

247

WP : 247

# Working Paper

WP247  
WP  
1978  
(247)

IIM  
WP-247



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT  
AHMEDABAD**

DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION  
AS SOCIAL MARKETING

by

Nikhilesh Dholakia

W P No. 247  
Oct. 1978

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* The main objective of the working paper series \*  
\* of the IIMA is to help faculty members to \*  
\* test out their research findings \*  
\* at the pre-publication stage. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT  
AHMEDABAD

### Abstract

Development Administration has come on its own as an area of practice and study. It is differentiated from conventional administration by its emphasis on social and economic change. In the field of management, the concept of Social Marketing has been advanced and applied in many non-business contexts. Social Marketing is very similar to development administration in its aims and approaches. Social Marketing in fact has been presented as an approach for planning social change. This paper examines the relationships between Development Administration and Social Marketing. The commonalities of the two are discussed using a comparative framework. On balance it appears that Social Marketing and Development Administration (as usually practised) are sufficiently different so as not to allow fruitful interchange. This paper makes suggestions regarding how Social Marketing can be adapted to the needs of Development Administration.

## DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION AS SOCIAL MARKETING

### Nature of Development Administration

Development administration has usually been discussed by counterposing it to conventional forms of administration. The specifications and elaboration of the concepts pertaining to development administration, therefore, take the form of negating conventional forms of administration. There is thus considerable thinking on what development administration is not. The thinking on what forms development administration does or should take is rather limited.

It is useful to understand some of the important features which differentiate development administration from conventional administration. The most important difference is in terms of the tasks of the administrator. The development administrator is supposed to facilitate social and economic progress in his area of operation. The conventional administrator, on the other hand, is concerned with system maintenance functions such as law and order, revenue collection, supervision, etc. The task or functional differences also call for different roles. The development administrator is supposed to perform an entrepreneurial and motivational role in contrast to the conservator and the controller role of the traditional administrator. Corresponding differences in administrative goals, methods, approaches, procedures, personnel, operating style, etc. can be expected.

The above view of development administration is based on the content rather than the context of administration. There is also a view that administration in non-Western underdeveloped contexts is by definition development administration. This view implies that when the administration of a developing country approximates the characteristics of a developed Western-country administration, there would be no more development administration. This is certainly neither very useful nor a very realistic view.

Another view which needs to be noted is that development is usually not the result of administrative action, but of mobilizative processes within a society. Such mobilizative and participative processes can rarely be triggered off by administrative action. It usually requires politicization, education, crises and conflicts to mobilize people for developmental causes.

What needs to be recognised in all the above views is that developmental processes cannot be and are not likely to be left alone by governments, elites, change agents, political organizers and other interested external agencies. This means that conscious intervention is likely to be the rule rather than the exception in development processes.

To that extent, it is helpful to conceive of development administration as the type of governmental intervention which causes development in the broader sense of economic growth, social justice and enhancement of quality of life. In this sense administrative action which causes an unbalanced state of development cannot honestly be classified as "development" administration.

#### Social Marketing

Like development administration, social marketing is also concerned with directed intervention to bring about desirable social change. The marketing part of social marketing refers to the use of concepts and techniques of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research for the purposes of design, implementation and control of social change programmes.

Social marketing has generated considerable academic as well as practical interest. Amongst marketing scholars, there has been a near unanimous endorsement of the extension of marketing concepts and techniques to the area of social progress. Some of the agencies concerned with social change have enthusiastically experimented with social marketing approach to programme design and implementation.

Applying Social Marketing Developmental Problems

The application of social marketing to development administration, however, has been extremely limited. Family planning programmes in developing countries, perhaps, are the only major examples of the use of the marketing approach for social change. As is well known, these programmes have had a very mixed record of success. Simplistic application of business marketing concepts to family planning programmes has in fact caused considerable disenchantment in many of the developing countries.

For a variety of reasons, social marketing deserves to be considered as a useful approach for development administration. Firstly, social marketing enables the quantification and measurement of several developmental goals. Market research has developed to a considerable level of sophistication in its commercial and business applications. The science of psychosocial measurement has also developed considerably. The use of psychosocial measurement devices within a well-designed market research programme can provide very powerful methods of monitoring the achievement of developmental goals. Secondly, social marketing offers innovative categories for looking at administrative decisions. The specifications of a development programme in terms of product design, pricing, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, distribution, etc. can help in highlighting the many facets of the developmental task, some of which may get neglected otherwise. Thirdly, the integrative decision making approach championed by social marketing can be very useful in designing development programmes. Fourthly, by bringing in considerations

of competition, market behaviour and external environment, social marketing introduces an element of strategic thinking in development administration.

For the above reasons, social marketing needs to be looked at carefully by development administrators. There are, however, a variety of reasons which make the value of social marketing suspect for the purposes of development administration. These reasons arise from the fact that the assumptions, structure and approaches of social marketing are at variance with those of development administration. The next section analyzes the significant differences between social marketing and development administration.

#### A Comparative Framework

Table 1 presents a comparison of development administration and social marketing on several dimensions. The dimensions broadly reflect the task, the roles and responsibilities of those charged with the tasks, and the task environment.

One way to characterise the differences between development administration and social marketing is that the styles of management implicit in the two are quite different. Social marketing requires an organic risk-taking style while development administration is characterised by a mechanistic and conservative style. It can be argued that the desired style of development administration would be very close to that of social marketing. The actual job of development administration, or for that matter of social marketing, has to be done keeping in view the realities



of the operating systems and environment. Therefore, it is not useful to dismiss the indifferences between development administration and social marketing as merely differences of style which would be eliminated as development administration grows in sophistication.

#### Bridging the Gap

Some changes can be brought about in development administration relatively easily to make it more amenable to application of social marketing. For example, the definition of developmental targets can be done in a more differentiated and disaggregate manner. Appropriate decentralization measures could endow the development administrators with sufficient authority to execute the tasks they are charged with. Similarly planning could be decentralised and made simultaneously a "top-down" and a "bottom-up" exercise, as is the case in most advanced marketing oriented organizations. With appropriate innovations and training inputs, the control and evaluation mechanisms in development programmes can be made more structured and task oriented. These changes can be brought about by infusing management concepts into development administration with increased vigour.

There are certain features of development administration, however, which cannot be changed by bringing more managerial thinking into administration. For example, the fact that an administrator in the field has usually available to him a wide variety of change strategies (including coercive) makes his strategic task different from that of a marketing manager.

The administrator differs from the marketing manager on the dimension of legitimacy. Greater legitimacy enjoyed by an administrator tempt him to choose shortcuts such as the use of fear to bring about changes. Similarly, an administrator can never be given a highly circumscribed and specific responsibility as in the case of a marketing manager. The administrator's responsibilities would always remain general and diffused to a certain extent. Finally, the task environment of the development administrator would be considerably more complex than that of the marketing manager of a limited social change programme.

There is in fact a need to change the concepts of management (in this case the concepts of social marketing) to make these representative of the realities of development administration. There are some indications that the realization for such changes is occurring within the marketing profession itself.

### Relevant Social Marketing

The search for relevant social marketing has begun after the hard realization that the transferability of marketing concepts to social contexts on an "as is" basis is limited. Some of the important changes that are being mooted in social marketing are:

1. Introductions of value orientations that induce commitment to and facilitate understanding of social problems and issues. For example, it has been proposed to introduce humanist values instead of pragmatist ones.
2. Deemphasis of the promotional aspects of social marketing.
3. Proposals for use of multiple objective decision techniques in social marketing situations.

Such changes would certainly help in making social marketing more useful in all nonbusiness contexts, including development administration. These changes, however, are not enough because they try to tackle the obstacles to the application of social marketing in a piecemeal manner. A comprehensive and holistic approach is required instead.

Table 2 identifies the likely obstacles in the application of social marketing to development administration at various levels. The obstacles relate to the assumptions and requirements implicitly or explicitly incorporated in the social marketing approach. These assumptions and requirements become obstacles because in the context of development administration the assumptions do not hold and the requirements cannot be made. To some extent administrative reforms, training inputs, etc. can create conditions more favourable to the application of social marketing. The major

changes, however, must occur in the technology of social "marketing". Table 2 outlines the nature of changes required. The knowledge base for bringing about these changes already exists. A programme of action and research is required to make the potent concepts of social marketing more adapted to the crucial task of development administration.

Table 1  
A Comparison of Development Administration &  
Social Marketing

Dimension	Development Administration	Social Marketing
TASK RELATED		
- Objectives	-General and Diffused	-Specific, differentiated
- Change Targets	-General, broadly specified	- Finely segmented
- Concept of Task	-Conceived in 'input' terms. If 'output' terms used, these are merely mechanical conversions of 'input' terms	-Conceived in 'output' terms, explicitly linked to objectives
-Task-Need fit	-Weak - certain simplistic, universal models are assumed to hold	-Somewhat stronger - Tendency to universalize persists.
ROLES & STYLES		
-Planning Role	-Usually given to top administrators only. Sometimes delegated to staff. Involvement and participation in planning low	-Most levels (including operating level) have a planning role.
-Role specification	-Often too rigid, restrictive - key roles often neglected	-Clear and partly flexible. All roles usually covered
-Executive Style	-Mechanic, risk-averse	-Organic, flexible, risk-taking

Dimension	Development Administration	Social Marketing
<b>PLANNING &amp; CONTROL</b>		
- Planning Horizon	-Sometimes restrictive- other times indeterminate. 'Going concern' view lacking	-Demarcation into short and long terms. Continuity assumed.
- Strategies	-Administrator could use a wide mix - persuasive, educative, coercive	-Manager limited to persuasive strate- gies only
- Nature of plans	-Budget (financial) oriented. No or poor time phasing	-Cost benefit oriented. Properly phased
-Control variable	-Usually inputs	-Inputs, Outputs and Process
-Programme Evaluation	-Subjective, often anecdotal	-Use of Marketing Research
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>		
-Personnel	-Often careerist, transitory	-Usually stable, professional
-Structure	-Strictly hierarchical	-Can vary with task/environment
-Responsibilities	-Many, general, diffuse	-Few, specific
-Authority	-Often not commensurate with responsibility	-Usually commensurate

Table 2

Obstacles to Social Marketing (SM) Applications in Development Administration (DA) & Suggested Changes

Level	Nature of obstacle	Suggestions for overcoming obstacle
Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-SM ignores client group values</li> <li>-SM is implicitly ideological</li> <li>-SM overstructures situations</li> <li>-SM ignores wider ramifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Explicit use of value variables</li> <li>-Client conscientization against manipulation</li> <li>-Use of systemic models with secondary, tertiary effects</li> </ul>
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-SM relies heavily on persuasion</li> <li>-SM assumes availability of clear strategic choices</li> <li>-SM assumes single/structured choice criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Widen strategic base</li> <li>-Develop and apply choice techniques for fuzzy situations</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-SM requires programmability of all key inputs</li> <li>-SM assumes impact can be isolated/measured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-DA can be programmed more by use of management control systems</li> <li>-Development and use of less structured evaluation techniques</li> </ul>
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-SM assumes high divisibility and monitorability of tasks</li> <li>-SM requires continuous and alert operating control by field managers</li> <li>-SM assumes passive (non-retaliatory) client</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Develop methods for using "multiskilled" operatives</li> <li>-Use of client-based control of operatives in development programmes</li> <li>-Improving client participation</li> </ul>

1. Braibanti, Ralph (ed.), Asian Bureaucratic Systems  
Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition,  
Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press,  
1966
2. Braibanti, Ralph, Research on the Bureaucracy of Pakistan,  
Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1966
3. Houston, Franklin S. and Richard E Homans, "Public Agency  
Marketing: Pitfalls and Problems," MSU Business Topics,  
Vol. 25, No.3, Summer, 1977, pp 36-40
4. Kotler, Philip and Gerald Zaltman, "Social Marketing: An  
Approach to Planned Social Change", Journal  
of Marketing, Vol. 35, July, 1977, pp 3-12
5. Riggs, Fred W., Administration in Developing Countries:  
The Theory of Prismatic Society, Boston: Houghton  
Mifflin, 1964
6. Riggs, Fred W., The Ecology of Public Administration,  
Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961
7. Weidner, Edward W. (ed.), Development Administration in  
Asia, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University  
Press, 1970