associated with the 1986 Challenger disaster, (Chapter 10) reveals that a culture of masculinity played a crucial role in shaping and influencing the various processes that led to the fateful decision to launch the Challenger space shuttle in the face of evidence that it was unsafe to do so.

The cross-case analysis conducted by Paula Caprioni and Jocelyn Finley (Chapter 10), of two highly publicised events that took place in 1996 - Rodney King being beaten by the Los Angeles Police Department, and the Tailhook Convention where several women naval officers and civilians were sexually assaulted - highlights the various organisational processes that tend to promote racist and sexist violence and reinforce dominant cultures and values. Some of these include taken-for-granted ideologies, language and codes of silence. The authors urge organisations to take note of these processes to prevent the moral exclusion of and harmdoing toward out-group members.

Recommendations to organisations to improve diversity management continue in Chapter 13. Here, E Joy Mighty examines the 'triple jeopardy' of discrimination - i e discrimination based on sex, race and colour - that immigrant women of colour have to face. She advocates several measures such as reducing tokenism, implementing formal mentoring programs, increasing the representation of such women in the workforce, and providing identity-based support groups.

The only article in this section that moves away from diversity issues pertaining to sex and race is Anshuman Prasad's historical analysis based on postcolonial theory of the Western oil industry (Chapter 12). He elucidates how the colonising West socially constructed an image of the colonized non-West as being backward and primitive in contrast to its own self-image of being an active, developed and civilised group of nations. Prasad suggests that in order to manage diversity better, one would have to begin by deconstructing the discourse of diversity itself, which is based on a colonising consciousness characterised by ambivalence, contradiction and schizophrenia, that hegemonically oppresses those at the margins.

In the last chapter of part three of the book (Chapter 14), Diana Wong-MingJi and Ali H Mir analyse data from over 30 years of international management research, and conclude that it is beset with parochialism, provincialism and a limiting discourse, all of which are problematic for promoting the idea of diversity globally. Anshuman Prasad and Michael B Elmes summarise in Section 4.

All in all, the book is a serious and well-timed attempt to appraise the reader of the dilemmas of managing workplace diversity. However, it does only limited justice to the term 'diversity'. Most of the articles in the book, especially those in section three, treat diversity in a very uniform manner - referring to issues pertaining to sex and race. Other than the stray

article on the colonising consciousness (Chapter 12) one finds no reference to diversity in terms of age, abilities, and so on. In fact, there could well have been an article theorising how or whether the dilemmas experienced while managing diversity issues pertaining to sex and race differ from diversity issues pertaining to non-binary variables such as age and disability.

— Ujvala Rajadhyaksha

Ujvala Rajadhyaksha is Assistant Professor, Behavioural Sciences, at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta.

Civil Service Reform and Structural Adjustment

By S K Das, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998; Price Rs 475

Post independence India has seen a progressive deterioration in the quality and content of public services provided by the government. The political-bureaucratic nexus has successfully hijacked public funds and public institutions for fulfilling narrow personal agendas. The civil services, as exemplified by

the IAS, are largely perceived to be venal, corrupt and totally without any standards of ethical behaviour.

Is there something innate to Indians that makes such deterioration inevitable? Are there no methods or systems available that can make public servants and public institutions more accountable? How can one cope and deal with the problems of the politician-bureaucrat nexus? Are there ways of dealing with such self-seeking and self-serving behaviour? How have other countries dealt with these problems? These are legitimate questions that need to be asked.

Civil Service and Structural Adjustment provides an overview that enables one to seek answers to the above questions. It covers both the theory and the practice of "public administration" and "public policy formulation". For the economic reform programme to be successful, an efficient, competent, honest, accountable and transparent civil service is needed. The book addresses issues related to the creation of such a service. A unique feature of this book is that it blends a practitioner's perspective with relevant theory, to provide extremely useful insights into the functioning of the civil services in India.

Hard evidence is provided to prove that the Jeremy Bentham-Max Weber models of the civil service as "benevolent social guardians of the public good" are invalid for developing countries like India. "Public choice theory", which assumes that civil servants and politicians behave as "rational maximisers of

their self interest", appears to capture the real life behaviour of the bureaucrat and the politician in a much better way. The issue in civil service reform, according to the author, is to find ways and means of aligning the "self-interest" of the civil servant with the "public good" of the state. "The principal – agent" framework, in which the bureaucrat is seen as the agent of the politician (the principal), provides the basis for analysing how alignments between individual self interest and public good can be achieved in the real world.

Using this backdrop, the issue of civil service reforms in both developing and developed countries is examined. One of the most interesting parts of the book deals with the "reform" experiences of some of the more developed countries. The countries chosen provide contrasting approaches to the question of reform. Singapore and Japan have centralised civil services that have successfully used the incremental route to reform. New Zealand and the UK have, however, chosen to go for a more decentralised civil service that involves a radical shift in their organisation and functioning. The case histories presented are concise, cover the essentials well and provide details on the context, content and methods of reform.

From this global perspective, the book goes on to look at the Indian scene. It provides a very readable account of the origins of the Indian Civil Service and its functioning in colonial India. The popular myth, that every-

thing that the erstwhile ICS did was in the public interest, is shattered with an array of facts and figures. The analysis makes clear that the ICS was an organisation entrusted with the pursuit of imperial interest and this was sometimes at loggerheads with public interest. The romantic notion of the ICS as the guardian of the poor and oppressed is not substantiated by the available evidence.

The evolution of the IAS as a successor to the ICS and its degradation under political patronage to its current avatar is also well covered. The problems of expansion in the scope and scale of "civil services" activities, the "transfer problem", lack of transparency and accountability, corruption, the perception that social ministries such as health and education are inferior to ministries like finance, industry or commerce, are dealt with in detail. The arguments presented make a logical case for looking at the problem of civil service reform as a "principal – agent" problem.

The author then goes on to make the point that India has to choose between two alternative models of civil service reform. One option is to go in for a centralised model, very similar to the existing model of the civil service in India. The dominant rationale for such Weberian models is that they provide adequate checks and balances to prevent misuse of money and power. These models are input focused and use control over money and power for their efficient functioning.

The author argues that such a

model is already in operation in India and has failed. A decentralised model, with a large degree of autonomy to the operating entities may be the more appropriate choice for liberalised India. Such a structure would be output focused and provide sufficient freedom at the operational level to cope with fast paced changes that are characteristic of industrial societies of today. Using the principal-agent framework, the principal and the agent could agree on the outputs expected from the system. It is for the politician (principal) to worry about how these individual outputs from various agents get translated into desirable outcomes that will benefit the large mass of people. This in the author's opinion would build accountability into the system. If such an organisation can really be designed, and the author makes a compelling case for it, one can actually imagine a government that works.

According to the author, the skills that are required for achieving such a world class civil service is not the real issue. The problem really is whether there is adequate "political will" to implement such radical change. The author believes, like many others, that external stimuli to economic reform, such as pressure from institutions such as the World Bank, is the only way such changes can be brought about. If this is really so, it is a very sad reflection on the state of the country and the civil service that administers it.

Little snippets of information spread throughout in the form of footnotes provide some unusual perspectives and make the book a pleasure to read. It is interesting to know that ICS officers were governed by the "Phal–Phul" rule, which forbade them to accept any gifts other than fruits and flowers. Similarly, the term bureaucracy originated from a piece of cloth used to cover the desks of officials in France. The chapter on Japanese civil services reform is particularly impressive. To know that a top class civil service can function without the corrupting influence of the political system was not only informative but also heartening.

Though the relationship between the politician and the bureaucrat as a principal – agent problem is well covered, the relationship between the politician and the people has not been subjected to the same level of scrutiny. This is to some extent understandable since the theme of the book is civil service reform and not political reform.

The book combines a high degree of scholarship with easy and lucid presentation. It is good enough to be prescribed as a basic textbook for any course on public policy either in India or abroad. Academics, politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats, management experts, policy researchers and even the public at large will benefit from this book.

— S Chandrashekar

S Chandrasheksr is Visiting Faculty, Corporate Strategy and Policy, at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore.
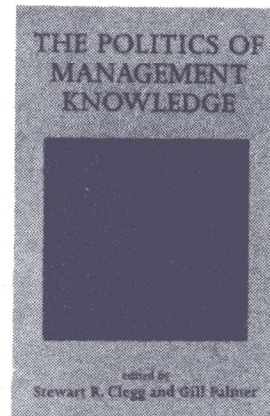
The Politics of Management Knowledge

Edited by Stewart Clegg and Gill Palmer, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1996, pp: 243, Price: £ 45 (cloth), £ 13.95 (paper)

As a book of papers delving into the meaning of management, The *Politics of Management Knowledge,* unashamedly finds its sources of inspiration in 'post modern discourse'. Its prime focus relates to the debate, "What is the science/art of management? Where does it come from and where is it heading?"

The book is built up on the writings of a number of academics whose works have been arranged into three sections. The first three papers consider how managers are "produced". Du Gay reflects on the history of bureaucracy and contrasts this with the concept of enterprise. Hansen looks at the influence of strong leadership and notes the discrepancy between the leadership self images of three well known executives in America and the way their organisations have been developed. Child and Rodrigues consider the significance of social identity on the