

The Role of Bureaucracy in Development Administration: A Comparative Study of India and Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Since very long in a governmental set up, bureaucrats play a very important role in all spheres of the developmental activities. In this regard they are considered as an expert of their field rather than the ministers of assigned departments. They work as an expert, as an advisory body in the governmental system. Bureaucracy is the sovereign factor in Development Administration. It is also called manpower management, personnel management, labour welfare management and so on. Bureaucracy is popularly known as the Backbone of the governmental organization, which actively participates in the public policy formulation process as well as implementation and evaluation. Whereas development administration is primarily concerned with planning, policy and programme and socio-economic development. As bureaucracy plays a number of important roles in the development process in which formulation of policy, implementation of policy, delegated legislation and administrative adjudication are core functions of the bureaucrats. Bureaucracy also ensures the development through continuous evaluation and vigilance. This paper will be focused on the comparative analysis of bureaucratic structure and their role in the developmental process in both the nations. And the lessons India could learn from Malaysian experience and vice versa.

Key Words: Bureaucracy, Development Administration, Public Policy, Bureaucratic Structure, Development Process.

INTRODUCTION

Development has become the centre of politics of most of developing countries. The major agency for development is the administrative machinery which is known as Bureaucracy in public administration. Every developing country is engage in upliftment of the socio-economic condition through extensive and intensive programmes and projects. For this purpose they need to made policies. Policy formulation varies from countries to countries. It will depend on the type of political structure and philosophy of one state. Bureaucracy is known as the backbone of the government. They made policies, implement them and evaluate them. In short we can say that they are completely responsible for the developmental process of a country. In case of India and Malaysia the bureaucrats recruited through high level competition conducted by Public Service Commission's of their respective country. In this paper I will try to compare the development process and other factors of development administration, which are more or less same in both the countries.

Bureaucracy

First of all I will discuss about the bureaucracy, in Malaysia there is a large number of civil servants, near about 1 million, means 1 civil servant on every 28 Malaysians. To put this in perspective, the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh employs about one million public servants. The population of Andhra Pradesh, however, is in the range of 75 million people — and even then, it's considered to have a disproportionately big civil service. The constitution declares Islam the state religion while protecting freedom of religion. That is the big difference between Indian bureaucracy and Malaysian bureaucracy. Malaysian bureaucracy, at the national and state levels, oversees the implementation of Islamic laws (or Sharia) and it has become the linchpin of Malaysia's state-driven Islamization. Sharia determines what is "right" or official in Islam and regulates almost all aspects of Muslim life. This places Islamic bureaucrats in a much stronger position than Islamic politicians. Bureaucrats can invoke the Sharia as a non-negotiable divine law and do not require the support of a diverse and multi-religious constituency for their political capital. Moreover, the bureaucracy enjoys a reputation for neutrality among Malaysian citizens.

The present Malaysian civil service is predominantly Malay; the higher the service group, the higher its domination by Malays. All other racial groups, including non-Malay bumiputras, are under-represented in varying degrees. Since the inception of the New Economic Policy in 1970, the proportion of Malays in the civil service has grown from 60% to 77%. The Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik (PTD) is 85 percent Malay, or has six Malays for each Non-Malay.

On the other hand in India there is no constitutional religion but protecting freedom of religion. Bureaucracy works according to the constitution and under representatives of people (Member of Parliament and member of legislative assemblies etc.). But common thing among both the bureaucracies are that they are the policy makers, policy implementers and policy evaluator.

Development

Development means to change something in a better position than older one. Here the development is in context of economic development, social development, socio-cultural development, community development etc. Development in the ultimate analysis is about improving the well being of the people, which is often measured in terms of providing facilities and services that could give them a chance for a better life. Raising standards of living, improving education and health and opening out new and equal opportunities for a richer and varied life are all essential components of development. The essence of development administration is to bring about change through integrated, organised and properly directed governmental action. It is about raising the standard of living of the people, improving their education and health, and also opening out to them new and equal opportunities for a richer and more varied life. The World Development Report (1991) looks at several indexes of development, to quote from the Report “the challenges of development in the broader sense are to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world’s of poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes but it involves much more. It encompasses as end in themselves, better education, higher standard of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom and a richer cultural life. The overall goal of development therefore is to increase the economic, political and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic groups, religions, races, regions and countries”. Development is goal oriented process. It is equated with economic growth, social transformation and nation building. National development is the major goal of most developing countries. This single goal subsumes myriads of goals such as economic and social progress, political modernisation, nation building, mobilisation of human and natural resources, reducing the levels of unemployment and party etc. The developing societies are goal oriented societies heading towards modernisation.

The First Malaysia Plan (1966–1970) was an economic development plan implemented by the government of Malaysia. It was the first economic plan for the whole of Malaysia—Sabah and Sarawak included—as opposed to just Malaya, which previous economic plans (such as the Second Malayan Five Year Plan) had confined them to. The Plan's objectives were to promote the welfare of all citizens, and improve the living conditions in rural areas, particularly among low-income groups.

The other feature of development is growth. All societies developing as well developed are growing, expanding and advancing. Although the degree, size, and substance of development varies from society to society. Again, present societies are complex societies with a high degree of inter-dependencies between them.

Modern development is characterised by technological innovations, which have altered the nature of development and greatly complicated its objectives. The computer, the nuclear technology, the space technology and many other sophisticated precision technologies have greatly influenced all aspects of society and human life. In the process of development bureaucracy plays a pivotal role, whether it is local or national level development.

Public Policy in Malaysia

Scantly, public policy in Malaysia is designed generally upon the requirement of the political and social structure and the future demand of the nations as a whole. Since Malaysian community is a multi-ethnic society; therefore, any public policy formulation has to be carefully studied by taking into consideration many factors such as political, social and economic factors to give an acceptable norm of satisfaction among her citizen. In order to understand policy formulation in Malaysia; therefore, it is essential to get a clear scenario on the country's political system and her social structures. Malaysian political system is based on Parliamentary Democracy and is ruled as a Constitutional Monarchy with his Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (the King) as the Supreme Head of the country. Malaysia upholds federal constitution that divides authority into legislative, judicial and executive authorities. The doctrine on separation of power; and, check and balance are clearly stated in the Federal Constitution. Concept of federalism in Malaysia also becomes a basis for government administration and machinery to correlate function between the state and the federal government. Such system is so effective to coordinate the public policy formulation and implementation processes through the assistance of the government machinery.

In Malaysia, the social and political systems are very closely related to the creation and formulation of public policy. The establishment of public policy is complex due to involvement of various interested parties during the process to derive for a decision. Public Policy in Malaysia can be created through one or combination of three processes. First is through political channel that means the policy is initiated through Cabinet orders or through the recommendation of several political reigning parties. Second is through administrative processes at the ministerial level. Since a policy has implication on the administrative machinery, the drafted policy is discussed at several high-level of government meetings. Third is through the combination of both processes via integrated approach/interaction. Special Committees may be set up to study the policy in-depth before presenting it to the Cabinet.

Policy Making Process in Malaysia

In general, policy making process in Malaysia has to go through several stages such as identifying the arising problems, planning, recommending/formulating suitable alternatives, legitimizing policies, implementing the suitable action policy, coordinating various events to suit the established policy and finally evaluating the effectiveness of such policy. Upon all processes, policy revision is vital nowadays due to the development of complex society in the modern era. Moreover, the roles played by certain groups are also essential to provide a better input in the content of the policy. In general, three players are identified: the politicians and government public administrators; the public's; and, the related interest group. The first group is the major players to be responsible in ensuring the success of the policy implementation. This group can be refined as the Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, and high-level of government officials. The policy is implemented under the jurisdiction of the Constitution and government regulations. Under the Constitution, the federal, state and local governments are given constitutional rights to implement public policy. As for the public's, they can act individually or form interest groups to put forth their ideas and needs for government consideration. However, these individuals and interest groups do not automatically have the exact power to formulate a public policy or playing as a major actor. Still, their movement can sometimes get a kind of strong public support through their campaign and activities and they also can make the policymaker to understand a ground problem in a clear vision to resolve the arising problems. Some even use the mass

media as their tool to convey their intention toward the government and to this extent; recently this mode seems to be quite effective to “trigger” the government machinery.

A civil service that is sufficiently representative of all races is imperative for three reasons. It is needed for enhancing equity for all races, not only in terms of jobs but also in terms of government responsiveness to their needs and wishes, as civil servants importantly affect both public policy and its implementation. Secondly, it is needed for national unity. Both symbolically and substantively (i.e. in terms of its policy effects), the presently non-representative civil service alienates the under-represented races, including discouraging non-Malays from attending national schools. Thirdly, enhancing representativeness through a fuller merit system would also enhance the capacity and performance of our civil service. This is increasingly important for meeting rising citizen expectations and for safeguarding our national competitiveness in an era of accelerating globalization.

Role of bureaucracy in development in India

In India the role of bureaucracy in developmental process is very significant. Bureaucrats are specialist of their field. They are trained, skilled and paid body of the government. In the process of policy formulation they are classified in three parts, as:

Higher Level Bureaucracy i.e. Senior Administrator

Middle Level Bureaucracy

Lower Level Bureaucracy

Higher Level Bureaucracy having key role in the policy Formulation because they are expert, well skilled, well knowledge in the process of policy making. In term of their functions they are responsible for the management of major function of the government, ranging from law and order to national development. They exercise much more power than their formal authority suggests. By virtue of their functions senior administrators enjoy considerable influence, power and prestige in society.

The developmental roles of senior administrator are divided into five major categories:

1. Policy Formulation: Political leaders are not experts but they are only the representative of the people, while permanent executives are experts and know the every nock and corner of the government; in many cases the political leaders lacks the required expertise and professional skills for developmental planning. Under these circumstances the role of senior administrator in the policy formulation for development becomes all the more important.

The functions of senior administrators as conventionally recognised encompass the formulation of policy, co-ordination of administrative machinery. They are assisting in the preparation of legislative measures and to ensure the government decisions are properly implemented. They also advise on the financial and administrative implications of different policy alternatives.

2. Advice on financial matter: In financial matter administrators determine the allocation of funds for the implementation of plans and according to priorities. They also advised on the revenue generation and expenditure of the government.

3. Implementation of policies: Besides policy formulation senior administrators are involved in implementing them and giving directions to lower level bureaucrats for this purpose. They also monitor the implementation process.

4. **Training Functions:** Senior administrators are responsible to interpret the public policy to the lower level of bureaucracy and to train the latter in the methods to be adopted to achieve its goals. Senior administrators devote some time in training junior administrators working under them.

5. **Political Dimension to the role:** By and large politicians tend to regard them as instruments for facilitating and carrying out political dictates and thus may even use them as scapegoats for achieving certain political ends.

Senior administrators are responsible for policy analysis and advice for the management of the department or offices entrusted to them as well as for the implementation and monitoring of programmes for mobilisation of resources and provision of leadership for the realisation of set goals.

Middle level bureaucracy are constitute of directors, block development officer and panchayat officers, deputy commissioners and technical personnel holding class 1 posts at the directorate and field levels performs several important roles in socio-economic development. Personnel at the middle bureaucracy are required to ensure co-ordination at the state, district and local levels. They act as a channel of communication between policy making and policy implementation. They have field responsibilities for the implementation of developmental task. They have a great deal of supervisory, inspection and direction tasks too. They analyse and communicate the data and other valuable information for the formulation of the public policies and plans to the secretariat and planning bodies.

Lower Level Bureaucracy

Civil servants at the lower level of public organisations
Constitute 85%-90% of task force. They perform the following functions:

A: Mass Contacts

it is the lower level bureaucracy which actually comes in direct contact with the masses. These contacts encourage popular participation in development and help the civil servants to ascertain popular demands and local needs.

B: Collection of Revenues and Information

Personnel in lower level bureaucracy perform the function of collecting revenue and taxes from the people and organisations. They also collect and transmit data for the formulation of development plans and programmes.

C: Learning Techniques

The lower level bureaucrats are required to learn techniques of innovation of new projects and programmes, and then to explain these two persons who are going to be affected. Thus, these public servants assume the role of multi-purpose work with semi-expertise in different areas like family planning, health education, animal husbandry, environmental protection, nutrition etc.

D: Implementing Projects and Policies

in urban as well as in rural areas, lower level bureaucracy's responsibility lies in implementing various schemes and projects which has been given to it. Such schemes and programmes as RDP, National Health Policy, New education Policy, Family Planning, Immunization Schemes and Social Forestry are now being implemented by the staff of lower level bureaucracy.

CONCLUSION

Bureaucracy plays an important role in a country's development, especially in the developing countries like Malaysia and India. Bureaucracy which consists of massed ranks of civil servants with required expertise and technical skills are expected to fulfil the goal of development.

Development differs substantially in developing countries, its scope is very broad when compared to developed countries. Illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, civil strife, nation building, public health etc., are some problems which are not faced by developed countries, this makes the task of bureaucracy even more arduous.

Nowadays we witness the emergence of a concept called 'Development Administration'. The focus is now to make administration more people friendly and goal oriented. Development Administration is now viewed as the process of guiding an organisation towards the achievement of progressive political, economic and social objectives that are authoritatively determined in one manner or another. Bureaucracy can play a pivotal role in development administration.

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