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THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: EVIDENCE FROM AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Why do some development programmes perform better than others? This paper explores a neglected area in public management - the managerial and institutional innovations which influence the outcomes of development programmes. The experience of six relatively successful and large programmes selected from Third World countries will be analysed to shed some light on this question. A comparative analysis of the "strategic management" of these programmes reveals several common features - clear focus on a dominant goal or service, a strategy of sequential diversification of goals, effective integration of the relevant inputs to deliver the service, strong demand mobilisation efforts, and the use of a decentralised network of organisations using indirect sources of influence reinforced by highly adaptive planning, monitoring, developmental and motivational processes. The design and orchestration of these strategic, structural and process interventions was facilitated by the relative autonomy of the programmes and the continuity and commitment of their leaders.

The Strategic Management of Development Programmes : Evidence from an International Study

Samuel Paul*

What accounts for the differential performance of State initiated development programmes in the Third World? A diversity of hypotheses exists on this subject most of which focus on the economics and politics of programmes and projects. The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of an international study of the managerial and institutional interventions associated with six relatively successful development programmes selected from different parts of the Third World. The important role played by managerial/organisational variables in project/programme performance has all along been recognised by development planners and policy makers though this has been a neglected area of observation and study.[1] As a result, the basic understanding of how these variables operate and interact in the public context and our ability to design and implement institutional interventions appropriate to the conditions in the developing world have not improved significantly inspite of three decades of development planning and programming. A great deal of progress, however, has been made by planners during the same period in the appraisal and evaluation of development projects/programmes using techniques such as cost benefit analysis. This has led many to believe that appraisal and selection of projects hold the key to performance. That the estimated or actual costs and benefits are the consequence of a series of planned or actual technical, managerial and institutional interventions by those responsible for the development programme is seldom recognised. We hope that the experience of the programmes analysed below will shed some light on the nature and interactions among these interventions in this neglected area for policy makers, programme managers and designers.

I. Key Areas of Intervention

Inspite of the growing role of the State in economic and social development, we know much less about "public management" as against "enterprise management". This paradox is in part due to some features which are unique to the public context.[2] First of all, it is important to note that the "bottom line" is more fuzzy in the public context so that the search for appropriate management interventions does not receive the sense of urgency normally present in the private sector. Often, development programmes are launched to compensate for the existence of "market failure". But in the process, the programmes may assume monopoly power and in the absence of competitive or market indicators, measurement of efficiency becomes a casualty. Programme performance is then viewed in terms of adherence to procedures. Cost control and the application of efficiency criteria normally associated with the discipline of the market place become low priority concerns.

Second, since development programmes are government supported and initiated, they are vulnerable to political pressures and interference which may conflict with their originally stated goals or charter. The management of the programmes within the bureaucratic structure which in turn is subject to political control as well as public scrutiny adds to this problem. Multiple and conflicting goals and demands get foisted on programmes. Overmanning and low productivity get institutionalised. The costs and consequences of these trends get masked by the fuzzy bottom line feature referred to above.

Third, development programme outputs tend to be services the demand for which many have to be mobilised. Their clientele are generally unsophisticated masses who need to be organised and influenced in effective ways. Whether it is the promotion of new seed varieties and extension to small farmers or family planning and nutrition to illiterate and poor households, it often becomes necessary for the programme to build credibility among clients, promote public response and adapt the services to meet the local conditions. This is in sharp contrast to the standardised products and services promoted by enterprises operating in protected markets and the routine functions performed by the "maintenance" departments of the government.[3] The provision of developmental services therefore calls for a setting that permits some measure of autonomy, risk taking, and personnel who are sensitive to client needs and are motivated enough to work together in well knit teams and if necessary with a network of organisations. These are not features one encounters in the hierarchically oriented bureaucratic setting which spawns and supervises development programmes. The means and resources required to make programmes perform and the flexibility needed to adapt them to changing environmental conditions are not therefore always available to the public manager.

This brief discussion of the nature of development programmes offers us some useful insights into the complexity of their management and the reasons why successful management or institutional interventions in this area are not plentiful. It appears that public and private managers differ significantly in the degree of control they exercise over their choice of goals, resources and environments. It has been observed that governments apply limited resources to massive objectives whereas private enterprises apply massive resources to limited objectives.[4] Those who lead development programmes seem to face more severe constraints in respect of goals, means and their ability to orchestrate the two.

A serious consequence of the operation of these constraints is the rather dismal performance of development programmes in many countries. This phenomenon of the frequent failure of development projects and programmes has been well documented in the literature.[5] While the anatomy of failure has much to commend itself, its major lacuna lies in its inability to provide insights into the positive and innovative managerial and institutional interventions which are required to achieve performance. This is not to deny the value of the negative lessons to be learnt from the experience of low performers. The point is that this imbalance has to be redressed by an analysis of relatively successful programmes or high performers in the developing world.

The sub-set of development programmes which formed the subject of our comparative study may be regarded as observations which belong to the "right tail" of the statistical distribution of programmes.

Performance is a relative term and problems of criteria, access to data and judgement make the choice of high performers a sensitive task. In the absence of a prior analysis of programmes, we based our selection on the evaluation provided by a large panel of experts familiar with different regions, sectors and programmes in the developing world. Surprisingly, the six programmes which were finally selected for depth study received unanimous or near unanimous support from the panels of advisors concerned with the relevant sectors and regions. The purpose of the selection was not to rank the programmes. That our interest was only to identify a small set of development programmes regarded as relative high performers in their categories cannot be overemphasised.

Four out of the six programmes were taken from Asian countries. The Indonesian Population Programme is regarded as an outstanding programme in the family planning and population field. Its active involvement of rural communities in planning and implementation and innovative and cost effective ways of adapting its service to local conditions have been extensively documented. The National Dairy Development Programme of India (Operation Flood) is considered a unique intervention of its kind, having pioneered an innovative strategy for rural development through the medium of over 10,000 village dairy cooperatives involving 1.3 million small farmers. The Philippine Rice Development Programme (Masagana-99) is credited with achieving sustained self sufficiency in rice for the country through a network of organisations which integrated a complex set of services to more than a million farmers. China's Public Health Programme is known for its massive impact on rural health care, aided by a strategy and institutional devices distinctly different from conventional modes of planning and delivery.

The remaining two national programmes were selected from Africa and Latin America. The Small-holder Tea Development Programme of Kenya (Kenya Tea Development Authority), has demonstrated how small, one acre tea farms could successfully compete with large private estates and earn the highest prices in the international tea market, benefiting thousands of small farmers in the process. The Rural Education Programme of Mexico (CONAFE), though as yet little known outside the country, has an impressive record of performance in a sector characterised by a difficult environment. There is no prima facie evidence in these programmes that their performance could be attributed to the existence of a favourable or benign environment. On the contrary, the detailed case studies testify to the ingenious ways in which the programme leaders had to cope with environmental complexity. Effective action in such large national programmes c calls for a wide variety of managerial and institutional innovations, both strategic and tactical. The basic concepts underlying this attempt to identify and analyse the critical management interventions is summarised below:

<u>Three Pre-conditions</u>

Observers of development programmes have repeatedly drawn attention to three factors as critical to their success. Political support or commitment is an important variable which has been highlighted in the literature. It is argued that without top level political commitment, no programme will go far. In order to succeed, a development programme must have a strong constituency or interest group behind it so that/the political bargaining arena it is able to receive priority /in and support. In other words, it is believed that a development programme without political power or clout will not perform well. Political Scientists, for example, have analysed the politics, bargaining processes and coalitions that operate behind programmes in order to explain their performance.[7] An important reason why certain projects funded by donor agencies in some countries failed to grow into larger programmes is said to be the lack of political commitment from the host governments.

On the other hand, economists have emphasised the role of "resources" and their utilisation as the key determinant of the performance of development programmes. The focus here is on the investment of capital resources which in turn generate outputs and returns. Considerable attention is therefore devoted to the mobilisation and efficient use of resources which are allocated to various development programmes and projects.[8] Physical assets and technology, for example, are bought with capital. The failure of many projects is attributed to the inadequacy of funds for investment and working capital. The prescription for improving performance, therefore, tends to highlight the need for additional resources.

Yet another factor which many observers seem to emphasise is leadership. Those who have analysed the internal dynamics of development programmes at the micro-level are impressed by the pivotal role played by the leaders of these organisations. The personal styles and contributions of leaders have been analysed in depth by scholars. Their ability to inspire others, create commitment and act as innovative entrepreneurs are seen as the key to successful performance.[9]

Undoubtedly, all these factors are relevant to the performance of any development programme. In our view, these are important pre-conditions for successful performance. But the political support, magnitude of resources and leadership available to a programme do not seem to ensure its success. Programmes which were launched with much political commitment behind them are known to have performed poorly. Programmes which had the benefit of massive investments of resources are known to have generated poor returns. Highly committed leaders have come to grief in some programmes inspite of their dedication.

Strategic Management : A Framework

Most authors who regard managerial and institutional factors as critical to performance have tended to take a rather partial view of the problem. Some scholars have investigated in depth selected organisational aspects and managerial processes of development programmes. A good example is Montgomery's study of the relationship between the outcomes of a sample of land reform programmes in poor countries and the degree of decentralisation associated with their implementation.[10] Similarly an inter-country analysis by Uphoff and Esman has brought out the importance of local organisation in rural development programmes.[11] Studies by Korten have emphasised the role of innovative organisational structures and client participation in development programmes.[12] In the light of a study of World Bank financed projects, Smith has concluded that the management problems highlighted in the project reviews were in fact problems of organisation design.[13] Some others have proposed new concepts of "community participation" and "integrated project planning and management cycle" as aids to improving project management.[14] Grindle and her co-authors have reviewed a number of development projects with a view to explaining their outcomes in terms of the context and content of the project.[15] Ickis has examined several rural development programmes in Latin America and concluded that their problems were related to weaknesses in the design and maintenance of organisational structures and related processes.[16]

These and other studies have undoubtedly drawn into sharp focus some important factors which are relevant to the performance of development programmes. Their major limitation, however, lies in their failure to articulate the interrelationships among the relevant variables and recognise the possibility that there might be varying combinations of the variables influencing performance and which are appropriate under different conditions. While we could have analysed our six programmes along the lines proposed by any of these authors, we have preferred to adopt a more holistic approach that we shall call "strategic management". By strategic management we mean the set of top management interventions which influence the design and orchestration of the strategy, organisational structure and processes of a programme/project in relation to its environment. "Environment" here refers to those forces external to the organisation which create opportunities and constraints for its survival and growth. "Strategy" refers to the long term choices concerning the programme's goals, concept of service and policies which seldom get spelt out in the macro development plan. Strategic choices are usually formulated and negotiated between the programme leadership and the supervising body (Ministry or Department) in the Government. By organisational structure is meant the durable organisational arrangements and the distribution of authority and reporting relationships in the programme agency. Processes refer to the means available to the programme leaders to accomplish organisational purpose by influencing the behaviour of the employees and beneficiary (client) groups. Planning and allocation processes and control and motivation processes are some examples of this variable.

In order to get a comprehensive and balanced view of the role of managerial and institutional factors in relation to programme performance, it is necessary to analyse all the variables listed above and the manner in which they reinforce one another. There are numerous decisions and actions that managers and administrators take in the course of operating a development programme. While all of them have an impact on the direction of the programme and its outcome, we regard the following as the critical interventions by the Government and the programme leadership which provide the basic framework for operational decisions and set the pace for programme performance. (1) the formulation of a strategy for the programme consistent with the objectives given by the Government and the environment in which it is to be implemented; (2) the creation or adaptation of an organisational structure that matches the programme strategy and facilitates its implementation; (3) the operation of the organisational processes of planning and monitoring performance, and motivating and developing human resources consistent with the strategy and structure referred to above; and (4) continual orchestration of these three types of interventions over time so that they reinforce one another even as environmental conditions change. Theoretical analysis as well as empirical studies of different types of organisations support the proposition that each of these interventions and the interaction effects among them contribute to improved organisational performance.[17] By the same token, when these interventions are poorly planned and incompatible with one another, performance is adversely affected. In other words, when there is "congruence" among these interventions, a synergy that contributes to better performance is generated. Lack of congruence produces the opposite effect. The design and orchestration of these management interventions constitute the core of "strategic management".[18]

Detailed case studies of the selected development programmes were analysed within the framework of strategic management to understand the nature and role of managerial and institutional innovations associated with high performance. The findings of the international study presented below affirm the important role played by strategic management in each of the six successful development programmes selected for analysis. For the sake of conceptual clarity, the experience of each program was analysed in terms of (a) strategic interventions, (b) structural interventions, and (c) process interventions. The study also found that the three pre-conditions of political commitment, resources and leadership were present in every case. There was relatively strong political support behind each programme. Adequacy of funds, appropriate technologies and good leadership were also common features, though the leaders were not in all cases charismatic personalities. What we now learn from the comparative analysis of the detailed case studies is that the leaders achieved results through a set of mutually reinforcing management interventions which were also consistent with their environments. The proposition is that their performance was influenced by the pre-conditions as well as strategic management. The implication of this proposition for weak development programmes is an important one. It is not enough to mobilise political support and funds, and search for charismatic leaders. In the absence of competent strategic management, it seems, these pre-conditions will be of little avail.

II. Major Findings of the Study

Our six development programmes may be categorised into two groups. Three were agriculture related and the rest were social development programmes. The agriculture based programmes were concerned with the development of three sub-sectors, dairying, rice and tea. The social programmes were designed to deliver family planning, health care and educational services. Inspite of the diversity in the nature of the programmes and their environments, the findings of the study reveal a surprising number of common features and approaches in the management of these programmes. First, we shall discuss the role played by the governments of the countries involved in facilitating strategic management. Second we shall present the significant strategic, structural and process interventions of the programmes, and some evidence on the congruence achieved by the programme leadership.

Role of the Government

Those who manage development programmes have often complained about the rigid manner in which Governments tend to impose goals and targets on them and their lack of involvement in the planning process. An analysis of the experience of our six programmes shows that the Governments which set them up played a significantly different role in these cases.

(1) In every programme, there was a formal statement of objectives given by the Government in the form of a legislative enactment, resolution or an order. These were broad statements permitting the programme agencies to pursue multiple goals and activities. In no case is there evidence that a Government rigidly specified the operational goals and strategy of a programme. Instead, the approach seems to have been to let the specification be influenced by the environment as perceived by the programme leadership. The Chinese and Kenyan programmes were the only exceptions where at the political level, there was prior strategic thinking about programme directions. In the Chinese case, the dominant role of Chairman Mao and his prior experience in public health work during the Liberation struggle were factors which led to the political leadership's direction of the health programme strategy. In the Kenyan case, even though the Government had specified the promotion of five crops

for the original programme agency, it agreed, in the light of experience, to limit the scope to one crop, namely, tea. This clearly reflects a positive response by the Government to the feedback given by the programme managers. Similarly, those involved in formulating the strategy for KTDA were the persons who were eventually asked to manage it.

(2) An important implication of this finding is that the dichotomy between planning and implementation was minimal in these relatively successful programmes. Once a broad mandate was given by the Government, it was the top managers of the programme agency who were responsible for planning the strategy and implementing it. In India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), its chairman and his group formulated the strategy of Operation Flood and had primary responsibility for its diffusion. In the Philippines, it was the Agriculture Secretary and his group who planned the strategy of Masagana-99 and then implemented it. In four out of the six cases, programme leaders were first identified followed by the creation of the programme agencies. The initiative for defining and evolving the programme strategy was left to the programme leaders who were thus responsible for both planning and implementation. This seems to have given the leaders greater flexibility to orchestrate these two processes and a sense of "being in charge" with its obvious implications for improved motivation to achieve results. Governments seem to have approved the strategy developed by them instead of handing over programme designs to them.

This pattern differs significantly from what has been observed in many countries and programmes. Government sometimes tend to import programme strategies or formulate them through internal groups without any reference to those likely to manage them. Strategy and implementation thus become disjointed and makes mutual adaptation between the two difficult in such programmes. This problem seems to have been avoided in the programmes we have reviewed. In the Chinese programme which had some problem in this respect, the health bureaucracy was not actively involved in or supportive of the new strategy. The political leadership therefore left only a limited role to the bureaucracy in implementation. The major participants were the political cadres and local organisations. Implementation by a bureaucracy which was not involved in or supportive of the programme strategy would have been dysfunctional.

(3) An important function performed by the Government was in monitoring the progress and performance of the development programmes. The Heads of departments or ministers concerned were actively interested in the results being achieved and asked specific questions about their progress periodically. In the Chinese case where we do not have detailed information on the monitoring aspect, we do know that Chairman Mao took a personal interest in the implementation of the health strategy. He may have used political channels rather than the bureaucracy for monitoring purposes. Political commitment thus meant not only the initial support given to a programme, but also monitoring it so that a sense of accountability is built in to counterbalance the flexibility given to those who manage it.

The willingness of the Government to let the broad objectives of its development programmes be translated into strategies by their leaders who were also responsible for implementation and its monitoring role while granting some flexibility to them in orchestrating planning and implementation are important factors to bear in mind while reviewing the top management interventions being summarised below.

Strategic Interventions

The strategy of a development programme is shaped by two important factors: the broad objectives laid down by the government for the programme, and the environment in which the programme has to be implemented. The strategic interventions in a programme are likely to be responses to questions such as the following: Given the broad objectives set by the government, what should be the entry point (operating goals and the concept of service)? For whom is the service designed (the clients)? When is it to be provided (phasing)? How is it to be provided (issues of demand or response, supply and mobilisation and participation of key actors and resources)? It is through the choice and adaptation of operating goals and tasks to the complexity of the environment that programme leaders make strategic interventions. A surprising number of common features emerged from a comparative analysis of the strategies of the six programmes.

(1) One of the most critical top management interventions concerns the choice of goals and the programme's services or outputs. Even where programme agencies were charged with multiple goals, both governments and the programme leaders involved seem to have opted for the pursuit of a dominant goal or service to begin with.[19] The Indian dairy programme's

focus on milk, the Indonesian programme's focus on fertility control and the Mexican programme's focus on rural primary education illustrate this point. Programme sub-goals and tasks could always be related to the dominant goal. The programme leaders limited the diversification of outputs or services in the early stages. Legally, there was nothing to prevent the programme agencies from pursuing multiple goals and providing multiple services. Their single service strategy appears to have been an important adaptation to their environments. First of all, their environments were characterised by a high degree of uncertainty in relation to markets or public response. A fair measure of diversity was present in these environments. In relative terms, the diversity factor appears to have been less intense in the Kenyan case as tea cultivation was confined to a region with relatively stable climatic and homogeneous soil conditions. The size factor also was the least problematic in the Kenyan case. Even so, the integrated service delivery required under these complex environments meant that multiple services were considered unmanageable in the initial stages. Programme managers had to give concentrated attention to both the demand and supply sides of their services. Simultaneous attention to the diverse and conflicting requirements of unrelated multiple services would simply have taxed their limits in the early stages. Second, in most developing countries, technical and managerial skills are in relative short supply. Instead of spreading them thinly, the leaders searched for manageable "entry points" and applied these scarce resources to the development of a basic service which was perceived to be critical to the programme's success. The dominant goal/service approach is in part an attempt to reduce complexity.

Third, as experience was gained and the dominant service matured, diversification did not pose excessive managerial burdens. Sequential diversification thus fits the environment and helps programmes grow through organisational learning. The dominant goal focus found in the six programmes therefore represents a deliberate strategy by their leaders in meeting Government's objectives and adapting to their environments.

(2) A common feature of the strategies of the six development programmes was the nature and scope of integration underlying their concept of service. It appears that an important contribution of the programmes has been in integrating a set of interdependent or sequentially dependent inputs or components to create a service which the beneficiaries or clients could not have done through the market mechanism. Public response to a programme goes up when a 'felt need' is thus met. The inability of a beneficiary to identify and integrate inputs may be due to four types of barriers:

(i) Technological barriers: The beneficiary may not have the technical skills to attempt integration on his own.

(ii) Access barriers: He may be prevented from getting the required inputs because of institutional handicaps caste or social handicaps, remote location, administrative hurdles.

(iii) Economic barriers. The size, cost and riskiness of investment and market imperfections may inhibit his response.

(iv) Organisational barriers. The beneficiary may be incapable of getting organised as part of a group to demand and share the benefits. The skills and leadership may simply not exist.

A programme's service delivery will succeed only when all the relevant barriers faced by the clients in a given situation are effectively overcome. The degree of integration required of a programme will be directly related to the severity of the beneficiary's inability to integrate the relevant inputs on his own.

In the three agricultural development programmes, the integration entailed the whole gamut of inputs from the production stage to market linkages. Without the market linkage, beneficiary response to the programmes would not have been as positive. In the Philippines, earlier rice development programmes which attempted partial integration by focusing only on the diffusion of technology and extension services did not make the desired impact because certain critical barriers had not been removed. Masagana-99 succeeded only when it integrated the neglected inputs along with the new rice technology and extension. Similarly the Intensive Cattle Development Programme (ICDP) which preceded Operation Flood in India focused on the supply of improved breeds of cattle and extension to farmers, but failed to pay adequate attention to other critical inputs and linkages they needed. The superiority of Operation Flood's strategy lay in identifying and integrating a range of elements only some of which had been taken into account by ICDP.

In the social development programmes, market linkages were obviously not relevant. Instead, community participation along with other inputs, was integrated into the concept of service as a device for response mobilisation. Social development programmes in countries which have taken a partial or inappropriate view of integration have not been very effective. Family planning programmes which followed a purely clinical approach, for example, have performed poorly. Similarly, integrated rural development programmes which attempt to integrate multiple services whose interdependence is dubious have also run into problems. It is the complexity of this integration process which makes the seemingly simple single goal/service strategy a managerially demanding endeavour. On the whole, the evidence from the six programmes and what we know of some of the less successful ones confirm the importance of strategies which compensate for the beneficiary's inability to integrate the required inputs of the service in question.

(3) An effective device by which the six programmes tested and adapted to their environments was the 'pilot project'. Only in four of the programmes were pilot projects designed systematically as a learning or research and development (R & D) device. But both the Indian Dairy Programme and the China Health Programme had the benefit of live experiences which preceded their strategy formulation. In India, "Amul", the district cooperative union, played the role of a pilot project for "Operation Flood" and was an invaluable aid to the latter in minimizing uncertainty and adapting to the environment. The scope and design of the

integration of services were calibrated through these experiments and their appropriateness to client needs was thus tested under real life conditions. Integration of pilot projects into the larger national programmes was an innovative feature of all the high performers. The replication of a service in a complex national environment without the benefit of such R & D work is an error committed by many development programmes. The experience of the Indonesian programme demonstrates the value of such experiments in coping with the uncertainty of public response and diversity of conditions in the environment. This approach not only led to the formulation of more realistic strategies, but also brought forth a set of people with experience, skills and knowledge of the environment who were extremely useful at the replication stage.

(4) It is not uncommon for development programmes to see themselves as delivery systems with scant attention paid to the demand side. The programmes we have examined are unique in that demand mobilisation (energising public demand or response) was an important aspect of their strategies. Operation Flood's use of financial and technical assistance, its deployment of spearhead teams to the districts and their credibility building activities.have played a dominant role in generating response from state governments and farmers. Spearhead teams which consisted of small groups of veterinary doctors and other extension staff have demonstrated to be villagers what the programme could do for them and thus helped promote the formation of dairy cooperatives. The Philippine Programme's use of credit without collateral and an elaborate communication campaign, the Indonesian programme's involvement of village community organisations

and their leaders in the programme and the Chinese programme's extensive use of mass preventive health care campaigns are also examples of strategic interventions to energise public demand or response. While community participation by itself is of value as an instrument of human development, we see here that it has a functional role to play in the context of demand mobilisation. Supply strategies were then tailored to match the demand created. In the Indonesian case, liberal stocks of contraceptive supplies were kept at local levels to meet the demand being generated through community mobilisation. If the demand mobilisation had not taken place, the supply strategy would have been unproductive. An important aspect of the demand and supply components of the strategy was the deliberate manner in which the programmes sought the support of the key actors in the environment. The Indonesian programme's mobilisation of Islamic leaders and community leaders illustrates this point.

The Mexican rural education programme was the only case where the primary focus was on the supply strategy. The existance of strong demand for the programme in rural communities permitted the programme leadership to concentrate on the supply function. The mix of functions or tasks which gets special emphasis in the successful programme is thus influenced by what a careful analysis of the environment reveals.

(5) Phasing over time in terms of geographical coverage has been a feature of the strategies of the programmes we have examined. Even though the programme was national in scope, the strategy was to extend the

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None of the programmes were managed by organisations which had full control over all the relevant tasks. The programme agencies in most cases operated as part of a network structure. Lateral influences through the network were more important than hierarchical control in order to achieve task performance. Indirect sources of influence on the network included control over the allocation of funds, joint planning, pressures from below generated through the mobilisation of demand, use of political power and the support of key actors. In the Indian Dairy Programme, the National Dairy Development Board, the Indian Dairy Corporation, the State Dairy Development Corporations and the District Cooperative Unions had to work together without hierarchical control or power of one over the others acting as the binding factor. The Dairy Board (NDDB) was certainly the lead agency, but had to depend on other sources of influence such as funds allocation, demand creation from below, etc., to get the network moving. The network structure also implied a significant degree of decentralisation in most programmes though the mix of functions decentralised varied from one programme to another. Where there was considerable diversity in the environment or uncertainty as to the likely response of the beneficiaries, the degree of decentralisation and participation of beneficiaries was greater as in the Mexican and Indonesian programmes.

(2) Despite the limited hierarchical control associated with the network structure, in all cases except the Chinese Health Programme, the lead (programme) agencies exercised effective control over the field level officials who were directly in touch with the beneficiaries. These "barefoot bureaucrats" played a critical role in mobilising public response

and delivering the programme services. The organisational structure and allocation of tasks were so devised that within the network the central programme agency had considerable influence over these functions and those who were responsible for them. Thus in Operation Flood (India) the spear-head teams were selected, motivated and directly supervised by the lead agency, the Dairy Board. In the Philippine rice programme and the Kenyan programme, though the field staff were drawn from Agriculture Extension Bureaus, they were on full time assignment with the programmes and the agencies concerned exercised substantial control over them in part through training, recognition and the incentive payments given to them. In the Indonesian and Mexican programmes, the field workers and instructors respectively were selected, trained and supervised by the programme agencies. These barefoot bureaucrats were an important source of influence on performance. By retaining direct control over these critical functionaries, who were in touch with the clients, the programme leadership seems to have developed a powerful, decentralised tool to influence the behaviour of the linked organisations in the network which could not have been controlled through the exercise of authority.

(3) Moderate to high degrees of autonomy characterised all the programmes. Even the Chinese programme, inspite of an authoritarian central structure for policy making was marked by a substantial measure of autonomy at the local level. Autonomy was not in all cases granted legally or as part of a design. Inducing or earning autonomy was a feature in almost all the programmes. Innovative approaches to funding, good performance and the participation of beneficiary groups were used to induce

autonomy. Even where legal/financial autonomy appeared to be limited /and there was evidence that a good measure of effective autonomy was enjoyed by the agencies through several indirect devices. Programme leaders in some cases bargained for a larger measure of autonomy and were able to retain it through their performance.

Process Interventions

In order to achieve organisational goals, any large development programme is likely to use a variety of internal processes and systems in its management. To be effective, such processes should support and reinforce the strategy and structure of the programme. It is significant that the six programmes under review did not adopt governmental processes and systems in several important respects. They appear to have used their autonomy to depart from conventional approaches to implementation and adopt innovative processes which were able to effectively reinforce their programme strategies and structures. We summarise below three areas in which such innovations were introduced.

(1) Human Resources Development

In all the six programmes, considerable importance was attached to the identification and selection of suitable staff to man the agencies. The use of pilot projects/experiments as a spawning ground for identifying and developing key personnel has been observed in most of the programmes. In the Indian programme, Amul, the original district union, played this role. In the Philippine programme, the Bulacan project (a pilot project) played a similar role. The standard approach of simply pulling in personnel from the government bureaucracy was not the pattern. Where the staff had to be brought in from the Ministries, special efforts were made to ensure their commitment and adaptation to the programmes. In the Indonesian programme, civil servants who joined the staff were asked to severe their links with their parent departments. They were given intensive training in the agency's own training schools. In the Philippine Programme, the training of the extension agents who were part of the Bureaus was done through the technicians involved in the pioneer pilot project and not in the routine departmental fashion. A similar pattern was observed in the Kenyan programme. The role of training in the development of people was prominent in all programmes. Surprisingly, a great deal of attention was also paid to the training of beneficiaries. The training of village cooperative society secretaries and the orientation given to groups of farmers by the Indian Dairy Board, organised training of farmers in the Kenyan and Philippine programmes and the massive training of barefoot doctors and health aides in China testify to the importance of the training process. When strategic and structural interventions were introduced, training was used as an instrument to develop and adapt both implementors and beneficiaries to match the new requirements effectively.

(2) <u>Motivational Process</u>

In addition to training which has a motivational dimension, there is evidence that all programmes paid considerable attention to the problems of motivating their beneficiaries as well as staff. In the economic programmes (dairy, rice and tea), assuring stable and high returns and regular payments to the farmer was part of a deliberate strategy. In the social programmes, on the other hand, economic incentives were not played up. Motivation of beneficiaries seems to have been achieved more through non-economic incentives such as recognition, status and ideological commitment. Community participation, awards for achievement and competition among communities are examples of appeal to non-economic incentives. The point is that the importance of motivational processes was recognised and the mix used seems to have matched the nature of the programme.

Economic incentives did play an important role in motivating the staff of the programme agencies. In relative terms, programme officials at different levels were on the whole better paid than comparable officials in the government. The exception is China where ideology seems to have played the dominant role. In some programmes, special incentive payments were given to certain categories of staff. In addition, the relative autonomy and the responsive nature of their organisation also seem to have contributed to the motivation of the staff. The ideology underlying the programme and the examples set by the leaders would have undoubtedly reinforced their positive motivation. In Operation Flood, for example, creation of a sense of challenge in the field staff was part of a deliberate strategy. What is important to note is that a mix of incentives adaptive to the nature of the programme and the environment was at work.

(3) Planning and Monitoring Processes

It is significant that "targetry" was not at the core of the planning process in any of the programmes. The network structure would have made a top down allocation of targets to implementing groups rather difficult. The economic programmes perhaps had a greater tendency to plan centrally and allocate resources than the social programmes where commitment of the implementing groups and beneficiaries was perceived as critical to the planning process. In the Indonesian programme, for example, much time was spent on "consensus building" with very little sanctity attached to targets which seemed to vary over time. First of all, community leaders had to evolve a consensus among members of their groups. These leaders then sat with the representatives of the Programme agency to bargain and finally agreed upon what was to be achieved. Actually in terms of performance, this programme did much better than many others. In the Chinese programme, the communes had considerable autonomy in determining allocations for health services. The participation of beneficiary groups in the planning process was more pronounced in the social programmes than in the economic programmes. Even in the economic programmes, there was some evidence of the involvement of implementors at different levels in the planning process.

The monitoring process was very much in evidence in all the programmes though the mix of formal and informal means used may have varied. Detailed data on this aspect were not available on the Chinese programme. Our guess is that monitoring in China may have been performed more through the political than the bureaucratic channel. In all other programmes, the formal information system was simple, but very compact and sharp in its focus. Computerised systems were used in some countries, enabling them to send feedback to the districts within two weeks of receipt of the original data. The effectiveness of the monitoring process as a control device was undoubtedly due to the interest shown by the top management and its willingness to take corrective action speedily. In the Indian Dairy Programme, the information and control system operating at the village society level is simple and yet remarkably effective. It is not clear whether at the central level, similar systems exist. Informal processes such as feedback through field visits were at work in all the programmes. But what the successful programmes have demonstrated most convincingly is that simple, but effective information systems could be devised and made to work as an aid to the monitoring process if the top management is motivated to use it. There is no doubt that the programme leaders' ability to orchestrate planning and implementation in the light of changing conditions was greatly strengthened by the operation of this sensitive process.

III. Implications for Public Policy and Management

The results reported above lend considerable support to the critical role of strategic management in influencing the performance of development programmes. However, this does not mean that there is a standard recipe for success. A detailed analysis of the programmes shows that similar interventions emerged as a response to somewhat similar environmental conditions and governmental constraints.

The tendency on the part of the selected development programmes to pursue a single dominant goal and diversify their services sequentially was an adaptation to the complex environments in which they operated and the demands of their programme strategies. In the uncertain environments that they faced, automatic response by beneficiaries could not have been assumed. In Operation Flood, for example, the relevant inputs for milk production at the farm level were delivered by the programme agency. It then vertically integrated the procurement, processing and marketing of milk to create the necessary linkages and exploit the economies of scale available at the processing and marketing stages. This mix of functional and vertical integration of services around the dominant goal of dairy development reflected the programme's recognition that such integration could not be achieved without external intervention. Creation of this mix also entailed the integration of diverse, but appropriate and cost effective technologies and the mobilisation of a variety of key actors including beneficiaries whose support was critical to programme success. The strategic intervention of the programme was designed to achieve these tasks and generate sustained response from beneficiaries by assuring adequate and stable returns to them. A similar approach was adopted by the Kenya Tea Development Authority and the Philippine Rice Programme. Given the complexity of their environments, and strategies, diversifying into other services (other crops, unrelated services etc.,) in the early stages would have imposed severe problems of management on the programmes. Hence the tendency of the programme leaders to diversify sequentially inspite of the broad scope in terms of goals given to them by the Government. Thus the Indian Dairy Board diversified into the oil seeds sector only after considerable progress was made on the dairy front. The Indonesian programme moved into the field of nutrition only after family planning had made significant headway. The Mexican education programme singlemindedly pursued its rural education programme for several years before it decided to move into the urban sector in a big way.

The strategic interventions associated with these programmes are by no means unique in the developing world. One could think of other development programmes which have emphasised functional and vertical integration of services. There are many programmes which have adopted lateral network structures. Several examples of decentralisation and participation of beneficiaries could also be found. Why then are such programmes not known for high levels of performance?

In management terms, an important answer to this paradox may be found in a unique feature of the six programmes we have examined. They exhibit a surprising measure of "congruence" among their environmental, strategic, structural and process variables. The mutual "fit" and interaction effects among these influences seem to have created a synergy which cannot be explained in terms of any one of them alone.

The six programmes, for example, show evidence of matching their organisational structures and processes to their environments and strategies. To illustrate, the Kenya Tea Development Authority's (KTDA) structure differed significantly from that of Conafe, the Mexican education agency. The relatively centralised structure of the KTDA, however, was more appropriate to the rather stable and homogeneous setting of tea cultivation, processing and marketing. The highly decentralised structure of Conafe, on the other hand, matched the extremely inaccessible and diverse Mexican rural environment and the situation-specific educational processes and community participation necessitated by the programme strategy. Given the complex integration strategy used in the Indian Dairy Programme, the Board found it appropriate to work with a network of organisations using indirect sources of influence rather than hierarchical control. In the Chinese health programme which integrated health services along with other activities of the commune as a matter of strategy, hierarchical control was minimal. Instead the commune was given the autonomy to plan and implement, a case of decentralised management. In respect of motivation, the Philippin Rice Programme mobilised farmer response through the use of credit and other economic incentives whereas the Indonesian Population Programme de-emphasised economic incentives and relied more upon community participation. The approaches were clearly different, yet consistent with the respective programme environments and strategies. We have here an explanation of why the degree of decentralisation, role of community participation, structural forms, motivational and control processes might vary from one development programme to another. What creates the synergy is the "congruence" among the environmental, strategic, structural and process variables and their positive interaction effects. Perhaps a major reason for the failure of many development programmes lies in the blind tendency to standardise all management interventions and the negative interaction effects among the key variables generated in the process.

The creation and orchestration of congruence constitute the core of strategic management. Development programmes seem to succeed when their top leaders and managers are able to practise strategic management. An important question relates to the conditions which facilitate the practice of strategic management. Are the political commitment to the programme and adequacy of resources sufficient for this purpose?

Our study of the six programmes sheds some light on this question. First of all, the achievement of congruence was facilitated by the integration of the planning and implementation processes in these programmes. The planning-implementation dichotomy that plagues the management of many public programmes was conspicuous by its absence in the six programmes. The functional and vertical integration of services referred to above and the dynamic adjustments required among the variables were clearly facilitated by the active role the top programme managers played in both planning and implementation.

Second, congruence would have been difficult to achieve without the measure of autonomy enjoyed by the programmes. The rigidities of the larger governmental structure and processes were effectively neutralised by the programme managers with the aid of both nominal and induced autonomy.[20] Clearly, there was a recognition on the part of the political leadership in the countries involved that the development tasks entrusted to the programmes under study required structures and processes different from those common to the conventional activities of government. Interestingly, both the economic and social programmes lent themselves to certain tests of performance, which though imperfect, facilitated balancing their autonomy with accountability. Having granted a reasonable degree of autonomy to the programme, the top political leadership played a crucial role in monitoring performance.

Third, congruence would have been difficult to create and maintain if the programme leadership changed too frequently. The easy entry and exit of leaders/managers which the civil service tradition in some countries has institutionalised in development programmes was conspicuous by its absence in the six cases. Coping with and adapting to complex environments call for stable, committed and competent top managers. Our six programmes seem to have fulfilled this condition. It was not charisma as much as their continuity on the job and commitment to programme tasks which enabled them to keep track of and orchestrate the different variables referred to above.

In summary, the choice of a dominant goal and service as an adaptation to the programme's complex environment, functional and vertical integration of inputs to support the dominant goal, the strategy of sequential diversification, adapting the degree of decentralisation and client participation to match the complexity of the environment and programme strategy, the use of autonomy coupled with accountability and careful monitoring by leaders with stability and commitment, reinforcement of the strategy through innovative motivational and developmental processes and the integration of planning and implementation are evidence of the interrelated and congruent interventions we have observed in the programmes under study. Our analysis shows that the mix of interventions in each case had an internal coherence of its own. This finding supports the hypothesis that there is a close association between strategic management and programme performance.

During the past three decades, the role of the state and investment of resources in a variety of public programmes have expanded significantly in many developing countries. The performance of the programmes, however, has been extremely uneven. Inspite of the use of sophisticated methods for project selection and allocation of resources, the services and real surpluses generated by the public sector have failed to improve . Conventional economic wisdom calls for increased resources for investment. Pricing reforms are proposed to augment surpluses and reduce state subsidies. These economic interventions are certainly in order in many situations. What the experience of development programmes in several countries now reveal, however, is that an important set of interventions that we have termed "strategic management" must match these basic economic and political policy decisions.

The managerial and institutional features of development programmes we have investigated in this study have seldom been the subject of public scrutiny and comparative analysis. While national development plans receive much publicity, the interventions planned for individual development programmes are hardly disseminated or debated outside the agencies/departments concerned. Consequently, they tend to receive much less attention than macro plans, and are perhaps not perceived as deserving skilled and careful analysis. Admittedly, critical analysis of management interventions and their congruence have not been researched on a large scale and our knowledge of why development programmes perform the way they do is limited. Nevertheless, the evidence gathered from the six programmes have some important implications for development planners, programme designers and public managers.

(1) It is seldom realised that the implementation problems of development programmes may lie in inadequate strategic management. That the management and institutional development of programmes must be based on a set of mutually consistent and reinforcing interventions is not always recognised by those who prescribe complex objectives for them. Multiple and sometimes unrelated goals are often imposed on programmes operating in ~~different~~ difficult environments without ascertaining whether suitable structures and processes can be created to match the requirements of the new strategies. The implementation problems facing some of the larger integrated rural development programmes stem from this lack of congruence. On the other hand, the relatively successful programmes we have examined show how the leaders coped with complex environments by focusing initially

on a single goal/service and diversifying sequentially through a strategy of learning and phased expansion. If instead, multiple goals/services are attempted simultaneously the realignments called for in terms of structure, degree of autonomy, motivation, monitoring and control processes etc., can be extremely demanding. To initiate large programmes without a realistic understanding of and capacity to create such realignments makes little sense. The moral is not that every programme should start with a single service, but that if more complex goals and services are introduced at the outset, structures and processes should be appropriately adapted to the environment and the new strategy.

(2) Does the integration of inputs underlying the programme's service match the beneficiaries' inability to integrate them on their own? Though the service provided by a programme is sometimes equated with the provision of a new technology, it often entails the integrated delivery of a set of inputs or components of which technology is only one. As we have seen, the basic service provided by our three agriculture related programmes called for a rather complex functional and vertical integration of a variety of inter-dependent inputs which the beneficiaries were unable to do on their own. It is the immensity of this task which adds complexity to the coordinating roles within the programme agency and necessitates the creation of effective networks. When programmes are designed without taking into account the beneficiary's inability to obtain and integrate the needed inputs on his own, the chances are that he will not be able to take advantage of their services. The degree of inability or barriers

faced by different groups of beneficiaries may vary. This in turn may necessitate the building in of "differentiated" services into the strategy as a response to the diversity in the environment. It is the failure to attempt such strategic innovations which by default lets the better placed beneficiaries appropriate or monopolise programme gains. We have here an important explanation why the "weaker sections" are seldom reached by many well intentioned development programmes.

(3) Do the strategies of development programmes facilitate their adaptation to the varying needs and conditions of the country? Is there a danger that overcentralisation and standardisation are killing innovative strategies? The tradition of centralised macro planning in many developing countries has encouraged a tendency to formulate individual programmes also in the same mould. When programme strategies are viewed as intellectual exercises in setting targets and allocating funds using standard norms, sensitivity to the diversity in the environment and the need to adapt innovatively to client needs may be lost sight of. When this tendency towards overcentralisation is reinforced by the dichotomy between planning and implementation, there will be little space left for the programme leaders to play the orchestration role which seems essential for the successful performance of a programme.

(4) Is "authority" the sole instrument available to programme leaders to facilitate implementation? The bureaucratic culture has a natural tendency to gravitate towards the use of "authority" as the primary instrument for achieving developmental goals. While authority and

hierarchical control have a legitimate role to play, complex development programmes seem to call for the use of indirect sources of influence to get the relevant network of institutions and beneficiary groups to work together to achieve programme goals. Exercise of direct control over the latter seems infeasible in most cases and even dysfunctional. As the complexity of programmes and their environments increases, the creation of new networks and the search for more innovative processes for influencing their behaviour must receive increased attention.

(5) Is there a conscious strategy to generate public response to the programme? Governments often tend to think of their development programmes as "supply systems" and hope that the power of authority will elicit public response. In a shortage situation, where the beneficiaries are aware of and able to demand the service, this approach may work. But, as the experience of the three social development programmes has shown, the neglect of the demand dimension and organisation of beneficiaries can be fatal especially where social change is the goal. Demand mobilisation may also call for credibility building for the programme among its potential clients. Pilot projects can play a powerful role in "testing the waters" and evolving a concept of service that matches beneficiary needs.

(6) Governments of developing countries may have to play some new roles in relation to complex programmes. There has been a growing diversification of developmental outputs and services in most of these countries. Yet the complexity introduced by such diversification and the need to evolve new ways of dealing with it have not received the attention they deserve. The strategic management approach, for example, highlights the

the need to differentiate within government structures between the requirements of development programmes and the standard maintenance tasks of the state. Given the development programme's need to match and orchestrate strategic, structural and process interventions, the primary focus of the supervising body within government must be on the initial goal setting and allocative functions and subsequent monitoring and evaluative roles. Its corollary is that the ongoing integration of planning and implementation should be left to the programme leaders, having selected them carefully and given them a reasonable degree of autonomy and stability on the job. Civil service practices which permit easy exit work against the creation of commitment and a sense of challenge on the part of the programme leaders. It does not appear to be a mere coincidence that the leaders of almost all the high performing programmes we have examined were men who stayed on their jobs for reasonably long periods. Even if drastic and large scale reforms are not feasible, at least in respect of the critical development programmes, national leaders ought to depart from the beaten track and intervene to facilitate strategic management.

It might be argued that the implications of our study will make little difference as long as there is no congruence between political performance and developmental performance in the national context. When the survival and progress of political leaders, elected representatives, bureaucrats and public managers ~~is~~ are not affected by the level and quality of developmental performance, it is not likely that much attention will be paid to the latter. This may well be a reason why high performers are not abundant among development programmes. Whether a state of congruence between political performance and developmental performance will emerge in a given country depends upon its stage of political development. While rigid generalisations are uncalled for, it is useful to distinguish between three stages: A country may go through these different stages of political development sequentially over time. Alternatively, characteristics of the three stages discribed below may coexist in the same country. It is even possible that a country might regress rather than move forward in terms of political development.[21] Many developing countries are still in the early stage of political development which essentially is in the nature of a spoils regime (the "primitive" stage). The leaders of these nations play the development game chiefly for the sake of sharing the spoils, and performance is of limited consequence to them. Imperfections in the political market (similar to those in the economic market) are such that the masses are unable to influence the quality of public management.

IN the second stage of political development (the "intermediate" stage) those in authority will be concerned about developmental performance only when extreme crises develop. The masses have wide tolerance limits and political survival will be in danger only when performance is ignored in these extreme situations. If food, or some other basic services totally break down, problems of performance receive attention until the crisis passes and then the system reverts to Stage I behaviour. The third stage of political development which we may call the "mature" stage is when political and developmental performance becomes congruent. Political survival is now seen as strongly influenced by what happens on the development front. In effect, this evolution reflects the maturing of the people and their leaders. Political bargaining and allocation processes will at this stage take into account problems of development performance rather seriously. Political commitment to development programmes will become stronger only as a country moves into Stage III. The experience of our successful programmes shows that when this pre-condition is met, strategic management comes into its own.

Footnotes

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