

Differences

Public administration is different from private administration in terms of the environment (i.e. institutional setting) in which it operates. Paul H. Appleby, Sir Josia Stamp, Herbert A. Simon and Peter Drucker made a distinction between public and private administrations.

Appleby's View: According to him, public administration is different from private administration in three aspects.

- (i) Political character
- (ii) Breadth of scope, impact and consideration
- (iii) Public accountability.

Josia Stamp's View: According to him, public administration differs from private administration in four aspects.

- (i) Principle of uniformity
- (ii) Principle of external financial control
- (iii) Principle of public responsibility
- (iv) Principle of service motive

Herbert Simon's View: According to him, the distinction between public administration and private administration lies in the popular imagination which relates to three points.

- (i) Public administration is bureaucratic, whereas private administration is business-like.
- (ii) Public administration is political, while private administration is non-political.
- (iii) Public administration is characterised by red-tape, while private administration is free from it.

Drucker's View: According to him, public administration (service institution) is basically different from private administration (business institution). To quote him, "It is different in its purpose. It has different values. It needs different objectives. And it makes a different contribution to society. 'Performance and results' are quite different in a service institution from what they are in a business institution. 'Managing for performance' is one area in which the service institution differs significantly from business institution."

The *differences* between public and private administrations are:

Political Direction The political character of public administration differentiates it from private administration. Public administration is subject to political direction and control. This is the primary distinction between the two. Paul Appleby argues, "Administration is politics since it must be responsive to the public interest It is necessary to emphasize the fact that popular political processes, which are the essence of

democracy, can only work through governmental organisation, and that all governmental organisations are not merely administrative entities, they are and must be political organisms.”

Breadth of Scope, Impact and Consideration Private administration cannot claim the breadth of scope, impact and consideration of the public administration. In the words of Paul H. Appleby, “The organised government impinges upon and is affected by practically everything that exists or moves in our society. It involves policies and actions of immense complexity. Its fullest possible understanding requires the wisdom of the anthropologist, the historian, the economist, the sociologist, the political scientist, the farmer, the labourer, the merchant, the industrialist, the banker, the politician, the philosopher, and many more.”

Public Accountability Public administration is characterised by public accountability from which private administration is free. Public administration has to function in its environment which consists of the press, political parties, pressure groups, and so forth. Thus, public accountability and responsibility is the hall mark of public administration in a democracy. Paul Appleby observes, “Government administration differs from all other administrative work to a degree not even faintly realized outside, by virtue of its public outcry.”

Principle of Uniformity Public administration has to be consistent in its treatment. In other words, the principle of consistency of treatment is the watch word of public administration. Its acts and decisions are regulated by uniform laws, rules and regulations. Private administration, on the other hand, can practise preferential treatment. In the words of Richard Warner, “A private administration need not worry very much about uniformity in treatment. It can cater for various special needs and purposes, charging often ‘what the traffic will bear’, without raising the storm of public protest which in the case of public administration would immediately arise if in government one law were devised for the benefit of the rich and another for the poor.”

Principle of External Financial Control The finances of public administration are controlled by the legislature. In other words, legislature authorises the income and expenditure of the executive branch. Private administration, on the other hand, is not subject to the principle of external financial control. It is free to manage its finances as it likes.

Principle of Service Motive Public administration is characterised by service motive. Its purpose is to serve the public and to promote community welfare. The private administration, in contrast, is characterised by profit motive, not social service. Its objective is to maximise profit. Also, the public administration carries a greater social prestige than the private administration because of its social role.

Legal Framework Public Administration has to function within the legal framework, that is, within the limits set by the laws, rules and regulations. This makes the public administration rigid in its operation. Private administration, on the other hand, is relatively free from such limits and enjoys flexibility in operation.

Nature of Functions Public administration differs from private administration in the nature of functions performed by it. Like—

- (i) It is more comprehensive than private administration, that is, it covers a wider range of activities.
- (ii) Its activities are more urgent and vital for the very existence of society.
- (iii) Its services, sometimes, tend to be monopolistic, for example, defence.

Anonymity Public administrators function anonymously. In other words, the functioning of civil service in government is characterised by the doctrine of anonymity which is the counterpart of the principle of

ministerial responsibility. Thus, the minister assumes responsibility for the actions of the civil servants working under him.

Efficiency Measurement Public administration differs from private administration in the measurement of efficiency. The resource use or profit earning (i.e. input—output relationship) is the criterion of measuring efficiency in private administration. But the same criterion cannot be applied while measuring efficiency in public administration. According to Peter Self, three kinds of efficiency are relevant in public administration, viz.

- (i) administrative or management efficiency as in the case of private administration;
- (ii) policy efficiency, that is, taking the right decisions and choosing appropriate programmes; and
- (iii) service efficiency, that is, clientele satisfaction and development.

Similarities

Even though, they differ in certain respects, there are many similarities between public and private administration. In fact, a group of administrative thinkers like Henry Fayol, M.P. Follet, Lyndall Urwick do not make a distinction between public and private administration.

They are of the view that all administration, whether public or private, is one and possess the same basic features. For example, Fayol says, “The meaning which I have given to the word administration and which has been generally adopted, broadens considerably the field of administrative science. It embraces not only the public service, but enterprises of every size and description, of every form and every purpose. All undertakings require planning, organisation, command, coordination and control, and in order to function properly, all must observe the same general principles. We are no longer confronted with several administrative sciences, but with one which can be applied equally well to public and private affairs.”

Similarly, Urwick says, “It is difficult to contemplate seriously a biochemistry of bankers, a physiology of professors, or a psychopathology of politicians. The attempts to subdivide the study of management or administration in accordance with the purpose of particular forms of undertaking seems to many authorities equally misdirected.”

The specific *similarities* between public and private administration are as below.

- (i) The managerial techniques and skills of planning, organising, coordinating, controlling, and so on are same in both.
- (ii) Both have uniformity in accounting, filing, statistics, stocking, and so on.
- (iii) Both are organised on the basis of principle of hierarchy, that is, scalar chain.
- (iv) Both are being influenced by the practices and standards of each other. Thus, Pfiffner and Presthus have described the emergence of public corporation as “a half way house between its commercial prototype and the traditional governmental department.”
- (v) Both have similarities so far as the problems of organisation, personnel and finance are concerned.
- (vi) The similarity between them is demonstrated by the fact that there is a mutual exchange and rotation of personnel between the two. Hence, the Administrative Staff College of India located at Hyderabad organises common training programmes for the personnel of both public and private sectors.

We can now conclude with the observation made by Dwight Waldo, “The generalisations which distinguish public administration from private administration by special care for equality of treatment, legal authorisation of, and responsibility of action, public justification or justifiability of decisions, financial probity and meticulousness, and so forth are of very limited applicability. In fact, public and private administrations are the two species of the same genus, but they have special values and techniques of their own which give to each its distinctive character.”