

Editorial

Sri Lanka Journal of Development Administration published yearly by the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration is devoted to the study of public management issues. It is concerned with the dissemination of original views and results of research in public administration. The nine articles contained in this volume present some of the most recent outlooks of prominent practitioners in the field of public management. They have offered their insights into several subjects of perennial significance. These collections of refereed articles are arrayed from general to specific- that is from theoretical presentations and overviews to case studies.

The first article by Dr B.S.Wijeweera critically examines three methods of recruitment employed to choose the best person for a job, namely, the examination oriented recruitment, work experience oriented recruitment and performance oriented recruitment. Citing examples from the public sector and the selection for the national cricket team, the author concludes that that no single procedure suits all situations.

John Xavier's contribution, "How to be a Great Public Service Leader?" highlights that the leadership skills are essentially the same in the public and private sectors. Though it is a much discussed theme, it continues to bristle with difficulties. Leadership requires analytical and technical skills as well as the soft skills of empathy, caring, motivation and self-regulation.

Dr R.H.S.Samaratunga examines the implications of Sri Lanka's policy shift towards the petroleum industry. From total government control in the sixties, the industrial structure has changed from a monopoly to many players in the liberalization moves in the 1990s. Ariyaratne Hewage focuses on "Results Based Management" as an approach for reducing regional disparities.

Rajiv Goonetilleke's essay analyses the expansion of public interest litigation, the principles of good governance including the public trust doctrine and the impact it has had on administrative and policy decision making. In situations where the executive acts brazenly in total disregard to the interests of the public, a citizen need not wait till the next election for some relief. Public interest litigation fills this gap by allowing persons to hold the administration accountable for its acts of commission and omission.

The sixth article by B.Wijayaratne and Dananjaya J. Hettiarachchi attempts to develop a framework for public sector organizations to assess their performance. The authors contend that public sector organizations require

a paradigm shift in which organizational performance needs to be aligned directly to the needs of the country's citizens. The key to this transformation lies in targeted, competency based training.

Since independence sixty six years ago, new approaches were adopted to deal with the problem of rural poverty: integrated rural development, participatory development, the empowering of community organizations, and so on. Dr Gamini Batuwitage analyses the theory of empowered communities by examining the lessons learned from the application of community driven development strategy in seven districts in Sri Lanka. His essay is significant in attempting to answer four queries: Has there been a shift from the empowerment discourse to an alternative discourse leading to a policy change? Who endorsed such a shift? What is the dialogue among the stakeholders on the justification for any such shift? What are the ingredients considered important for in such a strategy for community development?

In a recommendation that almost seems a platitude, Dr. J.D.Samarasinghe's foray into the application of ISO 9000 at a District Secretariat, signify the need for implementation of ISO 9000 in the Sri Lankan public sector. Interestingly, the survey data reveals that its most prominent outcome was the 'reduction of errors'. He concludes that while internal performance and employee satisfaction improved, what lagged behind was customer satisfaction.

The ninth and final contribution attempts to identify the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the Department of Motor Traffic in the Trincomalee district. The survey by Subathini Priyadharsan and Tharmini Ranjanan, is based on a questionnaire addressed to a sample of 200 clients. The data thus generated has been analysed by descriptive, bivariate and multivariate analysis. In this research, the conceptual variables such as, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy, support the customer satisfaction of the Department of Motor Traffic.

Hopefully, the selection of articles in this volume will provide insights into a range of public policy issues.

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