

## **APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATION: ADAPTING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO DIFFERENT SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Public Administration in Asia is going through an interesting stage. It appears that this stage involves the translation of theories, concepts, techniques, methods and approaches which originated outside of the region into strategies which fit the situation of each individual country.

The need to develop this "goodness of fit" may be described as an evolution of thought and action. A natural result which occurs when returning scholars or practitioners return from abroad and want to apply what they have learned. However, evolution implies that it is a broad process which is taking place, a natural progression in which there is little or no opportunity to influence the direction or trend.

Another description of this process could be intellectual development which parallels the socioeconomic development of countries in the region. As countries industrialize further, needs for new skills and techniques increase, and more education and training is available. In this description, the socioeconomic environment is the catalyst. The business sector becomes innovative. The public sector lags behind or worse retards the business sector because of poor performance, and limits economic growth.

If this view is accepted then a changing public administration is a result or product of the wider socioeconomic processes directed toward industrialization or urbanization. This would mean that there is little opportunity to develop new directions for the public organizations and administrators.

An analysis of development theory and administration notes:

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*As for the appropriate administrative system to undertake the development task, there was a neat prescriptive model in western tradition: the administrative state. The merger of Scientific Management with its principles of Public Administration and Keynesian economics gave the...model a distinctively technocratic flavour. Central tenets of the paradigm were the dichotomy between politics and administration hierarchy, unity of command, political neutrality, the congruence between efficiency and effectiveness, objectivity and ethical probity. All these presuppositions spelled out basically a Weberian model of bureaucratic administration. The great insistence to the dominant literature between bureaucracy and development was indeed overemphasized (Dwivedi and Nef, 1982 : 63 – 64).*

This is a view of public administration and development very prominent in the education of many scholars and practitioners educated abroad and staff in their home countries.

For public administration to fit the conditions in which it is taught and practiced, this view must be challenged and other more indigenous-based approaches should become more asserted.

Other strategies and perspectives have been available in parallel to the "Official Administration." The "Official Administration" was associated with the ruler and the capital and not with the ruled and the village. A sentiment related to this is that the power of the emperor stops at the village gate.

To the extent that the ruler accepted innovations from abroad, the administration became modernized and institutionalized. As it spread from the capital it was imposed on more and more areas. This created an administrative system which were locally-costumed versions of borrowed methods, that is they were imported ideas but with local symbols and ceremonies.

*In spite of much rhetoric, the emergent administrative systems tended to be imitative and ritualistic. Generally, practices, styles and structures unrelated to local traditions, needs, and realities succeeded in reproducing the symbolism, but not the substance, of a British, French or American bureaucracy (Dwivedi & Nef, 1982 : 64).*

Modern bureaucracy has become accepted as part of the local culture. It is ironic that the Weberian Model of administrative structure has become such a powerful force because it was imposed or borrowed from abroad and grafted on top of local administrative approaches originating from China or India which were the source material for Weber's theory. Weber's own perspective on bureaucracy was that it was a stage of administration suitable to its socioeconomic setting, that is Imperial Germany in the late 19th century (Weber, 1947 : 83). Weber also proposed the antidote to bureaucracy in the same set of writings used to establish the bureaucratic model. He proposed a strategy of participation at the level of the small group, modeled on the New England town meeting which is a similar example to many of the participative mechanisms at the village level based on consensus that are found in villages throughout Asia (Weber, 1947 : 413).

Weberian bureaucracy has become part of the traditional organizational culture in many Asian countries and the impact of this situation on innovation has been very negative.

Over the past 30 years, there have been other strategies related to development and administration which are more local or indigenous. These models have the following factors :

1. They tend to define development as a grass roots, need oriented, self-reliant process, with a distributive emphasis.
2. Change is to be profound and rapid, leading to a different kind of society (without a pre-ordained definition of modernity).
3. Politically pragmatic but not incremental.
4. Where Western models have emphasized urbanization and capital-intensive technology, these strategies stress the importance of rural development and labour as a major resource.
5. Rather than defining development as a technical problem, these approaches put an emphasis on ideological, normative and practical considerations.
6. Instead of a separation of politics from administration, their unity is emphasized (Dwivedi & Nef, 1982 : 67).

The theoretical foundations for this type of approach are both revolutionary (from a Marxist perspective) and indigenous with roots in local structures and traditions. For some circumstances it may be necessary to emphasize local parallels rather than the revolutionary focus.

In Asia, the issue of public administration is to find the right fit for the socioeconomic conditions in which the administrative structures are found. It is an issue of design, not evolution or the outcome of socioeconomic development. In this region, they range from primate cities, such as, Bangkok, Manila or Singapore to small villages and hamlets. Even within one country there are wide differences

in culture and socioeconomic conditions. To adapt public administration to every environment is likely to be an impossible task. However, more sensitivity to local conditions is necessary for public administration to be performed better (Willson-Pepper, 1982 : 1985). It is possible to develop strategies of design for administrative procedures and organizations which are more appropriate to the socioeconomic environment in which they are situated. It is possible also to prepare administrators who will know how to adapt and perform better in the variety of environments they face. How to do this will be the focus of this paper.

## ORGANIZATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Recent organizational theory has begun to concentrate on the impact of the environment on the organization. Aldrich (1979), for example, argues that it is the environment which accounts most for the type of organizational characteristics and the performance of any organization. Administrative agencies exist in an environment which has three major sources of influence : political, economic and sociocultural. The political environment is the form of government of the country, particularly at the national level. Democratically elected governments place different demands on public administration than autocratic or authoritarian regimes.

The economic environment refers to the level of financial resources available, the type of sectors, agricultural or industrial, and other economically related variables, such as, level of urbanization. Public administration demands are different in urban situations than in rural situations. The requirements of service delivery for rural agriculture are different than for urban-based industry. The level of economic growth affects the level of budget available to provide services.

Public administration also relates to a sociocultural environment which includes the values, traditions and beliefs of organizational members as they reflect the wider society and the patterns of social organization, such as, status, mobility, or customs. Scott (1983) describes these elements as the institutional environment. He argues that this may be the most important influence on the structure and behavior of organizations (Scott, 1983 : 14). Organizations reflect the direction of its institutional environment. If the wider environment is centralized, formalized and bureaucratized, then public organizations tend to look the same (Scott, 1983 : 15).

This sense of environment is very broad and it looks at public administration as the administrative system of a national government. In a more direct sense every agency at the national, regional, provincial or local levels has a specific operational environment which includes the aspects of the wider political, economic, and sociocultural environment which affect its structure and operations. From this perspective, an operating agency is affected by the political realities of the area in which it is located, the economic conditions in which it works, the sociocultural values of the staff and how they relate to the local residents, and the organizational value system of the parent organization.

The relationship between an organization and its environment is not static or uni-directional. There is an important dynamic of influences between the public agency and its constituents, and other elements of the environment (Aldrich, 1979 : 22). This is the dimension of feedback.

Organizations do change in response to environmental considerations and from internal decisions. They do innovate.

#### INNOVATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Public administration often gives the appearance of not being innovative, of being conservative and rule-bound. In reality, there are innovations going on all the time. They may be called administrative reforms, or new budget systems, or project management techniques, but they represent a change from the past, from the routine of administration. They represent new ways of doing things. The hope for development administration was based on a Western concept of progress :

*The key issue, then, was the transformation of the existing traditional machinery into the new entity. This was to be accomplished through Administrative Development : the modernization of the public service machinery through external inducement, transfer of technology and training by foreign experts (Dwivedi & Nef, 1982 : 63).*

This externally induced system of innovation has had limited success in improving administration, but has been unsuccessful in accomplishing very many development objectives. One effect of these efforts has been to create enclaves of innovation (Been, 1984 : 3). These are informal networks of civil servants who usually have been trained abroad, are technically skilled, knowledgeable about the environment they work in, and motivated to change the organization.

In order to promote greater innovations, the first task is to encourage these innovators and to increase their opportunities to accomplish change. The second task is to shape the innovations to fit the environment and accomplish their intended objective. Successful innovators know how to adapt to make this fit, to look for new ways of expressing their own culture without betraying it (Perroux, 1983 : 167).

Innovation and other forms of organizational change emphasize values of effectiveness, efficiency, and adaptation (Aldrich, 1979 : 22). The issue for any organization is to translate these values into the organizational culture and to convince organizational members to accept them (Aldrich, 1979 : 24).

The situations that will be explored in this paper represent innovations in the context of different sociocultural environments.

## **SITUATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The contingency approach argues, that organizations and their environment interact. Public administration changes in response to its organizational environment in specific ways. In this section, different situations are explored. Each situation examines some dimension of public administration in the Asia-Pacific region. Some situations include the public sector as a whole. Some situations look at rural development issues. It is impossible to look at every environment, every agency, and every issue. The selection of situations is to provide a variety of administrative circumstances and activities. They range from China and Japan, to Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka. The situations describe an innovation from which are drawn the aspects of the environment which related to fit the innovation to its environment. The strategic needs or directions which the administration should consider are also indicated.

### **Situation I : Administrative Reform in China**

Administrative reform began in 1979. The purpose of the reform was to reduce state interference in the economy and to reverse a trend to overbureaucratic centralization and the concentration of decision-making power of the central government agencies. The impact of this overbureaucratization was waste, slow, inefficient and ineffective performance. There were too many layers of control resulting in rigidity and excessive red tape.

Overcentralization contributed to this problem, there were too many central agencies and too many administrative routines. Because of the emphasis on routine, there was insufficient time for development planning, coordination, and resource management.

These problems at the national level were also evident at the regional and provincial levels and within the urban sector.

In order to minimize these problems the Chinese reforms emphasize the autonomy of economic enterprises, reduced central planning with more market conditions. There is greater concern for compensation for work accomplished and for evaluating work performance.

Within the public administration sector reform includes reducing the authority and power of the Party, giving more responsibility to government agencies, decentralization of decision-making and rationalizing governmental bureaucracies by reorganization and improving personnel management, such as, better recruitment, training and performance evaluation.

### **Environmental Aspects**

The political environment certainly influences the trend of administrative reform. The shift from the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution where the

emphasis was on political will to the present reforms based on technical expertise is a major aspect.

*Prior to the current administrative reform, excessive state interference in the economy and over-bureaucratic centralization and concentration of decision-making power was in fashion in China.... The state of a socialist country is expected to play the role of a development planner and administrator. But how this role should be played and the extent to which the state should intervene in the national economy were perennial questions which Chinese political leaders and economists had sought to answer in both theory and practice (You, 1986 : 130-131).*

Similarly, the economic environment also is a major factor. The need to promote growth, maximize return on investment and increasing the efficiency of economic enterprises and government agencies is much of the rationale for the directions of reform.

For the sociocultural aspects of the environment the relationship is not as positive to reform. The reform is described as being in conflict with values, such as, equalitarianism being opposed to rewards based on performance or an emphasis on individual accomplishment countering the collective orientation of the work group or family.

*Chinese administrative agencies are the major institutions in the fight against traditions detrimental to national modernization. China is a country with deep-rooted traditions. Some of these traditions are conducive to the development of society, while others are stereotypes which handicap economic development, modernization and the improvement of the quality of life... In the national drive for modernization, the state has to adopt appropriate laws, policies and measures to facilitate the elimination of these backward traditions (You, 1986 : 125-126).*

The strategic needs of the Chinese administrative reform is to change the nature of public administration from organizer and mobilizer of the revolution to administrator and manager of development, particularly economic growth. This is a very different strategy which requires an appropriate organizational design. In China this feature is still developing.

## Situation 2 : Japanese Style Administration

Japanese Style Administration is described as effective as Japanese Style Management. The factors that relate to its effectiveness are important in order to understand its potential in other situations in the region.

The first factor of interest is the selection process. There are two levels of national competitive examinations. The first is for senior public service in which approximately 35,000 university seniors and graduate students compete. Less than 5% pass, 1/3 of which are from Tokyo University law school.

Successful candidates have interviews with various ministries and agencies who make offers to particular candidates. An offer means a lifetime career in that ministry or agency.

The second examination is for middle-level and junior positions. Usually less academically qualified applicants compete. About 10% pass this examination in lifetime careers in line agencies.

A competitive examination based on merit stratifies the public service into a group which rises through the ranks and another which is relatively fixed for the intermediate group which rarely attains executive level.

Another factor is socialization into the career as part of career development. The early career of the Japanese official is based on on-the-job training and rotation of assignments including graduate education, an assignment overseas or being loaned to a line agency or working in a regional office. By the time an official is actually working in a senior position (early 30's in age), the official has an extensive variety of experience.

The third major aspect of Japanese administrative effectiveness is the type of decision-making which is described as consensual style originating from the bottom up. This provides an opportunity for junior officials to propose policies or develop alternatives which will reach the top and be acted on because they reflect consensus at each level. This develops initiative and creativity in the younger officials.

Promotion to senior ranks is based on seniority and a class of officials (defined by the year they entered public service) will advance together until they reach the most senior level, deputy minister. At that time, all members of that class or other older classes who were not successful in gaining promotion will resign from their particular department.

The type of official who succeeds to the deputy minister position is usually a person who can handle the heavy workload and be a good chairman of committees and compromises.



A fourth factor relates to labor relations. Officials are allowed to organize, but not to strike or allowed collective bargaining. Wages are set by a salary survey conducted by the National Personnel Agency, based on a comparison of similar positions in the private sector. Generally, public wages are kept competitive with the private sector. Another element which makes the Japanese administrative style successful is the conception that the government should be small and efficient as possible. Budgets have a fixed ceiling on spending requests. Budgets concentrate on maintaining a balance between competing programs.

There is also a comprehensive program review agency—the Japanese Management and Coordination Agency, which also acts as an ombudsman. It has a strong investigative mandate and powerful relationship to the Ministry of Finance.

The size of public service is also heavily restricted. There is a limit on total personnel. Staffing cuts have been obtained by requiring all ministries to reduce by 5% and eliminate one bureau. If a ministry wants to add a new bureau it must scrap an existing one.

Finally, the Japanese have used a series of commissions on administrative reform to make recommendations for improved efficiency and effectiveness. A successful recent example is the commission which implemented a strategy to terminate, restructure or privatize government corporations, notably, the Japanese National Railway.

#### **Environmental Considerations**

The economic environment has an important influence on the Japanese administrative style :

*In the past, each department concerned itself with its traditional mandate, which was that of promoting growth in some specific area of the economy. The simpler structure, combined with the growth of the economy as a whole, meant that there was little need for interdepartmental coordination. Today's more sophisticated economic structure has raised new issues which are not clearly within any one ministry's mandate (Borins, 1986 : 189).*

A recent example of this environment is the pressure on Japan to open its domestic market to foreign competition which requires changes in a number of ministries, such as, Posts and Telecommunications and Health and Welfare.

Features of the political environment also have an impact on the administration. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party has influence on policy development, for example, it is common for bureaucrats to have discussion meetings or study

groups which are held with party officials. The Prime Minister may also establish a joint Party Cabinet headquarters group to deal with a policy problem, for example, the opening up of the domestic market (Borins, 1986 : 191).

Perhaps the strongest environmental influence is sociocultural, such as, the achievement of consensus through consultation, the bottom-up decision-making process and the practice of lifetime employment and seniority. These influences may limit the adoption of Japanese style administration elsewhere.

The sociocultural features may also limit innovation, for example, the Japanese are not interested in budget techniques, such as, PPBS, MBO or ZBB. The complexity of issues related to the opening up of the domestic market makes it extremely difficult to achieve a consensual decision. External political pressures from the US, EEC and ASEAN require faster decisions which may be impeded by consensus decision-making.

The organizational culture of the Japanese Style of Administration concentrates on consensus decision-making and controlled performance based on budget and personnel constraints. The need for interagency cooperation and decision-making in the face of a more complex and antagonistic economic environment may make consensus decision-making more and more a limitation. A strategic direction requires a more appropriate organizational design in which the decision is more a compromise than a consensus.

### **Situation 3 : The Policy Process in Singapore**

This situation explores the development, implementation and the evaluation of policy in Singapore over the past two decades.

The first stage of the policy concentrates on developing of proposed alternatives for satisfying public demands. Most public policy in Singapore originates in the Cabinet which by law is the supreme policy-making body of the government. Each minister has authority and responsibility over the civil servants in the ministry.

After a policy direction becomes formulated at the Cabinet or ministerial level, the role of civil servants is to provide background data to enable the political decision-makers to choose the appropriate policy.

The reality of policy development in Singapore takes place in secrecy. It is recognized that the principal power of policy-making belongs to the Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, and no more than three close members of the Cabinet. Civil servants are rarely involved in policy-making.

Interest groups in Singapore do have an important role in the direction of policy by their representation on statutory boards and advisory committees. The

four chambers of commerce also have a major policy influence, particularly in economic policy. To some degree professional associations have a consultative influence. The other major segment of interest groups, trade unions, are part of an alliance with employers and the government, therefore, their interests are included in government policy but in a very passive way. Policy-making in Singapore can be described as a command structure directed from the top level of government.

Policy implementation in Singapore is carried out by the bureaucracy. It is described as very successful implementation compared to other developing countries. There are a variety of reasons described that contribute to success: the quality of political leadership, realistic policies, a qualified, competent and effective civil service, low corruption, periodic national campaigns of awareness, the social discipline of the public, and the small size of the nation.

The impacts of policy are assessed by policy evaluation. In general terms, Singapore has consistently achieved its objectives. However, in specific terms, there has been little or no systematic evaluation of whether the impacts have been successfully accomplished or what negative side effects have resulted. This situation may be changing as the government recognizes the need for more evaluative information and uses it in decision-making.

Overall, the policy process in Singapore can be described as effective in policy-making, efficient in implementation and weak in evaluation.

#### Environmental Considerations

The political environment is a significant element related to the policy in Singapore. The continuity of the party in power since 1959, the PAP, provides a degree of political stability which is rare:

*The most important feature of the political system in Singapore is the predominance of the PAP in the political arena after 1959 and the concomitant political stability and continuity during the past two and a half decades. The PAP's predominance in Singapore politics can be attributed mainly to its success in delivering the goods and services to the population and the resulting reservoir of legitimacy it has accumulated over 25 years (Quah, 1986 : 112).*

Another reason for its success is its skill in using grassroots organizations to help further the accomplishment of policy objectives and to provide feedback. A related factor to this is that Singapore is described as a spectator political culture. People know about the political system but don't participate in it. This provides the setting for an elitist, technocratic, command policy structure.

The economic environment is closely related to the political environment, public policy is seen as the means to enhanced economic development and related social objectives :

*Economically, Singapore has developed rapidly after the launching of its industrialization programme and the establishment of the Economic Development Board (EDB) in August, 1961. Its rapid economic growth during the last two decades has transformed the economy... Singapore's per capita gross national has increased from S \$ 1,330 in 1960 to S \$ 13,783 in 1983 (Quah, 1986 : 110).*

Economic success provides resources to satisfy policy objectives and insure successful implementation. However, it can be the cause of further problems as society changes.

The sociocultural environment is another aspect which affects the policy process. There are concerns to integrate the different ethnic groups and to counteract discrimination.

The spectator political culture means that there is a knowledgeable public which is not interested to participate as long as the present system is working and as long as it is structured the way it is.

The Singapore society is characterized by social discipline, that is, compliance with the common good and practicing self-restraint in resolving social problems :

*In other words, the population in Singapore is quite disciplined and has cooperated with and supported the PAP government's policies on public housing and family planning among others (Quah, 1986 : 120).*

Such a value system supports the accomplishment of policy objectives and contributes to their success.

The policy process in Singapore has achieved important results in part because it has a number of advantages of size, population, and resources (material and human). However, it also has a good fit with its environment, particularly, the sociocultural value.

In strategic terms, the policy process is predictable and one-way in its formulation and implementation. Values change, demands become different, over time the development and administration of policy must change :

*These leaders should remember that the Singapore of today (1984) is quite different from that of 1959. The population is now better educated, better informed, and has higher expectations. The old style of not explaining policies or not consulting those that will be affected by proposed policies is no longer relevant today (Quah, 1986 : 124).*

#### **Situation 4 : Financial Administration in Papua-New Guinea**

Papua-New Guinea has attempted to revise its financial administration. This attempt is interesting because it reflects the change from a colonial status to one of independence and all the resulting problems.

The first stage of public financial administration was colonial. Funding was related to the accountability requirements of the colonial authority (in this case, Australia). There was very little interest in development needs. Financial administration was characterized by excessive rigidity, inappropriate methods and bottlenecks relating to paperwork requirements.

Independence was the next stage in which the concern was for an indigenous budget process reflecting appropriate development priorities, national aspirations and cultural values. For example, the National Development Strategy was directed to rural-agricultural priorities rather than urban-industrial directions.

The independent stage has yet to be realized because of the influence of past inappropriate forms and methods of financial management, the role of expatriate advisers, and the dependency on and influence of Australia as a funding source. This has created a neo-colonial situation.

As Papua-New Guinea continues its transformation it must also transform its financial administration system. Its ability to do so is limited because of the irrelevance of the present system which concentrates on accounting, not economic development. Another limitation is the lack of financial legislation related to foreign aid which is not covered by the Constitution and not subject to parliamentary review. This results in a substantial amount of resources which are unregulated and unsupervised. How these funds fit national priorities remains unclear.

The final element in the failure to develop an independent financial administration system is the lack of capability and performance of the provincial and local government. There is a tendency at the local level to satisfy family or clan concerns or interests by provincial legislators to emphasize development projects which fit their constituencies rather than national priorities.

Papua-New Guinea is still in the process of developing an appropriate financial administration system which fits its development needs, priorities and cultural values.

#### **Environmental Considerations**

In order for Papua-New Guinea to increase its own development it must transform an essentially colonial form of financial administration that is more related to economic growth than accounting. However, the influence of Australia is very strong because of development assistance and the requirements of accountability from a foreign donor limits the interest in developing an indigenous financial system (Hardman, 1986 : 159).

The political environment relates to this situation in two ways. As a colony Papua-New Guinea was administered by an outside power very much influenced by British colonial practices which were more concerned with the maintenance of power than of generating economic growth. That political legacy continues.

As a country with wide differences in people and geography, Papua-New Guinea must maintain a national direction but take into consideration local concerns and issues. This is a question of balance that may not be served by the existing system. More accountability is required from local authorities.

The real power of economic and political colonialism is in the institutionalization of colonial values in the structures of the former colony and in the value systems of the people of Papua-New Guinea. The values of the British Colonial Office became the budget procedures and the perspective of budget officials :

*This over dependence on the preceding expatriate model has tended to obscure the importance of development priorities, national aspirations and cultural values (Hardman, 1986 : 160).*

The strategic need for Papua-New Guinea would be to adapt a financial administration system that concentrates on the priorities of rural-agricultural development, self-reliance and Papua-New Guinea culture. Budget and financial techniques are not value neutral, but they can be made appropriate to local conditions. In order to accomplish development objectives the financial management approach will have to adapt in reality, not just in form.

#### **Situation 5 : Implementing a New Budget System in Malaysia**

In 1969, Malaysia decided to implement a program and Performance Budgeting System. The reason for this change was that the existing system

inherited from the British focused on financial control. It did not provide the information necessary for planning and management of programs directed toward development objectives. The need for more efficient and effective use of financial resources required a new budget system.

On the basis of UN efforts at promoting PPB and the advice of American consultants, Malaysia began to introduce PPB at the departmental level initiated by the Treasury Department; The emphasis of this stage was described as "mechanical"; it was more concerned with formats than with the substance of financial management. The effort was considered to be the idea of the Treasury Department and the top management of agencies had no commitment to the system to its use.

The system also required considerable resources in skilled personnel which were not available. This increased the use of foreign experts. There was little attention paid to training top and middle level management in the use and application of the system.

By 1972 all federal government agencies were included under the PPB system. In this same year because of complaints and problems of the system the Treasury undertook a review of the PPB in order to improve the usefulness of the system for management. It decided to change the approach of implementation from across the spectrum of agencies because of the shortage of human resources to an in-depth approach. The basis of this approach was the recognition that for the PPB to be successful it needed to operate in an organizational and human system which created a supportive environment.

The implementation was made the responsibility of a high level governmental committee including the head of Treasury as its chairman and other relevant chiefs of finance-related functions. It was called the PPB Steering Committee. It has responsibility for planning, coordinating, deciding and allocating resources directed to the implementation of the PPB.

A new organization was created to act as the secretariat of the PPB Steering Committee. It was given the responsibility for innovating, developing, designing and coordinating the implementation of an effective and efficient financial management system in the Malaysian government. It monitors the implementation of PPB projects, developing guidelines and procedures of financial management, reforming the accounting system and automating the functions.

Another element of the new implementation approach was the creation of an Agency Steering Committee in the implementing department. The agency head would represent the department at the PPB Steering Committee and chair the agency committee. As the actual implementor under the direction of the Agency Steering Committee an agency implementation team was created.

In addition to the new structural aspects, training efforts were greatly increased to enable managers to understand and use the system as well as to develop the needed personnel.

By 1981, all agencies in the Federal Government of Malaysia were included under the in-depth implementation. The PPB has been described as successful. It has created a focus on priorities, accomplishing objectives and managing scarce resources. It is much more development oriented than the previous system making the Treasury less an agency of accountants into one of development administrators.

### **Environmental Considerations**

The political environment of PPB relates to the impact of colonial systems which continued in the stage of independence. In the period of nation-building, development activities took priority :

*There was, however, no concomitant upgrading of the administrative machinery in government to meet the challenge posed by the shift of goals from custody to development (Doh, 1981 : 292)*

As a new country with a federal system, Malaysia was required to develop a structure of managing financial resources related to development objectives which took into consideration the different levels of economic development of the states.

Because of the need for managed economic development, the economic environment is also an important factor. Scarce resources require a management system. This is the role of PPB. Before the beginning of this system there was a considerable shortfall in development expenditure (Doh, 1981 : 293).

Any innovation originates in a set of values. This means that the socio-cultural environment is critical. The initial effort at PPB originated from foreign advisers, principally American. Their values were not fully accepted by the administrators ultimately responsible for using the system. To make the system succeed a more relevant set of values were required :

*Innovations are the source of progress but the enemy of status quo and routine. Progressive elements in society will welcome innovations whereas those whose interests are identified with the status quo will resist the change. Innovation thus requires change agents and organizational vehicles for their diffusion. Change agents can take advantage of the sources of support, reduce resistance to the sources of support, reduce resistance to change and enhance*



*receptivity to, and acceptance of, the new norms, values and technologies involved in innovations. The presence of an innovative organization facilitates the task of building an institutional core which is committed to innovations and change, and which is also willing to diffuse them on a sustained basis (Doh, 1981 : 297).*

This situation demonstrates that there are strategies and techniques which can be used to adapt organizations to fit new circumstances.

The strategic direction of the Malaysian innovation in PPB is to implement it at all levels of the department. Hopefully, the factors which were successful at the top level will also work at the middle and lower management levels of management.

#### **Situation 6 : Irrigation Project Management in India**

The need for a coordinating mechanism for development projects is often a major obstacle to obtaining the full benefits of the project.

Because many functional departments or units may be involved, such as, irrigation, public works, agriculture, etc., coordination and allocation of resources is complex. The representation of local interests and participation are also considered an important element in implementation success.

In India, the central government in the early 1980's proposed a project management system for large irrigation projects which cut across administrative district boundaries. This system is called the Command Area Development Authority (CADA).

In the CADA system, the project manager is a fulltime administrator with the rank of Secretary to the State Government. The field heads of functional departments are under the CADA administrator in order to have appropriate control and coordination. CADA also has its own budget allocation for on-farm developments.

To facilitate coordination, each CADA has a board of representatives including farmers to supervise and review the program.

The objectives of the CADA are more detailed than just irrigation, including promoting cropping patterns, providing extension assistance, training farmers, demonstration of new techniques, providing credit flows, inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, developing roads, markets and farmers' organizations. To work successfully, CADA employs a strategy of an administrative structure that is based on a natural resource base which crosses administrative barriers to accomplish the maximum benefit of development efforts.

Although there is an overall model of CADA, it has been adapted to different states in India depending on the political and administrative characteristics of a particular state. In Gujarat, for example, there are important local government institutions with responsibility for rural development activities, such as extension or public health. These institutions are represented on the committees which coordinate overall activities as well as projects.

In other states, the CADA does not control the operations and management of projects which remain with the Irrigation Departments.

The most effective CADAs are those which are created under a legislative statute because they have greater legitimacy. CADAs established under executive order more problems securing cooperation and maintaining coordination.

#### **Environmental Considerations**

The political environment is represented by the need to adapt the CADA to different political structures in the variety of Indian States. A CADA must be adapted to the political reality of the state which it operates.

Within the economic situation of India, CADA represents an effort to manage and extend irrigation resources to promote rural development. There is an open question whether the intended objectives of the project system can be accomplished when it is adapted to different political conditions in India.

From the sociocultural perspective the CADA approach recognizes that :

*The departments involved in the project area entrusted with the activities will have their own viewpoints. Their approach to problems of irrigated agriculture is often influenced by their departmental philosophy and traditions, having been based upon professional value biases and prejudices which may come in the way of introducing innovations by restraining coordinated action and limiting rationality (Jayaraman, 1986 109).*

There it attempts to reconcile different perspectives through coordination and control. Similarly, the approach considers :

*It is a well known fact that the farmers have often been bypassed in the past since planners and administrators have taken them for granted... However, things have changed in the immediate past and there is a growing understanding that for a stable society in the rural areas, accommodation of the viewpoints of the targeted beneficiary has been considered as vital in the successful implementation of projects (Jayaraman, 1986 : 110).*

It attempts to build in representative interests in the project management system.

From the strategic perspective, the problem seems to be how to develop an appropriate project management approach which fits its political and sociocultural environment which can also accomplish its expected objectives.

#### **Situation 7 : Decentralization in Sri Lanka**

In the mid-1970's Sri Lanka implemented a program described as the Decentralized Budget (DCB). To this point in time the DCB has not been a successful mechanism of decentralization.

Sri Lanka has a two-tiered administrative system. The first tier consists of centralized functional departments concerned with highways, irrigation, building and education. These departments include field offices who are located at the district office.

The second tier is the administrative district (Kacheri) of which there are 24. The Chief Office is an appointment Agent who is supposed to coordinate activities in the district. Coordinating development projects is the task of the District Planning Office who are subordinate to the Government Agent.

Before the creation of the DCB the Government Agent staff were isolated from the day to day running of government projects because they have no control over functional department personnel who are administered from the central departments.

In this type of system, there was no coordination. Each central department went about conducting projects without interest or knowledge about what other agencies were doing.

The DCB's focus was to turn control over development projects to the people directly affected by them through the mechanism of giving Members of Parliament authority and responsibility of developing, funding and implementing development projects.

Each district has a Council of MPs and elected members. Each MP receives funds related to project development. The role of the Government Agents and Planning Officers were to assist the MPs to complete the projects. Functional departments were expected to do the actual work.

The effect of this new system was to make the MP a development administrator. The commitment and enthusiasm of the MP often related to whether a project was successful or not. Previous to the DCB, MPs had patronage and the ability to influence the bureaucracy. The new system gave them power to direct departmental administrators in the district and allocate funds.

At this point the DCB still faces problems. There is still very little coordination between projects. Cooperation from the functional departments is minimal. The functional departments are still centralized. Department officers cannot even make routine decisions without referring to the capital. Departments act on their own projects first and then the DCB projects, allocate equipment and materials to complete their own projects. Departments also retain financial control over projects, Government Agents and MPs will not know the budget status of projects until it is too late.

The design of this system has given some local control and involvement in projects to the districts by acting through the elected MPs. It has also increased the role of the District Administration. However, it has also increased the conflict between the three sets of actors resulting in a system which is not coordinated, subject to delays, cost overruns, and poor accomplishment of objectives.

#### **Environmental Considerations**

In this situation, the political environment has a major influence. The inclusion of a political actor, such as, an MP into the administrative system does include local representation into important issues, such as the allocation of scarce resources. However, it also injects more politics. The political calculus of efficiency is not very similar to the economic calculus.

The other political feature is the conflict between centralized departments and district administrators and the struggle to maintain the balance of power between the actors. This conflict is also affected by the involvement of the MPs.

To a great extent the political and administrative system is inherited from the British which in effect creates the conflict between the centralized bureaucracy and the decentralized development projects.

The economic environment is present more as the context in which the struggle for an appropriate decentralization takes place. Sri Lanka is a poor country, the allocation of development projects is an important issue, but the efficient and effective use of scarce resources is equally important. From this point of view, the current system is not appropriate.

Aspects of the sociocultural environment that are relevant relate to the need to find a Sri Lanka solution based on Sri Lanka culture and values. This is significantly impeded by the power of inherited British values, such as the separation of officials into generalists and functional specialists and considering the nature of administration as a function of law and rule. Attempting to graft a locally inspired change on an inherited system does not seem to work well.

The current struggle between ethnic groups in Sri Lanka would be a major factor to consider in the development of any appropriate administrative solution.

From the perspective of strategic need, decentralization in Sri Lanka is negatively affected by the reliance on an inappropriate structure inherited from the British. In order for an appropriate decentralization to take place it would have to be designed in response to Sri Lankan values. These values may be based on Sinhalese, Tamil values or some synthesis depending on the operating environment of the project.

#### **Situation 8 : Rural Development Management in Thailand**

In many countries with projects to provide basic needs to rural population, there is a concern to coordinate efforts, decentralize decision-making, increase local participation and determine the impact of their efforts.

In Thailand a new development management system was set up in 1982. The rationale for the new approach was based on the inadequacies of the old approach :

1. Lack of a central system to coordinate and translate policies into implementation.
2. Lack of a national monitoring and evaluation system to provide feedback on performance.
3. Confusion and duplication among the fragmented local development organizations.
4. Excessive control and resulting overcentralization of the formulation, financing and implementation of development programs and projects.
5. A bureaucracy characterized by red tape and inefficient utilization of financial resources.

To change this situation and improve the effectiveness of development planning and coordination, the Office of the Prime Minister issued a regulation creating the National Rural Development Committee (NRDC) which is chaired by the Prime Minister. It consists of the Office of the Prime Minister and four ministries, Education, Interior, Public Health and Agriculture and Cooperatives. The NRDC is the policy-making and implementing body. A unit of the National Economic and Social Development Board, the National Rural Development Coordination Centre, acts as the secretariat.

The focus of coordination and decentralization is the provincial level. Within the province, there is a Provincial Development Committee (with a sub-committee on rural development) and each district has a District Development Committee. At the sub-district level, the development activities will be carried out by the sub-district and villages.

Budgeting for development projects is allocated for targets selected at the provincial level.

This situation describes a pilot project using the new management system in Korat Province. 14 development projects were included in this pilot study. The Korat Project used the Basic Needs Approach to assess the standard of living of people in the province.

A review of the operation of this management system indicated that most people involved in the system were satisfied with coordination but dissatisfied with the level of decentralization. This dissatisfaction related to slowness in the procurement of needed materials and the inefficiency of personnel at the central offices.

Suggestions for improvement included training, better budget allocation, better monitoring and follow-up. Overall the perception of the new development management system was that it was more effective than the past system.

### **Environmental Considerations**

The need for a coordinated and decentralized management system for rural development reflects the nature of the political environment in Thailand, specifically the bureaucracy which has been highly centralized. The central administration is the source for all field operations operating directly or through provincial offices. As many as 131 departmental units may be operating in the provinces. The Fifth National Plan recognizes this issue :

*....The is an extensive discussion on the need to reform the entire decision-making and implementation machinery of the Government of Thailand. The underlying criticism, often openly stated, is the predominance of the center in decision making and implementing, especially, rural development (Watjanapoom & Tips, 1986 : 134).*

To be more effective in accomplishing development objectives, there is the recognized need to move closer to where the problems are.

The need for coordination reflects the character of the economic environment. During the period of the 5th Nation Plao, the economy of Thailand was affected by recession, high fuel prices and a high debt ratio. Therefore, there is much more concern to avoid waste and duplication of services and activities.

Within the sociocultural environment, the relevant aspect concerns the need to develop the mutual understanding of the development and organizational objectives between officials and beneficiaries. Related to this is the need for improved

human relations, specifically cooperation and the participation of relevant actors in the implementation (Watjanapoom & Tips, 1986 : 149). Training to understand the system and to make it work better was considered an important and necessary improvement.

Overall the system in Korat was considered to work well, but it was not as decentralized as participants would like it to be and it did not include much participation of the public in decision-making. The system has a very technocratic orientation reflecting the continuing dominance of the central administration and political direction of the Office of the prime Minister. It is an appropriate design for coordination, but not for decentralization or participation. The strategic direction of this system would be to adopt more participatory strategies within project management and give greater power to the local level.

#### **Situation 9 : Local Participation in Metro-Manila**

Urbanization in the region is continuing to grow, causing demands on city administration for services which will be increasingly difficult to meet. Migrants to the city because of their poverty tend to move to poorer areas, shanty-towns, or slums with poor health conditions, little or no public services and high unemployment. Very often they have no voice in government decisions.

This situation describes an effort at developing local participation in Metro-Manila in the Marcos era.

Prior to martial law in the Philippines in 1972, a social movement called ZOTO emerged in an area of Metro-Manila called the Tondo Foreshore. Two hundred thousand people with a monthly income of approximately U.S. \$ 37.00 lived there in very low standards of living. In 1970 ZOTO developed a very decentralized structure divided into sub-units which included 96 civic groups. The structure of decision-making was non-formal and very participative. Membership ranged from the very poor to the lower middle class.

ZOTO had three objectives :

1. Develop self-organization and self-help in the district.
2. Secure land tenure for the inhabitants.
3. Insure consultation by the officials for decisions related to the neighborhood.

The organization employed two strategies. One was to bargain with political representatives at the local and national level to offer support in exchange for protection against eviction or for local services. The other strategy was based on self-help on self-help through mobilizing scarce resources, organizing and planning projects and providing local community technical assistance.

Considerable progress was achieved until martial law was imposed in 1972, then ZOTO underwent a period of repression.

After martial law, the Marcos regime introduced their own form of local organization, the barangay. The barangay was intended to be a means for increasing citizen participation, assisting public service delivery and developing and implementing smallscale projects. These intentions were not realized. Instead, the barangay became an instrument of political control.

#### **Environmental Considerations**

The political environment strongly affected local participation with the imposition of martial law. ZOTO and similar organizations were considered as subversive and needed to be repressed. The barangay organization was designed to replace unsanctioned local participation and accomplish the same objectives. The barangays did not serve this role. In conditions of authoritarian rule, the potential of local participative organizations is severely reduced :

1. *The improvement of services through autonomous urban social movements is bound to fail under a political eliminate of severe repression.*
2. *Under strongly repressive regimes, urban social movements lose much of their potential as starting points of a decentralization of power and demo-cratization from the grassroots level (Rdland, 1984 : 332),*

The economic environment of rapidly growing urbanization which takes place in conditions of low economic growth and high unemployment results in an administrative structure which cannot provide sufficient services, particularly to the city's poorest residents. In such an economic environment alternative forms of service delivery through local participative organizations has considerable potential to improve conditions. With government help, international aid or NGO assistance, such organizations can be more effective.

Two aspects of the sociocultural environment are also important. Migrants to the city from the rural areas tend to retain the social organization of the village based on reciprocal group relations and decision-making by consensus. This form of organization if used in the context of the slum or shantytown situations can be an important vehicle to improve the service delivery and conditions of the residents.

There is also a competing administrative set of values that reduces the potential of using the local resident's value system. This value set can be described as technocratic. In the context of Metro-Manila :



*In the bureaucracy a class of technocrats with elitist and paternalistic views and highly negative attitudes towards participation became firmly established. These technocrats regarded the intervention of interest groups or the public in the planning and implementation process of their projects as costly and time consuming disturbance (Roland, 1984 : 329).*

The potential for local participation to provide needed services was impeded by the political environment and related sociocultural values.

Presently there is a new political environment in the Philippines. The economic conditions of the urban poor remain the same, the strategic need would be to return to the system of local participation with an orientation to self-help and mutual aid and a decentralized structure working in partnership with the government and other agencies (donors) to accomplish development objectives. This approach would accomplish a better fit between the administration and its environment, a more appropriate organization of service delivery.

#### **APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATION**

In this analysis the idea of an appropriate organization for public administration emerges frequently. The concept of appropriate technology is very well known (Schumacher, 1973). It represents an approach to development based on a technology which fits local socio-economic conditions. The focus of appropriate technology has been on small-medium scale projects. Although Schumacher had considered organizational forms relevant to appropriate technology, very little refinement has occurred. An organization should develop a good fit with its environment.

A perspective on appropriate organization in Asia is necessary because of the existing character of Public Administration in the region. Situations are very different. There are situations in which a bureaucratic organization is the most suitable. There are other situations in which it is completely inadequate (Aldrich, 1979 : 13).

The first characteristic of Appropriate Organization is the goodness-of-fit to its socioeconomic environment. This implies a design principle which emphasizes adaptation, that is, the organization is changed to match the circumstances in which it works.

For routine administrative decisions, in the capital agencies, which formalization, standardization and a hierarchical structure may be very suitable and in fact efficient. For decisions, in the field related to projects which have a direct

impact on rural citizens such a structure is usually completely ineffective (Willson-Pepper, 1982 : 196).

An appropriate organization emphasizes an open model of relationship to its environment and is structured to fit the circumstances of the culture, setting, political reality, and level of economy. There can be no one best method of organizational design but a variety of approaches are capable of accomplishing objectives (Flynn, 1985 : 160).

To be effective an appropriate organization must also have a suitable internal environment or organizational culture. An organizational culture is the shared beliefs of organizational members on how they should manage the organization and accomplish objectives (Lorsch, 1986 : 95). Culture affects the operations of the agency in the way it develops its strategy and its relationship with its environment (Lorsch, 1986 : 95).

Organizational Culture must be oriented to strategic behavior, that is, action to accomplish organizational objectives based on the distinctive competencies which help the organization attain competitive advantages (Kotler, Fahey & Jatusripatak, 1985 : 255). The appropriate organization is based on this combination of creating a strategic culture relating overriding socioecultural values and goals, to organizational beliefs and preferences to the selection strategies which fit the culture but result in better organizational performance (Kotler, Fahey & Jatusripatak, 1985 : 256). The most important element of the strategic direction becomes the emphasis on the organizational factors which create innovation in tandem with adaptation to the socioeconomic environment.

Innovation is an action to change techniques the organization uses or the services it provides. (Flynn, 1985 : 150). It is a direct action to influence the performance of the organization by changing the way it does things. It is also a direct action to influence its environment : citizens, clients, other agencies and organizations. Successful innovations are also characterized by successful adaptation (Aldrich, 1979 : 18; Scott, 1983 : 14).

The Appropriate Organization innovates adapts through developing creative individuals and organizational characteristics which give them opportunities to innovate.

**TABLE 1. APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATION : INDIVIDUALS AND FACTORS**

CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS	APPROPRIATE FACTORS
1. CAN CONCEPTUALIZE PROBLEMS CLEARLY, AND SPECIFICALLY	1. USES IDEAS
2. ORIGINAL, SEES DIFFERENT WAYS OF DOING THINGS	2. OPENS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION
3. CONCERNED WITH PROBLEMS	3. HAS MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON PROBLEMS
4. MOTIVATED FOR SOLUTIONS	4. CONCENTRATES ON OBJECTIVES
5. ANALYTICAL, EXPLORES WITHOUT BEING JUDGMENTAL	5. CONCERNED WITH FACTS
6. RELATIVISTIC, LESS AUTHORITARIAN	6. FLEXIBLE
7. INDEPENDENT	7. LONG RANGE FOCUS
8. VISIONARY	8. DECENTRALIZED
	9. OPEN
	10. INDEPENDENT

Adapted from : Steiner, G. (1965) *The Creative Organization*.

Table 1 examines the interrelationships between the creative individual and the organizational factors which complement creativity. An appropriate organization creates a climate for innovation and adaptation, establishes the strategic culture and the organizational factors required to successfully accomplish its objectives fit its environment (Flynn, 1985 : 160 ; Lorsch, 1986 : 109 ; Meyer, 1983 : 265).

#### **TOWARD A STRATEGY FOR APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATION**

Change does not happen by itself. Innovations take place. Some of this change is created within the organization. Some of it is stimulated by the environment. Innovation is a process that must be managed (Drucker, 1985). Managers need to become managers of adaptation (Toffler, 1985 : 2) Organizations must become adaptive. They must be able to read the environment, quickly develop necessary information, rapidly respond, learn from experience and redesign (De Greene, 1982 : 2).

All of this indicates that the structure of the organization should be appropriate to its external environment (Toffler, 1985 : 18). An appropriate organization is the arrangement in which innovation and adaptation take place. How to make it happen is the topic of this section.

The first stage is to recognize that innovation and adaptation are not just personality characteristics. As Drucker (1985) suggests, a manager who innovates or adapts is an entrepreneur. They create something new, different; they change or transmute values (Drucker, 1985 : 22). Entrepreneurship is action behavior which is based on the theory and practice of innovation (Drucker, 1985 : 26).

As Been (1984) indicates, all public organizations have pockets of innovators. Public administrators innovate continuously. The need is to promote innovative behavior, extend the circle of innovators as wide as possible, increase the entrepreneurship. Top administrators must recognize the potential of innovation and allow it to happen, that is, build an organizational culture that emphasizes an innovative strategy. Successful innovation :

1. *Begins with an analysis of the opportunities in the environment which is organized, regular and systematic.*
2. *Innovation is both conceptual and perceptual adaptation. To fit the expectations of people you must understand their expectations.*
3. *An effective innovation is simple and focused. It is a specific, clearly designed application.*
4. *Successful innovations start and adapt continuously.*
5. *Innovation relates to leadership becoming a "champion" of the innovation, the one who begins it, manages it, makes it work (Drucker, 1985 : 134-135).*

Managers fail to innovate because they don't understand the process (Drucker, 1985 : 151). They believe the best way to preserve the organization is to maintain the status quo. This is a prescription for organizational irrelevance because the organization is not adapting to its environment.

If public managers are expected to be innovative and know the strategies of innovation, they will become innovative (Drucker, 1985 : 158).

When the strategic direction is innovation and adaptation, top administrators will recognize that the organization must complement the innovation. Innovation is done by people work in a structure, it is necessary to create a structure that allows people to be innovative (Drucker, 1985 : 161). Participation is the key to an appropriate organization (De Greene, 1982 : 337).

Faced with change, public administrators may resist a specific innovation by saying it doesn't work in this setting or there are too many problems. There is no contradiction between innovation and administration. The Weberian bureaucracy was an innovation, not an end point. Weber recognized this. Other perspectives also recognize this. Luther Gulick has urged re-examination of the assumptions underlying organizational structures such as hierarchy. He believes that public administration can be truly democratic and participatory (Gulick, 1983). Similarly, Don Stone has argued for public administrators to work within their agencies to change from conventional bureaucracies to resilient entrepreneurial organizations with consultative and participatory processes (Stone, 1981).

In Asia, the situations of public administration are diverse. Change is happening. The role of public administration is to help change occur and make it fit better to the conditions in which it takes place. This requires a focus on innovation, a recognition of strategies of adaptation, and the development of Appropriate Organization to make the fit between public decisions and the public. It requires a recognition of the different environments in which public administration performs and the strategic direction to adapt to environments. The success or failure of innovation depends on adaptation and the organizational form to make it happen.

#### NOTES

These situations are extracted from articles appearing in well-known overseas or international journals in public administration. The interpretations are of the present author.

1. You (1986 : 151-172)
2. Borins (1986 : 75-196)
3. Quah (1986 : 108-126)
4. Hardman (1986 : 151-162)
5. Doh (1981 : 1-36)
6. Jayaraman (1986 : 99-115)
7. Oberst (1986 : 163-174)
8. Watjanapoom & Tips (1986 : 130-150)
9. Ruland (1984 : 325-333)

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