
UNIT 8 ROLE OF CABINET SECRETARIAT AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN POLICY-MAKING

Structure

- 8.0 Learning Outcome
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Role of Cabinet Secretariat in Policy-Making
- 8.3 Role of Prime Minister's Office in Policy-Making
 - 8.3.1 Advisory Committee/Councils to Prime Minister
 - 8.3.2 Prime Minister's Office: Intervention
 - 8.3.3 Role of Prime Minister in Policy-Making
- 8.4 The Role of Cabinet and Prime Minister's Office in Policy-Making—UK
- 8.5 Conclusion
- 8.6 Key Concepts
- 8.7 References and Further Reading
- 8.8 Activities

8.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- a Highlight the importance of cabinet secretariat in policy-making;
- a Describe the role of Prime Minister's Office and its advisory bodies in policy-making;
- Discuss the cases showing how the Prime Minister's Office intervenes in the policies of other ministries and other departments; and
- a Examine the role of British Cabinet and Prime Minister's Office in policy-making.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Public administration cannot exist in a policy vacuum. It must have administrative structures that are directed by leaders who wish to do something. This calls for creation of organisations, public agencies, and bureaus which, in turn, need to create more policies that give guidance to organisations and employees on how to put into practice the overall public policy.

In a parliamentary democracy, policy-making is the major function of the political executive. In this process, entire political system is involved in policy-making and implementation. In country like India the policy-making is vested in the political executive, that is, the Cabinet. In this Unit, we will be discussing the role played by the Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Secretariat in formulating public policy.

8.2 ROLE OF CABINET SECRETARIAT IN POLICY-MAKING

The Cabinet Secretariat has a very important place in the central administration. The Cabinet Secretariat is under direct charge of the Prime Minister. The administrative head of the Secretariat is the Cabinet Secretary who is also the ex-officio Chairman of the Civil Services Board. In the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 "Cabinet Secretariat" finds a place in the First Schedule to the Rules. The subjects allotted to this Secretariat are:

- Secretarial assistance to the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees.
- Implementation of the rules of business.

The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 and the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961, facilitating smooth transaction of business in Ministries/Departments of the Government by ensuring adherence to these rules. The Secretariat assists in decision-making in government by ensuring inter-ministerial coordination, ironing out differences amongst ministries/departments and evolving consensus through the instrumentality of the standing/adhoc Committees of the Secretaries. Through this mechanism new policy initiatives are also promoted.

The Cabinet Secretariat ensures that the President, the Vice President, and Ministers are kept informed of the major activities of all ministries/departments by means of monthly summary of their activities. Management of major crisis situations in the country, and coordinating activities of various ministries in such a situation is also one of the functions of the Cabinet Secretariat.

Support to Cabinet Committees

The secretarial assistance provided by Cabinet Secretariat to the Cabinet and Cabinet committees, includes:

- Convening of the meetings of the Cabinet on orders of the Prime Minister.
- Preparation and circulation of the agenda.
- Circulation of papers related to the cases on the agenda.
- Preparation of a record of discussions taken.
- Circulation of the record after obtaining approval of the Prime Minister.
- Keeping a watch on the implementation of the decisions taken by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Secretariat is custodian of the papers of the Cabinet meetings.

Promotion of Inter-Ministerial Coordination

Among the inter-ministerial matters, the coordination is required for removing difficulties, sorting out differences, overcoming delays, and for relating administrative action to policies.

While each ministry is responsible for acting on its own for expeditious implementation of government policies, plans, and programmes. However, where inter-ministerial cooperation is involved, they often seek the assistance of the Cabinet Secretariat. The inter-ministerial problems are dealt within the meetings of the committee of Secretaries (COS). Committees are constituted for discussing specific matters and proposals emanating from various Secretaries to the Government, and meetings are held under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. These committees are intended to break bottlenecks or secure mutually supporting inter-ministerial action.

The discussions of the COS take place on the basis of a paper formulated by the principal Department concerned and the Department with a different point of view, if any, providing a supplementary note. The decisions or recommendations of the COS are unanimous. These proceedings are also circulated to the departments and are followed up.

There are other important functions, which the COS discharges, viz. monitoring, coordination, and promotion of new policy initiatives. The Cabinet Secretariat is seen as a useful mechanism by the departments for promoting inter-ministerial coordination since the Cabinet Secretary is also the head of the civil services. The Secretaries find it necessary to keep the Cabinet Secretary informed of developments from time to time. The Transaction of Business Rules also require them to keep the Cabinet Secretary informed of developments from time to time, especially if there are any departures from these rules.

Cabinet Secretary

The office of the Cabinet Secretary and its functions has evolved over the years. As head of the civil service, he presides over the committees of Secretaries. These committees examine inter-ministry matters and other issues that concern the government as a whole. As a rule, the Cabinet Secretariat does not prepare papers for the Cabinet or its Committees; this function is performed by the concerned ministries. However, the Cabinet Secretary only oversees the agenda papers. It is only on rare occasions that the Cabinet Secretary prepares a paper for the Cabinet. He, however, attends all the meetings of the Cabinet and its Committees. He is also responsible for preparing the agenda, priority of items and allocation of subjects to Cabinet Committees on the direction of the Prime Minister. He also prepares minutes of the Cabinet meetings and Committees to the concerned ministries. Ishwar Dayal and others opine that there is no system of briefing the Prime Minister on the agenda items although the Cabinet Secretary may assist him during the meetings. The process of decision-making in the Cabinet is a long and complex process and major differences among the members are often assigned to a committee, or to the Cabinet Secretary to Inquire and report.

The Cabinet Secretary, therefore, plays a very significant role in the policy apparatus but, essentially, in a servicing sense, except in personnel matters where he, as the head of the civil service, has a much greater influence. However, the significance of his position depends upon the style of functioning of the Prime Minister and the amount of confidence he reposes in the Cabinet Secretariat. All the same, the Cabinet Secretariat has established itself, over the years, as a significant institution in the policy-making process.

Administrative Reforms Commission (1966 – 1969) on Cabinet Secretariat

The Administrative Reforms Commission was appointed by the government to study the machinery of the government of India and its procedures of work. Important recommendations relating to Cabinet Secretariat are as under:

- Every sub-committee of the Cabinet should be supported by a Committee of Secretaries in the Cabinet Secretariat to consider in advance all matters to be taken up in the Cabinet sub-committee.
- The role of the Cabinet Secretary should be limited to that of co-ordination. The Cabinet Secretary should also act as the principal staff adviser to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Cabinet Committee on important policy matters.
- The Department of Personnel should be headed by a secretary who should work under the general guidance of the Cabinet Secretary.

The Cabinet Secretary should have a tenure of at least three years to provide effective leadership to the civil services.

The above recommendation that the Cabinet Secretary should be appointed for a period of three years to enable him to provide effective leadership to the civil service was accepted by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government. However, in practice, the Cabinet Secretary is appointed for a fixed term of two years. Recently on August 10th 2006, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government approved a minimum tenure of three years for the Cabinet Secretary. Looking at the various functions and role of the Cabinet Secretariat it should be noted that it is essentially a staff agency for providing assistance and it does not have a major role in policy formulation. As most of the issues originate from the ministries/departments, and the basic input as also the policy frame is furnished by administrative Ministry, concerned. In crucial and important cases the Cabinet Secretary and the Committee of Secretaries provide useful insights and offer a wider perspective.

It appears that the function of Cabinet Secretariat is of servicing the proceedings of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees, and Committee of Secretaries. We can conclude that the Cabinet Secretariat is neither enforcement agency nor it is an activity instrument for policy formulation.

8.3 ROLE OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN POLICY-MAKING

The Prime Minister of India is the Head of the Union Government, as distinct from the President of India who is the Head of State. Since India has adopted the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy, it is the Prime Minister who oversees the day-to-day functioning of the Government of India. The Prime Minister is assisted in this task by his Council of Ministers, comprising Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State with independent charge, Ministers of State who work with Cabinet Ministers, and Deputy Ministers,

As head of the Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister oversees the work of all the ministries. He presides over the Cabinet meetings. The Union Cabinet functions on the principle of "collective responsibility". The Prime Minister is also the Chairman of the Planning Commission of India. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) provides secretarial assistance to the Prime Minister. It is headed by the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister. The PMO includes the Anti-Corruption Unit and the Public Wing dealing with grievances. The subject matter of files required to be submitted to the Prime Minister depends on whether he is holding direct charge of the Ministry or whether there is a Cabinet Minister or Minister of State (independent charge), in-charge of the Ministry. In the case of the latter, most matters are dealt by the Cabinet Minister / Minister of State, in-charge. Only important policy issues, which the Minister concerned feels should be submitted to the Prime Minister for orders or information, are received in the PMO.

In cases where the Prime Minister is the Minister-in-charge, all matters requiring ministerial approval are not delegated to the Minister of State/ Deputy Minister, if any, are submitted for orders. The Prime Minister has traditionally been the Minister-in-charge of the Departments of Space, Atomic Energy, and Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

Since the Prime Minister is Chairman of the Planning Commission, relevant files are forwarded to the PMO for comments and clearance. The Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) and the National Defence Fund (NDF) are operated directly from the PMO,

Some of the important matters that require the Prime Minister's personal attention include:

- important defence-related issues;

- decorations, both civilian and defence, where Presidential approval is required;
- all important policy issues;
- proposals for appointment of Indian Heads of Missions abroad and requests for grant of agreement for foreign Heads of Missions posted to India;
- all important decisions relating to the Cabinet Secretariat;
- appointments to the State Administrative Tribunals and the Central Administrative Tribunal, Union Public Service Commission, Election Commission, appointment of members of statutory/constitutional committees and Commissions attached to various Ministries;
- all policy matters relating to the administration of the civil services and administrative reforms;
- special packages announced by the Prime Minister for states. (These are monitored in the PMO and periodical reports submitted to Prime Minister); and
- all judicial appointments for which President's approval is required.

It shows that the PMO deals with almost every aspect of the Union Government. Work distribution in the Prime Minister's Office is presented below:

Work Distribution in PMO (As on 22.02.2006)			
AS / JS	Ministries/Departments	States	Assisted by
Additional Secretary	Cabinet Secretariat and ACC, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Law and Justice, Anti-corruption Unit		Director
	National Common Minimum Programme, Thrust Areas of Government, Computerisation of PMO		Deputy Secretary
	National Advisory Council		
Joint Secretary-1	Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Commerce & Industry, PM's Council on Trade & Industry, Industry Associations, Administration	UP, Uttaranchal	Director
	Steel		Director
	Finance, Planning, Infrastructure Committee, PM's Economic Advisory Council		Director
	Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, Railways, Civil Aviation, Mines, Non-Conventional Energy Sources		Deputy Secretary
	Communications & IT, Group on Telecom & IT Convergence		Deputy Secretary
	Power, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Coal, Task Force on Petroleum Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Regions, Trade & Economic Relations Committee, Energy Coordination Committee		Director
	PMO Security		Officer on Special Duty
Joint Secretary-2	Minority Affairs	MP, Chhattisgarh	Director
	Urban Development, Urban Employment & Poverty Alleviation, Chemicals & Fertilizers	Punjab, Haryana	Director
	Food Processing Industries, Information & Broadcasting	Bihar, Himachal Pradesh	Director
	Health & Family Welfare, Water Resources, Environment & Forests, Textiles, Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj, Rural	Andhra Pradesh,	Director

Joint Secretary-3	Tourism, Culture	Jharkhand Tamil Nadu, Kerala	Deputy Secretary Deputy Secretary Director
	National Knowledge Commission External Affairs Defence, Space, Overseas Indian Affairs, Atomic Energy National Security Council		Deputy Secretary Two Directors Director
Joint Secretary-4	Labour & Employment, Development of North Eastern Region, Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Parliamentary Affairs (incl. Parliament Work), Agriculture Coordination Committee, Youth Affairs & Sports, Science & Technology Company Affairs	NE States, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh	Director Director Deputy Secretary
	Statistics & Programme Implementation, Human Resource Development, Youth Affairs & Sports, Science & Technology, PM Funds, Public Wing		Director Director
	Home Affairs	Orissa, West Bengal	Deputy Secretary
	Social Justice & Empowerment	J&K, UTs, Goa	Director
	Small Scale Industries, Agro & Rural Industries, Ocean Development, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector	Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat	Deputy Secretary

Officers of PMO

Designation	Pay Scale Work Distribution in PMO (As on 22.02.2006)
National Security Adviser	MOS Rank
Principal Secretary (1)	Rs. 30,000 (fixed)
Media Adviser (1)	Rs. 26,000 (fixed)
Additional Secretary (1)	Rs. 22,400-525-24,500
Joint Secretary to PM (4)	Rs. 18,400-500-22,400
Private Secretary to PM (2)	Rs. 14,300-400-18,300
Director (10)	Rs. 14,300-400-18,300
PS to MOS (PMO) - 1	Rs. 14,300-400-18,300
Deputy Secretary (3)	Rs. 12,000-375-16,500
Under Secretary (Admn.)-1	Rs. 10,000-325-15,200
Under Secretary (Parl.) - 1	Rs. 10,000-325-15,200
Under Secretary (Pub;) - 1	Rs. 10,000-325-15,200

It looks almost all the aspects of the Union Government are being dealt with/by the PMO. The above distribution is indicative of the same.

8.3.1 Advisory Committee/Councils to Prime Minister

From time to time, the Prime Minister appoints committees, councils and commissions to advise him on specific policy matters. We will be looking into some of the committees, councils, and commissions, which have been constituted by the Prime Minister.

Scientific Advisory Council to Prime Minister

It is 28-member Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister headed by chemical scientist, C.N.R. Rao. The members, who would advise the Prime Minister on all issues relating to science and technology development in the country, have been chosen to cover a wide range of fields and different sectors including government research centres, academic institutions, and industry.

Advisory Group on Foreign Affairs to Prime Minister

Advisory Group on Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister is headed by National Security Advisor. This group advises the Prime Minister on a wide range of international issues and provides for coordination between the National Security Advisor and the External Affairs Ministry,

The Economic Advisory Council

The Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister was constituted with Dr. C. Rangarajan, (former Governor and Chairman, 12th Finance Commission) as the Chairman, with Cabinet rank. It has four other members of the rank of Minister of State.

Apart from advice on policy matters referred to the Council by the Prime Minister from time to time, the EAC prepares a monthly report on economic developments at home and abroad for the Prime Minister. It also monitors economic trends on a regular basis and brings to the Prime Minister's attention important developments at home and abroad, and suggests suitable policy response.

The Trade and Economic Relations Committee

The Trade & Economic Relations Committee is an institutional mechanism for evolving the extent, scope and operational parameters of our economic relations with other countries in a coordinated and synchronised manner.

The Committee is serviced by the Prime Minister's Office, which may obtain assistance as required from any Ministry/Department/Agency of the Government.

Composition

The composition of the Trade and Economic Relations Committee is as follows:

- a) Prime Minister (PM) — Chairman
- b) Finance Minister; /
- c) Commerce & Industry Minister
- d) External Affairs Minister
- e) Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission
- f) Chairman, Economic Advisory Council

- g) Chairman, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council
- h) National Security Adviser
- i) Principal Secretary to PM — Convenor

The Secretaries of the Departments of Economic Affairs, Revenue, Commerce, Industrial Policy & Promotion as well as the Secretary, Planning Commission and Foreign Secretary are permanent invitees to the meetings of the Committee,

The Energy Coordination Committee

The Energy Coordination Committee was constituted to enable a systematic approach to policy formulation, promote inter-departmental coordination, and function as a key mechanism for providing institutional support to decision-making in the area of energy planning and security.

The Prime Minister is Chairman of the Energy Coordination Committee, and the members are:

- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- e Minister of Power
- Minister of Coal
- MOS for Non-conventional energy sources
- Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission
- Member (Energy) Planning Commission
- Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to PM
- Chairman, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council
- National Security Advisor
- Principal Secretary to PM — Convenor

Member Secretary, Planning Commission, Cabinet Secretary and the Secretaries of Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal, Ministry of Non Conventional Energy Sources, Ministry of Atomic Energy, Economic Advisory Council to PM, are permanent invitees to the meetings of the committee.

Atomic Energy Commission

The Indian Atomic Energy Commission was first set up in August 1948 in the, then, Department of Scientific Research. The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) was set up on August 3, 1954 under the direct charge of the Prime Minister through a Presidential Order. Subsequently, in accordance with a Government Resolution dated March 1, 1958, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was established in the Department of Atomic Energy. The Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Atomic Energy is ex-officio Chairman of the Commission. The other Members of the AEC are appointed for each calendar year on the recommendation of the Chairman, AEC and after approval by the Prime Minister.

Task Force on Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Regions

Government has constituted a Task Force on Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Regions, in order to enable quick and coordinated decision-making, and to provide an appropriate policy framework for the development of investment regions of requisite scale and level of facilities, with the involvement of world-class developers and investors, in the fields of petroleum, chemicals and petrochemicals.

Composition

The Principal Secretary to Prime Minister is the Chairman of the Task Force, and the following are members:

- Member Secretary, Planning Commission
- Secretary, Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals
- Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion
- Secretary, Department of Commerce
- Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs
- Secretary, Department of Revenue
- Chief Secretaries of the States concerned
- Representative of the NRI Task Force.

Chairman, Railway Board and Secretaries of the Department of Shipping, Department of Road Transport and Highways, Department of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Environment and Forests, and Ministry of Labour are special invitees. The Task Force is serviced by the Prime Minister's Office.

Investment Commission

The Prime Minister had constituted an Investment Commission under the chairmanship of Shri Ratan Tata to recommend policies that the Government can take up to step up the rate of investment in India.

National Knowledge Commission

The Prime Minister of India constituted the National Knowledge Commission, with the mandate of devising and guiding reforms that will transform India into a strong and vibrant knowledge economy in coming years. Knowledge is an indispensable asset that has the potential to accelerate social and economic progress. A successful knowledge economy is one that uses knowledge as an effective tool for development.

The methodology of the Commission is to form Working Groups within each of its focus areas, and make concrete proposals for reform directly to the Prime Minister through a series of White Papers. This task involves working in close collaboration with the Union and State governments, professionals, academics, scientists, regulatory bodies, national think tanks, industry representatives, civil society organisations etc. The tenure of the Commission is three years. The first chairman of the commission is Mr. Sam Pitroda. Besides the Chairman, it has eight members.

National Common Minimum Programme

The Prime Minister with the assistance of PMO, reviews the status of implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). The duty of the Prime Minister is to monitor the extent to which the specific policy initiatives listed in the NCMP have been implemented. The PMO officials do a regular monitoring of implementation and follow-up work with ministries and state governments and also keep a close vigil on NCMP implementation, and also prepare ministry-wise status reports on NCMP implementation.

8.3.2 Prime Minister's Office: Intervention

Here we will be discussing few cases, showing how the Prime Minister's Office intervenes in the policies of other ministries or departments, in the national interest.

Case One

Coal Mining: PMO Backs Public Units (As reported in the *Indian Express*, dated September 26, 2005)

The Coal battles being fought on industry turf due to the supply-demand mismatch have acquired a new twist with the PMO coming to rescue to public sector to give them parity with the private sector as far as mining rights in explored coal blocks are concerned.

The PMO has quashed a proposal by the Coal Ministry, which suggested that PSUs should be kept out of the allocation of explored blocks of 'coal for captive mining. The Ministry had been of the view that allocation of explored captive blocks should not be made to public sector company applicants like GEB, MSEB, Orissa Power Generating Company, MP Mineral Development Corporation. This was pursued on the basis that they could be considered and allocated coal blocks outside the captive list under the government company route.

The move was dictated by the logic that captive blocks that have been explored in detail are few and the eligible applicants in the private sector are many, so it would be prudent to allot the latter to private players. According to the deliberations in PMO, the proposal to preclude PSUs from allocation of captive blocks is fraught with serious implications. For instance, since power generation is mostly in the hands of PSUs, depriving them of rights on captive blocks, would have implications on energy generation.

However, the PMO has shown sensitivity towards the need to encourage players to take up coal mining. In this context, the PMO has indicated to the Coal Ministry that unexplored coal blocks might be considered for allocation for captive mining to the PSUs that are interested in exploring them. The other measure underlined by the PMO to encourage coal mining is to allocate unexplored blocks to private companies as it was done earlier to expedite exploration through outsourcing.

Case Two

PMO for Joint Effort on Tribal Bill (As Reported in *Indian Express*, dated October 29, 2005)

The Government is keen on tabling the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 in Parliament in the winter session. The final draft of this Bill would be prepared by the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry. This was conveyed to 20-odd participants who were invited to a meeting convened by the Prime Minister's Office to thrash out differences on this issue.

After the conservationists joined the Ministry of Environment And Forests (MoEF) officials have raised their strong objections to the original draft tribal bill at the workshop organised by the Prime Minister's Office. The PMO asked the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to hold consultations with the MoEF over the next 10 days.

During the six-hour discussion, the MoEF was allowed to make a presentation and circulate its draft bill among participants. With the PMO keen to have a Final draft ready in roughly two week's time, officials of the Tribal Affairs Ministry and the MoEF were tight-lipped after the meet. According to sources, the course of action to be followed over the next two weeks:

- Participants will submit written inputs to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs within a week. The Tribal Affairs Secretary was directed to hold one-to-one meetings with few participants, who pointed out technical lacunae in the draft.
- The Tribal Affairs officials were asked to examine the inputs, and also alternative draft bill in consultation with the MoEF officials before modifying the original draft bill.
- This modified draft will be sent to participants in the workshop for comments.
- Finally, the Principal Secretary to PM will sit with the top officials from the ministries and finalise a draft for the Cabinet's approval.

Case Three

Spectrum: PMO annoyed at delay (*As Reported in Hindustan Times, dated March 06, 2006*)

The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh seems to have taken a serious view of the delay to resolve allocation of Spectrum for telecom operators in India. Based on the outline sent by the PMO on strategies and priorities for the year 2006 on Spectrum, the DoT is likely to submit this week a list of strategies and priorities seeking final approval of the Prime Minister on allocation of Spectrum.

It is not clear whether the proposal to be submitted by the DoT on Spectrum would be discussed by a Group of Ministers on Spectrum to resolve this issue or finalised by the PMO in consultation, with DoT and the Defence Ministry.

PMO - Overstepping

In the earlier paragraphs, we have seen the Prime Minister's Office intervening to bring out some uniformity or to sort out the differences in policy-making. There are also cases of unnecessary interference by PMO. In this respect we may cite a recent observation by the Delhi High Court. The Delhi High Court, on November 30, 2005, questioned the authority of PMO to frame guidelines on construction/alteration to official bungalows allotted to politicians and bureaucrats in Lutyen's Zone of capital and further observed, "Any power to make such alterations or constructions should emanate from a statute or legislation in force. We wonder how the PMO can frame any guideline in this regard". The directive followed a submission by the Additional Solicitor General to the Government that the matter pertaining to issuance of fresh guidelines for demolition and regularisation of unauthorised constructions in the Lutyen's zone, was under the consideration of the PMO.

8.3.3 Role of Prime Minister in Policy-Making

In a parliamentary democracy the Prime Minister is, at least theoretically, the first among the equals. But over a period of time, this aspect has changed and changed substantially even in Britain. The prime ministership of Margaret Thatcher brought out the Prime ministerial type of government in Britain more vividly. The picture in India is in no way different. This trend about the Prime Minister type of government in India came into focus when Mrs. Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister. When Late Rajiv Gandhi took over as the Prime Minister he brought a new hope and created lot of expectations of a more open and democratic government, but after sometime he also reverted to the prime ministerial model of functioning. The trend is more pronounced in case of coalition governments because the Prime Minister who is heading the coalition government has to bring a balance between various coalition partners. The world over, where the head of the government is powerful, naturally, everything revolves around him and every policy or decision he will take after discussing with his advisors. The Westminster type of democracy is also becoming more and more prime ministerial type of government not only in England and India but also in many other

democracies. The reasons attributed according to P.N. Dhar in his article "This Prime Minister's Office— Seeing Through the Mystic" to the increasing complexity of governance in India today, which makes the Prime Minister deal with the contenders for power and at the same time cope up with the socio-economic and political complexities at home and abroad. These matters cannot be dealt by him with the help of his Cabinet only and without a score of specialised advisors on the pattern of the US President. That is the reason why Prime Minister's Office enjoys a special position in the realm of policy-making. Most of the crucial policy decisions are taken in inter-departmental committees, in Cabinet committees or on the advice of the committees constituted by the Prime Minister or in conversation between the Prime Minister and the Minister concerned. This itself speaks about the importance of the Prime Minister or himself becoming the crucial element in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the policy initiatives may come from many sources, from the Prime Minister himself, from the ruling party, from coalition partners, from civil servants, from the media, from organised pressure groups, from the general public or from pressure from abroad and home. However, the final shape of any policy coming from any quarter would depend upon the Prime Minister himself.

8.4 THE ROLE OF CABINET AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN POLICY MAKING – UK

According to Peter Self, in UK the Cabinet in general and the Prime Minister specifically have staff assistance from the Cabinet Secretariat. As the work of policy co-ordination has grown, the PM's Secretariat has been strengthened and the arrangement whereby the same official was permanent secretary at the Treasury and secretary to the Cabinet was ended in 1962. Nonetheless, size of the Cabinet Secretariat, even adding to it the Prime Minister's personal staff, is extremely small when compared to that of the U.S. President or the French Prime Minister.

The functions of the Cabinet Secretariat also remain limited. Its main task is the formidable one of servicing the proceedings of the Cabinet itself and of the complex array of Cabinet committees. Poised at the top of the heap, the Cabinet Secretariat has the essential function of smoothening this formidable work of co-ordination, and of seeing that 'Cabinet' decisions (which include the decisions of all its dependent bodies) are duly understood and noted. However, the PM's Secretariat is not a control or enforcement agency—that duty rests with the departments—nor it is a very active instrument for policy formation. Policies and plans emerge from the departments within the framework of the general strategy laid down by the Cabinet. On the whole, this strategy has a broad, political character and does not usually include detailed analysis by the Secretariat of possible policies and plans. The Secretariat occupies a middle ground between the two main sources of policy-making in the British government, which are party policy and departmental policy. Thus, the Secretariat performs only with some of the minimum staff functions. It is, indeed, as much an instrument for 'doing' as for 'thinking'.

In terms of staff-and-line theory, the position of the British Prime Minister has caused frequent confusion. The power of the Prime Minister rests upon his right to hire and fire other ministers, his personal and political appeal as party leader, and his role as the chief representative of the nation in foreign relations. All these sources of power are subject to strong limitations. However, the enhanced significance of all three roles in modern times has exploded the constitutional myth that the Prime Minister is just *primus inter pares*, and has led some commentators to talk of the replacement of Cabinet by 'Prime Ministerial' government, and of the effective elevation of the Prime Minister to a position almost comparable with an elective President.

The aforementioned trends about the evolving role of the British Prime Minister are cited to emphasise the point that similar changes are taking place in the case of his Indian counterpart too.

8.5 CONCLUSION

In a parliamentary democracy, the Cabinet initiates and decides public policy concerning almost every sphere of government activity. Without its approval no policy proposal can become effective. In this Unit, we have attempted to discuss the role of Cabinet Secretariat and Prime Minister's Office in policy-making. After going through the role and functions of Cabinet Secretariat it was found that whether in India or Britain its main task is a formidable one, of servicing the proceedings of the Cabinet itself and of the complex array of Cabinet committees. The Cabinet Secretariat is neither an enforcement agency nor is it a very active instrument for policy formulation. Policies and plans emerge from the departments within the framework of the general strategy laid down by the Parliament. As rightly observed by Peter Self that the Cabinet Secretariat occupies the middle ground between the two main sources of policy-making in government, which are party policy and departmental policy. Thus, the Cabinet Secretariat performs only some of the minimum staff functions. The Prime Minister is the head of the Council of Ministers, leader of Parliament, the supreme leader of the party, often the leader of masses, serves as a channel of communication between the President and the Council of Ministers, also a spokesperson of the country on all matters of foreign policy and is also expected to keep a close watch and control on the economic situation of the country. Analysing the powers of the Prime Minister, we note that he enjoys tremendous powers and influence, both in the executive and legislative spheres. He is the key person in government. The entire structure of Cabinet is built around him. According to Gladstone he is the *keystone of the Cabinet 'arch'*, and Ivor Jennings describes him as the *'sun around which the planets revolve'*. He is also known as first among the equals; according to Peter G. Richard, *'Prime Minister is Primus Inter Pares'*. Ramsay Muir observes that the *'Cabinet is the steering wheel of the state and Prime Minister is the steersman'*. In conclusion, whether it is in Britain or India the Prime Minister occupies a key position in policy formulation. No doubt the policy initiatives have to come from the concerned ministries or departments; the responsibility of implementation also lies with them. As the leader of party and the legislature, the Prime Minister may like to use his office as a forum for discussion on important policy issues. On matters of critical importance, the Prime Minister may use his office to review and monitor the policies and activities of some ministries or to seek information on development on certain fronts. He may also create special agencies for advice, and monitoring of specific policy areas. We may conclude that in the Indian context the Prime Minister plays a very important role in policy formulation.

8.6 KEY CONCEPTS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| The National Knowledge Commission | : | It focuses on certain key areas that can help India to achieve this goal. These areas include education, science and technology, agriculture, industry, and e-governance. Broadly speaking, India needs to become a globally recognised player in the creation, application and dissemination of knowledge. |
| Public Law | : | A legislative act that deals with the citizenry as a whole; a statute that applies to all. This is in contrast to a private law, which affects only one person or group. |

8.7 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Anderson, James E., 1975, Public **Policy** Making, Praeger, New York.

Denhardt, Robert B. and Joseph, W. Grubbs, Public Administration : **An** Action Orientation (4th ed), Thomson, Canada.

Dror, Yehezkel, 1968, Public Policy **Making** Re-examined, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Dror Yehezkel, 1971, Ventures in Policy Sciences : Concepts and Applications, American Elsevier, New York.

Mazoomdaar, Jay, "PMO for Joint Effort on Tribal Bill", *Indian Express*, October 29, 2005.

Mishra, Prerna K., "Coal Mining: PMO Backs Public Units", *Indian Express*, September 26, 2005.

"PMO can't frame rules for Lutyen's bungalows: H C", *Hindustan Times*, December 1, 2005.

Sahni, Pardeep, 1987, Public Policy: Coceptual Dimensions, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad.

Self, Peter, 1977, Administrative Theories and Politics : An *Inquiry* into **the** Strucutre and Processes of **Modern** Government, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

Shafritz, Jay M. and E.W.Russell, 2003, Introducing Public *Administration* Addison Wesley, Longman, New York.

Website: <http://goidirectory.nic.in/>

8.8 ACTIVITIES

- 1) Describe the role of the Cabinet Secretariat and the PMO in the policy process.
- 2) It is said that the Indian parliamentary system is moving towards a 'Prime Ministerial' model. Discuss the statement.
- 3) Discuss the role of the Indian Prime Minister in the policy process.
- 4) Outline the organisational structure of the Cabinet Secretariat and the PMO's office in India.