

State Ministries

Need for More Rational Composition

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The size of State Ministries appears to bear no relation to the size of the State or its population as one would expect. It is more related to the extent of prevalence of factionalism in the ruling party. Also, where the Chief Ministers do not feel secure in office, there is a tendency for the number of Ministers to be large.

Division of work among the different Ministers also reveals no uniform pattern in the different States. One feature which is, however, common to almost all the States is the concentration of portfolios in the hands of the Chief Minister.

This is undesirable, both politically and administratively. Politically it makes the Chief Minister too powerful and something of a despot. Administratively it results in lack of proper supervision, it also affects the quality and extent of coordination among the different Ministries which is a primary responsibility of the Chief Minister.

THE Constitution of India provides for a Council of Ministers in each State to aid and advise the Governor in the performance of his official functions.

In the States, as in the Central Government, the Council of Ministers consists of Ministers of various ranks :

- (i) Members of the Cabinet
- (ii) Ministers of State
- (iii) Deputy Ministers
- (iv) Parliamentary Secretaries

There is no uniform pattern of composition of the Council of Ministers in the different States. In States like Andhra and Madras the Council of Ministers consists of Cabinet Ministers only, whereas in U P and West Bengal all the four categories of Ministers are present in the Council. But, as a rule, the Council of Ministers consists of Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers (see Table 1).

Size of Ministry

— Unrelated to Area or Population

The size of the Council of Ministers does not seem to bear any relationship to the population and area of the States. This is contrary to what one would expect considering that a bigger population and greater area should generally mean more administrative work. There are exceptions to this general rule, as in the case a State which is divided into clear-cut regional, linguistic or other zones where it may become necessary to afford representation in the Council of Ministers to the different regions or linguistic groups for reasons of political expediency.

Table 1 shows that in some of the States e.g. West Bengal and Bihar, there are more Ministers compared to States like Andhra and Madras. It seems fair to infer that in States where there are factions within the ruling party or where the Chief Minister does not feel secure in office, there is a tendency for the number of Ministers to be large.

If we leave aside the two States of Bihar and West Bengal, the average number of Ministers is about 20 which, by reasonable standards, seems to be the optimum size. On average, the Ministry should consist of 20 Members made up as follows :

Members of Cabinet	10
Ministers of State	5
Deputy Ministers	5

Parliamentary Secretaries :
Unnecessary

The institution of Parliamentary Secretaries can well be dispensed

with. Except in Bihar and West Bengal. Parliamentary Secretaries do not seem to be doing much useful work. Leaving these two States aside, Parliamentary Secretaries exist in four States; two of these have two each and the remaining two one each. The present functions of Parliamentary Secretaries could conveniently be taken over by Deputy Ministers.

About the division of work among the Ministers of various ranks also there is no uniformity. In Madhya Pradesh none of the 11 Deputy Ministers holds independent charge of a portfolio, whereas in Bihar four are in independent charge of portfolios. In Jammu and Kashmir three of the five Ministers of State hold independent portfolios. Even when a Deputy Minister holds independent charge of a portfolio, along with that he holds some other portfolio under some Cabinet Minister, Ministers of State, however, hold no other portfolio if they are

Table I

STATE	NUMBER OF CABINET MEMBERS	NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF STATE	NUMBER OF DEPUTY MINISTERS	NUMBER OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES	TOTAL
Andhra	12				12
Bihar	9		14	10	33
Assam	7		3	2	12
Gujarat	5		8	1	14
J & K	11	5			16
Kerala	11				11
M P	11		11		22
Madras	8				8
Maharashtra	14		12		26
Mysore	14		6		20
Orissa	11				11
Punjab	9		8	1	18
Rajasthan	11		3		14
U P	7	5	8	2	22
West Bengal	12	4	13	5	34

Table 2

STATE	NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF STATE/DEPUTY MINISTERS	NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF STATE/DEPUTY MINISTERS HOLDING INDEPENDENT CHARGE OF PORTFOLIOS
Andhra		
Assam	D M 3	
Bihar	D M 14	4
Gujarat	D M 8	1
J & K	M O S 5	3
Kerala		
M P	D M 11	
Madras		
Maharashtra	D M 12	1
Mysore	D M 6	
Orissa		
Punjab	D M 8	2
Rajasthan	D M 3	1
U P	M O S 5	M O S 5
	D M 8	D M 3
West Bengal	M O S 4	M O S 4
	D M 13	D M 1

independently in charge of some portfolio.

A rational distribution of portfolios would allocate the important ministries to Cabinet Ministers. Ministers of State would be in charge of less important departments, but they would hold independent charge. As a rule, a Deputy Minister would not be given independent charge of a portfolio. Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers should be promising young members of the ruling party who may eventually have to take up the responsibility of running the Government in the years to come. These appointments should be regarded as training for the younger politicians rather than as reward of past political services.

Excessive Concentration of Portfolios

As regards the distribution of portfolios among the various members of the Cabinet, in some States there is a concentration of portfolios in the hands of the Chief Ministers. In Assam the Chief Minister is responsible for General Administration, Home, P W D, Education, Transport, Information and Publicity, besides others, and also looks after residuary matters, (subjects not expressly mentioned). All told, he holds 15 portfolios. In Andhra the Chief Minister holds 12 portfolios and in Jammu and Kashmir 11. In West Bengal though the number of portfolios held by the Chief Minister is not large, he holds important portfolios like Home, Finance and Development along

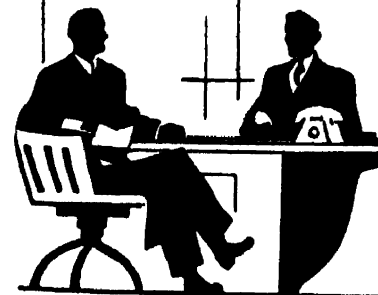
with a few others. General Administration seems to be a favourite of Chief Ministers. In 11 States it is held by Chief Ministers.

Such concentration of portfolios in the hands of the Chief Minister

is undesirable both politically and administratively. Politically, it makes the Chief Minister too powerful and something of a despot. Administratively, it results in lack of proper supervision. It also undermines the work of coordination which is a primary responsibility of the Chief Minister. In this regard it might be suggested that :

- (i) Important portfolios like Home, Finance, Revenue and P W D should not be concentrated in the hands of the Chief Minister or any other Minister.
- (ii) The Chief Minister should keep himself free from routine departmental administration as far as possible so as to be able to devote himself to planning and coordinating the work of the various Ministries,

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