# Management Capability : A Study In Public Sector Application

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The experience of many countries in the recent past engaged in socioeconomic development has underwritten the fact that management capability at all levels is a scarce resource and a limiting factor in the achievement of overall or specific goals. The increasingly direct and indirect involvement of the public sector in the socioeconomic realm places a heavy demand on management capability. Successful programme management and project development require high levels of management capability. In fact, the ability of a country to advance depends in large part on its management capability.

There has emerged consensus that the enhancement or expansion of management capability is needed to achieve overall or project goals. In any project the actual outcome, and hence the desirability of the exercise, depends on factors, such as management capability. A country has a fundamental stake in the realization and preservation of management capability in aiding the process of development and in harnessing various productive forces that generate output. Raising management capability is important because an increase in workload and involvement in new activity area without a corresponding change in personnel competence, specialty areas, skill types and skill levels may lead to organizational overload, immobilization and incapacitation. Yet, one of the conspicucous feature of nearly all developing countries is inadequate management capability. Management capability constraints pose one of the most serious limitations on development efforts and are in many cases as serious as impediment to programme/project development as shortage of investment funds or lack of sustained high-level support.

In the vast research output on country development that has appeared in recent years, remarkably little attention is paid to management capability.

Development experience shows a tendency to overlook management capability. Few countries pay close attention to a programme/project's management feasibility along with its technical, financial, economic and social feasibility. Many programmes projects make no or insufficient provision for ensuring management capability. One finds, as a result, that management capability is often neglected as a factor in sociocconomic development, funding and technical-assistance agencies typically tend to pay cursory attention to management capability in project development, and the need to enhance management capability dose not always receive for various reasons high priority among policy-makers. In this paper it is proposed to examine management's capability from the perspective of programme management and project development and to relate this particularly to the Caribbean country of Barbados.

### NATURE

The importance and usefulness of management capability in development activity and its contribution to the success or failure of development efforts are substantial. The ability of a public sector to formulate/ execute/ run programmes and projects rests in large part on its management capability. High management capability overlaps with high capital investment. Its importance lies in its capacity 'to implement new ideas and initiatives. Raising management capability and 'operational effectiveness is undeniable if development is to be accelerated and sustained. Capabilities and competencies are as essential in managing routine operations as for the major task of improving the life and culture of an entire society.

It is further noteworthy that management capability plays a decisive role in the programme/ project process, touching on all its phases, i.e. generation, study, formulation, execution and operation. It greatly influences the quality and outcome of its activities. It is crucial not only to its implementative progress but also its postcompletion operational success. Capability development is indispensable for programme/project personnel as well as members of participant groups. The accumulation and application of research and the sharpening of skills in the appraisal of capability development is important, especially for countries which attempt to plan their development. The strengthening of capability can lead to greater effectiveness in resource-use and to higher rewards in development efforts.

Setting about conceptually, management capability is a specific function necessary for the successful implementation of a programme/project as well as its effective operation. Its purpose is to develop competencies and attitudes essential to effective performance. Management capability is the ability to mobilize and use a variety of physical, human and financial inputs, estabilish and manage organizations for goal accomplishment, collect and process information, analyze and develop measures and options, formulate responses and set directions, design

and maintain systems and procedures, implement programmatic goals and values, and control and evaluate results.

The task of management capability is to identify, assess, quantify and apply inputs correctly through an organization that will ensure a planned result in terms of goods or services. It concerns ability to perform allocative, facilitative, production, entrepreneurial and regulatory functions. Ongoing research reveals a number of definitions of management capability. Gross (1969 : 227-228), Katz (1969 : 99-100), the United Nations (1969 : 8,67,112 ; 1978 : 73-91 ; 1983 : 1) and Swerdlow (1975 : 356) concur that management capability is the capacity to obtain desirable or intended results through organizations, and that it involves the ability to mobilize, allocate and combine the actions that are needed to achieve objectives. The United Nations (1975 : 32) defines it as being the ability to mobilize inputs and increase productivity or efficiency.

Likewise, management capability means (Stone and Stone, 1976 : 204) the institutional capacity to formulate and carry out activities to fulfil purposes. It consists of the methods, systems and activities (Gant, 1979 : 9) by which policies, programmes and projects are carried out to accomplish specific goals of development, goals which are articulated for a particular period of time and place. Goodman and Love (1980 :21) report that capability relates to the exercise of decision-making skills, the existence of proper information systems and the dissemination of information to target groups. It concerns (United Nations, 1983 : 27, 32) the ability of organizations to mobilize resources, convert them into goods or services and achieve complementarities with its external environment. It is developed to cope with the aggregate production and service functions which in turn reflect the needs of the population groups. Management capability is the combination of organizations, skills, resources, leadership and supports (United Nations, 1984 : 32) required for specific projects or general activities.

To continue, management capability can be considered a resource factor (King, 1967 : 10-11 ; Swerdlow, 1975 : 357-365 ; Israel, 1978 : 28). This resource has to be consciously allocated to yield a return on the investment. It is not a mobile resource capable of flowing spontaneously to the point where it can yield the greatest return. It is, as Bryant and White (1982 : 24) puts it, like good housekeeping ; when it is really good, it is also unobtrusive, enhances the environment, and facilitates getting on with the job.

It can be either specific or diffuse. When it is diffuse throughout a large organization, it tends to be overlooked and may be erroneoulsy considered almost costless. An important distinction exists between management capability and other resource factors (Kindleberger 1965 : 118). Capital can be subsdtuted for labour, or labour for land, or technology for land, and vice versa. But management capability is complementary rather than substitutible. The more interdependent a programme/project is, the more management capability it needs. It is not merely

concerned with what is to be done but also with how it is to be done. It involves acting in certain ways in the face of informational and cognitive chagrins (Dunsire, 1978 : 27). The United Nations confirms (1969 : 100) that the use of capability involves the interdisciplinary combination of managerial, political economic and social behaviours into a coherent and dynamic whole.

The elements of management capability comprise organization building, human resource development, morale maintenance, capacity-building, skill-raising, and performance and output consciousness. Also relevant are decision making ability, structural and operational attribute, attitudinal and behavioural adaptability and environmental sensitivity. Capability consists in indentifying and securing the resources that the organization requires, including tools, services, facilities, methods and procedures. It involves an ability to understand rapid and baffling environmental changes and to develop an organizational capacity to adapt creatively to these changes. It is ensured and sustained by several sets of activities, i.e. measuring results achieved, reviewing results and comparing them with the present targets, analyzing variances and indentifying their cause, and using corrective measures.

Capability involves identifying elements, understanding the process and planning the activating responses. It is especially sensitive to the adequacy of resources, motive and direction of mandate, type of leadership, effectiveness of motivators, scope and relevance of management education and training, continuity of management research and commitment to management planning and reform. Capability entails improvement in planning, problem-solving, and analytical, operational and evaluative skills. .

It is remarkable that the most critical competencies in management capability are the ability to operate within the organizational system, work within the functional and personal sub-systems, communicate ideas, work with diverse people, coordinate group effort, provide leadership, and intergate varied efforts. For example, competency areas comprise, broadly speaking, management techniques and behavioural tools. Management techniques extend to measuring, scheduling, budgeting, cost control, performance appraisal, quality control, accounting, reporting and contract-handling. Behavioural tools embrace team development, conflict management, power-influence factor, change manag ment, negotiation skills, climate-setting, cultural adaptation, reward factor, motivation factor and support network.

Management capability ensures and strengthens the vitality of the public sector to stimulate and facilitate development. It incorporates planning and forecasting competence, staff analysis capability, specialized personnel, management skill, field organization, successful decentralization, competent delegation and effective coordination. Capability results in expeditious decision, competent performance, clear accountability and overall efficiency. It not only contributes to an appropriate

and congenial operating culture and effective support system, but also improves the delivery of services and strengthens the production process in the public sector.

Of importance is measuring capability at both macro and micro levels. Performance takes a foremost place. For example, both past performance and an estimated future performance can be assessed. It can be measured in relation to the maximum output that is achieved. Performance refers to the relation between input and output, the cost and type of input, the quantity and quality of input, the benefits and disbenefits and the related operational snags.

Effectiveness and efficiency are the other variables. Effectiveness is selecting the right thing. Efficiency is the right way of doing that which is selected. Effectiveness speaks of the relation between achievement and objectives. Efficiency deals with inputs to outputs. No less important are other and related indicators, such as input indicators, activity indicators, output/impact indicators and social impact indicators.

Notable too is that management capability of a country is related to its history, culture, social structure and value system. It is desirable to make a distinction between actual and potential capability. The former is the capability demonstrated in the past or the present, and the latter is one which would be either required or would be available in the future. Also, the overall management capability of the public sector is distinguishable from the capability in a specific agency. The former is a macro capability, a large aggregate capability, and the latter localized in a particular organization.

The association between management capability and socioeconomic development is close. Imported or imposed programme initiatives are no substitute for actual local initiative and direction. It may be desirable to assemble talent initially in particular activity areas. The intensification of management capability in developing countries cannot afford to be ponderous ; it has to be quick, rational and conscious. It may be desirable to treat management as a sector, susceptible to programmed development in its own right, a field with its own identity.

Management capability is significant especially in programme management and project development. The quality of capability and skill can affect programme/projects in several ways. A programme/project may rake longer to complete than is allowed for initially. The period between when a programme/project is completed and when the new management group is sufficiently ready to operate it at its rated capacity may be prolonged. The rated capacity may not even be attained. Even if it is attained, it may be done only with the use of more costly inputs. Frequent changes in designs, schedules or budgets, extension or curtailment of completion schedules, re-ordering of priority, heavy reliance on external assistance, postponement and stretchout are not uncommon.

There is a widespread tendency to see management capability in terms of a fixed quantum. It is pertinent to question this tendency. The management systems may carry out, to varying degrees, any number of major activities, e.g. protection, regulation, extraction service and development. The capacity to perform any of these activities varies significantly because the skills, attitudes and organization techniques required in each case are different. Yet, there is limited recognition of the variations in capability and insufficient appreciation of the need to analyze capability in the context of these varying activities.

Management capability is susceptible to conscious improvement as well as the improvement that comes indirectly from associated and related changes. Improvements in capability may come from experience and deliberative changes in recruitment, training, structure, function, technique and ideology. Capability development is considerably influenced by and dependent on changes in the social structure-the type of public service, the form of organization, the flow and distribution of power and authority, social-structural changes, value-systems changes and changing social practices.

Indirect reviews of capability are reflected in efforts to assess the manageability or feasibility of new or additional programmes/projects. At budget times, request for additional personnel or directives for cuts in staff are presumably based in part on judgement of capability to do the assigned work. Specifically, when new programmes/projects are proposed, the question of capability is raised and examined. Some tests of management capability may be used. One may be whether the support services in a given country can sustain the proposed activity. Another may be whether an existing agency has demonstrated its competence to carry out the desired activity. The existence and reliability of a mangement delivery system to carry out a given activity is another. Still another one is whether the proposed activity can be carried out during a prescribed time-frame.

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

The needs in building, expanding and improving management capability are multiple. To start with, the need for capability growth, related planning and skill-raising for effective development is high. Spending time, money and resources on improvements in management capability is urgent. A country must invest in it and plan such investments like any other. Planning for management capabilities deserves the same degree of attention as that given to other public-sector activities. Commitment to improved management to increase implementative capability needs to parallel and combine with related development efforts. In fact, the selection of capable management staff for the organization, execution and operation of the programme/project should receive as much attention, if not more, as the design feature itself.

The organization structure needs to be redesigned to make it more agreeable with the task of resource management. A primary need should be to focus the attention of practitioners on achievable goals. Management capability must be renewed, recreated and revitalized. Dysfunctional and unsuitable structures, systems, processes and practices must be replaced. The capability variables should be clearly specified and, where possible, accurately quantified.

Sustained efforts are required to expand and improve management capability, to flush out weaknesses and generate recognition throughout the public sector system at all levels, that continuous capability growth is necessary. Capability growth requires designing an action plan, recruiting and training specialized staff to guide the effort and prepare necessary guidance and instructional materials for use of public personnel. The materials, covering policy, strategy, processs, technique and evaluation, should provide information on common deficiencies to look for, how to learn about problem-solving, how to develop remedies, how to conduct and execute fact-finding studies/surveys, and how to secure consensus and decisions.

Further, management capability requires strong policy and legislative support and widespread institutionalization. It may require a new sense of direction, a resolve to overcome many snags, a high standard of leadership, a high level of commitment, sustained and cautious attention and a regular allocation of resources. The mobility of personnel between the public and private sectors and within the public sector is seen as being helpful as well. Building and sustaining capability implies that profound changes are required in socio-political attitudes and traditional practices and behaviour. Understanding and managing environmental forces and re-examining traditional performance criteria are needed.

A fairly high level of consistent work from different functional areas-programming, research, formulation, service/production operation and promotion-and a proper balance between and among them are essential for sound programme/project development. Effective, efficient and socially purposeful capability involves a close relation of trust and confidence between the practitioners and the management system. It should be so oriented as to protect and promote the interests of the clientele against deprivation, distributional injustice, inequity and discriminatory treatment.

Fundamentally, the strength of mangement capability rests on the people in it, i.e. trained and motivated human resources. The vigour of a programme/ project generally depends on its members' awareness and resourcefulness. Its usefulness and expansion is further reliant on and influenced by the complementary activities of non-governmental and private-sector organizations, the receptivity of intended beneficiaries, the persistence of efforts, and the intensification of conceptual skill, analytical/operational capacity, action-oriented culture and interagency coordination.

Several approaches, strategies, operational measures and instruments are available for realizing management capability. It may be attained by either the overall systematic approach or the incremental approach. While presecribing the introduction of programming units, Waterston doubts (1965 : 291-292,320-322) the usefulness of rather uncertain and slow overall reforms, and suggests instead a piecemeal approach, which involves focusing on a few important projects and structuring management initiatives around them in the hope that these 'nuclei' would later become springboards for wider reform. Similarly, the United Nations reports its skepticism about an overall approach (1969 : 42), but is supportive of management reform and revitalization, institution-building, socio-political change and management development services  (1978 : 73-91 ; 1983 : 4). Katz finds (1969 : 112) management capability a complex task and a long-term process involving a strategy of successive apporximations.

Swerdlow stresses (1975 : 362-364) the redesign of entry criteria, management training, employee psychology and  value, and evaluation. Stone and Stone suggests (1976 : 209) management planning, integrated focus, organization and management development and management training. Mentor role, management by objectives, reward-system design and on-job training are counseled by Iversen (1979 : 92-93). Esman and Montgomery advocate (1980 : 183-234) building management capability by involving a larger number of organizations and by decentralizing authority and responsibility with a view to eliciting greater beneficiary participation and assuring that resources reach the intended groups. Given that complex and uncertain programme/projects cannot be controlled entirely from the centre, the strategy is to decentralize authority, share responsibility, delegate tasks and imporve monitoring.

Some other capability-growth strategies comprise establishing participatory mechanisms through which alternative views and assessments can emerge, encouraging innovativeness, reforming service regulation, developing internal appraisal capacity and placing programme1 project development in the hands of special agencies. Just so, others include empowering operating agencies with sufficient in-house capacity, streamlining the programme/project cycle, revising procurement procedures, revamping budgetary practices, and undertaking strategic reorganization and proceduralization.

EVALUATION

Seen as a major constraint on development activity, management incapacity and low levels of capability represent a pressing problem, and turn out to be persistent factors of underdevelopment. Management inadequacies are known to obstruct development and become particularly prejudicial at the phase of implementation. It is widely held that the failure of programme1 projects largely stems from a paucity of capability. Incapacity may also bring up a programme/project's vulnerability and heighten the risk of failure. Weaknesses in capability can serioulsy hurt or delay the

effective use of whatever aggregate resources and opportunities are available for development at a given time.

The concern over management incapacity in the public sector is growing. Many countries and their management systems generally lack the capacity to turn ideas into reality, do not have adequate skill in designing and installing workable organizations and procedures, and cannot produce sound and productive programmes / projects. Such inabilities may be reflected in frequent and sudden changes in designs, specifications, schedules, priorities, budgets, procurements, and intermittent postponement and stoppage. Inadequacies may as well result in the difficulty in identifying suitable programmes / projects, implementing those and carrying those to successful completion. Programmes/projects, as a result, are badly conceived, costs and completion time are underestimated, results are disappointing, and waste, corruption and confusion abound.

Public Sector managers are often badgered with small problems divide their attention among numerous short-term minutia and make it difficult for them to engage in the sustained planning of managment capability. Lack of effective capacity conmbutes to discover when and how programmes/projects stray from their designed course during implementation or operation. The emphasis on meeting schedules and deadlines overshadows the importance of uncovering and correcting mistakes. Occasionally, failure to plan for monitoring and assessment occurs so that it is difficult to know where programmes/projects deviate from the plans or what outcome is likely to turn out. Several programmes / projects, for instance, do not collect baseline data or gather information to measure progress. As a result, success is seen in terms of resources expended or inputs employed, rather than in terms of the quality, quantity and reliability of output, the impact on beneficiaries or the nature of changes attributable to the programme/project's successful operation.

Management capability is impaired by dysfunctional, wasteful and dilatory practices which suppress initiatives and erode motivation. Inappropriate structures, shortage of trained and determined practitioners, low quality of work, tortuous time-consuming routines, the casaulness of approach, lack of problem-solving orientation, the triumph of process over purpose and lack of coordination continue to exacerbate and retard capability. It is also constrained by institutional inadequacies, including weak planning agencies, inability to relate budgeting to long-term development priorities, undue emphasis on central control and insufficient sensitivity to cultural and social attitudes. Other weaknesses arise because the management system is not properly geared to identifying the clientele to be served, increasing their access to services, improving services until they are appropriate, delivering services efficiently and responding to the clientele. Besides, the prescriptions by international agencies can considerably strain the limited management skill of developing countries.

The continuous expansion of public-sector activities in numerous modernizing countries has produced its own set of constraints. Many public sectors have become large, powerful and protective of their own interest. Intersectoral and interservice personnel mobility is rare, lacking scarce skills into a static system rather than ensuring their optimum use by making them available whereever needed. It is wrong to assume that highly centralized and control-oriented managements make programmes/projects easier and surer to implement. Experience shows that the most valuable managerial capability is the ability to innovate, experiment, modify, improve and lead - talents that tend to be discouraged by central control. Indigenizing management capability does not seem to be a direct concern to many as well. Moreover, the casual adoption of inappropriate or unworkable management techniques tends to work against organizational capability and programme/project development which have to adapt to local conditions and needs. Dynamic participation and interaction, through which a diversity of views and assessments may shape plans differently, have not received sufficient attention.

### THE BARBADIAN CASE

Ever since the ministerial system was introduced in the 1950s and independence was achieved in 1966, Barbados' public sector. has grown considerably from routine, basic and regulatory functions to promotional, extension - oriented and developmental thrusts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the country expanded its programmes, services and operations, and completed a large number of projects. Some of these undertakings - recently completed and currently being run as normal operations - include from agriculture (Oistins Fisheries Terminal Project, Greenland Sheep Development Project), industry (Handicraft Development Project, Arawak Cement Plant Project), tourism (Harrisons' Cave Development Project, Heywoods Holiday Village Project), infrastructure (Grantley Adams International Airport Project, spring Garden Highway Project, Industrial Access Road Project, Pulverization Plant Project), education (Barbados Community College Project, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic Project), health (Bridgetown Sewerage Project), Barbados Drug Service Project), and housing (Ferniehurst Housing Project, Kensington Lodge Housing Project, St. Cecilia Housing Project).

Also mentionable are an expanding number of programmes, services and operations, viz. farm extension, agricultural marketing, investment counselling, industrial park services, tourism, promotion, airport/port operation, road building, school meals provision, vocational education, skills training, drug service, polyclinic service, sanitation service, housing credit, commercial/development banking, insurance, insurance services, management services, social assistance services, licensing operations, law enforcement and tax collection/management.

Several issues relating to management capabilities can be identified which underlie these and similar projects/programmes in Barbados' public sector. First, notwithstanding modest success, time management is a recurrent problem in that timing problems and procedural process delays are common. Inability to mange time surfaces in such varied forms as time overruns, time extensions, schedule slippages, long lead time, long turnaround time, long processing time, long waiting time, etc. All too often time can be seen being mismanaged, wasted and mis-spent. Priorities, schedules, punctuality and deadlines are far too often not carefully observed. The sense of urgency, timeliness and purposefulness is neither storng nor widespread. The transmission of information, the movement of personnel / materials and the speed at which action is followed are relatively slow-moving. This proneness permeates nearly all the levels, layers and specialisms of organizations. The perception of time, programme and need seems-to be such as to betray complacence.

Inability to monitor cost performance on a continuing basis and unwillingness to make disclosure of cost data stand out as a persistent issue. Cost overruns were common to nearly all the projects cited earlier. They also occur to the current programmes and operations of the public sector. Budgetary control has not kept up with recent developments, cost control is weak and indecisive, and cost accounting is virtually non-existent.

Another dominating issue is maintainability which suffers from lack of periodic and timely interventions in the servicing and updating of premises, facilities, equipment, tools, furnitures and fixtures. Much of the high cost of current operations as well as development programmes has resulted from waste, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, negligence and indifference to operation and maintenance, resulting from ignorance of what is required, ambiguity as to responsibility and certain cultural attitudes toward public resources. Routine as well as predictive and preventive maintenance are neglected resulting in breakdown, cost hike, downtime, low capacity utilization, work interruption and loss, capital waste, skill misuse and resource impairment. The professional commitment to plan, design, manage, maintain, sustain and improve is weak and, in some instances, non-existent. Maintenance costing is poor and data are presented in a form not suitable for maintenance management and management accounting.

Measurement and evaluation are weak areas in the public sector. Seldom are outputs systematically examined and measured and the results widely disseminated. Lack of competence in work and output measurement is, of course, one of the contributing factors. In like manner, neither ongoing programmes are evaluated according to established criteria nor are personnel assessed properly. There is hardly any negative reinforcement or prompt/effective sanction for bad behaviour. Public personnel get wrong signals and get socialized into behaviours not in keeping with a productive public sector.

The public sector's record so far in capacity-building and capacity expansion has not been impressive. Barring some professional/functionally specific areas and motivated personnel, the generation, diffusion and sustenance of management / operational skill, competence, expertise and orientation has been uneven and sporadic, even after 22 years of nationhood. Arising from this, some of the consequences have been costly, viz. unenviable time/cost/performance standards and dificiency in planning/direction. Whatever and whereever capacity is in existence has been centralized and hierarchicalized and has failed to involve the supervisory and first-line personnel.

Related to this is the lack of any concerted and sustained attempt at synergy maintenance. Top management continues to manage by fiat, hoping hard that the existing structure and hierarchical control will suffice to get the job done. But the reality is that historically - derived fragmentation, divisiveness, parochialism and factionalism militate against teamwork, cooperation, action-orientation and collectivity-orientation.These tendencies seem to have given rise to a kind of work orientation/behaviour in the public sector which seems to condone a great deal of inertia, incompetence, non-performance, wrong-doing, abuse, indulgence, weakness, timidity, indiscipline, opportunism, fault-finding and avoidance. Bureaucratism, compartmentalism, departmentalism and specialism contribute to thawart synergy and frustrate attempts at the optimal mobilization of already limited resources.

The operating culture appears to be, more often than noe, marked by a large degree of 'unstructuredness' and 'spontaneity'. It assumes varied forms, e.g. avoiding work/responsibility, resisting/resenting work, grudging work, unpleasant and sour behaviour, non-cooperation, defiance/inflexibility, gossipy ambience, late arrival, extended break and early departure. Dispositional conflicts seem high in that interpersonal relations appear stressful and untrusting. Attitudes toward authority institution/value/programme/work, life-view and world-view have not been systematically studied. But careful longitudinal observations are suggestive of high leisure preference and work avoidance/aversion on the part of sizable public personnel. The non-participative culture is far too more embedded than one readily realizes. Work itself seems to be internalized as pain-causing, punitive, unrewarding and exacting. Relatedly, responsibility does not seem to be properly focused and localized, i.e., the proliferation of the committee system has helped diffuse/dilute/ temporize responsibility, non-performance is manipulated by clever verbiage, and non-performers hide behind the convenience of group annonymity. Accountability toward societal institutions and the public clientele is delayed or absent and seems half-hearted.

Capability development has not been on the downswing partly because the management in the public sector has not installed proper work systems. For instance, the simplification, rationalization and coordination of work at the agency and interagency levels has not been worked out in many instances, with the result

that precious time and resources are wasted in the quicksand of institutional battle, functional orthodoxy and jurisdictional rivalry. The kind of horizontal and lateral interfacing that is needed in programme coordination is weak. Vigorous and tenacious follow-up is unusual. Internal as well as external communication is conducted in a way as to inhibit openness and authenticity. While internal communication is inter alia, formal, topheavy and authoritarian, the agencies' social/external communication with media/institutions/clientele is episodic and unprofessional.      .

At the highest levels in the public sector is the political directorate which seems to spend more  time and energy on reelectability than on policy formulation and direction, idea generation, political management, organizational leadership and maintaining mobility/momentum. It does not appear that the ministers, law-makers, other political executives and public personnel work toward common and shared organizational objectives. One does not find any evidence to suggest that the senior decision-makers function on the basis of some clearcut and established criteria. There tends to be an adverserial relation between the two sets of decision-makers with a pronounnced degree of partisanship and partisan rivalry. It seems that decisions are taken and work is carried out in a setting marred by instability, turmoil, conflict and dissensus. Such a situation hardly operates in isolation, and the structural dynamics can be seen ramifying into an endless power struggle-sometimes overt, sometimes coven-between the goernment and the unions / media / parties / interest groups. With both sides becoming frequently accusatory and vocal, some of the unifying / integrating forces seem conspicuously absent, viz. the regularity of consultation and negotiation, power-sharing, mutual acceptance and respect, a broad common ground, etc.

Finally, notwithstanding a series of studies and reports in Barbados on the need for and the methodology of public-sector reforms, the making of pronouncements from several sources of the same effect and the   presence of a number of management-service agencies (establishments, management training personnel management, 0 & m), the public sector in Barbados has not gone through a substantive/systemic reform, as opposed to procedural/piecemeal reform, in the recent times. Somehow, the subject has managed to become too delicate and sensitive. One may even point to visible fear, anxiety, discomfort and defensiveness whenever the reform/renewal/ revitalization need is publicly articulated. It would not be an exaggeration to say that so far political decision-makers and policy-makers have shown risk-aversion in respect of reform-making.

This behaviour on the part of the power/policy community has obscured the role of public-sector management in developing countries like Barbados. The policy-makers seem to have failed to appreciate the dynamic nature of management, i.e. management needs constant updating and regeneration. There seems to be little appreciation of the fact that unless the public sector is reformed and renewed instrategic areas here and now, it will continue to fail to be productive and task-

oriented, it will be cost-inefficient, it will be a burden and a drag, and it will constrain-rather than facilitate-development. The extant behaviour has stunted the possibilities of management capability growth, eroded faith in the national process, heightened self-survival need, and exponentially increased the proneness to 'play safe'.


CONCLUSIONS

Management capability is, perhaps, the most difficult of all the elements of a programme/project to appraise at this time. There is no way of avoiding the necessity of making a judgement about the capability question, whether the judgement is explicit or implicit. Both invidivual organizations  and the large system in developing countries have the opportunity to expand management capability. But neither the necessary analytical skill nor the required attitudinal change will come spontaneously. There must be conscious efforts to build these elements that will in turn help develop capability. Without supportive operating culture and organization-wide commitment, capability alone cannot assure programme/project success. It is also true that for some programme/projects management capability may be scarcer than finance. Capability by itself cannot create and sustain programmes/projects, other concomitant factors being resource, organizational will, policy direction, technicall orientation, etc.

Even the most capable managers tend to become overextended at times. They have too little time to spend on organization-building, the development of junior personnel and the maintenance or morale. They can easily lose sight of what is going on in their workplaces and become unaware of what is like to be a subordinate or client. Besides, what is clearly uniplementable at this time or in the immediate future need not be planned. Improving capability at the periphery is far more challenging than it is at the centre. Many of the organizations at the grassroots are hard to reach through conventional responses. The importance of persistence can hardly be overrated in capability. Programmes / projects that cost the least often may require the most organization.

Building a capable management is a slow, difficult and painful task. One should not expect quick results or give up too easily. For instance, many efforts to improve capability suffer from structural changes being put into effect with little attention to their implications for performance, changes in methods that do not pay off or may even impede better output, expansion or improvement of certain services with insufficient attention to costs or benefits, or changes introduced without realistic appraisal of present strengths and weaknesses.

Besides, situations of unused or surplus management capability may exist alongside acute shortage. An organization may maintain an ambience of false urgency and keep turning out at a brisk pace on subordianate or procedural questions, while the substantive ones are not properly examined. Some workplaces

may continue to do low-priority, even worthless, work, personnel may invent things to do when their real tasks have been diminished and staff who create false urgency to preserve their status and absorb resources. Nevertheless, it is difficult to move some of these idle or underutilized resources to other operations where additional capacity is needed. In fact, the search for the surplus may even involve an intriguing experience.

Capability planning, if not geared to the main shaft of management decision-making, soon becomes a burden on the system. Barbados shows that continuous and action-oriented capability planning has not been fully and properly incorporated into its public sector operation. Consequently, the characteristic problems of planning, structure, leadership, motivation and control persist. If, however, it is properly geared to current decision-making, its effectiveness is inceased at an exponential, but almost costless, rate. Unless there is a continuous focus on creating capability through the public sector systems, there will be poor planning and performance, inept coordination, unsatisfactory programme development, unsystematic budgeting, resource waste and employee disaffection.

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