

State of Public Administration in South Asia and Challenges Associated with Socio-Cultural and Political Scenario

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Abstract

This study primarily focuses on the hierarchical bureaucratic structure of public administration in South Asian countries and the socioeconomic challenges faced after colonial period. Along with the end of colonial period, post colonial development model was on rise and it argued that state alone is the agent for socioeconomic transformation of the newly formed modern states. However, the role of private sector was found to be crucial for the economic development. A market-oriented administrative reform during 1980's was emphasized and the concept of New Public Management (NPM) evolved which was successful in western developed nations such as USA, Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. But NPM could not yield much success in South Asian countries. Fred Riggs model of prismatic society brilliantly explains the reason and suggests that various socio-cultural and political scenario need to be considered while adopting and implementing these models. The major challenges associated with public administration in South Asian countries are rigid hierarchy, corruption, dysfunctional bureaucracy. Similarly, public administration in South Asian countries is characterized by formalism, heterogeneity, and functional overlaps that are the reflection of societal and political culture that prevails due to poly-communalism and poly-normativism.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, NPM, South Asia

Introduction

There is not yet any simple definition of public administration that is fully acceptable to both practitioners and scholars. With time, everything keeps on changing and so do the meaning of public administration. Due to its indispensable but dynamic nature, the perceptive of public administration keeps on changing along with the development of societies (Caiden 1971). Public administration is an academic discipline primarily concerned with implementation of government policies and its implementation. The history of public administration in South Asia started long back with the British Colonial Period. Along with various stages of evolution, models of public administration in South Asia can be distinctly categorized as; *Colonial Bureaucratic Model* practiced during colonial period, *Postcolonial-Developmental Model* adopted after the colonial period and the current *New Public Management Model*, originated from western developed nations. The latter model was borrowed and even imposed to various developing countries like in Southeast Asia (Haque 2007).

Precisely, Public administration is the practice of administrative functions as well as activities of government onward public that includes various actions from policy formulation to implementation. Different scholars have defined public administration based on its function, scope, boundaries, principles and evolution. Woodrow Wilson is known as father of public administration and he defined Public Administration as "detailed and systematic execution of public law; every particular application of general law is an act of administration". The public administration is an aspect of a more generic concept of administration which is centrally concerned with the organization of government policies and

programs as well as the behavior of officials formally responsible for their conduct. Different theories and models have been developed on according to the necessity of time and situation of that particular country affected by the notion of political science, social science and economics.

Public administration is a discipline of the collective history, organization, social and political theories related studies that focuses on the meaning, structure & function of public service, administrative management, bureaucracy, and so on. The public administration is still confusing and is searching a stable theory building and practice. Public Administration never had and perhaps will never have a steady state (Kettel 2000). The scope, boundary, value and philosophy of public administration are mere responses and reactions to its economic, socio-cultural, academic and political sphere. Many scholars have proposed their own theory in the field of public administration. If we look at the dynamism of public administration, we can see the change in its meaning and function in public sphere. With changing function, there emerged different types of model in different era of public administration.

The first paradigm (1900 to 1926) centers on the belief that administration was distinct from policy and politics and also known as "The Politics/Administration Dichotomy". The characteristic feature of this paradigm is the locus, government bureaucracy. In addition, Goodnow (1900) uttered politics has to do with policies (expressions of the state will) whereas administration has to do with the execution of these policies that support the notion of politics-administration dichotomy (Henry 1975). The paradigm two (1927-1937) was focus oriented where focus was on managerial expertise as indicated by F. W. Willoughby about the existence of scientific principles of administration through which administrators could become the expert. The change in the administration model was due to the industrial and economic growth in western countries where demand of managerial expertise was high in both public and private sectors. In 1937, Luther H. Gullick and Lyndall Urwick promoted seven principles of administration popular known as POSDCoRB that emphasizes managerial aspect of public administration (Henry 1975). In 1940, two directions took place for public administration; one opposing the distinction between politics and administration and the other objection was that the administration principles were nominal to the ultimate expression of managerial rationality. Moreover, the next paradigm, between 1950-and 1970, is referred to as public administration as political science. The characteristic of this paradigm is locus that was in government bureaucracy. This paradigm returned to linking political science and public administration (Henry 1975). In parallel, paradigm four occurred during 1956-1970 seeking another alternative where public administration was considered as management. The characteristic of this paradigm was the focus. Focus was on management that offered the field of public administration specialization and expertise due to its sophisticated techniques. Management affected public administration by drawing attention about the meaning of "public" in public administration. Eventually, public administration benefited from the influences of management and one of the influences is the development of methodology from the private sector to implement in the public sector. Public Administration was considered as Public Administration in paradigm five and successful as a study and a practice. During paradigm five (1970), public administration returned to functioning as a governmental bureaucracy (Henry 1975).

Recently, paradigm six from 1990s deals with the perception of the government and its administration. Globalization, Redefinition, and Devolution are the basis for the change in

current trend of public administration. Globalization involves the incorporation of multinational corporations, the internet & communication, worldwide environmental issues, and international trade. These entities are challenging the traditional place of power for governments in worldwide. Similarly, the actual process of governments reinventing themselves is known as Redefinition. The trend of government is shifting from power and hierarchy to collaboration and partnership. Lastly, the participation of individual citizens, groups of citizens, private-public partnerships, nonprofit sector, private sector, public authorities, associations of governments, and other governments are the notion of devolution. In this paradigm, the role of public administration is transformed from controlling the citizens towards providing public policies, laws, organizations, and institutions, which control citizens. Governments are restructuring their organization on the basis of information technologies.

1.2 Models of Public Administration in South Asia

As this paper attempts to discuss different models of public administration, the summary observation made by M. Shamsul Haque 2007, from his study in Southeast Asian countries, can be great sources of research information to get some idea about the historical transformation and development of different models of public administration in the context of South Asia as well. Haque (2007) broadly classified the occurrence of three models of public administration which are briefly discussed as follow.

1.2.1 Colonial Bureaucratic Model

This model of public administration is also known as traditional model of public administration that was emerged from western nation. According to Max Weber, this model is characterized by impersonality, prescribed rules and procedures, official documents, division of labor, hierarchy of authority, meritocracy, and separation of personal life from professional life. Traditional bureaucratic model emphasizes on rationalization of collective action to achieve the highest degree of efficiency (UNDP, 2004). This model which was adopted widely by western countries in their administrative affairs was also applied in their colonies.

In South Asia most of the region was colonized by British Legacy. They used this rigid bureaucratic model with maximum hierarchical loyalty to rule their colonies. But this model was imposed exogenously on developing countries. During colonial rule, these countries held the formal principle of the model but showed considerable deviations in real life practices. However, while adopting this bureaucratic model, the developing countries practiced the features of political neutrality, hierarchical loyalty, merit based selection, highest degree of administrative efficiency, routine, discipline, pragmatic and rational behavior of administrative elites, responsiveness, loyalty to the political regime, separation between public office and private life, paternalistic attitudes of bureaucrats, influential role of bureaucrats in drafting and implementing public policy (Haque 2007).

1.2.2 Post-Colonial Development Model

In post colonization period, state-led socioeconomic development was followed by most of the developing countries so that they could restructure their inherited colonial bureaucracy in favor of development-oriented public administration and this practice was widely known as "Development Administration". Development administration is bit different from rigid colonial bureaucratic model because it focused on the achievement of development

goals like economic growth, poverty eradication, income generation, and nation-building. Moreover, it emphasized on the adoption and implementation of state-led economic plans and programs through a new set of development-oriented public agencies and employees. Thus, we can say that postcolonial developing countries put emphasis on their administrative system to enhance socio-economic progress (Haque 2007). Euro-American traditions and experiences with managing the great depression and postwar European reconstruction underlie this model. The main thrust of this model was to increase and ensure the capacity of state bureaucracy to plan and execute development projects and to use foreign aids efficiently and effectively (Jadoon and Jabeen 2010).

This model was not an indigenous attempt of developing countries; rather it emerged from the prescriptions recommended by international donor agencies for economic development on the one hand and the policy choices made by the ruling elite for rapid socioeconomic development on the other. The practices of public administration in developing countries during postcolonial period are administration enhancing national economic development, meeting demand of international donor agencies (e.g. in the 1950s, United Nations put special emphasis on the transformation of public administration in developing countries in order to effectively implement their development plans and programs.), long-term economic development plans, creation of state enterprises (establishment of National Institute of Development Administration in 1966 in Thailand), emerging alliance between the state and private sector (Haque 2007).

2. Theoretical Analysis

2.1 New Public Management Model

The economic turmoil occurred worldwide during 1970's due to fuel crisis compelled in the transformation of administrative patterns of many countries. As a result, some countries including United Kingdom came up with administrative reforms in the decade of 1970s. Afterward, in 1980s, specifically financial pressures act as a catalyst for the change that pushed most western countries towards a focus on making the public sector more competitive and public administrators more responsive to citizens by offering value for money, flexibility of choice and transparency. Later this movement was referred as New Public Management by academics (Kalimullah, et al 2012). The paradigm shift observed recently in administrative theory and practice globally with greater emphasis on business like institutions, structures and functions brought out market-oriented administrative reforms in developed countries like America, Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. These reforms are now encapsulated as a new model known as New Public Management (Haque 2002).

It is a framework for reorganizing management procedures in the public sector with the aim of greater effectiveness and efficiency. In simple words, under NPM, the public sector has changed from a traditional model towards a performance oriented, citizen centric, transparent and innovative model. The major principle of New Public Management is transformation of public sector from its direct role to as a facilitator and promoting service delivery through downsizing public sector, outsourcing and partnership with the private sector. NPM involves modernization, privatization and minimizing the public sector and focuses on improving human resources, restructuring and repositioning organizations, staff involvement in decision making, relaxing unnecessary controls, clientele-oriented service, contracting out services provided by the state and effective delegation of power. The

practices of NPM is focused in introducing premarket policies (e.g., deregulation, privatization, and liberalization), restructuring public service to achieve service quality and customer satisfaction, emphasis on outputs rather than inputs (result-oriented administration), decentralizing administrative system, delegation of authority and responsibility to agency heads, abolishing unnecessary state agencies, and conversion of public agencies into autonomous public organization (Haque 2007). The doctrine of competition has been central to the development of NPM model rested on economic foundations which defined government activity, policy-making and service delivery (O'Flynn 2007).

2.2 Fred Riggs' Model of Comparative Public Administration

Fred Riggs is one of the very few scholars who contributed hugely to the emergence of comparative public administration and to an in depth understanding of public administration in developing countries [9]. In the beginning, Riggs developed a bipolar analytical framework known as the so-called agraria-industria model, where public administration was distinct between the traditional agrarian societies and modern industrial nations. While the *agraria* is characterized by self-contained and agriculture-based economy, family-based organization, authority source, and communalistic value; the *industria* possesses interdependent market economy, secular authority, achievement-oriented organization, individualistic value, and so on. There was a fusion of politics-administration in the administrative system in the agrarian whereas in industria was based on division of politics administration, impersonal human relation, specialism, and practical action (Riggs 1961).

However, these extreme ideal models were insufficient to elucidate the societal nature and administration in the post colonial developing nations and Riggs was searching for a more appropriate model. Fred Riggs in 1964 eventually came up with the prismatic model to elucidate these transitional nations. Riggs uttered this prismatic model based on the metaphor of prism – as the fused white sunlight (the fusion of several colors) passes through a prism; it becomes diffracted into several separate colors. Here the fused light signifies the fused structures of traditional society (single structure performing all necessary functions); the diffracted colors represent the specialized structures of modern society (separate institutions for key functions); and the condition within the prism (a transitional phase between the fused and diffracted stages) reflects the condition in developing nations, defined as prismatic societies (Riggs 1964).

In explicating the administration in prismatic societies, Riggs scientifically used an ecological approach to investigate their non administrative sphere of society, culture, politics, and economy, and. Generally, these kind of prismatic societies are distinguished by heterogeneity (existence of both the traditional and the modern together), formalism (gap between theory and practice), and functional overlaps (different institutions performing analogous functions). These features are reflected in the prevalence of poly-communalism in society (Influence of suspicion and distrust while interaction among communities); the bazaar-canteen model economy and its price-indeterminacy (due to the influence of social status, bargaining capacity, and official position on economic behavior); and poly-normativism while making decision (signifying the use of both rational and non rational criteria). Riggs utters that these ecological or contextual factors play significant role in shaping the nature of public administration in developing nations, that Riggs presents as SALA MODEL administration exemplified by the coexistence of universal official norms and respect for traditions, which is reflected in the influence of family and community on

official decisions (e.g. nepotism and favoritism); prevalence of both ascription and achievement criteria leading to the attainment norms in public offices; and so on (Chakrabarty and Chand 2012).

3. Methodology

This paper is developed on the basis of empirical evidence and study from the secondary sources of literature such as journal articles, published books and book chapters. Though there is no primary data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 State of Public Administration in South Asia

Most of the countries in South Asia like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, except Nepal and Bhutan were rule by British government almost for 200 years. The Indian subcontinent (present-day nations of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) were colonized by British from 1757 and lasted until 1947 (Iyer L., 2004). Thus, South Asian nations sharing a common past have different practices of public administration from ancient and colonial roots to present day central bureaucracy that is still influential in society (Sabharwal and Berman 2013). The first known bureaucratic administration in Indian sub-continent was Mauryan administration (320-185 BC) as written in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Mauryan Administration was the first public administration in its true sense because it was hierarchical, meritocracy, salaried, run by full time employees (on the basis of written documented), and divided into department. This regime was also known as Elitist Meritocracy (Sabharwal and Berman 2013).

Sabharwal and Berman (2013) mention about King Ashoka (304-232 BC) who strengthened the administrative machinery by reforming justice, local government and welfare and established the structural foundation of modern day public administration. The concept of decentralization further took root during the Gupta administration during 300-600 AD. The Mughal Empire in Medieval period (1200-1765 AD) is characterized by centralized and militaristic for of governance where administration was centered on the monarch and the system of Mansabdari (rank-in person system of higher bureaucracy) was introduced. Thus Mughal administration was a bureaucratic organization with unified hierarchy and uniform career management (Sabharwal and Berman 2013). The strong hierarchical structure of bureaucracy that is prevalent today in south Asian administration was originated from the historical practice that was even before British colonization.

In context of colonization period, the regulating Act 1773 set the foundation of central administration of east India Company transforming it from commercial administration into a political government in the Indian subcontinent. British introduced the federal form of government, which continues to be operational in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The secretariats, ministries, departments, tenure system etc are all established and nurtured by during the British regime, which is being continued even today. Thus strong bureaucracy and structure of governance (parliamentary system of government) and Indian civil service (ICS) are the biggest legacies of British regime and the political and administrative structures implanted by them sustained in India long after their departure. (Sabharwal and Berman 2013).

Thus, the Weberian bureaucratic model of public administration was imposed in the administrative sector of South Asian nation like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh but it is bit different in case of Sri-Lanka since it was colonized by Portuguese, Dutch and British regime. Nepal had no history of colonization so; the administrative system in case of Nepal is mixture of traditional kingship model and the imported bureaucratic model from British during their regime in Indian sub-continent. Furthermore, Nepal inevitably has adopted many administrative models that are developed and practiced by western developed countries. The various administrative reforms occurred in Nepal with course of time but Nepal also is facing many challenges in implementing the modern public administrative models. Bhutan being never colonized has its own Kingship administrative model and is still following the same but with some administrative reforms.

4.2 Transformation of Public Administration in South Asia

The decolonization era started with the end of Second World War but with the independence, many countries faced several problems regarding social and economic development (Haynes 2008). There was a serious need of improving various sectors of nation like such as agriculture, industry, trade, and banking. On the other hand, there was no concept of private sector involvement for development projects. So, governments with democracy after decolonization themselves were vanguard for building up the country, developing infrastructure, and providing public services (Sharma 2007). Post-colonial development model was not up to the expectation for strengthening administrative capacity necessary for the economic development of South Asia countries. The over-reliance on the governments to undertake activities and the prevalence of different forms of corruption, nepotism, and inefficient bureaucratic characteristics was realized by South Asian countries. In 1980s, international donors recommended the introduction of economic and political reforms in these developing countries with the aim of promoting decentralization, public private partnership (PPP) schemes to encourage private sector growth, and privatization & market-orientation in order to improve the economic performance and alleviate poverty. The introduction of this new model in public administration was popularly known as New Public Management (NPM) (Sharma 2007).

However, some developing countries are not capable of practicing all the characteristics of NPM due to various reasons. Among them politicization of civil service, corruption, bribery, partisan etc. are important reasons. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka politicized civil service could not implement NPM practices. Bangladesh attempts to reduce the size of public bureaucracy but was not very successful because of dysfunctional democracy, corruption and politicization of the public management system (Haque 2007).

4.3 Challenges of Public Administration in South Asia

The increase in the variety, number and complexity of functions that have to be performed by the modern State (countries freed from colonization) has resulted in an administrative lag. The major constituents of challenges for national development are a severe imbalance that exists between aspirations and performance, between the needs to be met and the adequacy of the administrative machinery to carry them out. It is therefore a necessity to develop the administrative capacity to implement programs of economic and social progress for developing nations. Establishing an effective and efficient administration

is a long and painful task even for advanced countries with a long history of administrative progress. Moreover, in context of developing countries like in South Asia, where sudden demands on government is foremost, administrative improvement is crucial which requires a new sense of direction and a determination to overcome many challenges. Administrative reform requires a high standard of leadership, sustained and continuous attention and a sizable commitment in terms of men, money and material (United Nations 1961).

South Asian countries have been adopting the models of public administration that are designed and successfully implemented by western developed countries. Despite of various transformations based in the public administration South Asian countries, the new models could not be viable in terms of outputs and outcomes because the economic, geo-political, cultural, and ethnic issues of the countries were the determinants to establish those administrative reforms. NPM tends to be an effective model that has assisted many developed countries in surmounting the problems created by the old model of public management; however, the success of NPM in developed countries does not guarantee that it will be successful also in developing countries in the same way. Despite the fact that the NPM model aims for accountability, transparency as well as the eradication of corruption in the public sector but it tends to create the opposite effect, leading to higher rate of corruption in case of developing countries (Ibrahim 2012). In contrast, Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia are comparatively successful regarding the practice of new model of public administration like New Public Management because they took the western model and locally customize according to their national context. However, the degree of success and failure also varies within Southeast Asian region that can be seen if we compare countries like Veitnam, Combodia, and Loas with Singapore and Malaysia (Haque 2007).

4.4 Impact of Socio-Cultural Practices in Public Administration of South Asia

In a study about cross-country analysis, Samaratunge, Alam, and Teicher (2008) recognized the factors that contribute to the problems of public sector reforms in South and Southeast Asian nations. Some initiatives of new public management (NPM) were explored in four South and Southeast Asian countries, namely: Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Scholars revealed that the contextual factors such as political history, party politics, macroeconomic considerations, state tradition, role of International Development Agencies (IDAs) and the state of civil society, have played a determining role for which Singapore and Malaysia are relatively successful on their own terms compared to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in public management reforms (Samaratunge, et al. 2008).

Sabharwal and Berman states that the Mughal administration was a bureaucratic organization with the system of checks and balances and a rigid hierarchy that involves endless paper work and filling at all levels are still prevalent in South Asia. This is the historical as well as cultural practices that still affect in shaping the strong hierarchical structure of public administration in South Asia. Similarly, the society of India as well Nepal is divided mainly into four castes based on the occupations (Brahimin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) from the historical time (Sabharwal and Berman 2013). This caste system is still prevalent and is a huge topic for debate in India and Nepal but relatively less in other countries of South Asia. Today, the caste system is the basis on which quotas for jobs and education are decided in India and Nepal as well as a source of some social problems requiring policy responses.

Correspondingly, the socio-cultural orientation of society can shape the administrative culture of country. Although Nepal has made an attempt to adopt the new administrative models like NPM, it could not be successfully institutionalized in government system. The major challenges are associated with socio-cultural and socio-economic orientation, that is: administrative system is still characterized by slow service delivery as a result of the hierarchical nature of public sector organizations; the lack of people orientation among public servants; and mostly the corruption is acknowledged to be a problem related with low salaries, benefits and opportunities. In addition, the dominant administrative culture such as formality rather than a process, dominance of seniority over merit, and poor accountability are rampant in public organization. Another challenges for administrative reform is that the Nepalese bureaucracy narrowly represents of Nepalese society, as few higher castes dominate public service employment (UNDP 2005).

Similarly, Bangladesh's public administration is an account of the interaction between traditional and modern administrative norms and practices (Masud 2013). Bangladesh has a long history of a well-organized bureaucracy from the beginning of colonization that continued the bureaucratic emphasis in public administration. Bangladesh already possessed the basic elements of a modern bureaucracy by the time of it seceded from Pakistan. Though, it was believed that through reform and nationalist commitment, an efficient and effective system of public administration could be produced by removing the bureaucracy's elitist character, illiberal outlook, formalistic operational style, intolerance of politicians and dogmatic, patronizing attitude this optimistic scenario has not come to be; instead there has been little progress in public administration reform. The major challenges are found to be maintenance of status quo, minor incremental reforms in the bureaucracy, little enthusiasm in government to advocate more radical changes, and opposition of elite civil servants to major change. The largely centralized public administration, excessively reliant on hierarchy and multiple layers of decision-making always hindered the institutionalization of innovative models of public administration (Keuleers 2004).

Bhutan is one of the last countries in the Asia- Pacific region to establish a modern system of public administration and has cautiously opened up to external influences and the idea of modernization. Gross National Happiness (GNH) defines Bhutan's national identity because GNH rather than Gross National Product (GNP) is the measure of success for Bhutanese development. Much administrative reform activity has focused on strengthening the institutional capacities of the public service, decentralization, and promotion of the private sector. The administrative reforms in Bhutan are long-term affair and are still incomplete. The socio-cultural practice of monarchy system in public affairs is still prevalent and the strong hierarchical system and traditional values in the society are some of the challenges for adoption and implementation of western models of public administration in Bhutan. However, the Government's policy of decentralization and increase in people's participation are positive signs of innovative administrative practices as compared to other countries in South Asia (UNDP 2005).

Sri Lanka is attempting to institutionalize new administrative since 1970 but has made little beneficial effect on improving administration and alleviating poverty. The major obstacles for administrative reforms are: inter-service rivalry undermining the efficiency of the bureaucracy; politicization of the civil service weakening meritocracy, dominance of patronage in public administration; reluctant public officers; in-fighting between administrative factions; low implementation priorities; absence of inter-agency coordinating

mechanisms; and lack of power or control over human resources and financial matters among decentralized authorities are revealed as major factors in avoidance of administrative reform (UNDP 2005).

4.5 Political Scenario: Shaping Public Administration of South Asia

It is difficult to sustain political support to implement imposed or adopted public administration models if government changes frequently, such as in countries like Nepal. Despite of stable governments coming into power, most of the time, there are coalition governments more interested in immediate political gains than in profound reform of any kind. Even when governments are in power they tend to be continuously in an electoral mood with the implication that reforms, synonymous with change, never become a priority (Chittoo, et al. 2009). The scenario of South Asian countries pretty resembles above situation and political parties in South Asia persistently goes through these kinds of tag war of political power. The influence of national and international politics is always prevailing behind the effective implementation of trendy public administrative models. The newly independent nations of South Asia faced challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, low levels of agricultural and industrial productivity and health problems related development issues. In order to overcome this impediment, South Asian nations adopted development model that was conceptualized and elaborated by Western (American scholars) as strategy against insurgency and the growth of communism in the third world (Basu 2004).

Despite of several initiatives to impose or borrow the advance administrative models, there have been considerable gap between the main tenets of these models and the actual administrative practices pursued by south Asian countries. Some of the major challenges are that the state institution in Asia is much less institutionalized and the civil service system is less neutral and more vulnerable to political influence. So this theory- practice gap is present in south Asian countries but absent in western countries which ultimately shows the reason of inappropriateness of models in case of developing countries (Haque 2007). New Public Management tends to be an effective model that has assisted many developed countries in overcoming the problems generated by the old public management model but the success of NPM in developed countries does not necessarily mean that it will help developing countries in the same way. Despite the fact that the NPM model aims for transparency and the eradication of corruption in the public sector but it tends to create the opposite effect, leading to higher rate of corruption in case of developing countries (Ibrahim 2012).

In case of Nepal, Maoist insurgency, political instability, and unfavorable developments in the global economy are the major culprits and constraints for effective implementation of NPM. Moreover, political scenario is closely linked with the performance of overall administrative system thus restricting or favoring the governance of a nation. Lack of efficiency and effectiveness in a bureaucracy of Nepal seems to suffer from a multitude of ailments. Ineffective government formed by short term political coalition, poor resource allocation, weak implementation and service delivery performance and corruption and leakages are key determinants of weak governance in Nepal. Improvements in governance are key requirements for Nepal's development and public administration reform is seen as a key component of governance in generating progress (UNDP 2005). To institutionalize and effectively implement such new concepts in public administration, unstable political situation and short period government formed on the political coalition are major challenges. Similarly, corruption, politicization of the bureaucracy, inability to learn from the successful

reforms of other countries, doubt of the government itself on commitment on new administrative reforms and above all the political battles between the two leading political parties cause little progress in establishing the current public administration models such as NPM in Bangladesh (UNDP 2005).

In Sri Lanka, the major reasons for subsequent failures in public administration reforms are; lack of political commitment, resistance from within the civil service, piecemeal approaches and the absence of permanent institutional settings to entrench the reform process. Presidential Administrative Reforms Committee outlined many major reforms since 1990s; however, resistance among political actors and within the bureaucracy itself resulted in a loss of momentum and direction without any tangible outcome (ADB, 2004).

Conclusion

Public administration in South Asian countries is characterized by hierarchy in bureaucracy long before colonial period; however traditional model of bureaucracy was adopted during British legacy. Most of the modern states of South Asia, freed from colonization, suffered from various social and economic problems after Second World War. In order to cope up with these socioeconomic challenges, South Asian countries adopted the administrative developmental model after decolonization, popularly known as post colonial development model with the aim of state-led socioeconomic development to restructure their inherited colonial bureaucracy in favor of development-oriented public administration. However, the government alone was unable to carry out the entire development and there was serious need of involvement of private sector especially for the socio-economic development. Consequently, there was paradigm shift in administrative theory and practice globally with greater emphasis on business like institutions, structures and functions to bring out market-oriented administrative reforms in and concept of New Public Management was evolved during 1980's. Although NPM was successful in western developed countries like America, Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand, the imposed or imitated NPM could not perform as per the expectation in public administration arena of South Asian countries. Fred Riggs model of prismatic society brilliantly explains the reason behind this failure of NPM and other innovative model of public administration in developing nations. As suggested by Riggs, various socio-cultural and political scenario need to be considered while adopting and implementing these models. The major challenges associated with public administration in South Asian countries are rigid hierarchy, corruption, dysfunctional bureaucracy exemplified by red-tapism. Moreover, public administration in South Asian countries is characterized by formalism, heterogeneity, and functional overlaps that are the reflection of societal and political culture prevailed by poly-communalism and poly-normativism. Hence, to establish more realistic and need-based administrative models, the relevancy of the administrative system needs to be critically scrutinized on the basis of native social-cultural and political contexts rather than arbitrarily imitating them in a hasty fashion.

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