

**BUREAUCRACY: Meaning,  
Characteristics, Demerits and  
Remedies.**

# Introduction And Meaning

Bureaucracy is derived from the Latin word bureau, used from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century in Western Europe not just to refer to a writing desk, but an office, i.e. a workplace, where officials worked. The original french meaning of the word bureau was the 'la- bure' or baize (Cloth) used to cover desk of the public authorities. The term bureaucracy came into use shortly before the French revolution of 1789 and from there rapidly spread to other countries. The greek suffix- Kratia or Kratos- means 'Power or Rule'. Bureaucracy thus basically means office power or office rule, the rule of the officialdom. *Max Weber* described bureaucracy, as technically superior to all other forms of organization and hence indispensable to large, complex enterprises.

# Definitions

According to Pfiffner, 'bureaucracy is a systematic organization of tasks and individuals into a pattern which can most effectively achieve the ends of collective efforts'.

According to Paul H.Appleby, "bureaucracy is a class of technically skilled persons, who are organized in an hierarchical way and serve the state in an impartial manner".

In brief bureaucracy is a system of administration wherein there is a specialization of functions, objectives qualifications for office, action according to the adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority and delegated powers.

# FEATURES/CHARACTERISTICS OF BUREAUCRACY

- 1.Division of labour
- 2.Hierarchy
3. Written documents
4. Adherence to rules
- 5.Impersonality
- 6.Career system
- 7.Fixed remuneration
- 8.Technical specialization
- 9.Political neutrality
- 10.Rationality and efficiency
- 11.Separation of public and private ends
12. Professional Officials
13. Appointment based on Merit
14. Provision of opportunities for Promotion
- 15.Anonymity
16. Permanent Tenure

# Demerits/Defects Of Bureaucracy

1. Circumlocution
2. Red Tapism
3. Formalism
4. Unresponsiveness
5. Not suitable for all kind of tasks
6. Class consciousness
7. Lust of power
8. Empire building
9. Corruption
10. Conservatism
11. Feeling of superiority
12. Undemocratic
13. Despotism
14. Increase in complexities
15. Self-Perpetuating

# Remedies To Remove The Defects Of Bureaucracy

1. Decentralisation of authority
2. Effective control of Parliament and Ministers over Bureaucracy
3. Simplification of administrative procedure
4. Citizens must be educated
5. Public relations
6. Up to date knowledge of bureaucracy
7. All appointments should be made on merit
8. Setting up of administrative tribunals
9. Publication of rules
10. Raising the morale and motivation of the employees
11. Clarity of goals and tasks
12. Training and development
13. Openness and Transparency in the administrative system
14. Strengthening the merit system
15. Accountability, Authority and Responsibility of employees

# Conclusion

Reforming bureaucracies is one of the challenging and difficult tasks. There has been mixed results reforms introduced in different countries. During the recent decades there has been a growing awareness about the mammoth public bureaucracies providing to be big liabilities for governments and societies. In India, over the years, a number of commissions and committies have recommended systematic administrative reforms. Major steps such as Disinvestment, PPP, Outsourcing, Total quality management, Result framework documents, Right to Information Act, Citizen Charters, Right to Service Act etc. have proved beneficial towards the improvement in the working of bureaucracies. Still much more is required to be done to genuinely improve the system of the governance.