This study is an effort to analyze the role of bureaucracy in a Modernizing state i.e. Egypt. Bureaucracy is not a new phenomenon. It existed in elaborate forms thousands of years ago in Egypt and Rome and in rather sophisticated forms in China and India in ancient times. With the dawn of modern era, the trend towards the process of bureaucratization greatly accelerated. In contemporary society, bureaucracy has become a dominant institution, indeed the institution that epitomizes the modern era.

The term is being used with different meanings to signify different things. There is no precise definition of bureaucracy. The term bureaucracy is derived from the Latin word “bureau” which means “desk” and Greek word ‘Cracy’ which means ‘rule’. Thus, it means desk rule or desk government. In French ‘La Bureau’ means a cloth used on the table of Public authorities. Later ‘bureau’ began to be used for the office room where table is kept. Thus, by the 18th century the term began to be used to refer to a place where official work is done. The suffix ‘cratic’ is derived from the Greek word which means ‘rules’. Thus, ‘bureaucracy’ refers to rule by officials.

Bureaucracy was originally conceived as a negative or perverse concept. It was a Frenchman deGurney, who first coined the term ‘Bureaucracy’ in the middle of 18th century. The important conceptual
innovation by deGurney was identification of a group of rules and methods of governing. In the word of H.J. Laski, “Bureaucracy” is a term usually applied to a system of Government, the control of which is so completely in the hands of the officials that their power jeopardizes the liberties of the ordinary citizens. According to Kingseley and Stahle, “bureaucracy” is characterized by a hierarchical administrative structure in which each official acts like a cog in a complex. In this organization, nothing is left to change. All important relationships are defined in advance and the pyramid of authority is divided horizontally into levels of responsibilities”.

The first chapter is basically theoretical wherein an attempt has been made to trace the origins & evolution of bureaucracy. The works of famous German sociologist Max Weber on bureaucracy has also been analysed in this chapter.

The second chapter traces the origins and growth of modern bureaucracy in Egypt. It focuses on the distinct influence of European States in the emergence of State bureaucracy since the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon. It then goes on to examine the development of bureaucracy under Mohd. Ali, British occupation, and finally after the 1952 Free Officers revolution.
The third chapter begins with a discussion of reforms and achievements during the Nasser's era, and the role played by the bureaucracy in implementing those reforms. The revolution of 1952 was not only a milestone in Egypt's long history but also exerted powerful influence on the Arab world and many of the emerging nations of the third world. Gamal Abdul Nasser became the most popular hero in Arab history, when he successfully led the Egyptian Revolution of July, 1952.

The fourth chapter deals with the economic development during Nasser era and the role of bureaucracy. Despite some progress in the scope and intensity of economic activities and rise in national income during the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Egyptian economy was not growing at what could be considered a reasonable rate.

With the revolution of 1952, the Egyptian economy witnesses a turn around as Nasser initiated a massive programme of industrialization. The Egyptian bureaucracy was required to play a positive and proactive role in all spheres of economic activity in order to makes Nasser's five year plan a success.

The fifth chapter analyses role of bureaucracy in the Post Nassers era. Under Sadat Egypt changed course from a state controlled economy to a liberalizing one. The Egyptian bureaucracy consequently had to adopt itself
to the new situation wherein private enterprise was given precedence over
the public sector.

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