

**Evolution of Development and Development
Administration Theory**

ARVIND SINGHAL
The Annenberg School of Communications,
University of Southern California,
Los Angeles, California (USA)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

EVOLUTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION THEORY

ARVIND SINGHAL *

A government cannot develop a country; it can only help its country develop.

— ACKOFF¹

Everyone is talking about development, but what is it in reality? One thing is certain: It has no simple meaning. Development means something different to each one who speaks.

— DICKINSON²

THE PROBLEM of development may be *the* major problem confronting the world. About 950 out of 1,000 people born between now and the year 2000 will be in the Third World countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia.³ So understanding development problems is crucially important.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Development is "a widely participatory process of directed social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment".⁴ Development in any particular nation consists of a synergy of such development goals as promoting literacy, improving nutrition and health, limiting family size, or increasing productivity. The precise nature of particular development problems vary from one country to another, depending on their unique economic, social, political, and cultural characteristics.

Development is the top priority of national government in every Third World country. The purposes of development are very popular. Who could argue against overcoming the limitations of illiteracy, improving the

* The author acknowledges the useful suggestions provided by Dr. Everett M. Rogers and Dr. Wesley Bjur in shaping the contents of this article. This article draws upon Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers, *India's Information Revolution*, New Delhi, Sage (in press).

health and nutrition of a nation's population, and producing more food so as to decrease hunger. Thus, while the *goals* of this type of directed social change are widely agreed upon, yet how these goals are to be attained precisely is often contentious.

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

During the 1950s and 1960s, a general optimism about development was widespread among both academic scholars and government officials. This optimism gradually dwindled and a questioning stance about development characterised the 1970s. The main viewpoint in the 1980s is *pluralism*, a willingness to recognise many different approaches to development.⁵

Economic Approaches

Soon after World War II, many Third World countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America gained their independence from Western colonial rule. These newly-independent Third World nations noted the pathways that had been followed by the Western industrialised countries to achieve socio-economic progress. Economists advised the people of Third World countries to save more and to invest it as capital, a strategy based on the writings of such classical economists as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx. The key question, therefore, was where and how to invest. Some experts recommended balanced growth, while others argued for unbalanced growth, that is, investing heavily in one area, and letting other areas be pulled along.⁶ Investment was usually concentrated in the industrial sector, often at the expense of rural and agricultural sectors of the economy.

Rostow⁷ identified five stages in the process of a nation's economic development: (1) *a traditional society*, characterised by low level of technology, a rigid social structure, fatalistic attitudes, and a low per capita income; (2) *preconditions for take-off* evolve as a traditional society is exposed to modern scientific knowledge and technology, and traditional values begin to break down; (3) *take-off*, wherein sustained economic growth gets underway, and the society discards its traditional values, (4) *drive to maturity*, in which a society undergoes rapid economic growth and becomes integrated into the larger international economic system; and (5) *high mass consumption*, the final stage of development, characterised by a high standard of living for a majority of the society. Rostow emphasised GNP (gross national product) as a measure of a country's progress in development. While useful in gaining an understanding of the stages in development, Rostow's approach does not discuss the specific processes which boost a society from one stage to another.⁸

Psychological Approaches

The Psychological approach to development is rooted in Max Weber's analysis of emergence of the Protestant Ethic and the subsequent rise of modern capitalism in the Western world. Weber argued that capitalism flourished in Europe because the Protestant reformation movement ended the long-established authority of the church, encouraging rational scientific inquiry. Modern European society displayed a spirit of capitalism, whose roots originated in ascetic Protestantism.⁹

Development officials in certain Third World countries were attracted by the psychological theories of David McClelland and Everett Hagen. They explained development in terms of the presence (or absence) of: (1) some individual personality trait, or (2) the general psychological state characterising a society.

McClelland's theory centred on achievement motivation, the desire for excellence. McClelland argued that the need for achievement (n/Ach) encourages an individual to meet challenges, to take risks, and to succeed in the face of difficulties.¹⁰ Western industrialised nations contained individuals with high levels of achievement motivation, which led to a high rate of national economic growth.

Hagen argued that traditional Third World societies produced authoritarian personalities who lacked self-confidence, exhibited a high level of anxiety when faced with new situations, and who were content to preserve the *status quo*. Developed societies contained more innovative personalities, who displayed self-confidence, derived satisfaction in solving problems, and who were achievers. He argued that for development to occur, individual personalities had to change. More innovative personalities could be encouraged by improving literacy, by expanding the mass media, by urbanisation, and by promoting nationalism.¹¹ McClelland's and Hagen's approaches to development are criticised because of their narrow focus on individual personality traits, and because of their seemingly elitist, condescending view of Third World societies.¹²

Theorists, such as Kunkel and Inkeles and Smith explained development in terms of the influence of social structure and social institutions on individual personality traits.¹³ Kunkel presented a behavioural model for social change. He argued that human behaviour could be modified, and social change initiated, once a society rewarded or punished specific behaviours of its individuals. Human behaviour could be altered by: (1) punishing behaviour inimical to economic development, for example, hoarding wealth, and (2) rewarding behaviour beneficial to economic development, for example, saving and investing.

Inkeles and Smith¹⁴ argued that: (i) development was associated with presence of a particular personality type in a society, and (2) economic development was dependent on the emergence of 'modern man'. They

claimed that modern personality traits were learned through interaction with such modern institutions as the school, the mass media, and the factory. Human personality changed through the process of socialisation, especially through interactions with social institutions.

The early economic and psychological approaches to development assumed that Third World countries were themselves to blame for their underdevelopment, and disregarded external factors which impeded Third World development. Dependency theorists investigated external factors to explain Third World's lack of development.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory gained popularity during the 1960s in the writings of several Latin American scholars. Its chief spokesperson was Andre Gunder Frank, a critic of economic and psychological approaches to development. He argued that: (1) colonialism, and (2) Western capitalism were the two major factors responsible for the underdeveloped nature of Third World countries.¹⁵ The Western industrialised countries developed by exploiting human and natural resources of their Asian, African, and Latin American colonies, and by making them economically dependent on their colonial powers. Unlike other theoretical approaches, which assume that Third World countries exist in isolation, dependency theory argues that Third World countries have been in too close contact with the Western industrialised countries.¹⁶ Neocolonialism continues as Western industrialised countries continue their political and economic domination of their former colonies.

Diffusionist Approach

Diffusion is defined as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.¹⁷ Edari utilises diffusion theory in a somewhat narrow sense to explain the process of Third World development. Diffusion is a process by which a Third World country adopts capital, technology, and social structure from Western industrialised countries.¹⁸ He argues that Third World countries will develop to the extent that: (1) Western industrialised countries provide capital (through loans and grants) to invest in development programmes, (2) they adopt modern methods of agricultural and industrial production, and (3) they adopt those values, attitudes, and behaviour patterns that are exhibited by Western industrialised nations.

In sum, early development theorists viewed development as a process by which a 'traditional' Third World society could be transformed into a 'modern' Western society. They were concerned with what a government did to, and for, its people. They stressed economic growth (measured as the annual rate of growth in a nation's Gross National Product (GNP)

through industrialisation.¹⁹ They implied that poverty was equivalent to underdevelopment. The obvious way for Third World countries (they were called "less developed countries" in the 1960s) to develop was to follow the Western model of development. Such development approaches, provided by Western scholars, were *elitist* and ethnocentric in believing that Third World nations had to develop in a Western way.

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

Third World countries did not experience, or experienced in a very different way, the process that had transformed Western nations into systems that placed a high value on science and technology, modern forms of social organisation, advanced industry, and the principles of democracy and justice.²⁰ Western theoretical models did not successfully predict development in the Third World. By just about anyone's standards of evaluation, the rate of development in Latin America, and Asia was disappointing. Even the one country that was an unqualified success in economic progress, Japan, did not closely follow the details of the Western model of development.²¹

Both internal and external forces contributed to the failure of development approaches in the Third World. The main internal causes of underdevelopment in the Third World countries included traditionalism, widespread poverty, illiteracy, inefficient and corrupt bureaucracies, a burgeoning population, and lack of an adequate infrastructure to utilise natural resources. The capital-intensive Western technologies, which had transformed the Euro-American nations, were often misfits in many capital-poor, labour-rich Third World countries. Adoption of capital-intensive technologies in labour-rich countries, while increasing efficiency and output, resulted in grave social problems. The western technologies displaced workers, increased unemployment, and led to the mass migration of people from villages to cities. These social changes resulting from Western technologies occurred so rapidly that many Third World governments were unprepared for the consequences.²² External constraints on a Third World nation's development included international terms of trade, the economic imperialism of multinational corporations, and the vulnerability and dependence of the Third World recipients of development assistance programmes.

Contemporary Approaches

In the 1970s and 1980s, the development problem has been reconceptualised in various ways. Rather than looking at GNP as a measure of development or growth, meeting basic human needs, equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits, and people-empowerment are being increasingly looked upon as development goals. Development scholars no longer treat the

Third World as a homogenous group of countries, but increasingly recognise the importance of cultural, context-based approaches to development.²³

A single comprehensive theory of development does not exist. The contemporary theoretical approaches to development are: (1) pluralistic, recognising many pathways to development, and (2) less Western in their cultural assumptions. Key elements in contemporary development approaches, reflected in the thinking of Rogers²⁴, Korten and Klaus²⁵, Bjur²⁶ Bryant and White²⁷, include: (1) greater equality in distribution of development benefits, (2) popular participation, knowledge-sharing, and empowerment to facilitate self-development efforts by individuals, groups, and communities, (3) self-reliance and independence in development, emphasizing the potential of local resources, (4) limiting growth of population²⁸, and (5) integration of "appropriate" technology with "big" modern technologies in order to facilitate development.²⁹

DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Development Administration is the uses of administration to further development.³⁰ Specially, development administration is the task of organising and administering public agencies to facilitate and implement development programmes.³¹ Development administration grew as an academic discipline when Western industrialised nations began to aid Third World development, using government and public-sponsored institutions as agents of social change.

During the 1950s and 1960s, development administration was influenced by the early theoretical approaches to development. Administrators believed that: (1) development was desirable, (2) development could be planned, directed, and controlled by public agencies, (3) poverty could be eliminated by improving the quantity and quality of public goods and services, and (4) obstacles to development could be overcome.³² Development was primarily viewed as economic development, and development administration was largely economic administration, with little concern for an equitable distribution of social benefits.

Today, development administration is less bound to Western approaches to development. The focus is on indigenous development, which is sustainable, and which meets the basic needs of the people.

CONTEMPORARY THEORISING IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

The focus of development administration has changed over the years, keeping pace with new development theorising. Once confined to the deployment of foreign aid, development administration today focuses on

planned change to meet a nation's broad political, economic, social, and cultural objectives.³³ Non-government, non-bureaucratic, religious, cultural, voluntary, and community organisations are now increasingly involved in development projects. Localised, decentralised, and participative approaches to development are encouraged.

From 'Blue-Print' Approach to Learning-Process Approach

One contemporary trend in development administration theory is a shift from a 'blue-print' approach to a learning-process approach. The 'blue-print' approach involves designing a specific plan of action in advance for administering a development programme.³⁴ With all its potential benefits, this approach is inflexible, and somewhat closed-ended, with its inability to respond to the needs of a changing environment.³⁵

In contrast, a *learning-process* approach is a relatively open-ended strategy to planned social change. This approach involves a cybernetic process by which development administrations can adapt themselves to changing environments and incorporate mid-course corrections, based on existing local conditions.³⁶ Problems are diagnosed and solutions implemented, by people and administrators jointly via a process of mutual learning.³⁷

The 'blue-print' approach emphasises advanced planning *for* the people. The learning-process approach emphasises planning *with* the people, and doing so during the process of administering a development programme.

From Production-Centred Approach to a People-Centred Approach

Another trend in contemporary development administration theorising is a shift from a production-centred to a people-centred approach to development. The *production-centred* development approach emphasises production of goods and services to maximise returns on investment.³⁸ This approach stresses: (1) industry over agriculture, (2) urban development over rural development, (3) utilisation of capital resources over human resources, (4) exploiting the environment for short-term gains over sustained harnessing of natural resources, and (5) establishing large-scale industries over small-scale industries.³⁹ Such a development approach neglects the basic needs of the rural poor in Third World countries, and promotes socio-economic inequality.

In the *people-centred* approach to development, the needs of the people take precedence over the needs of the production system. This approach views an individual not as a *subject* but as an actor, who defines the goals, controls the resources, and directs the processes affecting his/her life.⁴⁰ The central themes of people-centred development are: (1) empowerment of people, and (2) development of an administrative process which responds to the needs of the people.⁴¹

Key elements in people-centred development are: (1) human growth and

well-being, (2) equality, (3) self-reliance, (4) participation, and (5) sustainability. *Sustainability* is a measure of lasting quality in a development programme. A development programme can be sustained by: (1) creating a felt need among beneficiaries about the efficacy of the programme, (2) developing institutions which continually adapt⁴², (3) providing (or self-generation) of resources, and (4) building support among political elites and community groups.⁴³

An example of a learning-process and a people-centred approach to development is the spectacular case of the Anand Milk Producer's Union (AMUL), located in the Kheda district of India's Gujarat state.⁴⁴ In the mid-1940s, Kheda dairy farmers, dissatisfied with the local government's milk marketing programme, formed their own milk cooperative, AMUL. Under Verghese Kurien's dynamic leadership, AMUL gradually learned how to increase milk production, improve animal husbandry, manage a growing cooperative, and devise effective marketing strategies for its dairy products. As AMUL's learning-process continued, more dairy cooperatives were established and brought under AMUL's umbrella.

AMUL grew from bottom-up to eventually become the India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), an organisation now comprising about 6,000 village cooperatives, with a membership of about three million dairy farmers. NDDB is efficient, relatively corruption-free, and provides socio-economic benefits to the poor members of the village communities. Developmental growth is sustained through participative organisational structures, self-reliance strategies, and commitment to meet the basic needs of the village poor. NDDB's success led to what is commonly called the White Revolution in India, a State characterised by an abundance of dairy products. The AMUL-NDDB experience in India represents the benefits of employing a learning-process and people-centred approach to development.

In the 1980s, development administration theory is less ethno-centric, and less cultural in its Western assumptions. Today, development administration is characterised by context-based theories which incorporate indigenous social, cultural, political, and economic realities of Third World countries.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

In the 1950s and 1960s, development was viewed as a process by which a 'traditional' Third World society could be transformed into a 'modern' Western society. A general optimism about development was then widespread among both academic scholars and government officials. In the 1970s, it became increasingly apparent that Western theoretical models did not successfully predict development in the Third World countries of Asia,

Africa, and Latin America. Optimism about development turned into pessimism, and a questioning stance about development characterised the 1970s. The main view point about development (and development administration) in the 1980s is pluralism, a willingness to recognise many pathways to development. Instead of stressing per capita GNP as a measure of development, present-day development approaches emphasise greater equality, self-reliance, and people-participation.

REFERENCES

1. Russell L. Ackoff, "On the Nature of Development and Planning", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, Hartford, CT, Kumarian Press, 1984.
2. R. Dickinson, *Le Regle at le Niveau*, Geneva, CEC, 1968.
3. Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers, *India's Information Revolution*, New Delhi, Sage (in press).
4. *Ibid.*; also see "Communication and Development Today", paper presented in *Seminar on Communication and Change*, East-West Center, Honolulu, in July 1987.
5. Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm", in Everett M. Rogers (ed.), *Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage, 1976.
6. Wilbur Schramm, *The Story of Human Communication*, New York, Academic Press, 1988.
7. Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960.
8. Edward G. Stockwell and Karen Anne Laidlaw, *Third World Development: Problems and Prospects*, Chicago, Nelson-Hall, 1981.
9. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York, Charles Scriber's Sons, 1930.
10. David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society*, Princeton, NJ, Van Nostrand, 1961; and also see David C. McClelland, "A Psychological Path to Rapid Economic Development", *Mawazo*, Vol. 4, 1968, pp. 9-15.
11. Everett F. Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change*, Chicago, Dorsey, 1962.
12. Stockwell and Laidlaw, *op.cit.*
13. J.H. Kunkle, *Society and Economic Growth*, London, Oxford University Press, 1970.
14. A. Inkeles and D. H. Smith, *Becoming Modern*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1974.
15. A.G. Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969.
16. Stockwell and Laidlaw, *op. cit.*
17. Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, New York, Free Press, 1983, p.5.
18. R.S. Edari, *Social Change*, New York, W.C. Brown, 1976.
19. Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm", *op.cit.*
20. Singhal and Rogers, *op.cit.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. John H. Bodley, *Anthropology and Contemporary Human Problems*, Palo Alto, CA, Mayfield Publishing Company, (2nd ed.) 1983.
24. Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm", *op.cit.*; and also Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development Today", *op.cit.*

25. David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, Hartford, CT, Kumarian Press, 1984.
26. Wesley Bjur and A. Zomorodian, "Toward Indigenous Theories of Administration", Los Angeles, School of Public Administration, University of Southern California, 1986.
27. C. Bryant and Louise White, *Managing Development in the Third World*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1982.
28. Stockwell and Lindaw, *op.cit.*
29. E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*, New York, Harper and Row, 1973.
30. C. Bryant and Louise White, *op.cit.*
31. George F. Gant, "A Note on Applications of Development Administration", in International Institute of Administrative Sciences, *Education for Development Administration*, Brussels, Maiseon Ferd, Larcier, 1966.
32. Fred Riggs, "Perspectives on Social Change", in Chung Ro (ed.), *Social Change and Administrative Reform: Towards the Year 2000*, Seoul, Eastern Region Organization for Public Administration, 1985.
33. Wesley Bjur and Gerald Caiden, "Reforming Institutional Bureaucracies", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. XXIV, 1978, pp. 359-365.
34. David C. Korten, "Rural Development Programming: The Learning Process Approach", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, *op. cit.*
35. John Friedmann, "Planning as Social Learning", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, *op. cit.*
36. Korten, "Rural Development Programming: The Learning Process Approach", *op.cit.*
37. Edger S. Dunn, "The Nature of Social Learning", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, *op. cit.*
38. David C. Korten and George Carner, "Planning Frameworks for People-Centered Development", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, *op. cit.*
39. David C. Korten, "People Centred Development: Toward a Framework", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development, Contributions Towards Theory and Planning Frameworks*, *op. cit.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. Peter L. Berger and Richard Neuhaus, "To Empower People", in David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus (eds.), *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, *op. cit.*
42. Wesley Bjur, "Toward A Theory of Optimal Institutionalisation", Los Angeles, School of Public Administration, University of Southern California, 1977.
43. Louise G. White, *Creating Opportunities for Change*, Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 1987.
44. This case illustration is adapted from David C. Korten, "Rural Development Programming: The Learning Process Approach", *op.cit.*
45. Wesley Bjur and A. Zomorodian, *op. cit.*; Riggs, *op. cit.*; and J.E. Goldthorpe, *The Sociology of The Third World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975.