

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES  
The Hague - Netherlands



AN EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

a Thesis presented by

A. Ekanayake

(Sri Lanka)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the Degree of

**MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Members of the Thesis Committee:

Mr. M. Faltas  
Prof. J.H. Kraak  
Dr. L.F.B. Dubbeldam

The Hague, December 1978.

77935  
P.D.  
3/08/77

**AN EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: A SYSTEM APPROACH**

by

**A. Ekanayake**

**(Sri Lanka)**

**77935**

**A Thesis written in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for obtaining the Degree of Master  
of Development Studies of the Institute of Social  
Studies, The Hague.**

**December, 1978**

To the Library of University of  
Sri Jayawardanapura.  
Donated by the author.

*K. S. Jayatilaka*

1974-08-09

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies; the views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute. Research papers and theses are not made available for outside circulation by the Institute.

1  
2

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies; the views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute. Research papers and theses are not made available for outside circulation by the Institute.

## P R E F A C E

I arrived at the Institute of Social Studies with the intention of writing a thesis on some aspects of public enterprise, during the second part of my studies for the Master's Degree. But, within one month of my arrival, another idea that was disturbing me from the beginning of my university teaching career got the better of the original intention. The result is this study.

The form in which it is presented here has been the outcome of many long hours of discussion with my supervisor, guide, and guru, Mr. Michael Faltas, who helped me to see that our inadequacies may be related to much more than the shortcomings in the curriculum. I cannot, in a few words, express the debt of gratitude I owe him not only for the academic guidance but also for being a source of strength and consolation in my hours of loneliness and disolation. However, any shortcomings in this study are due to my own weaknesses.

My studies at the I.S.S. have been made possible by the Government of Netherlands who provided me with a fellowship; and by the Government and the University of Sri Lanka who afforded me the opportunity to make use of this fellowship. I am grateful to these authorities.

Several others helped and inspired me in this exercise. They include my colleagues at the Faculty, and the Department of Management Studies; my compatriots who studied at the I.S.S.; and the academic and administrative staff of the I.S.S.; who are too numerous to mention individually. I say, 'Thank You' to all of them.

A. Ekanayake

# C O N T E N T S

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	INTRODUCTION	1
	Undergraduate programme in Public Administration: Sri Lanka	1
	Evaluative Framework	5
	Definition of some basic concepts	8
	The sequence and limitations	11
I	THE STUDY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE STATE OF THE SCIENCE	13
	Continental Administrative Sciences	14
	Cameral sciences	14
	Administrative Law	15
	The study of bureaucracy	17
	Great Britain's Contribution	18
	Institutions	18
	American Public Administration	24
	Politics-administration dichotomy	26
	Principles of administration	28
	Generic administration	30
	Challenges	32
	Identity crisis	34
	Two major paths of development	35
	Comparative Public Administration	36
	Development Administration	40
	Public Policy Approach	42
	The 'New' Public Administration	44
	Perspectives on the study of Public Administration	48
	Historical perspective	48
	Legal perspective	49
	Management-process perspective	50
	Behavioural perspective	51
	Perspective of politics	52
	Ecological perspective	53

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	Comparative perspective	55
	Inadequacies and criteria	56
II	THE STUDY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: AN EVALUATION	62
	The role of universities in developing countries	64
	The role of the Department of Management Studies	68
	The evolution of undergraduate programmes in Public Administration	70
	Nature of changes	72
	Evaluation of courses in Public Administration	77
	Adequacy of courses and their contents	79
	Summary of evaluation	83
III	SYSTEMS APPROACHES TO EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	87
	The system	87
	Department of Management Studies as a system	90
	Demands on the system	91
	Support for the system	94
	Systems approach to the study of Public Administration	95
IV	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES AS AN INPUT INTO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM	98
	A survey of needs for training in management	99
	The nature of administrative-managerial recruits required	103
	Generalist or specialist ?	108
	The relevance of academic programmes	112
V	A METHODOLOGY FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	119
	Curriculum Development	119
	Definitions	119
	Systems approach	123
	Transformation process	123

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
VI	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT OR INSTITUTION BUILDING ?	150
	The Institution Building Approach	151
	Definition of concepts	151
	Institution variables	155
	Linkage variables	158
	Evaluative framework	160
	Evaluation	165
	Institution Variables	165
	Linkage variables	176
	Summary	184
VII	A STRATEGY OF INSTITUTION BUILDING	188
	CONCLUSION	203
	Issued raised	206
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	208
	Appendix I	212



## Diagrams and Tables

	<u>Page</u>
Diagram I - Complex Methods of Evaluation	5
Diagram II - Reference points of relevance and adequacy	10
Diagram III - Approaches to the study of Public Administration	57
Diagram 5.1 - Transformation Process in Education Institutions	125
Diagram 5.2 - Basic Stages in Curriculum Development	130
Diagram 6.1 - The Institution-Building Universe	152

### Tables

Table 2.1 - Effect of Programme Revisions on Subject Areas	76
Table 5.3 - Desirable Attributes of a Development Administrator	132
Table 5.4 - Emphasis on Different Aspects of the Matrix in the Undergraduate Programmes	135
Table 6.2 - Disaggregated Institution Variables	161
Table 6.3 - Relationship of Linkages with Institution Variables	163

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

The study of Public Administration assumed worldwide proportions after the Second World War when the newly independent countries sought to improve their administrative organizations as a means of accelerating the pace of socio-economic development. The late fifties and sixties witnessed an increasing proliferation of technical assistance programmes in Public Administration from the United Nations and the United States to developing countries, after the earlier assumption of shortage of capital was found to be an inadequate explanation of the causes of underdevelopment and when government-induced development efforts were found to require an improvement in public administration.

### Undergraduate programme in Public Administration: Sri Lanka

The establishment, in 1960, of an undergraduate programme in Public Administration in the Department of Economics, Public, and Business Administration of the Vidyodaya University of Ceylon (Department of Management Studies of the Vidyodaya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka since 1972) coincided with these developments in other countries, although it was not under the patronage of a technical assistance project that the undergraduate programme was established. It was also a period when, within the country itself, steps were beginning to be taken to improve tools and techniques of administration in the public sector with the establishment, in the early fifties, of an O & M Unit in the Treasury, which was then responsible for all public personnel administration (Minkes and Withana:13).

The undergraduate programme initially catered to those already employed at lower levels in the public service, and until the changes in the higher education system in 1966 there was no direct admission of high school candidates to this programme. Their education, combined with experience, and growing opportunities helped the early output of the programme to climb up the ladder of promotion to various administrative positions in the public service, although not necessarily to the main elite cadre: the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. It is also necessary to remember that these graduates were also a persevering group to go through the undergraduate programme while being employed.

Changes in curriculum in 1967, accompanied by changes in the admissions policy, provided for the entry of school leavers to the programme, while at the same time restricting admission of employed persons. However, up to 1972 employed persons could seek admission to the second year of the undergraduate programme by sitting and passing the Intermediate Examination at the end of the first year as external candidates, but only a very few could gain admission, so that the students in the programme were predominantly those who came from the high school system. Gradually, also, the admissions were effectively restricted to students who belonged to the 'commerce stream' in the high schools. Although science stream students could also seek admission if they wished, which were few, the arts stream students were effectively excluded by the prescription of a particular combination of subjects they had to pass at the GCE(AL) examination; until certain relaxations were made since 1976.

During their study, many students obtained employment, generally in the second year, at clerical or other subordinate levels in government departments

or public corporations. Thus they were employed on graduation, but they would be dissatisfied since such employment would not be commensurate with their newly acquired academic qualifications. While these graduates had at least this employment others who devoted themselves full-time to their studies found it hard to obtain employment at administrative/managerial levels after graduation and they too have had in many cases to start at subordinate levels.

There can be two major causes for this situation of underemployment or unemployment among the out<sup>put</sup> of the programme. In the first place, it can be related to the general situation of unemployment/underemployment of graduates in the country. In fact the output of graduates in liberal arts and social sciences is said to be in excess of the demand for them in the country and therefore there is bound to be some unemployment/underemployment for at least some time after graduation (see de Silva:424-425). The remedy for this lies with the government which is looked upon in Sri Lanka, as in most developing countries, as the major contributor to socio-economic development and expansion of employment opportunities; and therefore very little can be done by the university or by one of its academic departments.

Secondly, the cause of unemployment/underemployment may be related to the inadequacy or irrelevancy of the programme. If this is so, it is an area in which the Department could do many things to overcome these problems. It is an assumption of this study that there are shortcomings in the curriculum, organizational factors, and external factors which together contribute to the present situation of the graduates of the Department. If there are no such inadequacies and

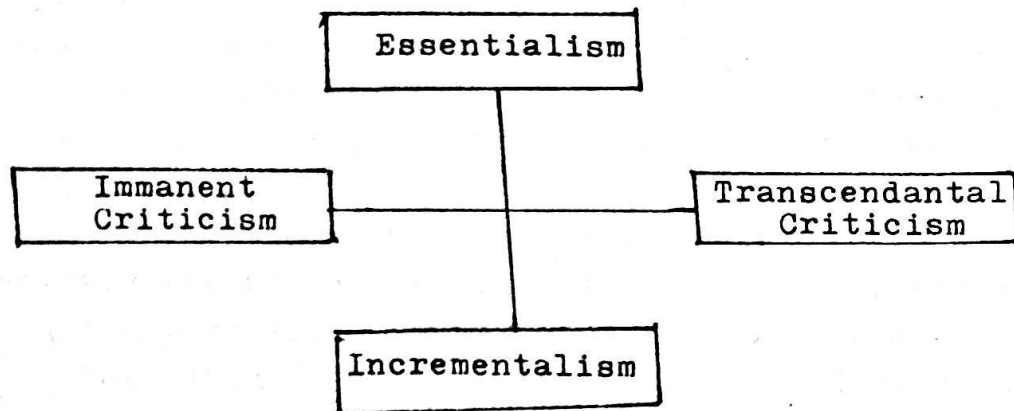
shortcomings one cannot explain why graduates in Public Administration who number about fifty annually remain unemployed or underemployed when annually much more than that number are recruited to the various administrative/managerial grades in the government departments and public corporations. This is also remarkable when one considers that there is a general recognition that those who are already in the administrative/managerial positions are in need of education and training in administration/management and therefore one would expect new recruits to be from among those who already possess this education and training (Minkes and Withana:32).

It is true that graduates of the Department have an edge over liberal arts and other social science undergraduates/graduates in obtaining employment at subordinate levels, but at administrative and managerial levels there seems to be no such advantage. One reason may be that, traditionally, recruitment to administrative grades of the public sector was made from among graduates in liberal arts and social sciences, and that this tradition continues unchanged for various reasons, even when the need for professional education and training in administration/management is found to be essential. However, the fact that the graduates of a programme which apparently is geared to cater to administrative/managerial needs of the country remain unemployed/underemployed needs serious examination to find out at least the major causes, and then suggest a set of actions which the Department could pursue hopefully to remedy the situation. This means that we have to examine the teaching programme and the internal and external factors that may affect the programme. It is the aim of this study to undertake such an evaluation.

Evaluative framework

But what is the evaluative framework that we are going to use in this study ? A public policy or programme can be evaluated in terms of either a simple or a complex method. Simple methods are inadequate for an overall evaluation, and therefore complex methods are necessary. Four complex methods are shown in the following diagram:

Diagram I - Complex Methods of Evaluation  
(as per Apthorpe and Gaspar)



Essentialism seeks to explain failure or success of a public policy or programme in terms of whether the essential characteristics are absent or present in the means of implementing that policy/programme. Incrementalism will argue that public policies could achieve certain results, but not others. Immanent criticism will take the stated objectives of the policy/programme as the basis of analysis and go on to find out whether these objectives have been achieved or not. The basis on which the objective itself has been determined, or whether there are any unstated objectives, is left outside of its analytical framework. Transcendental

Criticism, on the other hand, takes account not only of the stated objectives, but also the unstated ones and goes further and analyses public policies/programmes in terms of some general theoretical basis. Thus Transcendentalism rises above the limited scope of Immanent Criticism, in that while the latter limits its analysis to the stated objectives, the former goes into the basis of these objectives as well as to unstated objectives and then subjects these to criticism from a theoretical framework which the analyst assumes to be the valid theory.

Although the diagram counterposes Essentialism against Incrementalism and Immanent Criticism against Transcendental Criticism, as if they were completely at opposite poles, they are not so but are rather on different planes (or levels) so that the difference is one of degree. Essentialism is on a higher level of perfection than Incrementalism, while Transcendental Criticism goes beyond the scope of Immanent Criticism into unstated objectives and even to an examination of the basis<sup>of</sup> the objectives themselves. This view that the difference is one of degree seems to be supported by the following statement:

"James states simply, 'Programme evaluation can be defined as the measurement of success in reaching a stated objective', while Anderson qualifies the reaching of the objective in terms of 'measuring achievement of progress toward predetermined goals'. Anderson would go farther in his definition of goals by examining the value of the goals themselves. 'It is also concerned with determining whether the goals themselves are valid.' As we shall see later, the relationship of objectives to their underlying assumptions is indeed, a crucial aspect of evaluative research." (emphasis added; Suchman:29).

Thus one sees a close relationship between these four