

# Leadership Development within the Thai Public Service

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, there is no government that does not try to obtain the best human resources, especially leaders or effective managers to work for it. The government of Thailand is no exception. Throughout its history, it has been ceaselessly striving toward such a goal. Often there are drastic changes in philosophy of human resource management; all are for the betterment of human resource management and also finally for the wealth of the nation.

### 1.1 The meaning of leadership

Peter Drucker has described leadership as follows:

*Leadership is the lifting of man's vision to higher sights, the raising of a man's performance to a higher standard, the building of man's personality beyond its normal limitations. (Drucker, 1954 : 159-160)*

Alan C. Filley and Robert J. House define leadership and leader in the following manner :

*Leadership...is a process whereby one person exerts influence over members of a group. A leader, then is a person with power over others who exercises the power for the purpose of influencing their behavior. (Filley and House, 1969 : 391)*

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Likewise, Edwin P. Hollander and James W. Julian point out that the concept of leadership is as follows:

*An early element of confusion in the study of leadership was the failure to distinguish it as a process from the leader as a person who occupies a central role in the process. Leadership constitutes an influence relationship between two, or usually more, persons who depend upon one another for the attainment of certain mutual goals within a group situation. This situation not only involves the task but also comprises the group size, structure, resources, and history, among other variables. (Hollander and Julian, 1969 : 387-397)*

All of the above definitions provide insight into the leadership process. In conclusion, leadership is a process in which one person influences the behavior of members of a group. As a matter of fact, leadership and motivation are complementary processes. In most instances, motivation is influenced by leader effectiveness. Accordingly, both effective leadership and effective motivation are essential for good management and good performance.

In this paper, I would like to say that effective leaders and effective managers are considered to be the same persons.

## **1.2 The meaning of leadership**

Leadership functions will include the following activities : They are planning, organizing, team building, work improving, human resource staffing, directing or leading, delegating authority, motivating, problem-solving and decision-making, communicating, coordinating and controlling activities which will lead to fulfilling the organization's objectives efficiently. (See also Morrisey, 1976 : 8-12)

Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lippitt, and Ralph K. White identified three basic leadership styles—autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic (Lewin, Lippitt and White, 1953).

*In general, the autocratic leader makes all decisions; the laissez-faire leader allows individuals in the group to make all decisions; and the democratic leader guides and encourages the group to make decisions. Later on, Fred Fiedler and Robert J. House added one more leadership style, that is, contingency or situational leadership style. (Fiedler, 1967 and House, 1971)*

According to this style, decisions can be made by either an autocratic leader or by individuals in the group or by the group. It depends on the situation, namely, the nature of work, characteristics of subordinates, relationships between superior and subordinate and so on.

## **2. THE THAI BUREAUCRACY AND THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 A short overview of the Thai bureaucracy**

According to the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, the government is democratic with the King as head of the state. Sovereign power belongs to the people and the King is authorized to exercise legislative power through parliament, executive power through the cabinet, and judicial power through the courts.

Executive power is vested in the cabinet; which frames and implements all important national policies. According to the Thai Government Administration Act of 1991, it stipulates that administration should be divided into 3 levels—central, provincial, and local. The central administration consists of (1) Office of the Prime Minister, (2) Ministries, and (3) Departments. Currently, there are 15 ministries and one equivalent agency (Government Administration Act of 1991).

Government officials are classified into two main and broad groups, one for civil administration and the other for military affairs. Leadership development in the civil service system will be discussed in this paper as a representative of leadership development in the public sector in general.

## **2.2 Levels of leadership or management in the Thai civil service system**

Section 42 of the Civil Service Act of 1992 stipulates that there shall be 11 position levels for ordinary civil servants, based upon the complexity and required quality of work, with level 1 as the lowest and level 11 as the highest. Legally, civil servants are classified into 11 categories and are under the supervision of different central personnel agencies as follows:

- (1) Civil servants under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission,
- (2) Judges under the supervision of the Judicial Service Commission,
- (3) Teachers under the supervision of the Teacher Service Commission,
- (4) University officials under the supervision of the University Officials Commission,
- (5) Public prosecutors under the supervision of the Public Prosecutor Service Commission,
- (6) Provincial officers under the supervision of the Provincial Administration Commission,
- (7) Municipality officials under the supervision of the Municipality Officials Commission,
- (8) Bangkok Metropolitan officials under the supervision of the Bangkok Metropolitan Officials Commission,
- (9) Legislative Body officials under the supervision of the Legislative Body Officials Commission,
- (10) Sanitation officials under the supervision of the Sanitation Officials Commission,
- (11) Police officials under the supervision of the Police Officials Commission.

(See also Boonprakob, 1980 : 539-568)

Section 42 of the above-mentioned act refers to the leadership levels as follows:

- (1) Position level 4: The position of a first-line section head in a technical support unit which entails duties, responsibilities, and required work quality of moderately high degree; and involves supervising, overseeing, inspecting, and advising a group of officials.

(2) Position level 5: The position of section head in a technical support, or craft work unit, or the position of district office head, which entails duties, responsibilities and required work quality of high degree and involves supervising, overseeing, inspecting, and advising a group of officials.

(3) Position level 6: The position of division head or the equivalent of a staff division, head of a provincial office, or head of a district office, entailing duties, responsibilities, work complexity and required work quality of a high degree, which involves supervising and advising a group of subordinates; or the position of a government agency head having a comparable degree of responsibility, and work complexity and quality requirements.

(4) Position level 7: The position of head of a division of an administrative nature, entailing the work of monitoring, inspecting, and supervising a large number of subordinates and which involves a high level of duties and responsibilities, work complexity and required work quality; or the position of head of a government agency equivalent to a division, or head of a provincial district agency equivalent to a division, or head of a provincial, district or government agency having a comparable degree of duty, responsibility, and work complexity and quality requirements.

(5) Position level 8: The position of head of a division having administrative duties, responsibilities and work complexity and quality requirements of an exceptionally high degree, with the work involving the administrative supervision and advising of a large number of subordinates or the position of head of a government agency having division status, of a provincial agency or of a government agency having a comparable level of duty, responsibility and work quality requirements.

(6) Position level 9: (a) A top-level executive position, for the deputy head of a department-level government agency of a province; (b) a top-level executive position, for the assistant head of a ministry-level government agency not attached to any ministry or public body whose head is under the supervision of the Prime Minister, or of a department-level government agency whose head is directly accountable to the Prime Minister; (c) the position of head of a government agency above a division, with responsibility for the main work within the authority and duties of the department, involving a wide range of activities, and a higher degree of work complexity and required work quality than the work of a division.

(7) Position level 10: (a) A top-level executive position for the head of a department-level government agency, or of a province; (b) a top-level executive position for the deputy head of a ministry-level government agency or public body, of a department-level government agency not attached to any ministry or public body, whose head is under the supervision of the Prime Minister, or of a department-level government agency whose head is directly accountable to the Prime Minister.

(8) Position level 11: (a) A top executive position for the head of a ministry or public body; (b) a top-level executive position for the head of a department-level government agency not attached to any ministry or public body under the supervision of the Prime Minister, or as the head of a department-level government agency directly accountable to the Prime Minister.

In summary, position levels 4 and 5 are legally classified as first-line supervisors; position levels 6, 7 and level 8 as middle managers; and levels 9, 10 and level 11 as top executives, respectively. However, position levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 are practically regrouped as first-line supervisors, level 8 as middle managers, and levels 9, 10 and 11 as top executives.

### **2.3 The need for leadership development in the Thai public service**

It was pointed out that management problems of Thai executives were apparent as follows:

- (1) Inefficient decision-making,
- (2) Lack of a central unit to coordinate government and department policies,
- (3) Lack of coordination among departments,
- (4) Lack of policy evaluation,
- (5) Lack of a planning system at the ministerial level,
- (6) Lack of decentralization and delegation of authority,
- (7) Overlapping and duplicating functions,
- (8) Misuse of public resources,
- (9) Lack of clear understanding of goals of organization and of the nation,
- (10) Inadequate knowledge and skills in management concepts and practices,

(11) Inadequate system of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of programs and projects,

(12) A gap between policies and plans at the department level and operational plans at the division level.

The management functions essential for Thai executives to solve the above-mentioned problems were thus recommended:

- (1) Planning,
- (2) Decision-making,
- (3) Organizing,
- (4) Staffing,
- (5) Coordination,
- (6) Communication,
- (7) Motivation,
- (8) Leadership,
- (9) Controlling,
- (10) Performance appraisal,
- (11) Conflict resolution,
- (12) Public relations,
- (13) Delegation of authority,
- (14) Ceremonial functions,
- (15) The executive's duty as to liaison,
- (16) The executive's duty as a spokesman,
- (17) The executive as an entrepreneur.

The problems of the qualities and characteristics of Thai executives were also considered:

- (1) The prevalence of negative bureaucratic behavior,
- (2) Personalism or reliance upon personal relationships,
- (3) A tendency for higher level officials to pass the buck,
- (4) Overemphasis on hierarchical status,
- (5) Lack of deep commitment,
- (6) Lack of management ethics,
- (7) Corruption.

The appropriate qualities and characteristics of Thai executives for problem solution were considered as follows:

- (1) Willingness to accept responsibility,
- (2) Honesty to oneself and to subordinates,
- (3) Fairness,
- (4) Fostering teamwork or team spirit,
- (5) Increasing management ethics,
- (6) Capability,
- (7) Decisiveness,
- (8) Ability to handle and deal with people,
- (9) Human relations skills,
- (10) Loyalty,
- (11) Initiative,
- (12) Emotional stability,
- (13) Broadmindedness (Sriphadung, 1985 : 97-104).

### **3. THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (CSC) AND ITS ROLE IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 The CSC's role in leadership development**

The Civil Service Commission has been empowered to coordinate between and among civil ministries and departments for leadership development and also to conduct, by itself, leadership development delivery programmes, as shown in the act, the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) and government policy as follows:

- (1) The Civil Service Act of 1992 (section 77) stipulates that:

*In accordance with the rules and procedures prescribed by the CSC, before an ordinary civil servant is promoted to certain positions, he or she shall undergo appropriate orientation to enhance his or her knowledge, skills, attitude, and moral and ethical values to enable him or her to effectively perform his or her duties.*

- (2) Similarly, the Eight National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) states that the central personnel agencies should be encouraged



to systematically organize regular training and development programmes for government officials in a continuous manner from the time of recruitment, promotion, or transfer, as well as to develop themselves (The Eight National Economic and Social Development Plan, 1997-2001 : 142-143).

(3) The Civil Service Commission has also been empowered by the cabinet's policy to be the central agency to perform the functions of directing, controlling, and determining goals and guidelines of civil servant development together with setting systems and necessary development strategies for training and development policy implementation. At the same time, the government policy further states that the Budget Bureau, Office of the Civil Service Commission, The Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation, The Comptroller General's Department, civil service institutions and academic institutions should work in collaboration with other ministries and departments to promote civil servant development in accordance with this policy in terms of budget, manpower, foreign aid, and resource persons (The Government Policy on Civil Servant Training and Development, 1989).

For this effective functioning, the CSC set up a group of training and development experts and professionals to serve as the Sub-commission on civil servant development for the development of training and development policies, standards, and guidelines. The Civil Service Training Institute and the Civil Service Executive College were established in order to carry out and push the said mandates into practice for real and effective implementation.

### **3.2 The Civil Service Training Institute (CSTI) and the Civil Service Executive College (CSEC) and their roles in training and development.**

#### **3.2.1 Role and responsibilities of the CSTI are:**

- (1) to suggest and recommend government training policy to government through the Civil Service Commission;
- (2) to develop and conduct executive, managerial and supervisory training courses for executives, managers (division chiefs) and supervisors (subdivision chiefs) in the government agencies;
- (3) to develop and conduct training in areas of the commission's main responsibilities and to serve as the major deliverer of training in the field of personnel administration for all government agencies;

(4) to develop and conduct induction training for new entrants into the public service;

(5) to serve as the focal point for training of training officers, training of trainers, and training consulting, and other training concepts and practices for training officers and government officials who are responsible for training in various departments;

(6) to develop and conduct training in functional areas that have application to several ministers and their departments and where no one else has prime responsibility;

(7) to provide special assistance to organizations of government that are too small to warrant development of internal training expertise;

(8) to provide training assistance to organizations outside Bangkok;

(9) to develop training materials and technology that have relevance to the Thai environment, culture, values, and norms;

(10) to evaluate the effectiveness of training;

(11) to coordinate training activities among training organizations in Thai public agencies;

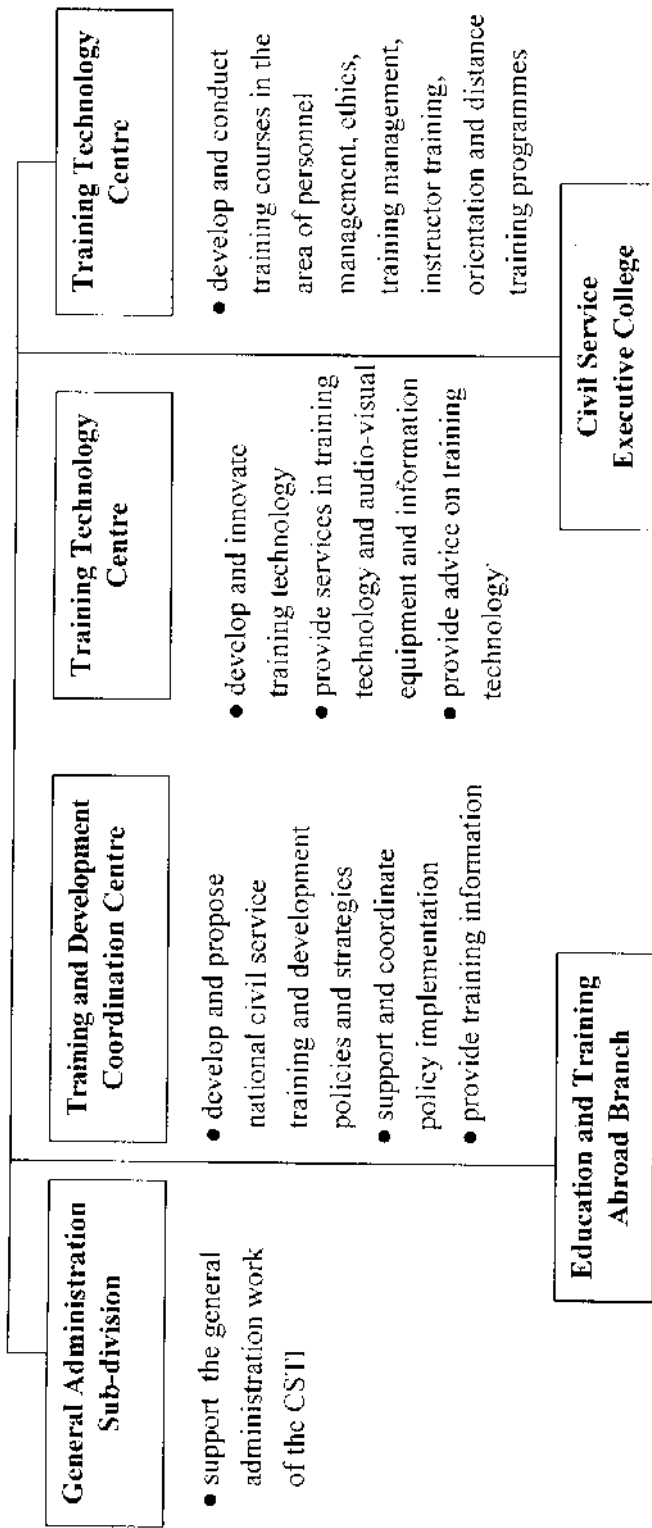
(12) to perform applied training research for the purpose of identifying training needs, training methods, and training materials useful in the Thai government situation (CSTI, 1980 : 27-28); and

(13) to provide a total system of education abroad on management and services for Thai students, especially Thai government scholarship students and government officials on study leave (Human Resource Development in the Public Service).

### **3.2.2 Structure of the CSTI**

In accordance with the CSTI's role, the CSTI is composed of one section, two centers, two colleges and one branch as follows:

**CSTI**



Existing training and development programmes organized by the CSTI:

*(1) Management development programmes.*

The programmes are in the area of public management for supervisors, middle managers, and top executives.

*(2) Personnel management development programmes.*

These training and development programmes are in the field of personnel management and related areas. The main objectives are to keep the government officials whose duties and responsibilities are directly concerned with personnel management abreast of new knowledge and information in this area.

*(3) Training development programmes.*

The programmes aim at providing training on training concepts, training methodologies, training management, and training delivery for government trainers. Moreover, the programmes include seminars to elicit ideas of senior trainers from various departments to develop and to improve training curricula and training methodologies for Thai civil servants.

*(4) Orientation and special training programmes.*

There are many special training and development programmes such as new civil servant orientation, ethics improvement, office management, and other special training and department programmes.

Moreover, the CSTI conducts distance training programmes for government officials who work outside the capital city or those who have less chance to attend such classroom-type training programmes.

### **3.3 The Civil Service Executive College (CSEC) and its role in leadership development**

The CSEC was later established, under the umbrella of the CSTI, in order to more emphatically develop and improve the management capabilities, understanding, and skills of executives, managers, and supervisors in various civil ministries and departments.

Some important training and development programmes of the CSEC:

*(1) The training programme in management for first-line supervisors.*

Objectives: to enable participants to:

- (a) Explain meanings and processes of management roles and responsibilities for first-line supervisors,
- (b) Exchange knowledge and experience between and among participants.
- (c) Promote good relationships for future cooperation and coordination,
- (d) Maintain the mental and physical fitness and readiness to work and supervise efficiently.

Program contents:

- (a) Roles, duties, and responsibilities of first-line supervisors,
- (b) Principles of effective and efficient work performance and experience of administrators of supervisors,
- (c) Planning and systematic work on project plans,
- (d) Human resource management in the civil service system,
- (e) Delegation of authority and control,
- (f) Problem-solving and decision-making,
- (g) Work improvement and reengineering,
- (h) Effectiveness of teamwork,
- (i) Job instruction and coaching,
- (j) Positive disciplinary action,
- (k) Presentation technique,
- (l) Public relations,
- (m) Ethical and mental development for supervisors,
- (n) Health and fitness,
- (o) Study tours.

Duration : 8 work days  
 Target group : Section chiefs or sub-division chiefs  
 (Position levels 6 and 7)  
 Number of participants : 30-35

(2) The seminar for division directors.

Objectives: to broaden the management perspectives of division directors so as to effectively keep pace with changing environments and conditions, and also to be able to systematically and efficiently analyze and solve management problems.

- (a) Environment of management.
- (b) Organization and management.
- (c) Organization development.
- (e) Problem-solving and decision-making.
- (f) Planning.
- (g) Work improvement and reengineering.
- (h) Management psychology.
- (i) Effective team management.
- (j) Government policy on human resource management.
- (k) Human resource management for managers.
- (l) Leadership skill development.
- (m) Effective public speaking.
- (n) Management of change.
- (o) Financial and budgetary management.
- (p) Principles of effective performance and experience of successful managers,
- (q) Mental development.
- (r) Physical exercise.
- (s) Experience in management.
- (t) Project for management development.

Duration	:	25 work days
Target group	:	Division directors with no more than 3 years of experience
Number of participants	:	35

### (3) The senior executive development programme

Objectives: To enable participants to:

- (a) Gain knowledge and better understanding of principles and techniques in management appropriate and necessary for effective duties and responsibilities of senior executives.
- (b) Gain knowledge and better understanding of relevant political, economic, social, and technological changes in the country.

- (c) Develop ideas, principles, and new methodologies in management compatible with the constant changes in the world,
- d) Develop attitudes, values, and management behavior with the emphasis on ethics and customer-orientation,
- e) Develop appropriate personal characteristics, both physically and mentally.

Program contents:

- (a) Environment of management,
- (b) Roles, duties and responsibilities of senior executives,
- (c) Management behavior,
- (d) General management,
- (e) Desirable qualifications and characteristics of executives,
- (f) Physical and mental development,
- (g) Individual study for each participant,
- (h) Group project for a group of 5 or 6 participants.

Duration	:	6 weeks
Target group	:	Senior executives (Senior Division Directors and Deputy Director-Generals)
Number of participants	:	41-50

**3.4 Some training and development techniques for leadership development in the CSTI are as follows:**

- (1) Lectures,
- (2) Symposia,
- (3) Panel discussion,
- (4) Group discussion,
- (5) Experiential learning,
- (6) Role-playing,
- (7) Exercises and practice,
- (8) Management games,
- (9) Audio-visual aids,

- (10) Sensitivity training,
- (11) Case studies,
- (12) Conferences,
- (13) Seminars,
- (14) Demonstrations,
- (15) Fishbowl,
- (16) Brainstorming,
- (17) Question and answer,
- (18) Individual study,
- (19) Group projects,
- (20) Computer aid,
- (21) Simulation,
- (22) Study tours.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **4.1 Conclusion**

Let us add the concluding remark that the need for leadership development programmes in Thailand comes mainly from the fact that there have been a number of problems, such as inefficient decision-making, misuse of public resources, lack of management commitment, corruption, and so on.

At the same time, constant changes, at an accelerating rate, in the political, economic, social, and technological environments have pushed and pulled the government of Thailand to see the need for coping with such changes. Accordingly, civil servant training and development policies were developed and implemented through mechanisms of the Civil Service Commission, especially the Civil Service Training Institute and the Civil Service Executive College, as mentioned above.

##### **4.2 Recommendations**

Recommendations on leadership development programmes in Thailand could be made as follows:



(1) Actual training and development needs of leadership development programmes at various levels should be carefully considered before objectives and curricula can be developed.

(2) Training and development techniques for leadership development programmes should be effective means for real changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of participants.

(3) Cost-effectiveness and benefits/cost of leadership development programmes should be analyzed and evaluated for consideration of effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes.

(4) Evaluation and follow up of leadership development programmes should seriously and continuously be made.

(5) Foreign exchange programmes in leadership development should be deliberately considered and coordinated.

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