

India Ombudsman: Aspect of Tructural- Institutional and Functional

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Abstract

Ombudsman is a concept belonging to public administration in general and advocates and protects citizens who are violated of their rights and powers against state institutions. The ombudsman, which finds application areas at different de vlet levels in all continents of the world, is also applied in Asia. The purpose of this article is to provide information on the structural-institutional and functional aspects of the Indian Ombu from Asia. In this context, the place and importance of the ombudsman for Indian democracy and public administration is to be emphasized.

Keyword: *Asia, Ombudsman, Public Administration, India.*



A. INTRODUCTION

The ombudsman is called the assistant, protector and attorney of citizens who have been violated of their rights or powers, and is essentially a concept related to politics, public administration and the state. For this reason, examining the ombudsmanship of a region, state or continent can give some clues about the political organization type, state-citizen relations and the level of democracy about that area.

Today, the ombudsman or ombudsman institution, which has spread to all continents of the world, has become one of the important administrative reform issues of the countries. The Ombudsman has attracted the attention of countries that have not yet adapted this institution to their own bodies, with the successful practices of countries that have experienced and implemented this institution before, have found a field of application and become widespread.

In Asia, which is one of the different continents of the world, those ombudsman institutions have been established in different states. The purpose of this article is to explain the ombudsman institution, which has spread to different continents of the world, through India, an Asian country. For this purpose, the article aims to give information about the Indian Ombudsman Institution depending on its structural-institutional and functional aspects. In this context, the importance of the ombudsman institution for Indian democracy and public administration, its advantages and gains are emphasized.

In this framework, first of all, attention will be given to the ombudsman at the general level. In the second part, the structural-institutional and functional aspects of the Indian Ombudsman Institution will be explained. Also in this study; The method of conducting an ombudsman examination in India using English and Turkish sources, determining the rules, principles and processes in which the ombudsman is

applied in an Asian country, revealing the importance of the ombudsman for an Asian country and giving an example of the spread of ombudsman in the world. has been preferred.

B. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explain the performance of the India Ombudsman. Moleong (2008) states that "qualitative research methods are a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Qualitative research requires guidance in the formulation of substantive theories based on data.

C. RESULT AN DISCUSSION

1. Ombudsman Concept

The Ombudsman is an independent body that receives complaints from citizens in the face of erroneous actions and procedures of the public administration and conducts examinations and audits on these complaints (Fowlie, 2008). The ombudsman has an extensive research and examination power over the operations, actions and behaviors of public administrations, but this institution cannot take binding decisions like courts (Yıldırım, 2014). The Ombudsman examines citizens' complaints against public authorities in an objective, honest, and ethical manner, and advocates and supports citizens against public administration. Therefore, among the qualifications of the ombudsman; There are aspects such as independence, impartiality, public responsibility and reliability (Abdioğlu, 2007). In addition to these, the features of the ombudsman include the following (Uğurlu, 1997; Hill: 1976):

- a. Established by law,
- b. Autonomy,
- c. Working outside the public administration (administration),
- d. Working independently from the legislature and the executive,
- e. Being an expert institution,
- f. Impartiality,
- g. Being an institution that can be easily accessed and applied by the public,
- h. It protects both sides between the public and the public administration.

The basic qualities and features of the ombudsman listed above are the aspects that make an ombudsman an ombudsman. As a matter of fact, the establishment and functioning of the ombudsman in accordance with a legal regulation, independence, impartiality and autonomy, external supervision of the public administration, expertise, easy accessibility by the public, and being the assistant not only of the public but also of the public administration are some of these aspects.

According to the definition made by the International Bar Association (IBA), which is frequently cited and accepted in the academic literature, the ombudsman is

authorized by the constitution and with a legal action on behalf of the Parliament, the ombudsman can act on behalf of the Parliament, who have the duty to examine institutions and organizations, make suggestions against the erroneous actions of the public administration or administration, submit the report they have prepared to the Parliament and legally

An official or institution headed independently by a high-level public official responsible for the Parliament (Sapers and Zinger, 2010; Eren, 2000). In addition, according to Hill (1976), the ombudsman is a public authority is an institution that extends the review in improving the performance of administrative audit after the decision has been made by

It submits its reports to the relevant public authority as a result of its examination. Furthermore, according to Oytan (1975), who made an explanatory definition, the ombudsman "appointed by the Parliament in principle, but which is independent against the government as well as against the Parliament, damages from the actions and operations of the administration. It is equipped with a broad investigation and investigation authority, which takes action on the complaints made by people who see it in no way, to reveal the injustices of the administration, to prevent the abuse of discretionary power, to respect the legislation and to ensure compliance, It is an institution that aims to make proposals without character and finally to propose necessary reforms for a better execution of public services.

As it is understood, the ombudsman, within the framework of the authority he receives from the Parliament, evaluates, analyzes and concludes the complaints received from citizens with systematic rules and principles, who are completely independent and impartial from the Government and Parliament organs, It is a structure that makes suggestions to public authorities and employees in order to correct the negativities in its work, presents an annual activity report to the Parliament regarding the activities and transactions it has carried out during the year, and is in intensive information exchange and communication with the media and the public.

The roots of the ombudsman are based in Sweden (Rowat, 1962) and the existence of this institution goes back to the 19th century (Ruppel-Schlichting, 2013; Mitchell and Doane, 1999). As a matter of fact, the ombudsman first appeared in Sweden in history and became a constitutional body (Erhürman, 1998). The country that established the ombudsman structure after Sweden was Finland in 1919, which was greatly affected by the Swedish system. Ombudsman institution, especially II. After the World War, it spread to various continents and countries of the world gradually and wave by wave. Indeed, after Finland, Denmark in 1955, New Zealand in 1962 and Norway in 1963 established the ombudsman system. Today, the institution of ombudsman is established in many countries and continents, including the United States (USA), France, England, Italy, Spain, Israel, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, Poland, Argentina and Portugal. It is applied at the level of municipality (Büyükcavcı, 2008; Gellhorn, 1966; Abedin, 2013). As it is understood, the ombudsman institution has become a developing institution that has cost the

world and after Sweden, it has spread to other Scandinavian countries firstly and from here to most of Europe, America, Oceania, Africa and Asia and has shown improvement (Doğan, 2014). This institution's II. Among the reasons why Sweden and Finland showed a great expansion and development after World War II; "The great impact of the socio-economic and political conditions of the countries, the increase of functions and duties undertaken by the state, the education of the public, the increase in participation in the administration, the development of democracy and the rule of law, the interest in the protection of human rights" (Baylan, 1978; Maulion, 2006; Özgül, 2013; Kestane, 2006). As a matter of fact, the ombudsman institution has a meaning that is related to all the issues mentioned above and adds value to them. Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the importance of the above issues in the historical process and the spread of the ombudsman institution. Because the ombudsman institution is a structure that has the potential to contribute to a fair administrative order based on democracy, rule of law, human rights and justice, depending on its qualifications and aspects.

2. Ombudsman in India

The ombudsman or ombudsman institution in India will be explained in the later part of the study depending on its structural-institutional and functional aspects. In this context, first of all, general information will be given depending on the aspects such as the establishment, duties, appointment and status of the ombudsman institution. Afterwards, information will be given about the acceptance of the complaint applications of the ombudsman institution, the ways of working, the finalization of the inspections and the functional aspects of the inspections, depending on the effectiveness and efficiency. However, before moving on to the statements about the Indian Ombudsman, the political structure and public administration organization of India will be discussed in general, considering that it is related to the ombudsman.

a. Political Structure and Public Administration of India

The state form is based on federalism¹ (Parlak and Caner, 2009) India is nowadays governed by a parliamentary government system. It is an independent, secular and democratic republic (Tripathi, 2009). The Constitution of India, which directs current and public policies, was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949 (Abadan, 1951) and was put into effect on January 26, 1950 (KTO, 2008; Mohanty, 2014). There are roots of British colonial rules applied in the past in the organization of state and public administration in India (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012; Chakrabarty, 2008). Indeed, the Indian legislative system is based on a two-structure system, as is the case with the members of the British Commonwealth (Brown, 2006), and the Parliament has two basic principles: the "People's Assembly (Lok Sabha)" and the "National Council (Rajya Sabha)". Organizing (Parlak and Caner, 2009). The executive order in India, through the President, Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are in progress. However, the duties and responsibilities of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are more (Güney,

2014). Unlike other countries with Anglo-Saxon law and administrative tradition in India, there is an administrative jurisdiction demand, and the "Supreme Court" has the feature of the largest administrative court in the country. In addition, there is also "National Informatics Center Services Incorporated-NICSI" equipped with the title of administrative court in India (Parlak, 2009; Brown, 2006).

b. Indian Ombudsman

1) General Information About the Indian Ombudsman: Structural-Institutional

Aspects There is no classical and general federal state level ombudsman institution in India (Tripathi, 2009). However, in some states at the regional level (Cooray, 2000; Carmona, 2011), ombudsman-like institutions called Lokayukta have been established (Mohapatra, 2013; Satyanand, 2014; Jha, 2013; Saxena, 2003). The concept of ombudsman in India is that the Administrative Reform Commission recommended the establishment of an ombudsman at both the central (Lokpal) and state level (Lokayuk) in 1966 with varying degrees of power (Stark, 2010; Joshi, 2003; Mohanty, 2014) is based on the report "Interim Report on the Problem of Redress of Citizens" (Jain, 1983). The general justification of this report is explained as "removing the general injustice in the perception of citizens and gaining trust by increasing the effectiveness of public management" (Mohapatra, 2013). Again in this report, recommendations were made by the Administrative Reform Commission on the following key issues (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012):

- Establishing *Lokpal* (central) and *Lokayukta* (state) institutions to deal with corruption and public complaints,
- Implementation of performance based budget in all development departments,
- Establishment of a central personnel agency in the center (Department of Personnel and Administrative Reform) under the independent personnel departments and cabinet secretariat in each ministry,
- Appointment of the regional development manager as an executive chief of *Zilla Parishad* and authorization of development responsibilities at regional level with *Zilla Parishad* (to be formed by selected participants),
- Establishment of the inter-state Constitutional Council in accordance with Article 263 of the Constitution to handle relations at the center-state level,
- By increasing the competitiveness and performance powers of government employees, thereby providing great opportunities
- Establishment of a Constitutional administrative court to resolve civil servants' complaints,
- Developing a positive organizational culture and a motivational climate in government organizations,
- De-politicizing services in relations between ministers and civil servants.

While there have been efforts to establish an ombudsman in India since 1962 (Jha, 2001; Rai and Singh, 1976; Mathur, 1963), in the framework of the above proposed report (Mohapatra, 2013), the Lokpal (Ombudsman) Act (Bill) 2 was adopted by the People's Assembly (Lok Sabha) in 1969, While waiting in the

National Council (Rajya Sabha), it was corrupted by the Parliament on the grounds that it would cause political unrest in the country. This draft bill was re-submitted to the above-mentioned bodies in 1971, 1977, 1985, 1996, 1998 and 2001 after it was drafted by the Joint Committee of Parliament and the Standing Committee on Home Affairs. The Parliament has always left its final conclusions regarding the Government's final decision unsolved (Jiaying and Cheong, 2008; Rowat, 1973; Sanchez, 2012). Therefore, *Lokpal* Institution, which is thought to operate at national level in India, has not been established until today. However, in India, there are ombudsman institutions established by legal regulation called *Lokayukta* at different state 3 levels.

In *Lokayuk*, it is appointed by the governor, who is the head of the executive body in the state (Malik, 2007). When appointing the ombudsman, the governor consults with the chief judge of the state's supreme court and the opposition leader in Parliament. If there is no such leader in the Parliament, he has to consult a parliament elected by the majority vote in the Parliament. On the other hand, in *Lokayuk* (ombudsman), he is dismissed by the governor due to reasons such as insufficiency and negligence (Jha, 2000).

Lokayukta are independent and impartial in their duties and actions. For this reason, these institutions cannot become members of the Parliament, engage in commercial profit making activities or initiatives, and they do not have relations with political parties (Jha, 2000). A person to be appointed as an ombudsman in India should have the qualifications of a judge (Waseem, 2011). In general, a person to be elected in *Lokayuk* should have the qualifications of a judge of the Constitutional Court or a chief judge of a high court (Jha, 2000). On the other hand, *Lokayukta* are commemorating horses for a period of 5 years (Weeks, 1978) and they do not have the opportunity to be reelected (for the second time) (Malik, 2007).

2) Information Regarding the Application Level of the Indian Ombudsman: Functional Aspects

In the state of Rajasthan, complaints can be made by every citizen in areas predetermined by law (The Rajasthan *Lokayukta* and Up-*Lokayuktas* Act, 1973). Complaints to *Lokayukta* in general in India should not belong to 1 year ago and should be made in accordance with the rules and rules in a pre-determined manner. In *Lokayukta*, the institution takes a preliminary evaluation of a complaint that it receives, depending on whether it falls within its scope of control and other criteria. After that, a preliminary evaluation is made and after a complaint passes to the examination area of *Lokayukta*, the institution sends a copy of the complaint to the office employees and the competent authority is informed about the issue. Then, according to the result of the subject, the relevant authority is clearly informed and suggestions and recommendations are made (Jha, 2000; Weeks, 1978). In India, *Lokayukta* have the right to access all documents and information of public nature, with certain exceptions (Weeks, 1978). Therefore, *Lokayukta* are in contact with public administrations. They inform the relevant administration for the solution of the

complaint that reaches them and they can request the necessary information and documents from them.

In India, the *Lokayukta* are preparing an annual report and by criticizing the misconduct of Government organizations, they assist the Parliament (at the state level) to correct the issue and ensure that a legal arrangement is made in this area (Jain, 1983). These annual reports are presented to both the Governor and the Parliament (Jha, 2000). For example, *Lokayukta* in the state of Maharashtra gives an annual report to both the Governor and all the wings of the Parliament (Weeks, 1978). In addition, *Lokayukta* are in a significant relationship with media and news organizations (Weeks, 1978). This situation increases the power of *Lokayuktalar* in India and enables them to get support from political and public control. Therefore, thanks to *Lokayukta*, a relationship and integrity is provided between administrative control, political control and public control.

Lokayukta are not a court in India. They do not have final decision-making powers. Therefore, the real power and influence of these institutions increases with the solution process and communication channels they have undertaken with the public administration, the Parliament and the public. As a matter of fact, *Lokayukta* make suggestions and recommendations to correct the problems and deficiencies of public administrations during the year, inform the Parliament regularly about their actions and activities during the year and share what is happening with the public through the media. With these features, *Lokayukta* become both a service and duty assistant of the public administration and a very effective defender of the citizens.

Regarding the determination of the efficiency and productivity levels of *Lokayukta* in India, below is the number of complaints received by some ombudsman offices throughout the year and numerical information about how many of these complaints have been resolved. In addition, some success points recorded by *Lokayukta* are stated below. In this way, some clues about the importance of ombudsmen for Indian democracy and public administration can be reached.

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Lokayukta in Madhya Pradesh state received a total of 84375 complaints from 1982 to 2001. The number of files opened by *Lokayukta* after the preliminary examination was 53651. Again, 14378 of these complaints

It was sent to the management as a recommendation to solve the problem. In addition, 16121 of these complaint files were recorded (*Lokayukt* Organization Madhya Pradesh, 2014). Within the framework of these results, *Lokayukta* in Madhya Pradesh state has decided that 26% of the complaint files are faulty and that the relevant public administration should take steps to correct its decisions.

In addition to the above information, *Lokayukta* in Andhra Pradesh state received 3060 complaints worth reviewing as of 2011 and 5346 complaints were rejected. This situation undoubtedly shows that people can reach the ombudsman easily and with the least expenditure, they can be protected from the mismanagement practices of the state and public administration bodies, and the efficiency and productivity level of public administration has increased. As a matter of fact, most of the complaints made to the ombudsman were rejected without any examination. This proves that citizens can directly access the ombudsman without incurring an additional cost or procedure. On the other hand, in the state of Uttarakhand, many problems were solved with the initiative of *Lokayukta* and great successes were achieved in a short time. Among these; "75 teachers from Uttarakhand state requested services in Uttar Pradesh state and the Uttarakhand government acknowledged this with the initiatives of the ombudsman, addressed the complaints of the citizens of Dehradun about the water shortage, advised the payment of premiums to contribute to the daily wages of the workers, It has attempted to draft law on employment for its dependents, issued a decision to the authorities to express its concerns about Doom Valley within the framework of air pollution "(*Lokayukta-Uttarakhand*, 2014). This shows that the complaints made to *Lokayukta* in India can include many different issues. As a matter of fact, the ombudsman examines the problem in spite of these various issues and tries to take necessary measures. In this context, *Lokayukta* are able to minimize the bad management practices and road lengths in public administrations thanks to these investigations and the measures they take (Jha, 2000). In addition, the ombudsman can inform the Parliament and other state bodies of the situation with the necessary measures and decisions in eliminating the problems arising from the legal gap.

As it is understood, *Lokayukta* in India take the complaints of the citizens quickly, directly and without exposing to the cost burden within the state, and they take important initiatives and take decisions in the solution of the problem. In this framework, *Lokayukta* are acting as a communication bridge between public administration and citizens in line with the solution of the problem. Citizens can participate in the process of determining and implementing public policies thanks to *Lokayukta*. This situation carries the *Lokayukta* to an important point in terms of the democracy and public administration in India and increases the legitimacy level of the citizen to the political power.

D. CONCLUSION

In India, there is no practice of an ombudsman institution at the federal level covering the whole country. On the other hand, the implementation of the ombudsman institution in India has been implemented at the state level. As a matter of fact, ombudsman institutions called *Lokayukta* have been established at the regional level in nearly 30 states in the country.

Ombudsman institutions (*Lokayukta*) in India comply with 8 basic qualifications and features that make an ombudsman an ombudsman, created by

reference to Uğurlu and Hill in the text. As a matter of fact, ombudsman institutions are designed to be impartial, independent and autonomous, established on the basis of a specific law. In addition, ombudsman institutions have been established as an institution that can be reached quickly, effectively, expertly, objectively audits public administrations from outside and contributes to both public administrations and citizens.

Ombudsman institutions in India contribute to both political and public scrutiny thanks to the reports they submitted to the Parliament and their relations with the media. In this way, they contribute to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, even at the regional level.

As a result, the practice of ombudsman office in India in Asia has made a contribution to the gradual and wave of ombudsman spread in the world, and these institutional practices help Parliaments to work more healthily and regularly as an important step towards democratization. On the other hand, with the ombudsman institution, which is an important experience in terms of public administration as well as Indian democracy, public administrations are encouraged to use more "citizen-oriented, accountable, open and participatory" ways and methods. In this context

In India, a local governance platform is established where the public, private and civil sector parties will negotiate mutually with the applications of the ombudsman institution. Because within the body of the ombudsman; Principles such as "communication, participation, trust and responsibility" already exist. In India, the ombudsman institution increases the level of trust in the state at the citizen level by contributing to both democracy and the organizational and functional structure of the public administration.

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