

**Recent Developments in Administrative
Reforms in Hong Kong
Malaysia and Singapore**

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Introduction

There is increasing concern that unchanged governance structures are inadequate and inappropriate in a constantly changing, complex and interdependent world. There is a clear need for undertaking wide-ranging and sweeping administrative reforms. The objective is to bring about efficiency, effectiveness and economy in public service operations and activities.

Hong Kong covers an area of 1044 square kilometres includes within it 235 islands and is a part of peninsula jutting south from southern China (Huque 1996: 4). Overwhelming majority, i.e. 98% of the 6 million population is Chinese who converse in Cantonese. The per capita GNP is US \$ 10,350 (World Bank 1991). Hong Kong was a British colony from 1842 to mid-1997. From 1 July 1997 Hong Kong has come under Chinese sovereignty. It has the status of Special Administrative Region (SAR) within China. The Hong Kong political system is characterised by a Chief Executive appointed by political authorities in Beijing, a Legislative Council and an Executive Branch (Lo 1998).

Malaysia covers an area of 329,758 square kilometres with Brunei, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia as its immediate neighbours (Ahmad 1998). The population now stands at 21 million. Over 50% of the population is Malays followed by Chinese 33% and Indians 10% (Quah 1990: 238). The per capita income reached US \$ 4,027 in 1995 (Ahmad 1998). Malaysia gained independence from the British in 1957 as Malaya. With the joining of Singapore and two Borneo states of Sarawak and Sabah in 1963 it became Malaysia. Malaysia has a parliamentary system with a constitutional monarch at the top. Malaya, Chinese (Mandarin) and Tamil are major languages.

Singapore is a city-state with a small land area of 224 square miles with an estimated population of 3,004,300 (Singapore 1997a: 4). Of the total population, the Chinese have overwhelming majority, i.e. 77.3% followed by Malays 14% and Indians 3.3% (Singapore 1997a: 4). Malaya, Chinese (Mandarin), Tamil and English are four official languages. Of these Malaya has been designated as the national language, while English has been retained as the official language. The per capita income is \$ 25,000 and the GNP is over \$ 39,000 (Singapore 1997a: 39). Singapore was a British colony. It became independent after 1965 after withdrawing from Malaysia in 1959.

Past Developments in Administrative Reform

The developments in the arena of administrative reform (AR) in the special region and two countries have not been even though there are some similarities. In Hong Kong administrative reform was not a priority area before 1989. There were attempts at what might be termed as administrative modernisation efforts to sustain the status quo. The government was reorganized under Maclehorse administration on the basis of recommendations contained in Mckinsey Report of 1973 (Lo and Yuen 1994: 3). One of the outcomes of the Mckinsey recommendations was the creation of policy and resources branches within the government. Long-range planning, as result of the reform, became a crucial responsibility of policy secretaries. Regionalisation was started. Seventy-five programme plans were drawn up in such important areas as medical and health services, housing, social welfare and education.

Corruption was widely prevalent in Hong Kong civil service. But the situation changed drastically with the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974. The ICAC was given wide array of powers. The ICAC has the power to arrest people on suspicion, search and seize without a warrant, require information, freeze assets and property and prevent people from leaving the country (Caiden 1991: 249). The Commission was assisted in its operation by five advisory committees on Corruption, Operations Review, Prevention, Community Relations and Complaints drawn from cross-section of the population that reported directly to the Governor (Caiden 1991: 249). The ICAC was organised into three areas to effectively perform its duties and responsibilities. The areas were: (a) an operations department to investigate, arrest and help prosecute; (b) a corruption prevention's department to restructure government organisations to reduce opportunities for corruption; and (c) a community relations department to change peoples attitudes toward corruption (Caiden 1991: 249).

In Malaysia administrative reform from the very beginning was an important policy objective of the government. This was because the government entrusted the tasks of socio-economic development and nation building to the public service. In the 1960s the major reforms included the establishment of the Development Administration Unit (DAU) within the Prime Minister's Department, introduction of the Programme and Performance Budgeting System (Ahmad 1998). The DAU was responsible for identifying and implementing administrative improvements in the public service. In the 1970s a number of reform measures were introduced. These included: establishment of a separate Public Service Department (PSD) as well as the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMMPU) now known as the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Planning Unit (MAMPU) in 1977 and the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) in 1972 (Ahmad 1998). The PSD was to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of all public sector organisations by initiating and implementing personnel management policies. The MAMPU was to study and identify major administrative problems at all levels of government and recommend necessary changes and appro-

priate innovative measures to overcome them. The INTAN was established with the goal of increasing the capacity and effectiveness of all public agencies in the formulation and implementation of policies and development programmes through training (Rahman n.d.). Subsequently, a Training and Career Development Division within PSD was established and Excellence in the Civil Service Programme was initiated in 1979.

Singapore, like Malaysia, initiated administrative reforms after independence. Initial reforms were intended to mould the attitude of the civil servants and to bring about some structural changes in the civil service (Khan 1998: 383). The reforms concentrated on structural reorganisation of the Singapore Civil Service (SCS) in the form of creation of new ministries and rationalisation of statutory boards, reduction in the salary of civil servants and creation of a Political Study Centre to mould the attitudes of civil servants (Quah 1975: 345–346). A Central Complaints Bureau (CCB) was established to check misbehaviour of civil servants towards people. The Financial Procedure Ordinance of 1960 compelled civil servants to reimburse the government for mishandling of public funds (Hiok 1980: 105). The National Productivity Board (NPB) was established in 1972 to improve productivity in all enterprises in Singapore (Teo 1985: 315). A Staff Training Institute (STI) was established in 1971 to train new officers of Administrative Service of SCS in modern management concepts and techniques (Khan 1998: 404). By 1974 training covered officers of other services of SCS and its scope expanded to include language and supervisory skills. Between 1975 and 1979 name of STI was changed twice. In 1979 it came to be known as Civil Service Institute (CSI). The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) located in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was established in 1952. The genesis of CPIB lay in the Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA) passed in 1937 and establishment of Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB). The head of CPIB is directly accountable to the Prime Minister. The powers and functions of CPIB have increased in last two decades. Wide-ranging powers and responsibilities of CPIB include: safeguarding integrity of the public service, encouraging corruption-free transactions in the private sector, responsible for checking and investigating malpractice by public officials, reviewing work methods and procedures of corruption-prone departments and bodies and identifying administrative weaknesses that could facilitate corruption and recommending remedial and preventive measures (Singapore 1997b: 53–54).

Recent Developments in Administrative Reforms

Hong Kong

In Hong Kong significant developments in administrative reform began with the publication of a government report in February 1989 titled "Public Sector Reform" (PSR). The PSR was influenced by ideas contained in New Public Management (NPM). The PSR included five broad components. These were: policy management reform, financial management reform, human resource reform, institutional reform and operational reform (Sankey 1993; Burns 1994).

Policy management reform sought to delegate responsibility for the allocation and use of resources to policy branches. Policy branches, in turn, were made responsible for choosing delivery agencies and evaluation of results. Use of program management structures was advocated including clear targets, accountability for targets and progress measured against targets. Financial management reform visualized new strategic role for the Finance Branch putting it in-charge with government's overall policy. One of its major responsibility would be to monitor delegation of financial authority to policy branches to ensure accountability. Institutional reform intended to make departments more cost-effective and efficient. Trading funds were to be established where departments could charge customers for their services. Initially trading funds would be set up with loan from the government but they would be expected to be self-financing by charging fees to the government agencies.

The concept of public as client figured prominently in PSR. The premise behind the concept was that those departments which would deal directly with people would annually publish performance pledges. These pledges would 'set out precisely what standards customers should expect from public services; how to judge whether those standards are met; and what to do when they are not (Patten 1992). The other initiatives that Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten introduced in October 1992 included: widening the power of Ombudsman and a review of legislation that restricted freedom of information (Lo and Yuen 1994: 3).

Reforming the civil service formed the core of human resource reform component of PSR. The civil service reform consisted of seven elements: role of the Civil Service Branch, delegation to Policy Branches, delegation to Departments, increase management flexibility in Departments, performance management, simplification of rules and regulations and management information system (Burns 1994: 245). The Civil Service Branch would play strategic role in a number of areas including setting parameters and issuing guidelines, ensuring consistency and parity in pay and conditions, providing advice and support to departments, and monitoring trends and taking corrective action. Delegation to Policy Branches included measures for their more active role in succession planning and authority to supervise in the creation of posts. Departments were delegated authority to recruit, to create new posts, to manage clerical and secretarial grades and conduct management training. Departments were given increased managerial flexibility to lower entry qualifications, to employ locally on short-term fixed contracts and to discipline/separate. In the area of performance management several initiatives were to be taken including constituting performance appraisal panels, putting in place transparent promotion criteria and using pilot programs in performance pay. Simplification of rules and regulations meant institution of a three-tier system that would include management manuals, practitioner's guide and civil service regulations. Management Information System was to gather comprehensive personnel data to monitor human resource management.

The PSR Report, in other words, contained plan of the government for a thorough administrative reform. The other recommendations of the Report included: hiving off more public services to public corporations after their rationalisation,

contracting out on a wider scale, promotion of divestitures where appropriate, development of a Priority Based Budgeting System and transformation of civil servants from administrators to better managers (Lo and Yuen 1994: 3; Tang, Perry and Lam 1994: 37; Cheung 1996: 31).

At the heart of administrative reform in Hong Kong the intention was to achieve efficiency in governmental operations premised on cost-benefit analysis. Greater flexibility was given to rationalised corporations and non-departmental bodies, size of the government was reduced and a degree of competition and market orientation was introduced in the public sector.

In the last ten to fifteen years the Hong Kong Government has privatised a number of government services including tunnel management and street cleaning. The government established in 1993 trading fund (TF) arrangements in Land and Companies Registries, Electrical and Mechanical Department and targeted Post Office, Drainage Services, Water Supplies, the Government Printer and the Information Technology Service Department for early inclusion within TF fold (Burns 1994: 244). Greater autonomy has been granted to several government bodies like Housing and Hospital Authorities and Radio and Television of Hong Kong. The contracting out/privatising and enhancing of autonomy of government departments and bodies have had a number of objectives. First, development of alternative delivery systems was intended for providing effective service to the public. This would enable public servants to become more innovative and entrepreneurial. Second, greater autonomy to public bodies would lead to decrease demands on the financial resources of the government.

Malaysia

Last two decades have witnessed a number of changes and innovations in Malaysian civil service. A former Chief Secretary, a staunch supporter of reform describes the situation as a paradigm shift (Sarji 1995: 99). This shift has been possible, according to him, as a result of the adoption of a number of strategies. These strategies included: improvements to the structure, systems, rules and regulations and information technology and inculcating the values of quality, productivity and accountability in the civil service (Sarji 1995: 99).

From the early eighties the Malaysian government focused specifically on better resource management to offset the economic recessions. In this regard a number of measures were initiated like downsizing of the public service through privatisation, introduction of the Malaysian Incorporated concept and inculcation of positive values and work ethics (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995a: 1).

Major administrative reforms in the Malaysian civil service can be categorised under five broad headings. These are: maintaining quality of service, enhancing productivity, ensuring integrity and accountability and institutionalising success.

Under maintaining quality of service a number of measures have already been implemented. These include: TQM, PSN and CSL, Counter Services and Client's Charter. The Total Quality Management (TQM) has been adopted as an approach to mobilise all available resources in public sector agencies to meet customer require-

ments (Sarji 1995: 100). The TQM is designed to create more customer-focused organisations that are viable and willing to provide better services to customers. Government departments have been instructed to form Quality Control Circles (QCCs). The QCCs are to mobilise expertise, experience and encourage employee creativity in problem-solving (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995a: 3). The Public Service Network (PSN) and the Civil Service Link (CSL) are also measures to electronically deliver information and services and facilitate electronic commerce. Driving and business licenses are renewed through PSN by utilising computer and network facilities in the post offices. The CSL, on the other hand, acts as an information centre and caters to the needs of the private sector in such areas as permits, licenses and taxation rates. The objective of the Malaysian government is to gradually move toward an era of paperless bureaucracy (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995b: 65). The Counter Service, related to both PSN and CSL, is another device to provide a number of services to people like issuance of licenses, permits, passports, identification cards; sale of postage stamps and collection of bill payments. The objective is to provide fast, accurate and courteous service to customers on a regular basis. The Client's Charter was introduced in 1993. The Client's Charter of a public sector agency includes a written commitment made by the agency to its user: it is a guarantee of service (Chiu 1997: 176). The objective is to provide complete customer satisfaction. The Client's Charter, like Citizen's Charter in U.K., enables the customer to evaluate the services rendered against declared quality standards and also allow the agencies to upgrade their services on a regular basis. A key component of the Client's Charter is the Service Recovery System which is designed to remedy deficiencies of service delivery with the aim of regaining the confidence of customers (Chiu 1997: 197).

To improve productivity a number of policy measures have already been implemented. These included: a New Remuneration System (NRS), a New Performance Appraisal System (NPAS), Malaysian Incorporated Policy (MIP), privatisation of government agencies and utilisation of information technology. The NRS was effectuated on 1 January 1992. The NRS through reclassification reduced the services classification significantly from 574 to 19. The 19 service classifications were divided into three service groups: top management, management and professional and support group. Significantly, under NRS a civil servant's promotion, salary increments, training and placement is dependent on his or her performance on the job and contribution towards the organisation and the civil service (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995: 42). The NPAS evaluates performance of a civil servant according to targets and goals set earlier. Close supervision of performance is conducted on a routine basis. The MIP is based on the philosophy that close co-operation, collaboration and joint action between government and industry (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995a: 4). This is considered essential for rapid industrial development. Consultative panels at federal, state and local levels are vehicles to arrange annual dialogues with the private sector. These dialogues are intended to exchange information and opinion about government agencies functions and how these affect the private sector. As a result, systems, rules, regulations of agencies may change to facilitate pri-

vate sector's increasing participation in the economy. Privatisation is utilized to reduce the size of the public sector. A Steering Committee on Reduction in Size of the Public Service has been established. The Committee has already introduced a number of measures to reach its goal of streamlined public sector. The measures included: control in the creation of posts, review of the status of vacant posts, reorganisation of agencies under New Remuneration System, review of the status of statutory bodies, enhancing the pace of privatisation programme and use of computers and office automation equipments (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995: 46). The government, as a policy, provides strong support to information technology development in the public service. Malaysia spent M\$ 243,000,000 in 1993 on information technology compared with M\$ 197,000,000 in 1992 (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995b: 62). The government has undertaken a number of major information technology projects. The government agencies have also intensified office automation to successfully tackle increased workload and changes in work requirements.

For ensuring integrity and accountability in the civil service a number of mechanisms and bodies have been set up. Accountability mechanisms are built into laws, regulations and institutions controlling public expenditure (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995a: 7). In 1982 the Audit Act was suitably amended to increase power and responsibilities of the Auditor-General so that he could conduct a thorough investigative audit of the activities of all government agencies on a much wider scale (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995a: 7). The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) also plays a crucial role to ensure financial control by the parliament over the public service. The PAC is also aided by the report of the Auditor-General placed before the parliament. The Public Complaints Bureau (PCB), housed in the Prime Minister's Department, receives grievances directly from the people in case of abuse of power, wrong interpretation of rules or misbehaviour of public officials (Chiu 1997: 179). The primary role of the PCB is to investigate citizen complain against public officials and agencies and present the findings to a high-powered Permanent Committee on Public Complaints for appropriate action. An Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) strictly enforces Anti-Corruption Act 1982. The ACA ensures that civil servants who are not involved in corruption or malpractices are recommended for promotion and for federal or state awards (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995b: 48). The Modified Budgeting System (MBS) is one of the mechanisms to improve financial management and accountability in the public service. The MBS, oriented towards measurement of output and impact of government programmes, enhances the accountability of controlling officers in the management of resources allocated to them (Commonwealth Secretariat 1995a: 8).

Three strategies have been used to institutionalise successes achieved so far in the area of administrative reform in the civil service. These strategies are intended to bring about and sustain major changes in the values, knowledge, skills and practices of civil servants in order for them to effectively perform their duties on a routine basis. The issuance of Development Administration Circulars (DACs), establishment of an Inspectorate Systems (IS) and emphasis on management education and training are some of the strategies adopted for institutionalising success.

The DACs contain minute guidelines to implement administrative improvement programmes. The IS has been set up to ensure follow-up and follow through on the implementation of administrative improvement programmes. The establishment and expansion of INTAN as a multi-purpose and diversified training organisation testified to the government's continued emphasis on management education and training and its consequent relationship with institutionalising success in the civil service.

Singapore

Singapore from the early years of its independence systematically and methodically moved towards implementing administrative reforms. In recent years administrative reform measures have been introduced and implemented in key aspects of the civil service with a regular frequency. As a result a number of important changes have taken place throughout the civil service. The major reform initiatives included: devolution of personnel management, autonomy to government agencies, increasing productivity, institutionalizing and integrating change, broadening and enhancing quality of Administrative Service, utilisation of information technology, curbing corruption, competitive pay for high-flyers, and selective recruitment of the best and the brightest (Khan 1998: 386-416; Quah 1995: 147).

In mid-1994 government set up a team of top civil servants to oversee changes in personnel of the civil service. The three-tier Personnel Boards (PBs) became operational from 1 January 1995 as a major policy initiative of the government to reform the civil service (Khan 1998: 389). At the bottom stands the Personnel Boards (PBs) and at the top is a Special Personnel Board (SPB) and in between there are Senior Personnel Boards (SPBs). Most of the civil servants, i.e. those belonging to Divisions II, III and IV are managed by twenty-four Personnel Boards (PBs) located in ministries. All Division I officers are supervised by six Senior Personnel Boards (SPBs). Each Board covers three to four ministries. The Special Personnel Board's (SPB) jurisdiction includes superscale officers upto Superscale E1 and Administrative Service Officers in the time scale. The ministries have been delegated power to hire and promote civil servants through the mechanism of PBs. The intention is to enable permanent secretaries and line managers authority to recruit and promote deserving candidates. The PBs in their activities are to be guided by a number of principles. These are: retaining merit as the basis for recruitment and promotion; fair and consistent use of delegated authority to ensure rigorous and fairness to all and provision of recourse to appeal to Public Service Commission and other Commissions by the aggrieved civil servants. As a result of the effectuation of latest reforms the Public Service Commission is now responsible for recruitment into the Administrative Service, the Parliamentary Service and the Audit Service; promotion of officers to Superscale D and above; planning and administration of undergraduate and graduate local and foreign scholarships and bursaries offered by the Singapore government, dismissal and disciplinary control and act as the final appellate board to hear appeal against promotion decisions of personnel boards (Singapore 1997b: 52).

In March 1996 government implemented a policy for granting greater autonomy to government departments, agencies and statutory boards. By April 1997 excepting the Ministry of Defence and Internal Security Department all ministries and departments have now been transformed into autonomous agencies (AAs). The AAs have to draw up a plan of services they intend to offer and will receive funding based on how well they meet a set of performance criteria as well as demand for their services. The AAs work involves a number of steps. First, each AA sets up clearly defined output and performance targets which is also agreed upon by its parent ministry and the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance (MOF) every year. Second, the MOF will give the AA a budget on the estimated cost of meeting those agreed upon targets. But the amount of money the AA will receive depends upon how it meets its targets and demands of service. Third, then the particular AA is free to manage the budget in whatever way it chooses as long as it meets set targets. The AAs enjoy considerable freedom in deciding on recruitment (below superscale level) and deployment and flexibility in utilizing financial resources at their disposal compared to situation in the past.

Enhancing productivity in the civil service has been and continues to be a key commitment of the government. A National Productivity Council (NPC) was established in 1981 to review and analyse productivity efforts, suggest policies and strategies to improve productivity among the population (Teo 1985: 317). A Central Productivity Steering Committee (CPSC) and the Civil Service Productivity Movement (CSPM) also began in 1981. As a result of the decision of CPSC, Work Improvement Teams (WITs) were introduced in the civil service. This heralded the beginning of the CSPM. The core component in productivity enhancement in the civil service centers around WITs. A WIT is a group of public servants from the same work unit, irrespective of job status, who meets regularly to identify, discuss and analyse problems, work out solutions to problems and then implement those solutions.

At the core of institutionalising and integrating change is the Public Service for 21st (PS21) initiative. The initiative was launched in May 1995. The PS 21 incorporates within it other earlier public sector service improvement initiatives like Public Contact Improvement Programme (PCIP) and the Service improvement Unit (SIU) and WITs. The SIU established in 1991 and located in the Prime Minister's Office has been acting as a watchdog over ministries and statutory boards. It monitors, audits and assesses quality of services provided by government agencies. The focus of PS 21 is on four areas: staff well-being, quality service, WITs and staff suggestions and organizational review. The PS 21 is premised on a comprehensive approach to prepare a civil servant to be receptive to and able to change by utilizing his appropriate knowledge (Guan 1997: 171). A number of initiatives have been developed for the PS 21 drive. A directory of public service has been compiled and published so that people know which government department to consult for a particular service. The introduction of a counter allowance scheme which gives a Singapore \$80 monthly allowance to frontline officers and employees who work in counters. A personal training road map is being developed containing training needs and courses an officer need to attend. A number of government agencies have set and published service

standards to be maintained in dealing with the public. Some agencies have made service pledges. The Administrative Service (AS) is the elite service among all the public services and enjoys enormous power. A number of administrative reform measures have been implemented to broaden the base and enhance the equality of AS. A Corps of Senior Administrators (CCA) was created in 1990 to harness best talent in the public sector. The scheme includes not only officers of the AS and Singapore Armed Force (SAF) scholars but officers from other services. Other changes pertaining to personnel management of AS included setting minimum criteria for recruitment and retention in the service. A Dual Career Scheme was put into effect in 1995. Under this scheme twenty-six officers from various services were selected for entrance into the AS. The AS opened its door, in a very limited scale, to the private sector on 1996. The rationale for this move was to help the civil service stay continuously attuned to outside trends and private sector needs. There is also a move to attach officers of AS to private sector companies to enable them gain first-hand experience of working conditions in the private sector.

With the setting up of the National Computer Board (NCB) and the initiation of the Civil Service Computerisation Programme (CSCP) both in 1981 systematic utilization of information technology in the civil service began. The NCB was to promote, implement and guide development of information systems in the civil service (Quah 1995: 151). The CSCP intended to facilitate wider use of computers by civil servants so that they could provide better service to the people through the use of computers (Leng 1987: 6). Between 1983 and 1985 a number of telecommunication and office system technologies like Civil Service Telephone Network System (CSTNS), Telecom Telebox Services (TTS) and facsimile machines were introduced resulting in considerable reduced costs of services and quickened pace of service delivery. In two years, i.e. 1997–1999, 8,000 new desktop computers and 4,000 computer notebooks for civil servants have been procured. The government formally set up shop on the Internet in 1996 resulting in the availability of new services on the Internet. Work Permit Application for maids can be made and results obtained in three days. Childcare registration has been made easier with citizens' access to comprehensive database of licensed childcare centers. A government electronic mailbox is available to enable people to contact any ministry or department by e-mail.

Corruption in civil service has been significantly curbed due to the adoption of a two-pronged anti-corruption strategy by the government. In 1980 the government amended the Prevention of Corruption Ordinance (POCO) and replaced it with Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA) to curb opportunities for corruption and to increase penalty for corrupt behaviour (Quah 1995: 148). The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) located in Prime Minister's Office and given additional powers by the POCA investigates and prosecutes people both in public and private sectors to effectively counter corrupt practices. Improvement in salaries and working conditions in the civil service has also lessened incentive for corruption.

Competitive salaries and favourable working conditions are provided to civil servants to retain high flyers. As early as 1972 all civil servants were given a thirteen-month non-personable allowance comparable to the bonus in the private

sector. Salaries of senior civil servants were increased in 1973 to reduce gap with their counterparts in the private sector. This trend continues. In 1982 salaries of members of the Administrative Service and other professional services were revised to redress wide disparity that existed in pay among outstanding graduates in private sector and their counterpart high flyers in the civil service especially in the Administrative Service (AS). After the most recent revisions the pay for an AS officer who performs well enough to reach the benchmark superscale Grade G at age 32 is \$ 12,400 per month. To attract and retain top calibre people in AS its pay is pegged to the average pay of the top 15th earner of six professions. Add to all these the AS civil servant's bonus has ranged from two to three in recent years; a special allowance of one month's pay given to a deserving officer; a performance bonus of upto four months is paid to a superscale G officer.

Selective recruitment of the best and the brightest is constantly followed by the government. The Public Service Commission (PSC) offers attractive undergraduate scholarships to outstanding students to study in Singapore and abroad. These scholars are bonded to serve the civil service for a fixed period. The PSC also conducts career talks with graduating students to get qualified candidates from the open market. The PSC recruits candidates to the Administrative Service (AS) through interviews of select short-listed candidates.

Conclusion

The two Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong have been successful in initiating and implementing wide-ranging administrative reforms (ARs) bringing about significant changes in the size, productivity, quality and work ethos in their civil services. Quality of services in terms efficiency and effectiveness has been enhanced. Change has been accepted and welcomed in two countries and one special region. Appropriate proactive reform measures have been devised and effectuated to cope with as well as benefit from changes in the environment. Far-reaching AR measures have been successful in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore for a number of reasons. An understanding of these measures can provide important guidelines to other countries both developed and developing in terms of strategies and variables crucial for implementing major AR measures. Political leadership specially top-level political leaders in two countries and one special region provided not only guidance but strong and sustained support to reform efforts. Political commitment turned out to be the most important variable in piloting reforms. Senior civil servants holding key positions in the government in most cases provided enthusiastic support to reform measures. Pro-reform civil servants were also placed in key positions to pilot reforms through sometimes tortuous and difficult terrain. Both top political leaders and senior civil servants were willing to undertake difficult decisions and adopt uncertain future courses. Also the reforms succeeded because these focused on a number of key aspects. These included: setting clear goals, involving as far as possible concerned people, examining relevant processes, measuring performance, using technology and emphasising results (Vera 1997: 4).

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