

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS DECENTRALIZATION

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I. Decentralization in Sri Lanka

Kings have been ruling Sri Lanka from very early times going back to the 3rd and 4th Centuries BC. Pandukabhaya ruled Sri Lanka from Anuradhapura for seventy years. He built his capital on a plan and made it a satellite city. During his period the whole country was divided into thousands of "Grams" -villages- by defining boundaries for administrative purposes¹. City had a separate administration as well as all villages. Committees drawn from elders of villages were looking after matters of local interests, eg. law and order, irrigation, lands and customs.

Early migrants had established these settlements in the North West, West, East, South Eastern river basins. When Anuradhapura became the capital, far off places like down south and west had remote control from the city. Therefore regional princes had been ruling the west and south. Thus Sri Lanka had three distinct regions called "Ratas" Ruhunu (South), Maya (West) and Pihiti (North Central).

When Portugueses arrived in Sri Lanka in 1505 AD they found in addition to the King who ruled from 'Kotte' two other 'Samanthas' one from the hill country and another from the North and also number of Vanniyars who were in charge of very remote areas of Sri Lanka².

Under the British occupation (1815 AD) a system of central administration was introduced. Traditions and institutions of local and regional rule disappeared gradually. In its place were Government Agents (District Commissioners/Prefects) in charge of provinces. They were primarily responsible for collection of revenue, later they became the real government at the provincial level looking after most of the functions. Local Governments were constituted for urban areas first and then in rural areas by assigning them some local revenues and local responsibilities.

All classical forms of decentralisation have not been strange to Sri Lanka but the scope of this paper may not permit comprehensive discussion. Hence as prelude to the main theme some attempts taken by Sri Lanka recently towards decentralization, will be discussed.

Sri Lanka has a population of 17.5 million living within an area of 64,628 Sq. Kilometres. Sri Lankan society represents a diversity, in terms of racial-religious and regional-linguistic groupings. Multi ethnic configuration of Sri Lanka has been a consequence, to considerable extent by its proximity to India and distance from any other country. The Indian influence figured prominently in the earliest socio-political development in Sri Lanka. The ancestry of Sinhalese the majority community 74% of the population, and Tamils, largest minority 18% of the population can be traced to migrations from Northern and Southern India³. Muslims account for 7.1% of the population and Europeans, Burgers and Malays for 1%.

Decentralization in unitary states embraces two complementary and inter related practices. One is commonly known as devolution, where in the authority to make certain decisions and some spheres of public policy is delegated by law to sub national assemblies and the other is known as de-concentration within bureaucracy involving the delegation of authority to make administrative decisions on behalf of the central administration.⁴

During the 1970s many governments in Asia, Latin America and Africa began to experiment with new approaches of decentralization. According to Cheema and Rondinelli⁵ there were three reasons behind these attempts: disillusionment with the results of central planning, requirements arisen in managing the development programs and the difficulty in managing the increased volume of government activities.

In addition the demand for regional autonomy by Tamils in the North was another dimension behind the Sri Lankan attempts of decentralization.

DISTRICT POLITICAL AUTHORITY (DPA)

In achieving better coordination in the food production drive which had to cut across the boundaries of functional ministry structures in the districts, a senior politician (Deputy Minister) was appointed as the District Political Authority (DPA) in 1973. The Government Agent (Prefect/District Commissioner) was made to work with DPA.

To strengthen his existence, financial allocations were made in the form of a decentralized budget (DCB) out of which expenditures were incurred on politically decided priorities by the DPA. This practice was extended to cover all Members of Parliament within the district with expanded allocations flowing in, to make their own priorities in their constituencies through the DPA. Commencing from the infrastructure needed for food production the scope of DCB was widened to the areas of health, education, small industries and social services. Ministerial allocations except for major capital developments were pooled into the DCB. A part of development grants meant for local authorities were also pooled.

DISTRICT MINISTER SYSTEM (DM)

DPA as an institution was recognised in the 1978 constitution in a new designation, District Minister (Minister who shall not be a Member

of the Cabinet of Ministers). Government Agent (GA), the head of the administrative district in line with the un-integrated prefectoral system became the District Secretary (DS). DCB continued to support the system and the accountability was established by making DS the accounting officer. Thus twenty four District Ministers were providing the political direction for the de-concentrated administrative structures through out the country, at the sub-national level.

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS (DDC)

Act No. 32 of 1980 enabled the establishment of twenty four District Development Councils (DDCs), one for each district. They were elected bodies. The representation was by directly elected councillors and the Members of Parliament of the district. The executive committee of the DDC was chaired by the District Minister and included the Chairman of the Council and two members. DS became the Secretary to the Council.

Town Councils and Village Councils (two smaller and rural types of local authorities) were integrated into the DDCs. Elections for the DDCs were conducted under the proportional representation system (PR) and the whole district was considered as one single electorate, thereby the wards disappeared. Two supportive institutions one at the village level called Gramodaya Mandalayas (GM), comprising heads of all voluntary agencies operating at the village level, and another at the divisional level comprising Chairmen of all GMs in the division, which called the Pradeshiya Mandalaya were also established. This was an attempt to maintain the linkages with the grass roots which was not recognised by the law makers.

DDCs prepared an annual development plan and executed it. They were more dependent on the decentralized budget and other government grants. They were supposed to be more than local governments, and executed more powers and functions to be delegated by the central ministries which did hardly happen. DDCs were constituted as an

attempt to pacify the demands for regional autonomy especially by the Tamils.

REASONS FOR FAILURE OF DPA, DM AND DDCS

Wijeweera⁶ comments on the DPA as an experiment in government which is to his knowledge has no parallel in countries following Parliamentary Cabinet type of governing practices. Slater⁷ mentions this as a means of creating effective political leadership at the district level through the appointment of a senior politician who could act as a check on the bureaucracy at a critical point of administrative intervention.

He suggests that the DCB at best would be seen in a paternalistic light as providing political leadership with the means of managing and directing local development efforts. At worst it was outright vote procurement, Slater concludes that instead of decentralization one can see it was an effort to impose central objectives with disbursed funds thus consolidating the local support.

Integration of small units of local governments TCs and VCs into DDCs could be seen as a centralisation of Local Government in the district capital.

Central ministries were reluctant to delegate some of their functions and provide part of their funds to the DDCs as was intended earlier. DDCs executed District Development Plans prepared on the basis of political priorities using DCB provisions.

The DPA was existing only for four years in its original form. DM and the DDCs were of existence for eight and six years respectively. At the inception these institutions were considered to be innovative and to be potentially effective instruments for decentralization. But they did not live up-to the expectations and were replaced by Pradeshiya Sabhas. "DDCs were seen by its supporters as the most far reaching innovation in the district administration in the post independence-Sri Lanka but it has been recently superseded by the lower tier Pradeshiya Sabhas". Oberst⁸

outlines some issues relating to the failure of decentralization policies.

- (a) Lack of decentralization in the administrative apparatus of departments.
- (b) Limited amount of cooperation from the departmental officers involved in the district budget.
- (c) First priority being placed in their own departmental projects.

He has come to a general conclusion that if decentralisation is to work in Sri Lanka and other nations, it must acknowledge the administrative apparatus, be aware of the power alliances with the apparatus, be aware of the power alliances with the apparatus, and correct the general tendency for those with power to recover professional treatment at the expense of others who may have equally justified projects.

PRADESHIYA SABHAS (DIVISIONAL COUNCILS)

The establishment of 257 Pradeshiya Sabhas (PSS) in 1987 marked an extensive attempt of decentralization. There were many reasons behind the constitution of PSS. DDCs had been executing local government functions through Sub Offices i.e. for TCs and VCs. There was not enough representation in the DDCs.

ELECTED MEMBERS IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Former TCs and VCs were smaller units, financially not viable to function as local governments.

Administrative division of the Assistant Government Agent was considered more important as it was the former Parliamentary electorate, and suitable for the constitution of a viable PS. Hence in most cases the AGA division falls coterminous with the PS area.

PS is an elected body corporate, and the elections are held once in four years. Chief Executive of the PS is the elected Chairman. Elected council operates as the policy making body. Powers, duties and responsi-

District	No of		Total members in no of			Total Members in PSs
	TCs	VCs	TCs & VCs	DCS	PSs	
Colombo	6	8	165	16	6	134
Gam paha	9	29	521	12	11	258
Kalutara	6	18	348	8	10	190
Kandy	2	45	674	13	17	263
Matale	3	21	333	3	11	124
N'Eliya	1	19	305	5	5	112
Galle	7	37	465	9	15	210
Matara	2	23	352	6	12	176
Hambantota	4	10	211	3	9	120
Jaffna	9	45	603	10	12	173*
Kilinochchi	—	—	—	—	3	38*
Mannar	1	15	166	4	4	44*
Vavunia	—	9	108	4	4	41*
Mulativu	1	10	38	4	4	38*
Batticaloa	2	18	173	3	11	109*
Ampara	2	21	188	4	15	174*
Trincomalee	3	23	200	2	10	94*
Kurunegala	3	49	612	13	17	308
Puttalam	5	19	289	4	10	141
Anuradhapura	1	32	523	6	18	193
Polonnaruwa	2	8	147	2	6	82
Badulla	4	32	376	8	14	183
Moneragala	1	14	158	2	10	104
Ratnapura	3	24	424	7	13	203
Kegalle	6	19	402	8	10	184
	83	548	7781	156	257	3696

*Elections could not be held in 1991

bilities of the PSS are similar to those of Urban Local Authorities, but they are to some extent less autonomous. Provisional Commissioners of Local Government and the Assistant Commissioners of Local Govern-

ment are appointed to supervise, guide and control the activities of PSS. Some PSS have an adequate revenue base but majority do not and depend heavily on government grants.

More than 75% of the population is rural and served by the PSS and they are therefore more closer to the people. Despite resource and management inadequacies PSS have a wider scope for becoming development facilitating agencies.

There are 257 PSS constituted throughout the country. Local elections held during 1991 returned 196 PSS elected having 196 elected chief executives and about 2105 councillor-policy makers.

URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Urban Local Authorities are Municipal Councils (MCs) and Urban Councils (UCs).

There are twelve MCs and thirty nine UCs in Sri Lanka.

Local elections were not held between 1969 and 1979 and ULAs were under the administration of Special Commissioners. Subsequently elections were held in 1979 under the PR system returning 51 ULAs elected.

As in the case of the PSs the Mayors and Chairmen of ULAs are chief executives and councillors are policy makers. Last elections were held in 1991.

ULAs were considered more autonomous and have more resources compared to PSs. However during 1980 the services provided by the ULAs were far from satisfactory⁹. Furthermore they were increasingly dependent on government grants.

And as part of the decentralization strategy the government initiated action in 1985 to strengthen the management capacity of ULAs providing technical assistance and training support through an IDA funded Municipal Management Project (MMP). Phase Four¹⁰ of the project which is now on has included PSs and the Provincial Local Government Agencies, as the subject of local government being now devolved to the Provincial

Councils established in 1988.

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Provincial Councils (PCs) were established in 1988. The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka was amended for enabling provisions to be made¹¹. In each province there is a PC but at the start for Northern and Eastern Provinces a single council has been established subject to its continuity or separation pending a decision made at a referendum. The agitation for regional autonomy by the Tamils in the North could not find agreement among the majority since the independence. The demand for regional autonomy began expanding through a federal state to a separate state. Intermittent communal violence and the armed struggle became a regional and geo-political issue.

The Tamil militants have virtually rejected the PCs. The North Eastern PC is not functioning at the moment but the rest are functioning. The total electorate is sceptical about the appropriateness and the sustainability of the system.

However the establishment of PCs is a giant stride towards decentralization in Sri Lanka devolving 37 subjects to the PCs fully and holding concurrent responsibility for another 36 subjects.

The PC is an elected body and the elections are held once in five years. The first election was held in 1988 and the second in 1993. Its legislature is comprised of elected members and the executive is the Governor appointed by the President. The Governor is responsible for the execution of policies and statutes made by the PC on devolved subjects, through Board of Provincial Ministers including the Chief Minister and four others.

A provincial public service has been constituted for each Province in support for the executive. Senior level administrators such as members of Sri Lanka Administrative Service have been seconded to the Provincial Public Service to man managerial positions.

DECONCENTRATED ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

Provinces have been too large as administrative regions. Hence Sri Lanka has been divided into twenty five districts for administrative purposes. The Government Agent (GA) who was responsible to the Home Ministry at the centre and being the head of the district has been playing three major roles¹². (Former GAs were in line with integrated prefects in other countries, subsequently their powers were reduced at creation of Line Ministries with sector responsibilities).

- 1) Statutory head of the district organizations of central ministries eg. district administration, lands, rural development.
- 2) Role to be played as a result of policy thrusts, food production, agriculture, cooperatives.
- 3) No formal control but has the authority to coordinate eg. irrigation, survey, forestry health, local government.

Under the recent package of decentralization district is no longer important except for a few government functions such as elections, census and statistics. District Agricultural Committee, District Coordination Committee and District Budget etc.

DIVISIONAL SECRETARIATS

The Division has now been considered most important as the administrative level not only for regulatory functions but specially for development functions. The division was earlier under the Assistant Government Agent (AGA). Now the AGA's office at the division has been upgraded as the Divisional Secretariat with a very senior officer appointed by the Cabinet as the Divisional Secretary (DS).

The DS functions under authority from the following :

- Statutory authority : Act No.58 of 1992 (GA's powers transferred)
- Delegations by Line Ministries

—Delegations by the Provincial Council

—There are 268 Divisional Secretariats established to date. The objectives of setting up DSs will be discussed later in this monograph.

A CASE FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

National Policy

Improvement of productive performance of the public service and the enhancement of the personal development of its members through the establishment and operation of effective training programs is the accepted national policy of Sri Lanka¹³.

In line with the accepted national policy all Ministries, Departments, Provincial Councils and Local Authorities should pursue action including the provision of budgetary resources and of manpower to ensure that public servants are effectively trained.

Responsibility i. for training has been placed on the head of each Ministry, department, office or agency.
ii. for providing leadership, and coordination for all training activities on the Ministry of Public Service which is to be created,
and
iii. For planning, programming, financing, operating and evaluating training programs on each head of ministry, department or the local authority.

Heavier commitment on training as per above has been emphasized on each Ministry, head of Department or Provincial Council or Local Authority. Accordingly they should

(a) Foster employee self development by creating a work environment which will motivate employees towards self improvement and by ensuring that training opportunities and self improvement materials are provided to them.

- (b) Ensure that all promotions are based on merit as demonstrated by employee performance.
- (c) Establish a training cell/unit headed by a senior and trained Training Officer who shall be responsible for preparation and implementing annual training plan.
- (d) Ensure that all supervisory officers receive a comprehensive training in training techniques and methodology and that all employees receive on the job training.

Also the finances for staff training should be provided for in the annual budgets calculated as a percentage of the total budget of each agency for personnel emoluments, based on a scale.

A sliding scale commencing at five percent of the first one million rupees and reducing there from by 1.0 percent for each additional one million rupees with a minimum of rate of 2 percent.

—Sri Lanka Institute for Development Administration (SLIDA)

—National Institute for Business Management (NIBM) had been identified as lead institutions for training of management grades while Public Service Training Institute for other grades of public service.

Capital cost for establishing these institutions is the governments' responsibility and they have to find their recurrent expenditures by way of service charges from client organizations. Each institute is considered to be semi-autonomous, has its own charter, own board of governors and has resources and staff under its own management.

It is considered that the above training policy has not adequately covered some very important areas where training interventions have a direct impact on both service provision to the constituents and organizational performance. They may not have perceived the need arisen in 1991 with the local elections returning 196 PS Chairmen and 2985 Councilors.

Chairmen of LAs (MCs, UCs & PSs) cannot be considered as merely politicians who take part in policy formulation. Case of Sri Lanka is that they are made Chief Executives of LAs.

—Pradeshiya Sabhas were elected for the first time throughout Sri Lanka.

—They cover almost 80% of the electorate, specially the semi urban and rural sectors.

—The Chairmen and Councillors did not have local government experience because the system was new.

—Amendments to LA election legislation enabled the election of youth (40% of the list of nominations should be reserved for youth between 18-35 years).

—Officer member relationships in these councils were also a new experience for both parties and role clarification, and identification of responsibilities lead to another scope for training intervention.

Except for the International Centre for Training of Rural Leaders (ICTRL) which was established in line with Somaui Undang in Korea to cater specially to voluntary sector in rural developments there is no other training institution to take over the responsibility of the above task. Resources under ICTRL's control were found not adequate enough. Hence the government with its experience of providing TA and training support to ULAs through the Urban Program Unit (UPU) which was established in 1985 to carry out TA/Training programs in assisting ULAs to improve managerial performance directed UPU to provide same support to PSS. As a World Bank funded project UPU could not expand its activities beyond agreed terms of reference, also could not have staff and financial resources to respond to such a massive task.

UPU directorate had to change its strategy of providing assistance to ULAs for this extensive coverage of all LAs giving more emphasis on off the job training followed by onsite TA follow up.

Just after the local government elections in April 1991, Urban Pro-

gram Unit carried out an extensive training program for newly elected chairmen of PSS on Planning and Budgeting. The Department of Local Government, Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs and Provincial Councils and the Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation and Provincial Councils provided direction for the programs and ICTRL providing the institutional back up.

II. TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MAYORS, CHAIRMEN AND COUNCILLORS

The objective of setting up of PSS (may be all LAs) the powers, duties and responsibilities vested upon them, revenue base assigned to finance the delivery of services and the organization will be discussed in brief followed by a detail discussion on the training programs conducted towards the improvement of managerial and leadership skills of elected representatives.

Pradeshiya Sabha Act No.15 of 1987 clearly states why PSs were established.

A PS constituted for each PS area shall be the LA within such area and be charged with the “regulation control and administration of all matters relating to public health, public utility services and public thoroughfares, and generally with the protection and promotion of the comfort convenience and welfare of the people and all amenities within each area¹⁴.”

These functions are known as traditional functions of Local Government and they can be classified as follows :

- a) Local Infrastructure—— Roads & Drains
Traffic
Water supply, sanitation
Street lighting
- b) Environmental/ Road safety

Regulatory	Solid waste disposal & cleaning Planning & development control Vector control Cemeteries & burial grounds
c) Commercial—	Markets/fairs Economics/development/employment generation.
d) Social-Cultural— and Recreational	Personal health clinics/dispensaries libraries parks and gardens playgrounds community centres pre-schools

One may see that the above seems typical to LGs however the policy in establishing PCs clearly indicates that the LAs can be conferred with more powers and responsibilities. But unfortunately no PC has ever attempted to test LA capacity to manage development by assigning more responsibilities and resources.

Services provided by the LAs are poor due to rising costs of operation and maintenance and the inadequate funding available.

Local authorities have been assigned some revenue sources by law. Property rates and license duties, trade taxes, user charges, stamp duties and court fines in some cases are among them. Earlier charges on electricity, before the schemes were taken over by the Lanka Electricity Company and Ceylon Electricity Board was considered a major component. Instead of property rates in urban and developed areas, acreage tax is levied in the rural areas. However local authorities are supported by the grants given by the Provincial Council as is the case in most other countries. Grant component varies from 40% in the urban authorities to about 80-85 in the rural authorities. Collection of rates and taxes stands

generally at lower levels leaving arrears amounting to substantial amounts at the end of each year.

ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

With the mission established by law, and assigned authority with resources local authorities have been given a basic statutory organization comprising two integral components.

1. An elected council with the Mayor/Chairman as the chief executive officer,
2. The officer structure headed by a Commissioner/Secretary being the chief administrative officer

(In municipalities, the Commissioner is the chief executive, next to the Mayor and all other officers are subordinate to him)

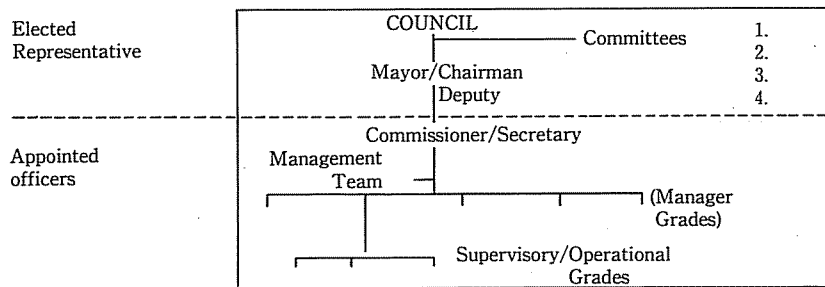
Council comprises of elected representatives, who serve a term four years. Council is the policy making body, meeting once a month formally. Councillors are grouped into committees in MC and PSS. In UCs committees are optional. Committees are set up to deliberate matters referred to in detail with functional officers and make recommendations to the council, to make decision making process more democratic and participatory, ensuring accountability.

Mayor or Chairman in Sri Lankan LAs are more powerful compared to ceremonial Mayors and Chairmen of UK local governments. They have to play the role of a leader towards both the councillors and officers organization thus becoming the integral link. They are empowered to prepare, submit and execute budgets, and made chief accounting officers.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ORGANIZATION

TRAINING NEEDS OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Apparent need for training of Councillors and Mayors/Chairmen was to clarify their roles and relationships with the appointed officers, hori-



zontal linkages with divisional agencies and vertical linkages with provincial and government ministries and departments. In addition, Mayors/Chairmen should have some leadership/managerial skills to play their roles as chief executives, specially establishing direction by way of interpreting political manifesto, to the officer organization. They have to monitor and review council programs, ensuring the constituents of affordable services turned out of optimal utilization of resources, available to the council to be mobilized.

Consultants of the UPU and officers of the Provincial Councils interviewed newly elected councillors on the training needs. Interviewers had wider experience of working in the councils, which certainly was an advantage to perceive the training needs.

A modular training program was designed for both-categories by the UPU and the concurrence of other relevant agencies was obtained.

COUNCILOR TRAINING PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES of the Councilor training program were to

- (a) improve their knowledge on the organizational aspect of Local Government including law.
- (b) Improve their skills in interaction with officers by defining and identifying their respective roles and responsibilities.

- (c) Encouraging them to be active in policy formulation and monitoring projects developed for implementation.
- It was anticipated that 2985 councillors will participate in the training program.
- UPU took the lead role with collaboration of ICTRL providing training management and logistical support.
- Program was residential for four days in batches of 25-30 councillors for each.
- They were selected from several councils, on a provincial basis.
- Lectures, demonstrations, role plays, discussions, representations, group work were used as methodology with audio visuals.
- Subject areas carried were :
 - (a) Powers functions and duties of LAs
 - (b) Legal parameters for LAs to perform
 - (c) Bye Laws-binding council meetings, Committee meetings
 - (d) Council organization, environment (internal/external) and officer relationship.
 - (e) Their role in the annual budget formulation and implementation
 - (e) Formulation of Performance Improvement Plans for the LAs
 - (g) Community participation, empowering people
 - (h) Project screening through RRAs and PRAs.

Each session was evaluated by participants and their views were taken care with for planning the follow on sessions. At informal interviews the general opinion found was that the program was useful. Chairmen were the most satisfied lot, when the councillors returned after training and the Chairmen commented it was easy now for them to work with councillors those who have gone through the training program. Councillors were found cooperating, offering constructive criticism, understanding and looking forward.

Sponsorship for funding was from

- Sri Lanka Foundation Institute through

Kondrad Adinaer Foundation

—ICTRL

—UPU through IDA Credit

—Provincial Council Funds

—LAs spending on travelling expenses of participant-councillors

Thirty programs were conducted in 1992 with 1163 participants and eight programmes were conducted in 1993 with 352 participants, total of thirty eight programmes for 1515 councillors.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR MATORS/CHAIRMEN

Role of the Mayors/Chairmen slides from that of policy makers to the manager, more on the direction of a, leader offering leadership both to councillors and managers. They are busy people and could not afford longer periods for training out side their offices. Very specific, task related areas of training were included in the training programmes. Except for three training programs for Mayors, Chairmen and Commissioners/Secretaries of Municipal and Urban Councils which were conducted centrally at Sri Lanka foundation Institute, other training programmes were conducted on a district basis. They were shorter programmes of half a day or a day.

OBJECTIVES of these training programmes were to

- (a) Improve their knowledge of their obligations being the chief executives of leading both councillors and officers of the organization on a strategic process of achieving council objectives.
- (b) Offer basic management tools which are needed in carrying out their responsibilities, improving executive skills.
- (c) share experience with others through 'action learning'

Areas covered in training were :

- (a) Performance monitoring through the Performance Improvement Planning process.
- (b) Preparation of Action Plans for development activities.

- (c) Formulation of budget policy for the following year.
- (d) Conducting Quarterly Review
- (e) Formulation of PIPs for the following year.
- (f) Management of contracts
- (g) Estimation for Development work

Sponsorship for funding was same as in the case of members but ICTRL's support was not sought because workshops were held mainly on a district basis.

To reinforce the skills gained through training programmes follow up Technical Assistance visits were made. Consultancy teams from the UPU visited LAs, discussed with Mayors/Chairmen and officers and attempted to relate improved skills to live situation in the LA.

SOME EXPERIENCES

- Politicians are responsive to training provided that the skills transfer or behavioral change through training is going to help them serve people.
- Brain storming, case studies, group work, discussions, agreeing on action plans, (trainee centered methods) are more effective.
- Visual aids were appreciated.
- Half a day program to fall concurrent to the LA activity calendar is preferred.
- Management of training is difficult due to lack of training management skills.
- Resources are also inadequate—resource personnel and financial resources.
- Unlike officer training the Mayor/Chairmen are elected leaders and there is a goal conflict of field needs and partisan politics.
- Retaining skills once developed is also a problem—once in four years they are subject to appraisal by voters. Recently 7 PS Chairmen from the Western province, were elected as members of the PC and

assumed duties.

- These seems to be no institutional arrangement in place to look in to this on going process of training offered to elected representatives in the absence of the UPU and ICTRL, UPU's mission will be completed during a year or two. The PC which is in charge of LAs should have to develop a mechanism to continue support to LAs by conducting programmes for elected officials.

III. TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR DIVISIONAL SECRETARIES

There are five levels of administration in Sri Lanka

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| —National level | —The Presidency-Parliament |
| —Provincial level | —Governor, Provincial Councils |
| —District level | —District Secretary, (limited agency functions of the Government) |
| —Divisional level | —Divisional Secretary |
| —Village level | —Grama Niladhari (Village level officer) |

The importance of the district level is diminishing, leaving the District Secretary with a few functions like elections, census and statistics, coordination and the district budget.

However as was discussed briefly earlier in this article the decentralized administrative unit in the division-the Divisional Secretary has been the major concern of the government during the recent past.

The decentralization of administration and securing the participation of people through democratic institutions at levels lower than the national is the emerging political culture in Sri Lanka. Division is the accepted unit of decentralized governance and it has now established and integrated into the PC system with blessings of the government.

Political direction prevails at National and Provincial levels through the Parliament and the Provincial Council respectively. Executive Presi-

dent and the Board of Provincial Ministers, play the role of political executive at the two levels. Next important level the divisional level has not provided for such a politic-admin blend despite the vision, policy makers earlier thought of. "This note sets out a frame work for achieving further devolution and decentralisation of functions of Government to the local level and for ensuring accountability to the people through elected local authorities.

It is proposed that central to the implementation of the above strategy is the organization of a Divisional Secretariat at the Pradeshia (Divisional) level under the charge of a senior experienced administrator to be designated Divisional Secretary.

The Divisional Secretary will work under the Pradeshia Sabha as its Chief Administrative Officer. He will be assisted by a team of staff officers dealing with functions devolved to the Pradeshia Sabha as well as with functions decentralised from the district level or from the centre¹⁵."

But through the implementation process substantial change in the government policy could be seen. To date, the devolved unit PS and the de-concentrated unit-the D.S., operate side by side quite independently. Trend is that DS should supervise the functions of the PS under powers vested in the Provincial Minister of Local Government and the Provincial Commissioner of Local Government delegated to him, as he is being appointed as an Asst. Commissioner of Local Government.

Then the government policy as was stated through media, and public platforms was to set up a Divisional Secretariat which provides services to people at their door step. It was also called a "Super Market" or one stop shop.

Hon. Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs specifically stated the functions of the Divisional Secretaries at a discussion with Governors, Provincial Chief Ministers and senior state and provincial officers on 09-06-1992 as

“Divisional Secretary would form the main administrative organization of the decentralization system of the regional administration. The functions of Divisional Secretariat would be ;

- (a) Carry out functions delegated by the Provincial Council
- (b) Carry out non developed functions now decentralised from the Government (Except elections) and
- (c) Responsibility for divisional level planning and accounting”¹⁶

However through the objectives so far achieved, following observations can be made.

- i People were provided with more than 268 out-lets for services instead of 25 hitherto and the access has been improved. Most of the functions of the former head of the district have been delegated to Divisional Secretary together with functions carried out by the PC at the offices of the District and Provincial Secretariats.
- ii Establishment of all offices has been completed during a period less than 8-9 months. Roles responsibilities and relationships of the DS were not very clear in the minds of policy makers and implementors.
- iii Officers to man Divisional Secretariats were found not only from Divisional Administration but also from departments and ministries. They needed different type of skills required in the new assignment.

A clear case for training intervention was thus established. It was more than traditional training, which means filling the gaps of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Training situation was more trainee centred and a learning process for all parties concerned.

Two major tasks were assigned to trainers in the SLIDA.

- (1) Transform the role of bureaucratic administration of the decentralised unit to development management.
- (2) Transfer/Realise key techniques improving the access to ser-

vices by the public in the division, at the top managerial level.

Target group was the Divisional Secretaries. They are members of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service at the senior level with experience of more than fifteen years in the age group 37-42. Most of them were graduates at the recruitment and subsequently had obtained Diploma in Public Management from SLIDA. Some of them were post graduates.

SLIDA- developed the objective of the training program

“This is a residential course of training designed to equip the Divisional Secretaries in the implementation of the ‘Government’ Decentralisation Policy of ‘Taking Administration to the People’¹⁷.

The OBJECTIVE of the course is to provide the necessary re-orientation in knowledge, skills, sensitivity values and attitudes to the participants to enable them to perform their duties efficiently and effectively as Divisional Secretaries so as to ensure,

- (i) that the delivery of services to the people is undertaken at the local level in direct response to the peoples’ legitimized needs and
- (ii) that they will function as Development Administrators who would be instrumental in enhancing the quality of life of the people.

Duration of the course is one month and conducted in two phases of 2 weeks each”.

Contents of the programmes were

- Management and Development Administration
- Special Functions
- Seminars on Special Topics
- Computer Applications

Methodology included Lectures Briefings followed by Group Exercises and Presentations, Special Seminars, Workshops, Discussions, Assignments and Field Visits to Divisional Secretariats.

Following sessions were in the program

Phase I —Concept of Decentralization in Public Administration Sys-

terms

- The experience of Decentralization in Sri Lanka with special reference to political and administrative changes.
- Local Government Institutions and the Divisional Secretariat
- Decentralization and the Divisional Secretariat Issues
- Institutional Framework of the New Divisional Secretariat
- Developing a Mission for the Divisional Secretariat
- Identifying the Divisional Secretaries' Roles and Responsibilities
- Developing Job Description
- Organising the Divisional Secretariat both, structure and office systems and procedure
- Team Building workshop
- Regional Planning in Sri Lanka-Drawing up a Divisional Development Plan
- Mobilization and utilization of Resources
- Coordination-External Agencies
- at the District level
- Introduction, application-concept of Marketing
- Internal Consultancy for Management and Organizational Development
- Computer Application
- Phase II—Budgeting and Accounting Systems
 - Decentralized Budget
 - Auditing-Internal Audit, Value for Money Auditing
 - Revenue Collection-Excise and Customs
 - Development of Management Skills for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship Development
 - Identification of Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Support Services for Entrepreneurship Development
- Field Visits
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Registrations of Births, Marriages and Deaths
- Computation and Payment/Procedures
- Social Welfare Polocoes Programmes and Future Prospective
- Widespread Distress
- Module on Technical Skills for Administrators
- Land Work
- Institutional Arrangements for Disciplinary Matters
- Organization Culture

Each Phase of training programmes was concluded with an evaluation session. Contributions by the external faculty members drawn from Universities, Ministries, Departments and Provincial Councils facilitated the efforts of the Internal Faculty of SLIDA.

Participation by the target group was extremely satisfactory. Altogether 207 Divisional Secretaries participated fully in Phase I and II. Six DSs participated in Phase I only. Six DSs did not participate at all. Two groups were put through the program concurrently and within 6 months the program was completed for all such groups.

Except for the general concept of a divisional office and functions, a clear understanding of the organization was not prevailing at the inception. Political and Administrative interpretations of the policy was bias (to some extent), creating a confused state of affairs.

However through the programmes participants were encouraged to develop a mission statement for the organization. Some interesting statement are :

- Facilitating of the strengthening of people' through the provision of easy access to the peoples needs in the Division
- Taking Administration to people and speedy and effective divi-

sional development

—Provisions of peoples' needs within the division itself for the improvement of their living condition and helping and bringing about balanced development

Roles and relationships, job description, organizations structure and linkages were identified and developed subsequently. Some issues were also identified and recommended solutions were reported upward resulting a piece of legislation-Act No 58 of 1992. This act provides for the DS to execute the powers of the former Government Agent of the District.

Funding for the program was found in the SLIDAs budget from the consolidated fund.

SLIDAs response to the short notice given by the Minister, for training of newly appointed DSs was quite assuring and is clear evidence of quality training it can offer despite affordable and moderate (compared to international standards) logistical support. Commitment and the expertise at its disposal was behind this noteworthy achievement.

IV. HORIZONTAL LINKAGES AT THE DIVISIONAL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

Decentralization initiative of 1992 to have an Integrated Divisional Secretariat having political leadership and direction provided by a local Authority failed. Instead two types of organizations now exist at the divisional level.

Local Government
PS, UC or MC

Administrative Units
Divisional Secretariat
Divisional Directorate of Health
Divisional Directorate of Education
Divisional Police

Administrative units, delegated with authority hitherto exercised at the District, Provincial and National Levels are innovative yet have to

face complex challenges for having only vertical linkages. If horizontal linkages are not built then the expectations, of administration being sensitive and responsive to individual and collective needs of the people will not be met. Approach paper for discussion developed by SLIDA suggests two approaches for improved coordination¹⁸.

(1) Coordination between the 4 administrative agencies.

(2) Coordination of the administrative organizations with Local Government Agencies

apart from the formal, planning or information exchange coordination's the paper emphasises the 'Training' Component.

"Many of the administration agencies tend to fulfil their specified area of responsibility, unaware of the broader issues which fall within the audit of their fellow administration agencies. Training courses particularly of a residential nature would be not only widen their horizons but also give them broader knowledge, skills and attitudes"¹⁹.

Approach paper was discussed in a group comprising representatives of Training Institutions, Ministry Officials, Local Authority Chairmen, DSs, Health, Education, Police Department officials. Working group was instructed to formulate a training program.

Programmes are organized by ;

—Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung

—Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI)

—Urban Program Unit (UPU)

—Ministry of Policy Planning & Implementation (MPPI)

—International Centre for the Training of Rural Leaders (ICTRL)
Objectives were agreed

—Improve the knowledge and understanding of the institutional linkages at the divisional level.

—Understand the roles and responsibilities of divisional agencies.

—Facilitate achieving basic skills to strengthen effective horizontal coordination.

Participants of the program are ;

- Chairman of the Local Authority
- Leader of the opposition of the LA
- Secretary of the LA
- All Managerial staff representing the Divisional Secretariat.
- Divisional Director of Health
- Divisional Director of Education and
- The Police Officers

Three divisions will be taken at a time and the total number of participants in a program will be 25-30.

Training program is residential and duration is three days ; Friday through Sunday, allowing minimum interruption to divisional programmes.

Curriculum is developed and sessions have been planned to achieve objectives. With a brief inauguration at the commencement day one is set apart for behavioural aspects leading to Team Building. Techniques and devices for team building will be practised through by the training experts from the SLIDA internal faculty.

Day two is set apart for understanding the formal linkages of divisional organizations, together with roles and responsibilities. Group work session and a case study have been planned for afternoon closing with a session focusing on success stories, NGO involvement and innovations, through a discussion.

Day three is devoted for developing Divisional Development Plan and implementation strengthening horizontal coordination to be practised through strategic management perspective. Community representation and popular participation through local government and technical and professional input through other agencies would be mobilized. Optimal use of resources, resource sharing, partnership operations, joint monitoring of projects identified in the plan would be concentrated with the main theme-horizontal considerations.

Evaluation was done informally using a friendly discussion to get a feed back from the participants, on the impact of training and any modifications for future programmes.

Following four programmes were conducted, first being a pilot on which some improvements to sessions plan and curriculum made.

Program 001 15-10-1993 to 17-10-1993

Divisional Agencies Participated

1. Aranayake
2. Hambantota
3. Kesbewa

Program 002 19-11-1993 to 21-11-1993

Divisional Agencies Participated

1. Kaduwela
2. Kobeigane
3. Udunuwara

Program 003 26-11-1993 to 29-11-1993

Divisional Agencies Participated

1. Ambalantota
2. Bandarawela
3. Wariyapola

Program 004 03-12-1993 to 05-12-1993

Divisional Agencies Participated

1. Badalkumbura
2. Kahatagasdigiliya
3. Wennappuwa

Resource persons were drawn from

——SLIDA

——SLFI

——UPU

——ICTRL and Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation and Departments, eg. Police, Health and Education.

Funding for the program is by SLIDA and SLFI.

There are 196 elected PSS and 268 DS divisions to be covered with the program. Strategy has been formulated to cover all divisions within a period of six months from February 1994. An alternative was considered to train trainers to conduct sessions at the provincial level. But the logistic and resource personnel problem have been the obstacle to maintain quality. However in the long run this alternative cannot be excluded as the process has to continue.

Participants of all four programmes requested that politicians at the Provincial and National Level should also be trained with them. Nevertheless a member of Provincial Council and Parliament voluntarily participated in program one and two. Capital funds of the Decentralized Budget and the PC are distributed on priorities decided by MPs and Provincial Councillors. They are at the district level. Because of the district base and the preferential voting system, these politicians have interests in many divisions in the same district. Number to be invited cannot be planned without consulting MPs. Also it was stated that a three day training program is too much for politicians of that level.

MPs have competing interests and constantly changing priorities to create havoc at the implementation level with agencies concerned. One way out would be the Divisional Development Plans where identified projects, with appraisal are available for funding by them. Anyway this situation is an impeding factor, where training alone cannot make a way out.

CONCLUSION

It is opportune at this moment to assess the three structures of training modules which have been used for developing skills, knowledge attitudes and values of a group of divisional policy makers and implementors on the merit of achieving the objectives of decentralization. Whatever the contents and the interpretation of decentralization are the

rationale should be the improved access to the services by the target group of people through optimal utilization of resources at disposal, which need strategic planning, budgeting and performance management.

In the first instance members of the LAA have been oriented towards their roles and the relationships within and outside the organization—eg. LA, Mayors and Chairmen, being the chief executives have been supported by providing basic and minimum management tools for them to play their role effectively. They play double roles in one hand by representing the interest of the public at the Council in deciding priorities with the Councillors, and on the other monitoring and reviewing the progress made by the officers implementing such programmes.

Training Programmes conducted for DSs in the newly established de-concentrated unit were also aimed to transform the bureaucratic organization to a development administration outfit ensuring better access to services by the people achieving value for money invested through three Es (economy, efficiency and effectiveness).

Finally the module designed for group of actors belonging to different disciplines and politicians belonging to the ruling party and the opposition is supposed to reinforce the integration of approaches in need identification, setting the direction and purpose, strategy formulation, resource deployment and project monitoring ensuring the constituents what they need and there by establishing public accountability.

Some lessons that trainers learnt through the program are :

- It was a fallacy that these adult learners have come to a saturation point of perceiving. They always can accommodate what is relevant or which can be linked to what is known given space of time to ponder. Discovering that learning is useful and rewarding results in people being more likely to continue with, return to or repeat the task. When an individual receives praise for good work he or she will try to improve his or her performance.
- Participants being experienced people are much more likely to have

- been handling concrete issues and to have solved practical problems for themselves by doing implying trial and error principle of learning.
- Commitment of participants for learning was normally part time due to their other responsibilities also they wish to set short term goals or achievements.
 - Participants always expects very high competence from the tutor, a thorough knowledge of the subject material and use of delivery techniques.
 - As very busy individuals they always need result oriented activity based programmes, relevant to their needs and matching their abilities.

As globally accepted training is not a panacea for all sickening situations. Policy adjustments, practical systems, will have to complement training inputs for a sustainable impact. Nevertheless it is a process continuing worthwhile of everybody's concern.

NOTE

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- 7 Slater R P Central Control or Local Reform? Planning & Administration Vol 86 (P. 17)
- 8 Oberst R-1986 Administrative Conflict and Decentralization Cose of Sri Lanka-Public Administration and Development Vol 6 (P. 173)
- 9 Sri Lanka Urban Sector Report-1984 South Asia Projects-World Bank (P.

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 - 11 Constitution of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka-Thirteenth Amendment
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 - 13 Administrative Reform Committee Report No 5-1988 Training and Career Development (P. 28)
 - 14 PS Act No 15 of 1985-Sec 4
 - 15 Taking Administration to the People-A note issued by the Ministry of Public Administration Provincial councils and Home Affairs-(P. 1 & 2)
 - 16 Minutes of the meeting of Chief Ministers, Governors of Provinces and other state and Provincial Officers chaired by the Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs on 09/06/1992
 - 17 Training Programme for DSs (Round No 1 and No 2)
 - 18 SLIDA-1993 Approach Paper for discussion-Public Institution Building and Human Resource Development
 - 19 SLIDA-1993-Approach Paper for discussion-Public Institution Building and Human Resource Development.