

EDITORIAL NOTE

In preparing for the fifth edition of *Comparative Studies of Public Administration*, several of us who have been involved in this project as members of the editorial committee met a number of times to decide on a specific topic for the present issue. During these meetings a host of significant ideas emerged. Some suggested administrative reforms and center-local relationships, while others recommended a new format for public administration as the central theme of the upcoming publication. Although these questions were important and stimulating, we concluded our prolonged discussions believing that "human resource development in public administration" should be the topic for the fifth edition of this important project for a number of reasons.

First, in both developed and developing countries, human resource development seems to have become highly critical for sustainable growth in the next decade and beyond. It has been frequently pointed out that the progress in the area of human resource development in developing nations seems to hold the key to success in economic growth and political development. Likewise, a growing number of specialists also argue an eminent need for human resource improvement in developed nations. In the face of recession and growing social problems, many developed countries, too, require a group of public officials who are equipped with a refreshing concept of public management.

However, a large number of countries, regardless of the level of economic development, commonly show that they have frequently failed to take full advantage of their human resource potential. Instead, these nations have, as often as not, developed a score of social impediments which tend to generate an untoward effect on the full employment of their human resource capabilities. Gender discrimination is one of the universal problems, while cultural and ethnic prejudice is another issue having

a direct bearing on the deficiency of human resource development in both developed and developing nations.

These questions lead to another set of problems. As the twenty-first century approaches, two trends of international significance have become highly conspicuous. They are the development of information technologies, on one hand, and the globalization of national economies, on the other. The invention of new communication technology such as fax machines and computer mail have literally made the world extremely small, even to the extent that national boundaries have frequently become irrelevant. Similarly, because of the growth of new tele-communication networks, billions of dollars will be transmitted across national borders with a flip of a computer switch. National economies are, more than ever before, closely linked to the system of international economies.

According to experts, the current "borderless" trend will further continue and eventually undermine the role of the public sector in many nations. Postal service is one of the cases in point. Although it has usually run by the public sector in most of the countries, the growth of Email networks has reduced the function of the postal service to the degree that, in several countries, it will eventually go private. In the face of these unsettling prospects in the public sector, a strong need exists in both developed and developing countries to nurture a new and competent group of public officials. These people should have an innovative vision of governance and a rational sense of public administration. Being furnished with these qualities, they will be better equipped to steer their respective countries through a sea of trouble and difficulty.

For any nation, securing such capable public officials is an awesome task; nonetheless, a number of measures can be initiated. First and foremost, the recruitment process must become open and fair, at the same time, remaining competitive. In this regard, many nations must work hard to alleviate gender discrimination and any other social and cultural biases. As previously noted, these have been among the most significant

impediments to the complete utilization of human resource potential. Additionally, job training of officials must also be stressed and institutionalized. It is through a structured training process that any nation will be able to produce a supply of competent public officials. Particularly in developing economies, job training seems inextricable from success in economic development and modern nation building. This has probably been already recognized, but the actual operations in many countries indicate that the programs still leave much to be desired, as a number of articles in this volume later make clear.

The fifth edition of *Comparative Studies of Public Administration* has a total of ten articles. This special issue starts off with Jong S. Jun's article, "Managing Cultural Diversity : Human Resource Development in American Public Organizations." In this monograph, the author focuses on the United States and points out that, "as cultural and ethnic diversity expands, employees of the future will look and behave differently than they did in the past." This is followed by Tae-Kwon Ha's "Selection of the Korean Civil Service : Policies, Practices, and Consequences." The major thrust of this report is that, in the Korean civil service, such "irrational" variables as one's birth place, school-ties, and gender quite frequently become decisive in determining one's employment in the public sector.

Two authors deal with the same issue of the lack of women's public advancement in Asian countries. Lim Teck Ghee centers on Malaysia and elaborates a number of constraints that women must face in the job market in Southeast Asian countries. Similarly, Hiroko Hashimoto compares the public role of women in Thailand and Japan with those in other regions of Asia. The author has found several lamentable results of women's public advancements in these areas.

As far as the role of women is concerned, the Philippines is perhaps an exception in Asia. Celenia L. Jamig describes that the country's present development program will make women one of the most impor-

tant components of Philippine development. Likewise, Peter Mayer presents a highly interesting Australian case. In Australia, the author remarks that sex discrimination in employment is forbidden by law: consequently, a large number of women have attained high public posts in different levels of governments.

Human resource development is of critical significance in developing economies. Three papers address this issue in three different settings. A. L. Amarasinghe elucidates the problem of human resource development from a historical perspective in Sri Lanka, while R. B. Jain notes the evolution of government human resource development programs in India. In a similar vein, Michael Hodd depicts the state of affairs in Africa and contends that African countries desperately need food and education, which form the basics for their human resource development.

Finally Yoshihiro Tabe of Japan's Local Autonomy College identifies several prominent issues in local governments of the country. From his perspective, public entities have increasingly come to deal with a growing number of different and diverse problems. He remarks that these new difficulties are arising mainly because of globalization of the economy and development of information technology. In light of rapid social and economic transformation, the author believes that there is a significant need to train Japan's local public personnel.

Akira NAKAMURA
Professor and Chair
Meiji University
Tokyo, Japan