysis

The Manual details the Aims and other relevant details but the important part of the manual is the Part 5 which talks about Allocation of Business and duties. The manual specifies that the department undertakes 16 specific tasks, but during the course of the internship we realised that the department just focuses on two major tasks (Post Creation and the RTI) while leaves a lot of discussion left on the other 14 tasks which the department doesn't even touch. Hence a Manual on the lines of Govt. of Haryana where it not only names but also details out the work area where the admin reform dept works.

Manual 2

The Manual gives a detailed account of the Powers and duties of the staff. A very clearly defined table which gives all the information that is required in order to understand the different functions viz. Administrative, Financial, Statuary and Others.

Analysis

The Manual has a lot of information missing like out of the 18 posts defined 16 have NIL written as their work title. The duties are also not clearly defined. For example, there is no post in the Financial Listing which is defined under the Asst. Accounts officer's job. This job is with the senior Researcher. In addition the Manual defines all the tasks for areas like "O&M inspection", Work Study which during the research were never found being done by the department.

Manual 3

Manual 3 gives the Procedure followed in decision making.

Analysis

Since we didn't have the time to analyse the system of file movement, not much can be commented upon.

Manual 4

Gives information on norms set for the discharge of functions.

Manual 5

This is an important official document that defines the different manuals followed by the department in the discharge of its duties. The Manual gives the details of the DRTI, and other handbooks which defines the work area and the laws and regulations within the framework of which the department works.

The important document here is the Citizens Charter. The AR dept is supposedly the nodal agency to make sure that all other department put their Citizens Charter up on the web but unfortunately the Dept. own Citizen Charter doesn't suffice the minimum standards itself. The following important data provided by Transparency International is seen as one of the parameters to check the relevance of CC

1. Involvement of employees
2. Recognition of employees
3. Reorientation and training
4. Awareness about charters
5. Use of Information Technology
6. Measurable and monitored
7. Accountability
8. Review of charter

Manual 6

Gives the details of the documents that are with the department of Admin Reforms. It not only keeps documents like the study reports etc but also the Annual Reports of the Public Grievances Commission (PGC) and the Lokayukta Office.

Analysis

The department had the files with the data. On random checking to find the recommendation reports we were allowed to study the registers for files that have passed through the department and the record was well maintained.

Manual 7

Talks about any arrangement for consultation with any NGO, Civil Society Group or representation of public in relation to the policy implementation.

Analysis

The department doesn't have any such initiatives and hence no record of the above has been kept. However during the informal talks its was known that the Dept. does call for social audits and also consults NGOS from time to time

Manual 8

List of Boards/Committees which have been created.

Analysis

The department has none of the following created

Manual 9

Directory of all the officials working in the Department.

Analysis

Phone calls were made to all the officials at 4:23 16/6/09 out of which 4 were found transferred but the Manual still mentions them as an employees! The Principal Secy of the dept still carries the name of the officer who is now the Secretary Vigilance but hasn't been updated on the Manual or on the website.

Manual 10

The monthly remuneration received by each of the officers and employees. Gives the data of the grade pay and also the compensation as provided in the regulations.

Manual 11

The Budgetary Allocation for the department is mentioned in this Manual.

Analysis

The department was sanctioned 82 lakhs in the year 2008-09 out of which Rs 30 Lakhs was allocated for the strengthening of the AR department. No road map on how the dept. plans to spend this amount is available in the charter. The Budget allocations and its spending is one of the ways of gauging transparency and accountability. Since no blueprint is provided hence it's left for the citizen to evaluate.

Manual 12

Subsidy Programmes: No subsidy Programmes

Manual 13

Permits, authorization and concessions etc granted: NONE

Manual 14

Information available on electronic form, talks about the data that has been suo moto put online by the Dept.

Analysis

Out of the 15 documents listed online, 11 were available online while important documents like "Reporting e-enabling Citizen of Delhi" and "Lokayukta and PGC's Annual Reports were neither found on the AR dept website nor on their own respective websites.

Manual 15

Particulars of facilities available to citizens for obtaining information

Analysis It's a repetition of Manual 14 with the same problems as defined above.

Manual 16

PIO with respect to RTI, the numbers and the contact details are given as required by law.

Manual 17

Other Information: None

ii) Personal Interactions

This section is a view from the eyes of an ordinary man. It answers the questions on how one gets information on a personal visit and how well the department receives you. We analyze this section on the basis of the following parameters-

1. Officer Interacted with
2. Class/Position
3. Outcome

The Department has been given as an additional charge which clearly shows the seriousness of the government in concern with this department. The Principal Secretary (AR) was not available during our visits and hence we had to meet the subordinates. According to the hierarchy following is the account

Officer Interacted with	Post	Outcome
Mr KB Rai	Class I, Advisor	Not willing to speak with us and directed us to meet Mr AK Goel
Mr AK Goel	Class I, Assistant Director	<p>Very willing to talk with us and gave us plenty of time. He told us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department is understaffed to handle even its RTI coordinating functions. • The majority of the work of the dept relates to post creation. • There is no feedback via civil society, NGO's etc. • For punctuality drives, different departments have been interlinked and are supposed to keep a check on each other. • Lokayukta and Public Grievance Commission function independently, if they need something they are supposed to come to the AR dept. • The dept did not have an annual report. • Reforms in the transport dept were suggested 3 years back and there haven't been any major reforms since then. • He added that the dept does not

		concentrate on analyzing diff departments for improvements on a regular and organized basis
Ms C.P. Srivastava	Class I, Assistant Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She informed us that the dept has a record of file numbers and subjects as record of file movement, and brought for us the record of the previous 2 years of the same. • The Department's role stops with recommending measures on file, and there is no checkback to know what happened to the same. • There is hardly any <i>suo moto</i> action taken up because the likelihood of acceptance is practically nil, even though that is within the mandate of the dept.
Mr Naresh Kumar	Class I, Assistant Director	Spoke to us only in the presence of Mr Goel. Refused to speak to us independently.
Prabjit Kumar Luthra	Class II, Research Investigator	Budget Allocation and Expenditure Analysis

Analysis

The interaction with most of the officers was not very fruitful. It was observed that the level of awareness about reforms happening in other states wasn't there. The department did not want to take initiative on understanding the reform process and hence recommending seemed to be a distant dream. The officers especially Mr. Goel was willing to help us with information and came up with new ideas but lacked the will to implement them.

b) Structure and Functions of the Department

i) Nodal Agency DRTI

The Department has been assigned as the nodal agency for the implementation of the RTI Act (2005). Under this ambit the department compiles all the RTI's received by the various departments of the Delhi government. As the nodal agency any RTI's filed with the AR dept are forwarded to the concerned department. So the AR dept. has twin functions a- Data Compilation and b- Nodal Agency for the implementation of the RTI Act.

ii) Lokayukta

The Department is to perform secretariat functions for the Lokayukta, a relatively recent venture of the government. It is one of the strongest anti-malpractice cells in the state. The Department's involvement is minimal, and it functions independently to a large

extent. Only some appointments, submission of reports and demand based functions are routed through the department.

iii) Public Grievances Commission

Covered under separate project, the Department's role is to perform the secretariat functions for the PGC.

iv) Award Schemes

There is a cash award of up to Rs 5000/- for officers or staff members whose recommendations are accepted by the standing committee on Administrative Reform, under different heads such as-

Award Categories²

Cutting down delays	Reducing paper work	Simplifying process and procedures
Bringing innovative improvement for citizens' satisfaction	Reducing cost of operation to bring economy and saving in Govt. expenditure	Other allied fields having a direct bearing on citizens' satisfaction
Suggestions of innovative nature resulting in reforms of any kind;		

Source:

Under this section on the website, there is a noteworthy initiative undertaken whereby there is a link titled "Your Suggestions" which opens a suggestion form for the general public. However, the usage of this is minimal and it was a surprise to find this feature, showing up the lack of publicity that it has received.

v) Citizen Charter

The Citizen's Charter acts as an interface between the people and the government, seeking to improve the quality of the interaction of the two. The basic objective is to empower the citizen, improve public service delivery and accountability. The department is the nodal agency to get the citizen's charters prepared of various departments/organizations. The website claims that all departments have responded favorably to the innovation to prepare these charters, but a survey found that of the departments of the Delhi government, with a sample size of 98, only 45 charters have been uploaded on the web, of which only 29 are functional. Autonomous bodies were not covered under the survey

vi) Punctuality Drives

Details of punctuality drives conducted in the past were not available. The purpose of the duty itself was questioned by a high level officer in the department. It was felt that there should be adaptability in timings and if people are asked to work overtime on

²http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doit_ar/Administrative+Reforms/Home/Award+Schemes/

some days, they should be allowed to come late other days. Also unavailable was a record of punishing regular late-comers, a lacuna in the department's functioning.

vii) O & M Instruction

Organization and Method instruction was the earlier Administrative Reform Department. As the name suggests it was to concentrate on the administrative processes and systems in the secretariat. However, this portion of functioning has started becoming inactive over the years. The last record of this work dates back to 2002. Listed below are the letters sent by the Department to the different departments as given on the website, and the salient features of the moves. However, it is unclear as to whether any of these were carried out.

- **Annual Inspections - dated 09.05.2002**

There was a demand to conduct inspection of departments under the Manual of Office Procedure. It was also noted that past such inspections have been conducted superficially and this should be avoided. Further, compliance reports were also asked for with follow up study by the AR Department.

- **Weeding out of Records – dated 03.06.2002**

A 15 day drive was to be undertaken, with a schedule chalked out by various department HODs to examine each and every file/register/document as well as other records, lying for three years or more and establish its life span. It was also required that a report of the same was to be submitted to the department after the two month period in which the study was to be conducted.

- **On the Spot Training – dated 28.02.2003**

To improve the Filing System and Record Management in the Secretariat, Shri S.M.H. Naqvi was hired as a consultant to visit the various departments with feedback about progress submitted to the department after the exercise.

- On the spot training of filing system, department-wise.
- Scrutinize files submitted by dealing hand before submission to Head of department and point out errors.
- Get the errors rectified on the spot before submission.
- Guidance for record management and weeding out of old record including maintenance of Assistant diary, weekly arrears statement, monthly arrears statement etc.

viii) Manual of Office Procedure Test

The Manual of Office Procedure governs protocol to be followed in day to day work of departments. The department conducts annual tests with rewards based on the performance of an individual in the test. On visits to the secretariat, it was found that notices are up as to when the test is to be conducted, but information on who has registered, as well as past results could not be gotten.

ix) Plan Scheme (Strengthening of department)

Every year in the demand for grants (available with the Planning Department) for the past 3 years there has been an approved outlay for 'Strengthening the AR department'. The outcome budget states that the deliverable output for the same is Preparation of Reform reports, distribution of prize money for various competitions on reforms and reform studies, with the objective of improving efficiency in governance.

However, an analysis of the real expenditure incurred by the department indicates that the heads, under which this money was spent, was to a large extent on miscellaneous expenditure rather than strengthening or carrying out reform study, with a few exceptions. The different heads of expenditure in this as listed by the department are as follows-

- Arrears due to Pay Commission
- Bonus pay of officials
- Reimbursement of tuition fees of employees and ex-employees
- Payment towards temporary posts
- Manual of Office Procedure Test

- Buying of Computers, tables etc
- Citizen Information Guide (Compilation of Citizen Charters)
- Mission Convergence
- Social Audit of the department being carried out

Thus, one sees that the expenditures do not pursue the deliverable output of preparing reports on reform, leaving this duty out of the spectrum of the department.

x) Post Creation

We have given this duty a separate head because of the prominence it has in the day to day functioning of the department. On inspection of the file movement records of the department we found that a majority of the subjects of the files received by the department were for allocation of new posts to different departments, hospitals etc. eg: Security Guards

The process is as follows-

1. File of demand received by the AR Dept
2. Study teams analyze the demand and its practicality
3. Recommendations, which could be different from the demand, based on studies are given and the file is sent back to the department.
4. Taking up of these recommendations and moving the file along to the Lt Governor for implementation is entirely up to the department.

Thus, it is clear that the department does not have any recommendatory authority over the other departments. While this is justifiable there is also no feedback mechanism for the department, which means that whether or not something has been taken up is not known to the department itself, let alone the public. For example, a suggestion to downsize a particular dept will most likely fall on deaf ears with no knowledge of what happened to the idea. This is a clear disincentive for any kind of suggestion to be made.

7. Case Studies

a) Government of Himachal Pradesh

i) REFNIC - References Monitoring System

The Dept. of Admin Reforms in coordination with all the departments initiated a very ambitious project where they interlinked the Secretariat with a LAN network tracking system. The REFNIC is the only file and paper tracking software of its kind in the entire country, which covers all aspects from receipt to dispatch not only within an office but also beyond it. The repetitive paper work is eliminated by sharing the data across the network. Reminders are generated automatically in printed form as well as by e-mail and pop-up message on the screen. The most salient feature of this software is that the status of any paper/ file can be seen by anyone on the internet and very soon on mobile devices. It is standard software which can be replicated in all government offices as it is built around the current procedure of dealing papers, policies, letters, rules and files while introducing some systematic changes through process engineering.

The application has streamlined the workflow and eliminated the need for diary-ing at four places. The application of ICT has reduced the arbitrary handling of PUCs/files and discretionary powers have been made open. The system has brought in transparency and accountability.

The Process is-

1. Central Diary - An 8 digit code is allotted to the file
2. When any section gets the file it opens the record and uploads the data (any additions/comments etc)
3. The file moves to another department and then it is further updated

ii) E -Gazette

The Constitution is the fundamental document out of which Acts arise. These acts give rise to Rules and Regulations and these Regulations unless notified do not become laws. Everyday the various departments of the government come up with various notifications which are printed and kept but never put on a public domain. The E-Gazette initiative of the Administrative Reforms Dept. analyzed this problem and convinced all departments to upload their notifications and print it in one format which gives uniformity and greater control to the general public over their rights.

The Digital Gazette project is the first of its kind in the India where the paper copies of the official Gazette have been discontinued from 1st of August 2007. The Gazette is available on <http://himachal.nic.in/egazette> in digital and searchable format. No other Gazette in India is printed in digital format only.

Besides converting the Gazette into digital form, the process has been decentralized as all departments send their notifications for publication through the SW interface only. The eGovernance initiative has resulted in huge cost savings to the State Government besides benefiting the citizens, lawyers, bankers, departments, employees as any

Gazette notification issued after the cut-off date is available on the Internet in searchable format.

The eGazette is environment friendly too as its website shows the conservation of trees and water which are used by the paper manufacturing industry for paper manufacture.

b) Business Process Reengineering- Income Tax Department (ITD)³

Collection of direct taxes is under the administration of the ITD, and has been growing at a fast pace in recent years. In the Financial Year 2007-08 collection stood at Rs 3,14,468 crores as against Rs 48,280 crores in 1997-98. The tax payer base has also expanded. Coupled with the increase in transactions and businesses, especially in the current global context, there is a challenge to the ITD department, demanding that it keep up, both in capacity and in efficiency.

To this end, business process reengineering was announced in 2006 for the department. A Directorate of BPR was created in May 2006 and through a global tender, PricewaterhouseCoopers was appointed as external consultant. The main objectives as listed with the department are-

- Re-evaluation of all current processes to remove the redundant and obsolete processes and redesign or create new processes which are more efficient and maximize use of resources to produce the best results
- Identification of stakeholders' needs and the ways in which the organization can meet them especially taxpayer's needs for information, convenience of filing tax returns & documents, payment of taxes and speedier issue of refunds
- Use best and leading practices of other organizations to develop milestones, objectives, targets to benchmark organizational performance
- Increase alignment between people, processes and technology
- Enhance employee involvement, skills and organizational creativity

The project brought out 18 reports and was completed in a period of eight months starting from 1 May 2007.

As a preparatory exercise prior to the BPR project, awareness was created in the organization through several meetings held with employees as well as their associations/unions. The desire for change was clearly evident during these interactions. This exercise was aimed at creating a larger ownership thereby ensuring support and involvement - an essential element for the success of such a mammoth exercise. Outreach initiatives also included setting up of internet discussion forums/blog to encourage participation and sharing of ideas. In all, approximately 840 departmental personnel from Chief Commissioners to Group C employees were consulted and participated in the exercise. Besides, a specially designed HR questionnaire was

³ <http://www.incometaxindia.gov.in/BPR.html>

administered to 896 departmental persons to elicit their views. Further, voice of customer (VoC) survey was conducted at 12 stations in which a specifically designed questionnaire was administered to 754 taxpayers of different categories and tax consultants.

The BPR project was undertaken in two phases- 'As-is' study phase and 'To-be' Model stage. The success of the project depended on ensuring that correct facts were captured during the 'As-is' study as only then correct solutions could be found. To dispel any apprehensions in the minds of the employees about the aim of the exercise, it was made clear during the field study that the exercise conducted was neither an inspection/audit nor was it for individual fault finding.

The new technology initiatives together with functional segregation of department's operations into bulk and compliance and upgradation of manpower skills would help the department to deliver better taxpayer services, improve enforcement functions resulting in enhanced compliance.

Detailed To-Be models and recommendations have been prepared in respect of the following:

- Bulk Operations Division including Regional Processing Centre
- Facilitation Centres and Receipt and Dispatch Units
- Changes to PAN / TAN Issuance and Management
- Assessee Tax Credit Accounting System
- Core Processes Redesign – Assessment
- Core Processes Redesign – Post Assessment
- Core Processes Redesign - Appellate
- Risk Assessment System
- Knowledge Management System
- Record Management System
- Human Resources and Infrastructure
- Grievance Redressal Management
- Change Management

The Business process Re-engineering of the Income tax Department is the first such project initiated by the Government of India where a comprehensive study of such a large Department has been undertaken and changes have been recommended taking a holistic view of the Department that would fundamentally change the way the Department functions

8. A Framework for Reform

Every year Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievances (DARPG) awards best governance practices in the country. The list of awardees has not seen a Delhi based project for innumerable years. It is inexplicable for Delhi to stay far behind in terms of efficiency not just globally but within the country as well. In this section, we concentrate on providing a framework for developing and implementing reform in the bureaucracy through actions of the various stakeholders-

- Executive
- Bureaucracy
- Public

We do this through putting forward principles that should govern the reform process and a corresponding change in the actions of the stakeholders to achieve the vision outlined in the first section of the report.

a) Understanding the Role of the Bureaucracy

The traditional view of the role of the government is a “servant of the people”, with its duty being to serve whatever interests the people demand in the most efficient manner possible, while in actuality it has become a perversion in many places with peoples’ actions being governed by the nature of the bureaucracy and its processes.

By virtue of being a singular body, functioning on the ideal of service causes the functioning to run into problems. It is important when one speaks of provision of services, especially relating to interaction that there is competition, with people having the choice to go to the better serving agency. Needless to say, it is not possible to have multiple bureaucracies. One possible framework in this regard is for privatizing service provision, that is, the interaction of the citizen with the government through private agencies, as is done with the visa systems of some countries. The sole aim of this agency being provision of quality service, that brings an improvement to government-citizen relationship. Further, this service obviously needs to be backed by efficient functioning in the bureaucracy. A private service provider would create pressure on the system’s process to be carried out better, since their work is also dependent on them.

b) Demand-Driven vs Supply Driven Reform

The ideal system of governance would be instantly adaptable to change and developments in a multitude of factors, such as demands, technology, political class etc. Changes herein would be demand driven, to attain functional efficiency. That is a system towards which we should try and move.

However, the current bureaucratic set up’s processes have been over-complicated and reform has been stalled due to political apathy and fear of taking on the system. Given this, generation of reforms based on demand from within departments takes a backseat due to conflict of personal interests. With a non-transparent process

providing comfort, perhaps side benefits and a stable job, changes could lead to downsizing and loss of unaccounted benefits. These would be put off with fears such as prosecution and instability personally trumping the goal of functional efficiency.

In this situation, the need for reform comes to the fore, and the agency of reform has to be supply based or differently put, through a higher authority. The change in this scenario would be a forced change often going against majority of opinion within the set up due to personal harm, which is by no means easy to put aside. Yet this does not take away from the essentiality of making that change for better processes.

c) Authority vs Discussion

Having put forward the current context, it is clear that political apathy is a major deterrent to any change. At the same time the need for change has been established as well. The agency for change in this case has to come through a balance of authority and sensitivity to opinions and personal interests.

A good methodology of the same has been highlighted in the case studies section. The essence of the idea is for change to be discussion based with people of the department in which the change is suggested. It is important to guard against the attitude that everything done by the government is wrong, and base demands sensibly. Easily feasible is a regular, periodic meeting of the secretaries of all the departments to discuss required change and commit to implementing change. Regularity would ensure that undertaken change is taken forward since the topic would be up for discussion amongst all colleagues again and again. One could draw an analogy with a corporate house strategy think-tank, putting in place strategies for the way forward given the consumer base. This can be initiated by the Chief Minister and her Council of Ministers who can attend the meetings being the elected representatives of the people.

Another opening that needs to be provided is attention to the public demands. While registering of grievances of the public is one matter, citizen ideas for introducing change also need to be given regard. There should be a public forum for discussion involving civil society, citizens, students, the agendas of which should be put up and analyzed in the same regular meetings.

d) Transparency equals Efficiency

A way to achieve the outlined ideals of efficiency is through transparency. It is important not to misunderstand this concept as scrutinizing the process of every decision made. A person works in a department with a certain period of training, which needs to be respected. The meaning simply is that data on the process that has been carried out, and the time in which it has been done is easily available in the public domain. This information being visible to everyone implies that if any malpractice is to occur it will immediately be caught on to. The risk of corrupt practices or holding up of files on arbitrary grounds gets drastically reduced. For this, REFNIC, an initiative of the Himachal government is worth review. A centralized computerized system enables everyone to track file movement in the government,

whichever department it may be with. After this, it is easier to take up grievances at that level, against a specific person. This takes a step towards downsizing as well, and hence has been met with resistance by those whose job descriptions fall vacant and hence is a tough move to put in place, despite the obvious benefits to functioning and to the public.

There is a step-wise process to this. First is the move towards computerization of the department from manual filing systems and then moving this system online for access over the internet. It is the first move that is the hardest; the marginal cost of the second is minimal.

e) Business Process Reengineering/Simplification

Alongside improving the functioning and efficiency of currently established processes and ways of working, it is also important to review these practices. Currently, if a file has to move through 5 levels in one department, and 5 departments for the final clearance, it makes sense to question whether passing through so many people is required for that decision to be made. Similarly for allocations, complaints etc, while there may not be a single-window answer to everything with due diligence required for thorough analysis, the current procedures stand very complicated and thus study needs to be undertaken to change this. Such a study was undertaken by the Income Tax Department in 2007. The jury is still out on the success of the project, but the effort is commendable, with studying of best practices globally, discussions with employees and tax payers, all factored in.

On similar lines, these processes need to be encouraged to come up within departments through some channel. It is not possible for the Department of Administrative Reform, to suo moto take up studies for all departments since the specific issues of functioning cannot be understood by them. This push can come from the elected government, but it has been seen to usually come from a small segment of reform-driven officials.

One such initiative is the award scheme put in place both at the central and state level. This scheme needs to be restructured since an award of Rs 5000 on acceptance of reform is not enough of an incentive to recommend a change that could lead to a degree of unpopularity among peers.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations for the Department and Government

The Department of Administrative Reforms was set up as a concretization of the Organization and Methods Instruction aimed at improving government systems and processes. Two administrative reforms commissions, under Morarji Desai and Veerappa Moily have further pushed the case for reform, and an improvement in the interaction between the citizen and the government. The Department under NCT, Delhi since getting the status of a fully functional department in 2005 has deviated from its original functions due to structural and incentive problems. Towards moving in the right directions, our recommendations are as follows-

1. Monthly Meeting of Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Principal Secretaries for discussion of what reforms are to be made, as well as evaluation of current progress on previous discussion. The Admin Reforms department can be the facilitator of such a process and can act as the nodal agency for building upon the same.
2. Computerization of Departments as a first step, towards having online database, supplemented with training in computers for personnel. The REFNIC case study of the Himachal Pradesh Government is a classic example where all files moving in and out of the departments are put online on a LAN network which is accessible to the general public as well. Citizens can check the file status, why is it file lying on a single table for many days and can even contact the official to get the status quo and seek an explanation. The government is also contemplating punitive action against officers who delay file movement. This system should be implemented in the Delhi State Secretariat which will bring more transparency and also better governance model for other states to follow.
3. Review of Award Scheme, with increased amount of cash prize to incentivize a push towards reform from within departments.
4. Public Forum for Reform Discussion to be sensitive to demands of public administration
5. Excellent work is being carried on by the Department of Administrative Reforms and the Public Grievances,(DARPG) Government of India. The Department has developed a lot of national best practices* which has a lot of compilation on practices that can definitely be implemented in the State.