

PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE OF DIBRUGARH TOWARDS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: - The district administration in India is a key unit of field administration, serving as the primary point of contact between citizens and the government. It encompasses all government agencies, officials, public servants, and institutions like panchayats and municipalities within the district. The district administration plays a crucial role in managing public affairs, implementing government policies, and promoting welfare and development. Effective functioning requires close interaction between district officers and the community to address local needs and challenges. Citizens' active participation and the responsiveness of district officials are essential for the successful execution of public policies. This paper analyzes the perception and attitude of the people of Dibrugarh district towards their district administration.

Key Words:- Dibrugarh, District Administration, Attitude, People, Perception.

Introduction:-This paper seeks to explore the extent to which the people of Dibrugarh district are engaged with or alienated from their district administration. For district administration to function effectively, it must secure the cooperation and support of the public. Administrative agencies should work in a manner that satisfies the needs and expectations of the people, thereby fostering strong public opinion in their favour. Public opinion plays a crucial role in generating broad-based support for the administration, which in turn provides it with legitimacy. When this legitimacy is absent, alienation can manifest through public apathy and the withdrawal of support. People are more likely to back the administration when they believe its actions are fair and just. This paper aims to assess the level of support or alienation among the residents of Dibrugarh district towards their district administration.

Citizens' Perception of Administration: -The key components of citizens' perception of administration, which are crucial for ensuring broad public participation in governance, include adequate citizen knowledge of administrative norms and practices, genuine public support for government goals, policies, and programs, as well as the perception that the administrative system is sensitive and responsive to public needs. Additionally, trust in the integrity and honesty of administrative officials, rather

than viewing the system as corrupt or prone to corruption, plays a significant role. These elements are vital for fostering a balanced and positive relationship between citizens and the administration.

Perception, in this context, refers to the public's view of administrative procedures and the behavior of officials. It reflects the development of a particular image of the overall administrative process. Public opinion, in turn, is shaped by this perception of how administration functions. In the present chapter, an in-depth exploration of citizens' perceptions through extensive questioning is not feasible. However, a few key questions have been posed to gauge whether the public's perception tends to support or alienate them from the administration.

Health Service: -To understand the perception of the respondent relating to health services the following question was administered to ascertain how the people perceive of the behaviour of the staff of the public health services towards them.

Perception	Percentage of Respondents
Very good	11(8)
Good	26(20)
Bad	79(61)
Don't know	14(11)
n	130(100)

Table-1: What is your perception about the behaviour of the staff of the public health services?

The above Table-1 reveals that only 8 % respondents said that the behaviour of the staff of the public health services is very good, while 20 % said that it was good, but majority of the respondent 61 % perceived that the behaviour of the staff is bad. 11 % of the respondents expressed their inability to response the question by saying "don't know". It is observed that the respondents of Dibrugarh district are not satisfied with the behaviour of the staff of the public health services. Most of the respondents stated that the staff lack courtesy and they are not helpful. Since the respondents expressed their dissatisfactions, they were further asked to assess the level of performance of public health services.

Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	29(22)
No	85(65)
Don't know	16(13)
n	130(100)

Table-2: How far the services of the public health agencies are satisfactory?

The above table-2 clearly reveals that the respondents expressed their dissatisfactions with the services of the public health agencies. 22 % of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the services of the public health agencies while majority of the respondents 65 % expressed their dissatisfaction. 13 % of the respondents expressed their inability to response the question.

Citizens' daily interactions with public health staff bring them into direct contact with health centers, where they often face challenges. Public perception of the administration tends to be one of inefficiency, delay, and corruption. The next question posed to respondents explores the efforts made by health centers to raise awareness about available services and family planning.

Response	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	23(18)
No	89(68)
Don't know	18(14)
n	130(100)
If yes, specify the measures	
Measures	
Holding public meeting	9(39)
Informal discussion with people	8(35)
Distributing pamphlets, Newsletters, etc.	6(26)
n	23(100)

Table-3: Did the public health centers take up any measure to make the people

aware about health services and family planning?

Table-3 shows that only 18% of respondents reported efforts by public health centers to raise awareness about health services and family planning, while 68% disagreed. Those who agreed mentioned occasional discussions and the distribution of pamphlets by family planning staff. This indicates a lack of administrative support for health services. Most interactions with health center staff involved routine requests, but respondents reported difficulties, including having to pay for medicines, consultations, and injections. Many prefer private

practitioners or rely on traditional healers due to inadequate public health services, leading to a growing sense of alienation. To ascertain the perception of the people with regard to payment for medical services, the following question was asked to the people.

Responses	Medicines	Consultation	Family Planning materials
Yes	86(66)	38(29)	63(48)
No	30(23)	71(55)	26(20)
Don't know	14(11)	21(16)	41(32)
n	130(100)	130(100)	130(100)

Table-4: Do you have to pay for availing medical services?

The data in Table-4 shows that 66% of respondents paid for medicines, 29% for consultations at public health centers, and 48% for family planning materials. In contrast, 23% didn't pay for medicines, 55% for consultations, and 20% for family planning materials. Additionally, 32% were unsure about family planning costs, as they neither visited the centers nor used their services. This indicates a lack of awareness about family planning, with many feelings unnecessarily harassed when accessing services. The study highlights that this sense of alienation reflects reality, leading to a negative public perception of the administration.

Water Supply:

Safe drinking water is a major challenge for both urban and rural areas. At the state level, the Department of Rural Development coordinates efforts to provide drinking water, while the Public Health Department oversees its supply. At the district level, the District Public Health Engineering Office (PHE) is responsible for ensuring water distribution. In rural areas, water is mostly sourced from traditional wells, with no significant schemes beyond the installation of tube wells. Currently, piped water supply covers only one-third of the district. To assess the effectiveness of water supply services in both rural and urban areas, the following questions were posed to gauge public perception.

Perception	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	23(18)
No	107(82)
Don't know	-----
n	130(100)

Do you think that the quantity of water supply fulfills your requirements? The above table reveals that only 18% respondents said that the quantity of water supply

fulfills their requirements while majority of them 82% stated that water supply does not fulfill their requirements for both domestic and non-domestic use. To determine the perception of the complexity of procedure for getting water connection, the respondents were asked as to whether they consider that the procedure for getting water connection was complicated/satisfactory/simple, the following question was asked to the respondents.

Perception	Percentage of Respondents
Complicated	74(57)
Satisfactory	22(17)
Simple	18(14)
Don't know	16(12)
n	130(100)

Table-6: Do you consider that the procedure for getting water connection is complicated/satisfactory/simple?

The above table states that majority of the respondents 57% said that the procedure for getting water connection is complicated, whereas 17% said that it is satisfactory and 14% said that it is simple. 12% of them expressed their ignorance to response the question saying 'Don't know'.

The next question administered to the respondents to know the quality of water. To ascertain the quality of water-supply the following question was asked to the respondents.

Perception	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	11(8)
No	104(80)
Don't know	15(12)
n	130(100)

Table-7: Do you think that water supply to your area is free from pollution?

From the Table-7 it is seen that only 8% respondents stated that the water supplied by the government agencies is free from pollution. But 80% of the respondents complained that the water supply to their areas contains full of iron. Sometimes they got brown colour water from the tube wells. For this, people have to make their own arrangements for water. As a result of the consumption of contaminated water the people suffered from numerous diseases. The people are not at all happy with the water supply of the government. Thus, an alienated perception has been developed among the people with regard to water supply.

Attitude: Attitude refers to a way of looking at life, thinking and feeling. In the present study the primary

concern is to see how the people feel and think regarding administration. People's attitude determines their behaviour. If the attitudes indicate support, it would mean that people are likely to have greater contact with the administration and try to avail of the services. On the other hand, the tendency would be to avoid or keep away from administration if they are alienated. The primary purpose of administration working at all levels is to provide the basic essential services to the people. The people receive most of the essential services from the administrative agencies. Therefore, the average citizen looks upon to administrative agencies to provide all the basic amenities and services to them. If the citizens are satisfied with the services, they continue their support and cooperation towards the administration. Otherwise, they are likely to develop an attitude of indifferent to the administration. To examine the attitude of the people towards administration the following questions are asked to the respondents.

Services	Attitudes	Percentage of Respondents
Water connection	Govt. Sources	53(41)
	Own arrangements	77(59)
n		130(100)
Treatment of Patients	Govt. Hospitals	48(37)
	Private Nursing Homes	82(63)
n		130(100)

Table-8: From what sources do you prefer to get water connection and treatment of the patients?

The analysis of the above data clearly shows a growing disconnect between the public and the administration. 41% of respondents prefer to arrange their own water supply rather than rely on government sources. While 37% opt for treatment at government hospitals, 63% favor private nursing homes. Respondents also accuse senior doctors at Assam Medical College (AMC) of prioritizing private clinics over the AMC, with frequent reports of patients being pressured into using specific nursing homes. To examine the attitude of the people about their allegations against the officials of the government, the following question was asked to ascertain what they generally do if they have any complaint against a government officers.

Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Complaint to higher official	47(36)
Do nothing	83(64)
n	130(100)

Table-9: What do you do if you have any complaint against the government officials?

36% of the respondents said that they generally lodged complaints to the higher officials while majority of them said that they would do nothing and 64% expressed their ignorance. When enquired from those who said that they would do nothing as to why they could do nothing. The reason mentioned was that the officials would not listen to them. They complained that if complains are received no follow up action is taken against their grievances. Inaccessibility of the officials, lack of knowledge, ignorance of the people are some of the reasons. Those who replied in positive to the earlier question are further asked whether they would make complaint in writing or verbally.

Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Writing	11(08)*
Verbal	23(18)
Both Oral and Writing	13(10)

Table-10: Do you lodge complaint in writing or verbally?

Percentage is calculated from the total number of Respondents. 08% of the respondents said that they generally make complaints in writing whereas 18% of the respondents said verbally and 10% said they make the complaint orally as well as in writing. The table indicates a lack of confidence in administration. The reason for not lodging complaint before a higher officer is that the people do not expect that the higher officer would take action against their subordinates. To examine this, the following question was asked to those who stated that they generally made complaint to higher officials.

Responses	Percentage of Respondents
It is their duty	09(07) *
They will help the people to give them justice	21(16)
They will take action if the complaint is genuine	17(13)

Table-11: Why do you think that the officials will take action on their complaints?

* Percentage is calculated from the total number of Respondents.

To ascertain some general attitude of the respondents a few statements were given to the respondents and they were asked to indicate whether they “agree” or “disagree” with them.

Sl.No.	Attitude	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1.	Officials are accessible to the people	33(25)	69(68)	08(07)
2.	Officials are helpful to the people.	34(26)	85(66)	11(08)
3.	People are harassed by the officials.	91(70)	32(25)	07(05)
4.	Administrators help only the rich and influential.	79(61)	39(30)	12(09)
5.	Officials are corrupt.	86(66)	37(28)	07(06)
6.	Officials are helpful	24(18)	93(72)	13(10)
7.	Administration cares all the people equally	31(24)	85(65)	14(11)

Table-13: Do you agree/disagree with the statements above?

The above table conclusively proves that there is alienation rather than support among the people towards administration. The statements 1, 2, 6, and 7 are positive, while 3, 4, and 5 are negative. A mean was calculated to analyze the respondents' agreement and disagreement. It was found that 68% disagreed with statement 1, 66% with statement 2, 72% with statement 6, and 65% with statement 7, indicating alienation from the positive statements. Meanwhile, 70% agreed with statements 3, 4, and 5, further reflecting alienation. This analysis shows that people's perceptions and attitudes have led to their alienation from the administration, acknowledging widespread inefficiency and unresponsiveness to public needs. The study analyzes the perception of Dibrugarh district's people toward the administration, confirming their alienation. The dissatisfaction stems from the government's failure to address the needs of the "common man," with widespread discontent at the point where administration interacts directly with the public. People face unnecessary harassment in obtaining water connections and public health services, preferring to arrange their own solutions due to poor interactions with officials. This indicates a critical view of the administration, highlighting inefficiency and unresponsiveness.

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