

Development Administration: A Systems Perspective

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Abstract

Development administration occupies central position in all the efforts of the government especially in the economically backward countries and essentially it refers to striving for the socioeconomic uplift of citizen and the country as a whole. Government in these countries also take several administrative reform efforts to shape their administrative systems so that the later can effectively and efficiently discharge their responsibilities with a view to achieving the overall developmental goal. Since development is a multidimensional phenomenon having a number of qualitative and quantitative as well as interrelated and interdependent dimensions and is exposed through systems change, development administration needs to be viewed from systems perspective. In this article attempts have been made to analyze development administration from systems perspective.

Keywords: Development, system, input, conversion process, output, feedback, environment.

Introduction

Development as a multidimensional phenomenon always accompanies with changes in the system state and essentially involves a profound transformation of entire economic and social structure.⁶ Functionally, it lies on the increased ability of human societies to shape their physical, human and cultural environment. It is the responsibility of development administration in any country striving for development to shoulder the responsibility for ensuring developmental changes and transformation in the

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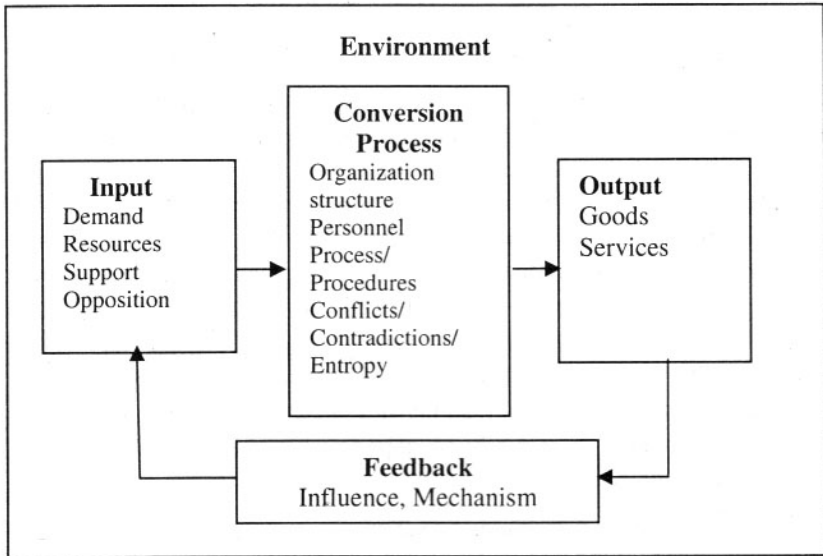
society by formulating proper policies and implementing the same through a capable administrative system. Development administration thus includes two issues: (i) administration for development as well as (ii) development of administration, one directly deals with the goal and other with the means needed to achieve the goal. Effective and efficient means necessarily refers to the administrative system which is capable of shouldering all the responsibilities of development administration. That is why for initiating development process first of all a proper administrative system compatible with the demand of development needs to be established. Since development is holistic in nature and upholds the notions of total system, development administration should also be viewed and structured from systems perspective so that it can discharge its developmental responsibilities effectively and efficiently. In this article attempts have been made to analyze development administration from systems perspective within the broader framework of input, conversion process, output, feedback and environment.

Development Administration as a System

Development administration can be conceptualized from systems perspective which integrates all the issues pertinent to development within the philosophical foundation of (i) wholeness and (ii) interrelationship. This perspective is also essential for analyzing the change process occurring in the developing societies (Finkle and Gable 1966). Efforts for development are linked with the whole social system and address all the dominant aspects of the society in integrated manner. Development administration is also a total phenomenon having some interrelated components which interact with each other and with the environment for goal accomplishment. As a system it takes inputs from the environment, converts or transforms the inputs into outputs with the help of some withinputs; discharges or releases the outputs into the environment and receives feedback manifesting the nature and dimension of influence of outputs upon environment.

Development is a never ending process. The continuity of this process is practically maintained this continuous cycle of events of development administration. The following diagram represents a general systems model of development efforts/administration.

FIGURE



The elements shown in the figure, i.e. the environment, inputs, conversion process, outputs and feedback relate to and interact with each other. The entire set of these elements and their interactions constitute the system of development administration. *Environment* within which system work stimulates the system men receive its products; *inputs* carry stimuli from environment to the development administration; *outputs* carry the results of development actions to the environment; *conversion process* converts/transforms inputs into outputs and *feedback* transmits the systems elements are briefly discussed in the following section to have a theoretical framework.

Inputs

Inputs are the raw materials of the system. The production mechanism is primarily based on the inputs received by the system from environment. The system starts its function with the importation of inputs. Types of inputs required by a system vary from mere information to material resources. Johnson, Kast and Resenzwing discuss inputs for any system into three broad categories: information inputs, *material inputs* and *energy inputs*. The later two are often convertible to each other. Along with natural energy, human resources are also included in the category of energy inputs. Ira Sharkansky points out (i) demands, (ii) resources and (iii) support and

opposition from the citizen as the inputs for public administration. These are also equally the inputs for development administration.

Demand manifests the objective conditions in the environment which requires development intervention. Socio-economic disparities exposed in the form of underdevelopment threatens environmental balance and thereby the forward movement of the society as a whole. These constitute a *demand* for development felt equally by the *advantaged* and *disadvantaged* section of people. The first initiates development process to consolidate or save their position and the later supports development efforts for socio-economics uses of their life. The nature and types of demand are molded by the socio-political ideology and by the nature of relationship among the different sections of people.

Only the information inputs describing the exact nature of demand are not sufficient for development efforts. These might be followed by resources like capital/fund, manpower, technology, other raw materials etc. All or some of these may be mobilized from within and without the country. Sources of these inputs have direct bearing on the process of input-importation and conversion process. *Support* and *opposition* of the government, donors people and other pressure groups affect both the demand for development and flow of inputs to the process of development. If the government policy does not permit the operation of development efforts either NGOs or any other agencies the later lose the legal right to work in any modern nation state. Government's support and opposition are reflected in its policy declaration, legal provisions and administrative behavior. Influence of donors, people and other pressure groups inside and outside the country plays a vital role in the embodiment of government's support for or opposition to any efforts. Donor's role is the most crucial in the policy decisions of developing countries for their direct financial involvement in the development efforts in developing countries as well as the later's dependency on the former for development assistance. Donors *support* and *opposition* enhances and restricts foreign fund flow to these countries respectively. *Support* and *opposition* of people and other interest groups stem from the consideration of the result of efforts affecting them and their interest. Efforts receive strong mass support when these are found congruent with the socio-cultural norms and value as well as with people's expectation, while incongruence produces opposite result. Support of the people, in the development efforts ranks very high. It ensures people's participation in the development process and helps have sustainable base. The system of development must have sufficient information about the access to these inputs.

Conversion Process

The system transforms available inputs into outputs. Development system converts the inputs into outputs for the purpose of development. "Features for conversion process itself affect their actions. These features are given a separate level in order to distinguish them from the inputs that come from environment. Because they originate within the conversion process, they are called *with inputs*" (Sharkansky 1975: 8). *With inputs* in the system of development efforts include: (i) organization structure, (ii) personnel, (iii) process/procedures, (iv) conflicts/contradictions. With inputs are not only responsible for converting inputs into outputs, equally they are responsible for the importation of inputs from the exportation of outputs to the environment to ensure the continuity of conversion process and thereby the achievement of development objectives. Katz and Khan mention five types of functions under five subsystems related to the conversion process: *production, maintenance supportive, adaptive and managerial*. Production processes with the help of technical proficiency transform energy within the organization. To maintain steady state maintenance involves in meditating between tasks demand and human needs to keep structure in operation. Supportive functions include procurement of inputs and disposal of output through transactional exchanges at system boundaries and obtaining social support and legitimization. These are done with the help of societal manipulation and integration. Adaptive functions help the system to cope with the changing environment and expectations and include a number of intelligence activities like research, planning system development etc. (i) Resolving conflicts between hierarchical levels, (ii) coordinating and directing functional substructures; and (iii) coordinating external demands and organizational resources and needs etc. constitutes managerial functions in the conversion process.

Structure represents the relationship among the various functions or the activities in the organization for the efficient achievement of its goal. It "can be compared to the skeleton structure of animals ---it provides the basic framework around which the various parts or units are related and function: (Johnson, Kast and Resenzweig 1973:32). Simon holds, "the organization structure establishes a common set of presuppositions and expectations as to which members of the organization are responsible for which classes of decisions; it establishes a structure of sub-goal to serve as criteria of choice in various parts of the organization; and it establishes intelligence responsibilities in particular organization units for securing specific parts of the organization's environment and for communicating events requiring

attention to appropriate decision points" (Simon 1960:10). In short structure highlights who is where, why and how in the organization. It makes clear distribution of responsibilities and authority in the organization through horizontal and vertical division for having the total work done. *Hierarchy* refers to the vertical division of authority and responsibility in the organization structure while *departmentalization* refers horizontal functional division *Span of control* is one of the basic criteria in setting hierarchy and establishing various departments. There are *line* and *staff* units in the structure, one directly related to the goal accomplishment activities and the other assists the former by providing technical and other supports, committees meant for special purpose also constitute an important part of modern development organization.

Personnel make the structure operative in the system. They are recruited in the organization on the basis of a service and salary structure. Conversion is the interaction between structure personnel for converting inputs following some process/procedures to have desired outputs.

System of recruitment and nature of appointment, permanent and temporary, salary and incentive structure, motivation and manpower development process within the organization determines the quality of personnel in the system. Conversion process always requires an efficient personnel management system.

A set of processes consisting of some procedures and methods establish linkage between structure and personnel and make the organization operative. These centers round two broader issues of with inputs--*planning* process and *implementation* process. "Plan is a specific documented intention consisting of an objective and an action statement represents the means to that end" (Kreitner 1987:148). Plan explains *what, when* and *how* something is to be done in the system. Planning is the process by which the system adapts its resources to changing environmental and internal forces (Johnson, Kast and Rosenzwing 1973:49). Planning is an integrative activity and is not an end in itself--"its purpose is to provide the guidelines necessary for the vital decision making processes throughout the organization" (1993:54). It decides in advance what is to be done and how is to be done. *Futurity action* and personal or organizational causation are important elements in any plan (LiBreton and Henning 1961:7). Information is the basic input in any planning process. The development organization for initiating planning process needs sufficient and accurate information regarding demand, support, opposition and the availability of resources needed for development action. Plans for repetitive and non-repetitive problems are different on the basis of time dimension plan may be strategic middle range of short-term in nature. Development efforts require various types of plans to face the contingent forces.

Plan is materialized through a complicated process of implementation. The necessary aspects of implementation process are *communication*, delegation coordination/integration, supervision, control, monitoring and evaluation. The field level staff and structure of development organization shoulder the ultimate responsibility of implementing development plants, programs and project. The need to be communicated the message regarding development actions as visualized in the planning/program documents. Delegation of adequate authority and supply of necessary inputs are two prerequisites for their action. Various units at the implementation level, following the principle of differentiation and specialization, work separately to achieve the segment of planned object. Only through integration and coordination there outputs can effectively achieve the desired goal of development. Through division of work there always develop some forces of disintegration in the system. Coordination upholds the forces of integration to achieve the integrative goal of development. The conversion process takes place in a dynamic environment which deviate the time of action from the desired one. Henri Fayol defines: "control consists of verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plan adopted, the instructions issued and principles established. It has to point out weaknesses and errors in order to rectify and prevent recurrence"(Fayol 1949: 107). Control function "provides adjustments in conformance to the plan; the maintenance of variations from system objectives within allowable limits" (Johnson, Kast and Rrosenzweig 1973:74). Rebert Mockler comprehensively defines control as systematic effort "to compare performance to predetermined standards, plans or objectives in order to determined whether performance is in line with these standards and presumably in order to take any remedial action required to see that human and their corporate resources are being used tin most effective and efficient way possible in achieving corporate objectives" (Mockler 1970:14). In the process of development program implementation control mechanism occupies the most vital position the development process is not desirable by some of the forces who prefer status-quo, not developmental change. At the time of this opposition development process may deviate from the proper way of handling inputs meant for development. Control mechanism constantly tries to protect this deviation.

Monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the implementing actors are two other activities in the system of conversion process. These two are also used as instruments of control mechanisms.

Participation of actors and beneficiaries in the process of development both at planning and implementation stages has been a widely accepted phenomenon which necessary to formulate realistic plan and effective plan

implementation. Effectiveness of developmental organization largely is affected by its capability to ensure participation.

Conflicts and contradictions are most common phenomena in any complex organization that may originate act of personal, structural and procedural reasons. In the conversion process, Sharkansky observes "Conflicts between the formal rules of the organization and the personnel values of the administrations clashes among administrators that increase problems in making agency outputs; decision makers' use of routine procedures to simplify complex and numerous inputs; an tendencies towards rigid maintenance of the status-quo in the force of innovative demands. An agency's leadership and staff may disagree about proper salaries, working conditions and services to the agency's clients" (Sharkansky 1975:8). There are informal groups in the social organizations. The differences among these groups in respect of their goals and organizational goal also produce conflicts and contradictions in the conversion process.

Outputs

Outputs that conversion process discharges to the environment include "services, tangible goods and behavioral regulations, plus gestures, and activities that the give symbolic messages to those who are tuned in" (Sharkansky 1975:9). Outputs help the system to achieve its goal. This fall within two broad categories: *goods* and *services*. The outputs of development efforts ensure directly the supply of goods to the beneficiaries or create congenial scope for them so that they themselves can produce goods required by them. Effectiveness of the outputs of the efforts depends on their capacity to face the development demands of the incumbents and minimizing opposition of the environment. It is measured by the process of evaluation.

Feedback

Feedback represents the influence of earlier outputs upon the demands, resources, support or opposition i.e. up inputs that the system receives (Sharkansky 1975:17). Feedback mechanisms are evident in the continuity of interactions among development actors and the many sources of their inputs and the recipients of their outputs. The continuity of the development process is carried on by the feedback mechanism. This feedback may be positive when it satisfies the target and negative when paradoxes remain between expectation and outputs. Development efforts need multidimensional feedback mechanism to get proper assessment of the output and goal achievement. Negative feedback is more important to the conversion process for its adaptation with the development need. "When a system's negative feedback discontinues its steady state vanishes and at the same time its boundary disappears and the system terminates" (Miller

1955:529). Functionally the outputs constitute the boundary of the system. It disappears when the conversion process collapses at the advent of the total rejection of environment to receive system outputs.

Environment

Environment is very important to any system. Development system not only takes inputs from discharges outputs to the environment, it does all have a desired impact on the environment. Environment is dynamic, the system of development efforts must cope with the changing environment. Shirley Terreberry argues that environments are becoming more 'turbulent'. There are accelerating rates and new directions of change in that the system must be able to adapt to this turbulence in order to survive. Environmental factors are a source of change as well as a source or cause of existing conditions (Hall 1974:297-8). Environment is a compact network of relationship of enormous issues and entities by which any organization is surrounded. Considering this reality "organization can be thought of as a subsystem of the broader socio-cultural environment in which it operates" (Johnson, Kast and Rozenweig 1973:508). Development efforts always strive towards the change in relationship network of the environment to remove the adds of underdevelopment. There are several issues and elements in the environment development administration. Hall discusses two types of environment: *general* and *specific*. The first contains those general conditions that must be of concern to all organization --- social, economic, political, legal, demographic changes etc. The second category contains specific environmental influences on organization such as other organizations with which it interacts or particular individuals who are crucial to it" (1973:298). William Dill from narrower perspective defines it as *task environment* which refers to those elements in the environment that are relevant or potentially relevant for organization (Dill 1958:409-43).

The environment that are most relevant to the system of development efforts are the socio-cultural and economic condition in general which uphold the overall demand for development. The other three important elements with which it always interacts specifically are the beneficiaries, government and donor. Beneficiaries are the object of development as well as actors when participation and sustainability is concerned. Government provides legal basis for development action and regulates and directs the same as the protector of popular interest. In the developing countries where internal resource mobilization cannot alone ensure development finance, donor's role still remains vertical in the process of development change initiated either by the government or by the non-government administration refers to its relationship with the government, donors and beneficiaries within the broader socio-economic spectrum.

Table-1 Various issues related to the System of Development Efforts/Administration

No.	Systems Variable	Main constituents of the systems variable	Aspects related to the constituents of system variable
1.	Input	a. Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socio-economic status of the people - Dimension and nature of under development - Need for development - Socio-political ideology
		b. Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fund/capital - Manpower - Technology - Raw material
		c. Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy and administrative supports from the government - Donors support - Legal/Legislative/Judicial protection - Socio-cultural consumer - Support of the masses/clients
		d. Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government - Donor - People - Socio-cultural innocence - Legal and administrative constraints
2.	Conversion Process	a. Organization structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization goal and functions - Hierarchy, distribution of authorities and power/basis of command - Departments/Divisions - Associated bodies/committees - Distribution of work
		b. Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel manual (recruitment/selection) - Service structure - Personnel strength and qualities - Wage/incentive structure - Personnel development system (training)
		c. Process/ Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning: setting programs preparation of project, decision making, diplomacy - Implementation: Communication, delegation,

No.	Systems Variable	Main constituents of the systems variable	Aspects related to the constituents of system variable
			co-ordination integration, monitoring, control and evaluation
		d. Conflicts/ Contradictions/ Entropy	- Inter personnel - Structural - Procedural-negative entropy
3.	Outputs	a. Goods	- Economic goods/income employment generation - Capital formation - Infrastructure
		b. Services	- Health - Education - Environment - Legal - Conscientization
4.	Feedback	a. Influence	- Positive influence - Negative influence
		b. Mechanism	- Mechanism of getting feedback - Changes directed by feedback
5.	Environment	a. Beneficiaries	- Socio-economic status, attitudinal and behavioral pattern of beneficiaries - Relationship with beneficiaries
		b. Government	- Government's rules/ regulation - Institutional arrangement - Pattern and spheres of relationship - Policy and attitude of government
		c. Donor	- Role of donor - Relationship with donor - Interactional pattern - Donors' attitude
		d. Socio-culture and economic issues	- People as whole - Socio-cultural dynamics - Network of the economy

Conclusion

This framework of development administration the system depends on the various issues like the extent to which the system can uphold the different characteristics of open system in coherent manner and the functional arrangement of the interacting subsystems within the system. Importation of inputs, conversion process, exportation of outputs and feedback constitute the most important functional characteristics of any system. Besides these other important characteristics including negative entropy, coding process ,steady state and dynamic homeostasis,

differentiation and equifinality as mentioned by Katz and Kahn determine the efficacy of the system operation. Development administration system must move to arrest entropic processes that always threaten development initiatives in the developing countries, so the system must acquire negative entropy, the means and strength to encounter the same. The system must procure information input and receive negative feedback. Coding process in this regards plays the most vital role. It refers to a framework within which the system will accept or reject any inputs. It is a basic element related to the perspective of development efforts. If any development administration system fails to develop, sustain and use its coding process it has every chance to derail from its goal. The development administration system must uphold dynamic equilibrium in its operation and proper balance with the dynamic environment without sacrificing its core values and compromising with the objective of development. It needs to exhibit the characteristics of differentiation efficiently and effectively. For its successful achievement of goal it must follow or uphold the principle of differentiation and must keep in mind that a system can reach the same final state from differing initial conditions and by a variety of paths. All these characteristics do not automatically become operative in the system rather they essentially depend on the subsystem arrangement and functioning of the later.

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