

INSTITUTION BUILDING : AN INTRODUCTION TO A MODEL FOR EVALUATIVE STUDIES

by

A. EKANAYAKE

Administrative action is purposive. It is aimed at achieving some objective determined by those who have the authority to allocate values for the society. In very broad terms such action may be directed to the maintenance or to the systematic change of the social system.

The objectives sought to be achieved by some administrative activities may be explicit. Others may not be very clear. However the clarity of objectives does not by itself ensure their satisfactory achievement. When objectives are nebulous their achievement is doubly uncertain.

Thus, there is a perennial need to assess the success or failure of administrative activities in terms of the stated or implied purposes to which they are directed and to isolate the determinants of the outcome, particularly failure, in order to rectify deviations and improve performance.

Although the need for evaluation may be recognized it is not always undertaken. When undertaken not all evaluations would produce satisfactory results. There may be several reasons for this. But one of the most significant causes of poor evaluative studies would be related to the inadequacies of the evaluative framework.

In recent times considerable theoretical work has been done in the field of evaluative research while in the practical sphere voluminous evaluative studies have been and are being undertaken. It is not proposed here to undertake a review of all that has been done or is being done.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce, in very concise terms, an analytical framework that has been fairly well developed by a few devoted scholars whose contributions will be acknowledged at the appropriate places in the following pages. It must be stated that the model was developed as an analytical tool for the study of organisation-induced changes. But it has been elaborated and adapted by others for evaluative studies.

As the model is a systemic one it would be appropriate to take a brief look at the nature of systems to place our model in its proper perspective.

A system is a set of components that interact with each other to process inputs and expel outputs which are in some detectable way different from the inputs.¹ Components of a system can be considered to be sub-systems, or if taken individually, can themselves be considered to be systems. The sub-systems (components) will have elements which when interacting with each other help to produce an output which is their contribution to the system.

A system thus defined is a part of a larger system which we may call the supra-system. If the supra-system is considered to be the system, the other systems become components or sub-systems. Thus, if we consider the society to be a system there will be sub-systems within it which we can, for example, designate as the political, the economic, or the social system. These sub-systems are themselves composed of various sub-sub-systems.

Thus, the term 'system' does not relate to any particular category, level, or size of a set of interactions. What we designate as a system for a given purpose may either be an element of a component, a component of a system, a system of a supra-system, or the supra-system itself. Therefore, one finds a hierarchy of systems; the lower (smaller) one contributing in some way to the needs of a higher (larger) one. Such a functional relationship is necessary for the survival, in a structural form, of the smaller system within the larger system. It also indicates an interrelationship among smaller systems within the supra-system, although these interrelationships are of a different order than the relationships and interactions between the components of a system. For example, the relationship of components in a system will be one of interdependence, each component contributing in some way to process outputs of the system, while the relationships of one system with another can be complementary or competitive. If a component within a system is competitive with another component, it will be inimical to the survival of the system. The components of a system should therefore be compatible, but two systems need not be so compatible, although such compatibility may contribute to harmony in the supra-system.

These interrelationships also indicate that systems in general are 'open.' They are subject to influences from their environments and other systems which provide inputs ("information and energies" or "demands and supports") necessary both for the survival of the system and to perform its functions of providing outputs which become inputs for other systems. A system is therefore 'open' not only because it absorbs and accepts inputs from the environment but also because it expels outputs and waste into that environment. If a system discharges outputs which are dysfunctional to the environment the survival of that system will be at stake. Therefore it has to adapt and change

itself to provide outputs which are functional. Failure to do so will result in a failure to acquire inputs necessary for generating outputs and for its own maintenance.

Reference to open systems implies that there are also closed systems. But some hold the view that they do not exist.² A closed system, in the limiting case, is unaffected by the environment. It does not absorb or receive any inputs from the environment. The assumption of a closed system may be useful and convenient for analytical purposes. But even the elements that are examined by chemists and physicists in their laboratories are affected by the environment (temperature) and they themselves discharge waste (heat) into the environment. In social systems, we cannot think of closed systems.³ Even if a community is isolated and has no contacts with other communities, it is at least submitted to influences from its physical environment. In the modern world such isolated communities are very rare.

There will, however, be a difference in the degree of openness of systems depending on the degree of influences or inputs absorption from the environment, either because necessary inputs are not available, or because the level of activity within the system does not require a higher level of inputs by way of information and energies (demands and supports) to be absorbed into the system. It would then mean that the amount of output expelled into the supra-system by the system is relatively low and therefore its value to the supra-system will also be relatively low. Under these circumstances it is necessary to assume that all systems have to depend for their inputs and for the absorption of their outputs on the environment and therefore are open systems.

Any administrative organisation which has for its purpose the delivery of goods or services to the society will, according to the above analysis, be an open system. Such a system will have within it various components and elements which interact to produce those outputs which it is expected to deliver to the social system. We have however to ascertain what these components and elements are that interact within an organization. This is not all. Since a system affects the environment and is affected by it there is a need to find out the nature of those exchanges. In this task the analytical model referred to earlier which is known as the Institution Building model comes to our assistance. Our attention should therefore be directed to it, the description of which is the substantive task of this paper.

The Institution Building Model

The Institution Building (IB) model provides a framework for organizational and environmental analysis for the understanding and explanation of organizational failure or success. The model has identified the critical internal variables of the organization which affect performance. It has also identified those elements in the environment which are crucial to the organization, and with which it has transactions.

The IB model as developed by Milton J. Esman and others consist of two sets of variables : the *institution variables* which are internal to the organization, and the *linkage variables* which relate to the environmental factors. The transactions between these two sets of variables constitute a third category. In order to be clear as to what these variables mean a few definitions would be appropriate.

What is an *institution* ? The word may mean (a) a behavioral pattern; (b) an establishment, organization, or association; or (c) a building housing that establishment, organization, or association.⁴ Sociologically it is a standardized mode of social behaviour, or "normative patterns which define proper, legitimate, or expected modes of action, or social relationships"⁵ In IB literature, an institution is a change-inducing and change-protecting formal organization which has become meaningful and valued in the society in which it functions.⁶ In other words "an institution is an organization which incorporates, fosters, and protects normative relationships which are valued in the environment."⁷

Institution building has accordingly been defined "as the planning, structuring, and guidance of new or reconstituted organizations which (a) embody changes in values, functions, physical and/or social technologies; (b) establish, foster, and protect new normative relationships and action patterns; and (c) obtain support and complementarity in the environment"⁸

When organizations and their action patterns are valued and accepted as legitimate sources of policy even when those policies are not favoured, *institutionalization* has taken place. Huntington says that institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability.⁹ In other words, the organizations and the new action patterns they introduce become meaningful and valued in the society. According to Philip Selznik, to institutionalize is to "infuse with value beyond the technical requirements at hand."¹⁰ Esman and Bruhns say :

"By institutionalization, we mean the process by which new ideas and functions, through the instrument of organization, are integrated and

fitted into developing societies, are accepted and acquire the capacity to sustain themselves, and in turn, influence the latter environment in which they function.”¹¹

Institutionality denotes that “at least certain relationships and action patterns incorporated in the organization are normative both within the organization and for other social units and that the functions and services performed by the organization are valued in the environment and further that some support and complementarity in the environment has been attained.” It is a variable for evaluating the success of institution-building efforts and is a matter of degree and not an absolute category.¹²

But one cannot agree that the concept itself is an evaluative measure, because institutionality is, according to Esman, an end state. That state can be identified only by the existence of certain characteristics. These characteristics have been shown by Esman to be “(i) technical capability—the ability to deliver innovative technical services at an increasing level of competence; (ii) normative commitment—the internalization by its staff of the innovative ideas, relationships, and practices for which the institution stands; (iii) innovative thrust — the ability of the institution to continue to innovate; (iv) environment image; and (v) spread effect.”¹³ It may be possible to evaluate the success of the institution-building process with these criteria, but how can one evaluate an organization to find out whether it has the means to achieve institutionality? This seems to be possible only by the use of the two sets of variables in the IB model. Although they may not have been devised as evaluative variables, the means by which institutionality is achieved have to be adopted as measures to determine whether an organization is on the path to institutionalization. But let us proceed with definitions.

The institution variables of the IB model are leadership, doctrine, programme, resources, and internal structure which represent a cluster of organizational elements.

In the IB model *leadership* is the single most critical variable which is defined as a group process in which various roles are played by different individuals and therefore encompasses the group of persons who are actively engaged in the formulation of the doctrine and programme of the institution and who direct its operations and relationships with the environment.¹⁴ The elaboration, expression and manipulation of the doctrine is an important responsibility of the leadership requiring investment of time, thought, and effort. Other responsibilities relate to the development of the programme, mobilization of resources, and cultivating linkages, in addition to the direction and motivation of the staff of the organization.

When the introduction of behavioural changes are involved, as distinct from the maintenance of status quo, both within the organization and the environment, especially when there may be powerful resistance to such changes, organizations require "technically and politically competent" leadership committed to innovation to deal with internal and external responsibilities. It need not necessarily be provided by a single individual. In fact it may require a collectivity to deal effectively with the various roles that are involved internally and externally, even when there is a single competent person as a leader. When it is not possible to find either a single or collective leadership within the organization, it becomes a serious limitation, even if environmental factors are favourable. The alternative available then would be one of finding suitable leadership from outside or limiting activities in keeping with the capabilities of existing leadership.¹⁵

The specification of values, objectives, and operational methods underlying social action represents the *doctrine* which "is regarded as a series of themes which project, both within the organization itself and in its external environment a set of images and expectations of institutional goals and styles of action."¹⁶ It is the expression of what the organization stands for, what it hopes to achieve, and the styles of action it intends to use.¹⁷ Noting that the term 'doctrine' is used in the literature on IB in place of 'mission' or 'objective,' Hill and others state that "doctrine is a useful concept: it goes beyond the broad objectives, which normally are short statements of the major goals to be sought. The doctrine takes the objectives and converts them into a more concrete set of policies and guidelines which gives definite direction for the institution's activities." They go on to state for example that in "educational institutions, the definition of doctrine might include such matters as: (i) the use oriented teaching and research as opposed to exclusive attention to theory, (ii) participative learning versus straight lecturing, (iii) faculty accessibility to students, (iv) faculty receptivity to student questioning and argument, and (v) organic versus personalized leadership. In short, doctrine pertains largely to the internal value system of the institution and to determination of the features which will differentiate it from other institutions"¹⁸

When the doctrine is clear, consistent and confident, it promotes a purposeful interaction and organizational effectiveness in its external dealings. It helps to clarify the values it stands for and projects an image of the organization indicating the services and benefits the society can expect from it. Thus it helps gain and maintain support. It is not a single concept but a group of flexible themes, differently emphasized for different clienteles. "Doctrine thus motivates personnel, provides standards for decision-making and for evaluating results and helps to prepare the ground and to rationalize

shifts in the organization's emphasis, activities, and outputs."¹⁹ Lack of a doctrine or a clear one reduces credibility and obscures the purpose of the organization.

Programme refers to "those actions which are related to the performance of functions and services constituting the output of the institution."²⁰ It is a set of activities which translates the doctrine into concrete patterns of action and involves a set of choices for the allocation of energies and resources for their conversion into specific outputs.

Resources are "the financial, physical, human, technological and informational inputs of the institution"²¹ They may take the form of (a) legal and political authority, (b) personnel, (c) funds, (d) equipment, (e) facilities, and (f) information. Resources availability will have a great impact on programme effectiveness and the extent of programme expansion possible. Because of this, problems of mobilizing resources and ensuring steady flow is an important preoccupation of institutional leadership. Resources may be converted into outputs to increase organization's capabilities. The price paid for resources is the "organization's ability to produce valued services to those in society who control or influence the flow of resources."²²

The "structure and processes established for the operation of the institution and for its maintenance" is the *internal structure*. It is the instrument through which the programme and the doctrine on which the programme is or should be based is operationalized. The cluster of elements called the internal structure includes formal and informal patterns of authority, division of labour, channels of communication, methods of resolving conflicts and mediation, and this complex whole is the vehicle of change. It is therefore one of the most valuable resources of the institution builder.

An innovative institution which aims at influencing the environment will have innumerable exchanges with the environment and these exchanges are called *transactions*. These transactions involve exchange of goods or services, and power and influence with organizations and groups in the environment. In order to have continuous and fruitful transactions, the institution has to establish and maintain a network of *linkages* with the relevant segments in the environment. "Linkages are those points at which exchanges (information and energy transfers) actively take place."²³ These linkages are necessary to gain support, overcome resistance, exchange resources, structure the environment, and transfer norms and values.²⁴

Every organization has to obtain a mandate for it to come into being, authority for it to function, acquire resources for it to continue in operation, and ensure protection for survival. These are derived through *enabling linkages* which are defined as the relationship with organizations and social

groups which control the allocation of authority and resources needed by the institution to function. Enabling linkages provide authority, access to resources, and protects the organization. Therefore the institutional leadership needs to cultivate these linkages to strengthen them.²⁵

Besides the resources provided through the enabling linkages, the organization requires certain inputs from other segments of the environment. It also needs to have segments of the environment which absorb its output. Relationships with those organizations which supply inputs and which use outputs of the institution are called *functional linkages*. These relationships are therefore of a complementary nature.

“The linkages with institutions which incorporate norms and values which are relevant to the doctrine and program of the institution” are called *normative linkages*.²⁶ There is a source from which the institution derives its norms and values. Esman and Blaise define institutions as “organizations which incorporate, foster, and protect normative relationships and action patterns and perform functions and services which are valued in the environment.”²⁷ This shows that the institution derives norms from other sources to incorporate in it. For a change-inducing organization some of the norms that it incorporates may come from sources outside the country, and therefore this aspect of normative linkages may be with them. These linkages will strengthen the enabling and functional linkages, and confer prestige on the institution.

Apart from the relationships of an institution with formal organizations in the environment there are also other exchanges of various kinds which are important to an institution. These exchanges arise through what are called *diffuse linkages*. They are relationships with individuals or groups not aggregated in formal organizations or collectivities but may have influence with the enabling and functional organizations. What is broadly termed public opinion but more specifically those who shape public opinion — the press etc. — falls into this category.²⁸

The discussion so far can be summarised by a diagrammatic representation of the IB model in what Esman and others call the Institution Building Universe. This is to be found in Diagram I.

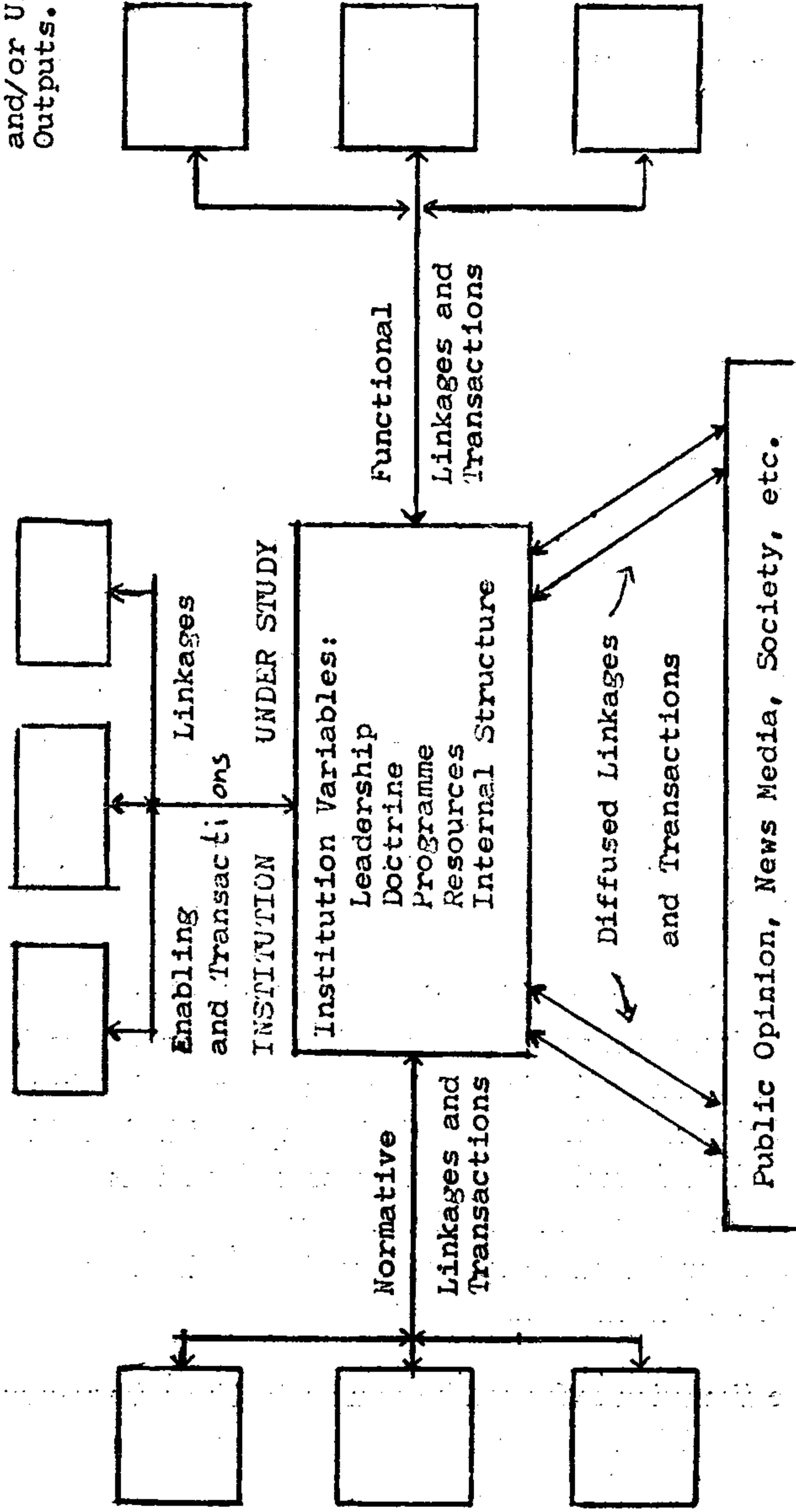
The IB model has been developed and continues to be refined as a model for induced social change in developing societies. But it appears also to be an analytical and an evaluative model. In fact, the model seems to be used more and more for evaluating the success or failure of organization-induced changes.²⁹

THE INSTITUTION - BUILDING UNIVERSE

ORGANIZATIONS OR SOCIAL GROUPS CONTROLLING BY
ALLOCATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES NEEDED BY
INSTITUTION

Complementary
Organizations
Supplying Inputs
and/or Using
Outputs.

Other
Institutions
Incorporating
Norms and
Values
Relevant to
Doctrine and
Programme of
Institution
under
study



Public Opinion, News Media, Society, etc.

The IB model provides specific variables to look for in evaluation and goes further than for example, *immanent criticism*³⁰ which begins its evaluative process from the objectives of a programme. In the IB model, the doctrine encompasses much more than objectives and the doctrine itself has to be related to social needs. Thus it goes into the evaluation of the adequacy of the doctrine itself, taking a transcendental approach³¹ to evaluation. The advantage of the IB model lies in the fact that apart from institution variables, the model emphasizes the importance of environmental linkages which are grouped under four variables. That this model can assist in developing a framework for evaluation is indicated by Saul M. Katz.³² The matrix developed by William J. Jorns is such a framework.³³ He has shown how the institution variables can be disaggregated to suit specific evaluative requirements. An example of partially disaggregated institution variables is given in Table I below:

TABLE 1
Disaggregated Institution Variables (as per W. J. Jorns)

INSTITUTION VARIABLES	
1.	Leadership
	(a) Technical competence
	(b) Administrative competence
	(c) Political competence
	(d) Commitment to doctrine
	(e) Depth of leadership
	(f) Continuity and succession
2.	Doctrine
	(a) Its source
	(b) Realism in terms of needs and resources
	(c) Specificity, consistency and articulation
	(d) Sensivity to societal norms
	(e) Official legitimization
	(f) Provision for conflict management
	(g) Degree of innovativeness
3.	Programme
	(a) Consistency with doctrine
	(b) Programme visibility
	(c) Programme stability
	(d) Staff commitment
	(e) Management of opposition
4.	Resources
	(a) Adequacy of financial support
	(b) Staff training and development
	(c) Physical facilities
	(d) Information on new techniques
	(e) Access to feedback
5.	Internal structure
	(a) Adequacy of the existing structure
	(b) Allocation of tasks based on specialization
	(c) Contribution to programme improvement

Each of the institution variables makes a large impact on the development of transactions between the institution and the environment through the four linkages. It is the interaction between these two sets of variables that determines the degree of (a) efficiency in processing outputs, and (b)

effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services by formal organizations. In other words institutionality can be said to be a function of these interactions. Derge and others have developed a set of hypotheses indicating the interaction of internal variables with the four clusters of linkages in the IB model for evaluative purposes.³⁴

When the different elements of leadership, doctrine, programme, resources, and internal structure that interact or affect interactions with enabling, functional, normative, and diffuse linkages are disaggregated and elaborated they can be presented in a complex matrix. In order to clarify this point some relevant elements of the leadership variable are given in Table 2 below :

TABLE 2
Relationship of Institution Variables with Linkages

Linkage variables	Institution variables	A Leadership
1. Enabling Linkages		(a) membership in committees etc. of the institution and government agencies (b) interaction with government leadership (c) independence from government interference (d) acceptance by social, political, economic and other elite groups
2. Functional Linkages		(a) ability to identify relevant clientele groups (b) interaction with clientele group leadership (c) personal and professional acceptance by clientele group leadership
3. Normative Linkages		(a) acceptance/accommodation by social groups (b) relationship with norm-deriving institutions (c) respect for dominant social values and norms
4. Diffuse Linkages		(a) ability to convert favourable public opinion for gaining institutional acceptance (b) ability to avert unfavourable public opinion and minimize effects of negative popular evaluation

Similarly, for each of the other institution variables it is possible to elaborate those elements which interact with linkages and which contribute directly or indirectly to organizational performance one way or the other. The extent to which the relevant elements are present within the different variables as well as the degree of their activity (or inactivity) are the determinants of organizational success or failure.

These disaggregated variables therefore provide a useful framework for evaluative purposes.

Conclusion

A large amount of literature is now available on Institution Building, some of which have been referred to in this paper. The Institution Building

model was developed and elaborated to explain the conditions necessary for the success of programmes for social change particularly in developing countries. The model has identified two sets of variables, internal and external to organisations, which interact with each other. Institution variables of leadership, doctrine, programme, resources and internal structure while interacting with each other also interact with enabling, functional, normative, and diffuse linkages which are the four external variables. Successful achievement of developmental goals depends on the strength of these variables. If they can be useful in understanding organizational success (or failure) they provide a satisfactory framework for evaluative studies. This is the use some scholars have made of the IB model with appropriate elaborations and disaggregations of the variables. The model has been profitably put in to use in evaluating educational programmes in some developing countries. Its use is not or need not be limited only to this sphere. Evaluation of any programme of organization-induced change can conveniently be undertaken with the use of the framework provided by the IB model.

Notes

1. F. Kenneth Berrien, *General and Social Systems*, New Jersey, New Brunswick : Rutgers University Press (1968), p. 15.
2. *Ibid* pp. 15-16.
3. Robert Paul Boynton, *Management Development in the Public Service Approaches to Curriculum Design*, Jakarta, Lembaga Administrasi Negara (IBRD/ UN Project, INS/77/XOI,) (1977) p. 27.
4. Oxford Dictionary.
5. Martin Landau, "Linkage, Coding and Intermediacy : A Strategy for Institution Building" in *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol. 2, No. 4, February 1971, p. 404.
6. Melvin G. Blase, *Institution Building : A Source Book*, London, Sage Publications Ltd., (1973) pp. 45.
7. Milton J. Esman and Fred C Bruhans, "Institution Building in National Development; An Approach to Induced Social Change in Transitional Societies." in *Comparative Theories of Social Change*: Michigan, Arn Abor, Foundation for Research on Human Behaviour. (1966) p. 323.
8. Hans C. Blaise, *Institution Building for Public Service Development*, Paper presented at the Conference of Directors of Public Service Training Institutes held at the Asian Centre for Development Administration, February 28, March 6, 1974, Kuala Lumpur. p. 6.
Milton J. Esman, "Some Issues in Institution Building Theory" in B. Woods Thomas and others (eds) *Institution Building : A Model for Applied Social Change*, Massachusetts, Cambridge, Schenkman Publishing Company (1972) p. 22.
Blase, *op. cit* p. 30.
9. Samul Huntington, (1965 : 17).
10. Philip Selznik, *Leadership in Administration*, Illinois, Evanston, Row, Peterson and Co. (1957) p. 17.
11. Esman and Bruhns, *Op. cit* p. 321.
12. *Ibid* p. 326; Esman *Op. cit* pp. 24, 29.
13. Thomas Hill, W. W. Haynes, and H. Baumgartel (eds) *Institution Building in India: A study of International Collaboration in Management Education*, Boston, Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Division of Research (1973) p. 6.
14. Esman. *op. cit* p. 2; Blaise *op. cit* p. 6.
15. Esman *op. cit* pp. 28, 29.
16. Esman *op. cit* p. 23; Blaise, *op. cit* p. 6.
17. Esman *op. cit* p. 29.
18. Hill and others, *op. cit* pp. 30, 31 (emphasis added).
19. Esman *op. cit* p. 39.
20. *Ibid* p. 23.
21. *Ibid*.
22. *Ibid* p. 31.
23. Landau, *op. cit* p. 406; Esman and Bruhns *op. cit* p. 332.
24. Esman, *op. cit* pp. 23, 32; Blaise *op. cit* p. 7; Esman and Bruhns, *op. cit* pp. 333, 334, 322.
25. Esman *op. cit* p. 32; Esman and Bruhns *op. cit* p. 333.
26. Esman *op. cit* p. 23; Esman and Bruhns *Ibid*; Blaise, *op. cit* p. 7.
27. Quoted in Hill *et. seg.* p. 3 (emphasis added).
28. Esman *op. cit* pp. 23, 33; Blaise, *op. cit* p. 7; Esman and Bruhns, *op. cit* p. 333.
29. See Blase, *op. cit* p. 229 etc.
30. An evaluative concept elaborated by R. Apthorpe and D. Gaspar, The Hague, Institute of Social Studies Occasional Paper no. 75 September 1979.
31. *Ibid*
32. Saul M. Katz "The Institution Building Model : A Systems View" in Joseph W. Eaton (ed) *Institution building and Development: From Concepts to Application*, London, Sage Publications (1972) p. 160; Blase, *op. cit* pp. 23,24.
33. Blase *op. cit* p. 42.
34. *Ibid* pp. 44, 49.
35. As elaborated by Derge and others. See Blase *op. cit*.