



Transformation of Bureaucratic Accountability in India: Media, Public Opinion and Democratic Governance

Kumara S ¹

¹ Assistant Professor of Political Science, School of Geopolitics and Public Policy, REVA University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Corresponding author: kumarsheni200@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper will discuss how the accountability aspect of bureaucracy in India is changing with the growing presence of the media, the populace, and the political forces in a democratic set up. The Indian bureaucracy, especially the Indian Administrative Service, which was traditionally organized in accordance with Weberian ideals of neutrality, hierarchy and procedural autonomy, had little public accountability. Nonetheless, the rise of investigative journalism, institutionalization of the Right to Information Act, and the spread of digital and social media have contributed to a great deal of transparency and participation of the citizen. Media has become a watchdog because it exposes corruption as well as the failure of administration and inefficiency in the administration and thus enhances the people to control them hence making them correct their actions. At the same time, increased publicity and real-time public commentary has changed the behaviour of bureaucracies, promoting risk-aversion, defense-oriented decision-making and reputational sensitivity. Policy priorities and administrative reactions are more influenced by public opinion, which is enhanced with the help of media discourse, whereas political executives employ the media and popular opinion to have an influence on appointments, transfers, and performance. These processes bring about democratic payoffs and institutional difficulties; the increased accountability and responsiveness are accompanied by the jeopardy on the bureaucratic autonomy, professionalism, and the future governance ability. According to the study, democratic administration should be conducted in a sustainable way by balancing transparency with institutional protection such as tenure security, ethical media, and clear accountability systems to maintain both responsiveness and administrative integrity.

Keywords: Bureaucratic accountability; Media; Public opinion; Democracy; Social Media

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the defining technologies of the 21st century, with transformative potential across virtually every domain of human activity. As global challenges, from climate change and poverty to public health crises and educational inequality, continue to mount, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a universal framework for coordinated, evidence-based action. Yet the pathway from technological potential to measurable development outcomes remains complex and context-dependent. This paper contributes to the growing literature at the intersection of AI and sustainable development by presenting a systematic, cross-disciplinary analysis of how AI tools and systems have been deployed in SDG-relevant contexts over the past five years. Rather than focusing on a single sector or technology type, we adopt a multidisciplinary lens to capture the breadth of applications, from precision agriculture and climate modelling to adaptive learning platforms and AI-powered health diagnostics. A central contribution of this work is the development and validation of the AI-SDG Alignment Index (ASAI), a composite metric designed to assess the degree to which a given AI intervention is meaningfully aligned with SDG targets. The ASAI incorporates dimensions of outcome effectiveness, equity of access, governance transparency, and long-term sustainability. In modern democratic regimes, media, public opinion, and political influence on bureaucracy are determinants of the outcome of governance. In India, the world's largest democracy, this connection is especially complicated because of the huge population of this country, various media market, and strong bureaucratic institutions which were inherited in the colonial era. The Indian bureaucracy particularly the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) has long been a neutral, professional, and permanent executive above politics and that is aimed at putting policies in action regardless of political shifts. Nonetheless, the growing power of the mass media and the rising level of aggressiveness of the opinion have vastly changed the relations between bureaucratic autonomy and political control. By disseminating information, establishing political agendas, and exposing administrative shortcomings or corruption, the media acts as a mediator between the people and the government. Social opinion, which is shaped by political discourses, social movements, and media discourses, simultaneously exert pressure on elected officials and attempts to influence bureaucratic practice. Political executives, in turn, regularly use the media and public opinion to exert control over bureaucratic institutions and some jeopardize their independence. This dynamic has far-reaching effects on India's democratic governance, accountability, transparency, and administrative effectiveness.

2. Findings

Role of Media as a Bureaucratic Watchdog

One of the most significant developments in modern democratic governance is the media's expanding function as a check and balance on the Indian bureaucracy. The colonial system of administration left behind a culture of secrecy, a hierarchical decision-making process, and a lack of transparency in procedures. In previous decades, the public was not informed about the decision-making process or the use of public funds. However, this situation has changed because of the emergence of independent media, whether it be online, on television, or

in print, which has increased accountability and transparency in the management of masses. Through investigative reporting, public interest journalism and data analysis, the media has become crucial in raising concerns about the functioning of bureaucracies and exposing irregularities in administration.

Investigative journalism has especially played a significant role in exposing corruptness and inefficiency in government organs. Great scandals that relate to public procurement, allotment of natural resources, abuse of discretionary powers and failure to handle crises have been determined quite frequently through consistent media investigations as opposed to internal audit procedures. This kind of reporting does not only demonstrate individual wrongdoing but also shows the weak areas in the governance set-ups. The media exposes these problems to the public thus it puts pressure on corrective action, disciplinary measures, and policy changes. According to [Thakurta \(2012\)](#), high profile corruption cases in India have been able to receive national publicity due to the protracted journalistic inquiry into them and this shows that the media can serve as a check on bureaucratic excesses.

The media watchdog role was further enhanced with the adoption of the Right to Information (RTi) Act, 2005 which provided legal powers to the journalists and citizens to obtain official documents and records. The RTI model formalized openness so that reporters could get evidence-based data regarding government choices, spending, and operations. RTI disclosures in the media stories have made bureaucrats more accountable because they are forced to explain themselves and ensure that they follow the rules that exist. This has greatly decreased the culture of administrative secrets which are used to guard the public officials against scrutiny. According to [Jenkins \(2019\)](#), the RTI Act has transformed the way governance is practiced in India since the share of information now becomes a legal requirement and not discretionary, and thus an increase in accountability among the population. Social networking sites and the digital media have also increased the area of control. Online portals, independent blogs, and citizen journalism projects enable faster spread of information, and they enable wider engagement of people in the debate of governance. Problems that may have only been localized in the past are now being nationalized to promote quicker responses by the administration. Besides, real-time reporting of crisis responses e.g., in natural disaster or outbreak of a disease, illustrates the lapses and inefficiencies in the bureaucratic process, and corrective efforts are taken immediately.

Although these are the good changes, the watchdog of the media is still disproportionate and faulty. Scandals involving high-profile personalities usually get a lot of coverage whereas everyday failures in administration or structural issues are likely to get very little attention. The reporting can be compromised by sensationalism, political agenda and commercial incentives, emphasizing dramatic stories or personalized blame instead of institutional change. The intricacy of understanding governance issues and complex bureaucracies may be oversimplified by this biased coverage. Furthermore, unsubstantiated claims or misleading information can damage reputations and undermine trust.

In India, the media has developed into a powerful instrument for accountability, with investigative journalism and the use of RTI procedures increasing transparency and exposing bureaucratic secrecy. Limitation may still exist, but its watchdog role is crucial in the democratic administration. Through this balance between hard investigations and responsible reporting the media can further enhance bureaucratic accountability and encourage better conduct in the administration of society.

Bureaucratic behaviour influenced by media

The media is ubiquitous in India, and this has contributed in a great way to changing how the bureaucracy operates and behaves. Conventionally, blindness, strictness in the system, and lack of access to the outside world are used to define the bureaucratic systems. Nevertheless, the spread of television news, internet journalism, and social media has put the officials of the people under constant scrutiny and criticism. Consequently, bureaucrats are increasingly working in a setting that is defined by the general perception, with media discourses having the potential to directly shape their career path. The negative coverage or misconduct accusations or even misunderstandings of administrative decisions may harm the reputation and influence the transfers, postings, and promotions. Media exposure, in turn, is turning out to be a potent influence on the stability of administration and decision-making ([Ayyar, 2020](#)).

In that regard, most bureaucrats have become more cautious in their work, as they are afraid of having their actions critiqued and targeted by the media, as such that a controversial or misunderstood decision will lead to a backlash. Such an ambiance has been leading to what researchers have termed defensive administration. The concept of defensive administration is a tendency to act in such a way that officials focus on adherence to procedures and rules in the face of creative or innovative problem-solving. Bureaucrats would rather make safe and documented decisions that cover them against allegations of misconduct instead of acting discretionally. Although this strategy can increase transparency and decrease the chances of corruption because it means the administration does not have this discretion any longer, it may hinder the efficiency of the administrations. It increases the pace of decision-making, files travel slowly with several levels of approval, and policy innovation is commonly discouraged ([Ayyar, 2020](#)).

The implications of defensive administration are especially immense in a multifaceted and dynamically emerging country such as India where ruling issues are often made to demand context-specific and flexible answers. The risk-aversion of bureaucrats can cause them to not want to implement new policies or adjust the existing programs to local requirements. This unwillingness may compromise the quality-of-service provision to the masses and thwart the development agenda. In this way, even though media, control can serve as a control measure, too much pressure exceptionally generates stagnation in the administrative system.

Meanwhile, bureaucracy and media are not related only in a hostile way. The increased role of public communication has prompted most senior bureaucrats to be initiative-taking when dealing with the media. The press conferences, interviews, and social media usage, including Twitter and LinkedIn, enable authorities to clarify the policies, wrong information refutation, and portray transparency. The traditional reality of bureaucratic anonymity, in which civil servants primarily operated in the background, has drastically changed as a result of this active communication. Nowadays, being visible is becoming a pre-requisite that helps build public trust and responsiveness to citizens' concerns. This is a change in line with more general democratic demands of transparency and responsibility. People are more information-demanding and want the representatives of the government to defend their actions on a public level. Through personal communication with the people, bureaucrats can increase their legitimacy and participatory government. Nevertheless, this new position is quite demanding in terms of balance as too much media intervention can turn administrative operations into a partisan matter or potentially undermine impartiality.

In general, the ubiquity of media has transformed the nature of bureaucratic incentives, promoting both reservedness and communication. Although media attention and scrutiny can enhance accountability and transparency, it has the effect of creating risk-averse behaviour that slows down governance. Therefore, the changing relationship between the media and the bureaucracy in India bring both opportunities and challenges towards good administration of the people.

Bureaucratic accountability as a source of public opinion

The opinion of the masses, conditioned and reinforced by the traditional and digital media, has turned out to be a powerful force in defining the role of bureaucracies in the modern system of governance. Bureaucratic institutions, which were previously thought to have been shielded, be bound by rules and were a slow-moving institution, now have their feet trailed, judged, and scrutinized by citizens. The visibility of the administrative decisions through media narratives, major campaigns and social movements has made bureaucrats more responsible to societal demands. Consequently, the common opinion is growing to be a reference and limitation to bureaucratic actions.

The mass media and the social media tools are the core of manipulating the opinion of the people regarding governance. Administrative failure, corruption, or negligence can be widely outcried in news and such as response requires the authorities to take immediate corrective measures. To give a few examples, the cases of service delivery failure, or malmanagement were often accompanied by a quick investigation of this issue, deftacking of officials, or restructuring the policy due to social pressure (Mehta, 2018). This receptiveness shows that bureaucracies are no longer exactly hierarchical institutions, but they are also affected by external society. In this regard, public opinion serves as an informal check system which complements the formal systems of oversight.

More so, policy priorities are largely informed by the collective opinion. Bureaucracies are supposed to harmonize their operations with the needs and demands of the citizens especially in delicate areas like welfare deliveries, environment protection, medical services, and city management. Administrative agencies tend to shift resources and focus when the social issues of pollution, unemployment, or inequality start to gain popularity in the media. Such congruency promotes democracy in governance, since the interests of society are represented in bureaucratic activities as opposed to procedural factors. Researchers say that this responsiveness enhances legitimacy and confidence in official bodies (Peters, 2019).

The role of the opinion of the people is noticeable in times of crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated how the sense of administrative efficiency affected the decisions of governments and the responsibility of bureaucracies. The expectations of the population to obtain timely access to health care services, openness, and responsiveness to relief necessitated the bureaucratic systems to respond in a quick and flexible manner. Governments that could not fulfill these expectations were criticized and lost popular trust whereas governments that were seen to be competent received more support. Therefore, the citizen perceptions did not only predispose direct actions but also affected the long-term institutional changes and crisis management policies.

Although these are beneficial, there are also challenges associated with relying on the opinion of the people. The popular opinion is not necessarily enlightened with true information or logical thinking. Misconception of sophisticated administrative problems may be caused by media hype, emotional response, and misinformation. Social media can give rumors or partial accounts too much attention, building unrealistic anticipations of immediate solutions. Bureaucrats can be subjected to pressure accordingly to take short-term or symbolic action instead of sustainable, evidence-based policies. Reactive governance may destroy the effectiveness of public administration because of the poor planning and professional judgement (Hood, 2011).

Through media discourses, public opinion has reshaped the way bureaucracy operate by making it more accountable, responsive, and democratically acceptable. Simultaneously, it may cause instability and stress, which makes it difficult to make rational decisions. Hence although bureaucracies are required to be cognizant of the concerns of the citizens, they should also create a balance between responsiveness and expertise, transparency, and long-term planning. This balance is a key to the first level of democratic participation and the second level of administrative effectiveness.

Bureaucracy as a subject of political control.

One of the most eminent and defining characteristics of the Indian administrative system as of today is political control over bureaucracy which is the depiction of the overall conflict between democratic accountability and administrative neutrality. Theoretically, the civil services of India should serve as political neutral and merit-based institutions that execute the policies without bias to the ruling party. But

elected officials have a considerable amount of both formal and informal control over bureaucratic professions, and decision making. The impact of this influence is exercised by using the power in relation to appointments, transfers, promotions, and discipline, and thus influence the incentives and the conduct of the civil servants.

The executive arms of politics formally have power over the key decisions made in the bureaucracy including ministers and chief ministers. This kind of power is acceptable by a democratic constitution; because the elected officials are answerable to the electorate, they should have the capability to control the administrative apparatus in effecting their directives. But this power may often overstep the bounds of proper to open interference. According to Peters (2010), political executives often use the media to justify their interference in the affairs of administration through the media coverage and the popular opinion that such interference is needed in responding to the requirements and governance. Therefore, bureaucrats can feel that their professional security depends not only on performance but also on political orientation.

The regular change of civil servants is one of the most obvious methods of political domination. Transfers, as a means of administration formally designed to bring about efficiency and local prevention, are frequently employed to an end-purpose, namely to reward loyalty or to punish disloyalty. Most Indian states have a pattern of transferring officers across states with a relatively short period of time and by doing this, the continuity of policy faces a risk of being disrupted and the institutional memory is undermined. There is empirical evidence that does not show that these transfers are random. Iyer and Mani (2012) prove the point that bureaucrats who occupy roles that do not suit the political interests or become involved in media scandals are much more likely to be transferred. On the other hand, individuals who conform to existing political discourses or who are in good standing with political authorities are usually granted protection or promotion. It is a practice that makes transfers a form of rehabilitation on albeit indirect and strong; it fosters conformity and not independent thinking.

This push grows stronger through how stories spread in public talk. When official frame red tape wins or loses using news channels, it shapes how civil servants are seen turning routine work into reputation games. Communication to the bureaucracy using public announcements, televised address, and as of late, social media communications can be considered informal directives. These signals convey messages on the priority of policy and acceptable behaviour without giving commands. Although this kind of signaling may be beneficial in terms of raising responsiveness, it may also blur the line between political leadership and administrative neutrality. Bureaucrats have the tendency to make changes ahead of time to suit themselves to what they think is favorable with the political inclinations hence compromising the deal of delivering service without bias.

In general, the issue of political control of the Indian bureaucracy can be seen as a complicated mixture of the democratic accountability and the professional autonomy. Despite the need for some degree of political control within a representative system, too much control may result in de-motivation, instability, and a functional civil service whose operations are governed by rules. Making norms, tenures, and personnel policies more transparent could be one way of achieving a more sustainable balance between responsiveness and neutrality.

Role of social media in reinventing mechanisms of control

Social media has grown quickly to redefine the old relationship between media, bureaucracy, and politics to form a more interactive and immediate environment of governance. Traditionally, media-bureaucracy-politics nexus had been functioning based on formal and hierarchical communication lines. Decisions that were made by bureaucrats were passed down to political leaders and subsequently to the masses via traditional media sources like the newspapers and television. This system enabled the process of bureaucracy to be comparatively sheltered out of the direct view of the people. Nonetheless, communication tools like Twitter and Facebook, and WhatsApp have distorted this model through the ability to connect instantaneously and allow a large-scale involvement, hence changing the perception and practice of governance.

The democratization of information about Gods and the voice of citizens has been enhanced through the social media. Citizens are now able to approach the policymakers/bureaucrats directly, voice their complaints, express their views, and hold them accountable instantly. This change has minimised the monopoly of traditional media as controllers of the discourses of people. Rather, online platforms are open-forums, in which administrative actions have immediate review and challenge. This has led to a greater presence direct responsibility of the bureaucrats to the people, who are often not required to follow the hierarchy. Such exposure will potentially establish transparency and accountability that will compel the state agencies to act more responsibly and ethically.

Political leadership has not been left out because they have adapted to this new environment through active use of social media in the process of communicating the policy initiatives, justifying decisions, and receiving support. Direct messaging enables leaders to give definitions to narratives, and they do not always need to rely on traditional journalism. In addition, digital analytics allow politicians to monitor the atmosphere of the people and review the performance of bureaucracy. One of the examples is when the administrative interventions are introduced after receiving the complaints or posts about the services delays through social media. Such real time feedback systems can be a good form of improving democratic governance as it makes the running of the institutions more responsive to the demands of the citizens (Mergel, 2013). The social media has consequently been incorporated in the administration of the people as a performance controlling tool and a communication tool.

They include these positive aspects, as well as severe difficulties of the change. Transmission is fast in online communication and is viral in nature and this may exert a great burden on the bureaucrats to take quick decisions at times in defiance of due process and critical thinking.

The immediate action anticipation might interfere with professional discretion and future orientation. Besides, fake news, misinformation, and organized online campaigns can be used by attackers to unfairly target the people in the position of officials, damage their reputation, and morale. The fake news can be transmitted very quickly and confirmed only afterward, so it discredits the administrative bodies (Vosoughi et al., 2018). The bureaucrats can also be discouraged from making unpopular decisions that are necessitated by this environment thereby affecting the impact of policies.

The other complication is that there are no definite institutional guidelines of social media involvement. Most bureaucracies do not have official guidelines on how the officials should interrelate on the internet, how they handle online complaints, or handle criticism. The absence of standardization can make answers unequal, which will cause confusion and even abuse platforms. The creation of ethical systems and training is thus important to strike a balance between transparency and professionalism.

Social media has essentially transformed the media-bureaucracy-politics nexus through improvement of communication, accountability, and participation of its citizens. Although it provides with the chances of enhanced transparency and responsiveness, it comes with the risks of misinformation, pressure, and institutional ambiguity. The digital world needs to be governed well and adjusted strategically to ensure that the advantages are tapped whilst the disadvantages are dealt with.

3. Discussion of Results

Indian bureaucratic accountability has taken a tremendous change in the last few decades. Conventionally, the Indian bureaucracy had the accountability mechanisms formed mainly by the formal, hierarchical, and institutional means. Well-defined rules of service, reporting lines, and internal procedures held civil servants accountable primarily to political executives- ministers, secretaries, and higher-level administration. Nonetheless, with the emergence of mass media, investigative journalism, the Right to Information (RTI) regime, and in modern times, social media platforms have created new and informal, and most of the time unpredicted kinds of accountability. The birth of these developments has transformed the relationship between the bureaucracy, political actors and citizens, both with democratic benefits as well as institutional problems.

The Weberian paradigm of bureaucracy had focused on being neutral, hierarchical, and having to operate in accordance with the rules. This model in India was translated into a system where the civil servants were working within the administrative norms and were slightly insulated against the pressure of the masses and the media. Responsibility was not horizontal but vertical, i.e., officials were obliged to their seniors and there was political executive control. Although this structure was rather stable and provided stability in the procedures, it was frequently not very transparent and responsive to the people. Lack of information between the state and the citizens implied that corruption, inefficiency, and maladministration could take a long time to be revealed. Within such an environment, there were minimal checks and balances by the people and citizens did not have much means of holding leaders to account.

This arrangement has essentially changed due to the proliferation of the media and the interest of the people. Bureaucratic functioning has never been more visible due to investigative journalism and 24-hour new cycles. The RTI act of 2005 was a landmark in this change. RTI decreased the information disparity between the state and society by providing the citizens with legal access to records within the government. RTI disclosures are becoming more frequently used in uncovering irregularities and exposing corruption by media organisations. Since Jenkins (2019) advocates, this RTI-enabling media space is a significant democratic advantage, it not only increases transparency, but also makes the bureaucrat publicly accountable to his/her actions. Scandals are also known to discourage unethical practices as well as enhancing the confidence of the populace in the institutions of governance.

In terms of democracy, these developments are mostly good. The media attention will promote accountability and ethical behaviour by the officials. Bureaucratic decisions that come under scrutiny by the people make the administrators more mindful of the interests of the citizens. A corrective force can be exercised through popular opinion and make sure that governance can be in accordance with the democratic values but not the inclined bureaucratic or political interests. In addition, informed citizens are the ones who can engage more in the processes of policymaking. In this regard, the media and the involvement of people help in enhancing the aspect of democracy by increasing the arena of accountability to con-closed institutional space.

Nonetheless, the scientific empowerment of media also poses a great threat to bureaucratic independence. The trade-offs, technical knowledge, and long-term processes that are involved in decision-making in the government are usually complex and hard to fit in with media narratives. Whenever bureaucratic measures are evaluated based on dramatic and simplifying accounts, officials can start to focus more on appearances than reality. Risk-averse behaviour can be caused by fear of not only being criticized by society, but also by being printed in the news as if making an unconventional or provocative decision. This is what is commonly referred to as defensive administration which secures people in the short term but compromises long-term governance abilities. When the officials are more interested in preventing criticism, as opposed to addressing the problem, innovation, experimentation, and policy learning are harmed.

The mediation of political control by the media and the opinion of the people also makes the accountability scenario more complex. The democratic system demands election of officials, who must be sensitive to the issues raised by the population, and the media tends to magnify the issues. Ideally, this receptiveness helps improve legitimacy. Nevertheless, political actors can use media accounts to put unnecessary pressure on bureaucrats. When initiating transfers, suspensions, or disciplinary action, administrative performance is not the basis upon which they should be initiated, but rather to satisfy the masses or handle any political backlash. Iyer and Mani (2012) indicated

that repeated transfers of civil servants' interrupt continuity in the policies and undercut the institution of knowledge. Such politization compromises professionalism and effectiveness of structures of governance.

Social media contributes to the improvement of such dynamics. The digital medium breaks the information production and dissemination free, and the citizens can voice their displeasure in real-time. Although this increases participation and accountability, it lowers the response time significantly. Bureaucrats are increasingly being assessed on the spot and in most instances without context or procedural cover. The rise of the online outcry, viral posts and hashtags may lead to action being taken instantly when serious thought is required. Such an atmosphere encourages token gestures, such as rushed suspensions, mass media declamations, or monetary solutions, more than systematic, factual reforms. The pace of social media may thereby destroy the deliberations that are vital to proper administration.

The other problem that is of high concern is media ownership and political affiliations. Ideally, the media acts like a watchdog and investigates the state without any favour. Practically, however, a lot of media houses are politically or corporate oriented and this is reflected in their coverage. Selective reporting can be aimed at some officials or departments against others without considering the rest and instead of accountability being partisan. Media criticism that is politically driven will skew opinion and lack credibility. Media controls can manifest themselves not as a political check to bureaucrats but rather as a political threat to bureaucrats, which further complicates the decision making of bureaucrats.

At the institutional level, India does not have strong mechanisms to strike a balance between accountability and autonomy. Although this is possible through mechanisms like the Central Vigilance Commission, inquiries by the departments and even judicial reviews, these are usually tedious and inconsistent. There are still minimal reforms on the civil services in terms of tenure security, clear performance analysis, and professionalism. Accountability would not be compromised but the officials would be guarded against unnecessary interference by making key posts have fixed tenure, clear transfer criteria, and media engagement guidelines. In the absence of such changes, the existing system exposes bureaucrats to political manipulation and media publicity, undermining the administrative machine.

The change of bureaucratic accountability in India represents the general development of democratic government. Media and popular press have certainly enhanced control, openness, and empowered citizens. The digital platforms and the RTI regime have minimised the information asymmetry and revealed the malpractice, which has led to more receptive management. In modern environments, a highly influential or politicized media machine may undermine bureaucratic discretion, promote defensive behaviors, and disrupt citizenship institutions. The difficulty is how to combine openness and professional integrity. The institutional protection, i.e., the protection of tenure, the independent review mechanism, and other standards of ethical conduct of media enterprises is inseparable to tapping the advantages of greater accountability of the administration without the loss of administrative integrity. It is only to achieve such a fine balance between India and its bureaucracy that India can be confident that the bureaucracy is not only democratically responsive but also competent to provide efficient and sustainable governance.

This process of interaction of the media, the masses, and the politically negotiated control of the bureau in India is a typical example of the changing nature of democratic control. Openness and accountability have been placed on the forefront where media and citizens are questioning the established secrecy standards in the bureaucracy. However, it is the growing power of media that has centralized political power, undermined bureaucratic discretion, and created defensive administration. With the emergence of social media, these forces have only increased, posing opportunities as well as threats to governance. India should thus develop a subtle balance between bureaucracy professionalism and democracy by adopting institutional reforms that ensure autonomy and improve accountability and transparency.

6. References

- [1] Ayyar, V. (2020). *The Indian Administrative Service: Continuity and change in bureaucratic behaviour*. Oxford University Press.
- [2] Hood, C. (2011). *The blame game: Spin, bureaucracy, and self-preservation in government*. Princeton University Press.
- [3] Iyer, L., & Mani, A. (2012). Traveling agents: Political change and bureaucratic turnover in India. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(3), 723-739. https://doi.org/10.1162/REST_a_00213
- [4] Jenkins, R. (2019). *How India's Right to Information Act transformed governance*. Oxford University Press.
- [5] Mehta, P. B. (2018). *Governance, accountability, and public institutions in India*. Oxford University Press.
- [6] Mergel, I. (2013). Social media adoption and resulting tactics in the U.S. federal government. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(2), 123-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2012.12.004>
- [7] Peters, B. G. (2010). *The politics of bureaucracy: An introduction to comparative public administration* (6th ed.). Routledge.
- [8] Peters, B. G. (2019). *Institutional theory in political science: The new institutionalism* (4th ed.). Edward Elgar.
- [9] Thakurta, P. G. (2012). *Media ethics: Truth, fairness, and objectivity in Indian journalism*. Oxford University Press.
- [10] Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559>.