

**ISSUES IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY :
A CASE STUDY OF
ADDALAICHENAI DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT
IN THE EASTERN SRI LANKA**

Journal of Social Review
Volume 3 (2)
December 2014
Department of
Social Sciences

**M. Abdul Jabbar
T. Fathima Sajeetha**

Abstract

This study examines the major issues in public service delivery in the Addalaichenai divisional secretariat area of Eastern Sri Lanka. The government has the obligation to deliver the services to its citizens. Normally, the action of government which provides the services to the citizens is called as public service delivery. The objective of this study is to identify the empirical major issues in public service delivery in Addalaichenai divisional secretariat. This research is built on qualitative research methodology and it is explored by using both primary and secondary materials. In the primary source, the qualitative interviews and focus group discussion are used where necessary. In the secondary source such as books, magazines, internet articles are used. This paper finds out that two types of issues are in service delivery in Addalaichenai divisional secretariat faced by people and administrators such as unawareness of people, discrimination, delay, lack of modern facilities, political influence. These issues are the challenges to the day to day life of the people and they have to be solved to achieve the enhancement of the citizens.

Introduction

The concept of service delivery occupies important place in administrative studies. It is divided into public and private service delivery. As private sectors are almost money oriented, its service delivery does not reach all people. But the goals of public institutions are to deliver the services to the citizens and improve the social interests. Because of that the service consumers are called as customers and citizens in private and public institutions. This study has full concentrations on public service delivery. The public institutions which deliver the public services may be school, government hospital, local government bodies, police station and departments which have the authority from the law.

The primary purpose of government is to provide goods and services to the society such as education, health, welfare, safety and morals of its citizens (Ruchelman 1989:1). The democratic governments are obliged to provide these services through the central and local government bodies. Public services are defined as those services which are mainly or completely, funded by taxation (Humperes 1998: 6). These services can differ significantly from commercial private sector services in a number of ways. Normally, public services are concerned which services are provided by the government or institutions without profit oriented.

According to UNDP (1999) literature public service delivery is a set of institutional arrangements adopted by the government to

provide public goods and services to its citizens. Public service delivery system in Sri Lanka takes the important place like many other developed and developing countries over the hundred years. It effects on day to day activities of citizens at the grassroots level. As number of separate organizations at national level in the delivering public services may be large, many public service bodies are established for handling the vast majority of contacts with the general public. They have responsibilities either directly or indirectly to state and citizens.

In Sri Lanka, the many public institutions active to deliver the public services under the central government, provincial government and local government. They are ministries, authorities, departments, administrative offices and etc. Although every public institution delivers the public services according to the government's policy, it faces many challenges and issues to do its service accurately. This study examines major issues in public service delivery based on Addalaichenai divisional secretariat area.

Divisional secretariat takes an important role in public service delivery. It delivers the services to all levels of citizens including the grass root and facilitate the public to get these services quickly and easily. It provides the essential public services which are need to drive the day to day life of public. It provides the multiple services such as the birth certificate, death certificate, marriage certificate, national identity card, passport, character certificate, license, social services to the people.

Objectives

The objective of this research is to identify major issues in public service delivery of Addalaichenai divisional secretariat.

Especially, it tries to find out the issues both faced by people and administrators in this regard. This research is organized as follows. The next section briefly examines the review of theoretical and empirical literature. The research findings are then summarized followed by data analysis. The last section sets out the conclusion of the research.

Research Methodology

The research comprises the qualitative analysis which includes primary and secondary data. Addalaichenai divisional secretariat has been chosen for the case study. This paper is based on 20 qualitative interviews (administrators and public), limited observation and a discussion with target group are used to obtain primary data. Relevant academic writings, books, magazines, journals, government publication report are used as secondary data. The secondary data collection is based on literature survey which I reviewed theoretical and empirical literature available on the subject.

Conceptual Framework

Public service delivery is one of the developing concepts. Goods are not only to fulfill the human's needs, but also services. These public services are delivered by the government through the public institutions. This part briefly explains the criteria of quality delivery of public services, approaches to public service delivery, methods of public service delivery and citizen's rights on public service delivery.

Seidle mentions the criteria for quality delivery of public services, they are responsiveness, accessibility and reliability(1995: 11). If service delivery system is without the above, it will be not considered as a quality delivery of public services.

There are some approaches to deliver the public services. German Sociologist Max Webber has designed the bureaucratic model (Ruchelman 1989:1). It is a traditional approach for delivering services. Most prominent is the characteristic of hierarchy where in the few at the top of the pyramid assume overall administrative responsibility. And large number of personnel at the lower levels workers at the bottom of the pyramid.

The other approach is public choice theory. Where bureaucracies perform inefficiently or where there is strong pressure to cut the costs of services, an alternative model may be considered (Ibid: 3). This approach recognizes that while it is government that is usually responsible for arranging the delivery of services, the same government jurisdiction does not necessarily produce the services. According to this approach, service providers may be a public agency, a private profit-making firm, a group of volunteers or just plain citizens.

There are four basic broad models of public service delivery arrangements that governments everywhere have adopted (Pradeep 2011: 7). They are direct service delivery model, privatization service delivery model, decentralization service delivery model and alternative service delivery model. In our country, the direct service delivery model and decentralization service delivery model are almost used.

According to the UN human rights declaration convention 21(2), every person has a right to enjoy the equal public services (Waldt 2004: 82). So public service delivery is concerned as an essential to fulfill their rights. OECD (1990) has identified the rights of people who are the tax payers. They are the right to be informed, assisted and heard, the right to be appeal, the right to pay no more than the correct amount of tax, the right to certainty, the right to privacy,

the right to confidentiality and secrecy. Where these rights are abused or have crisis to get and enjoy the public services, people's life will be weakened.

Research Area

Sri Lanka, a small country of Asia, has a long history in public service delivery. It dates back to the times of ancient kings, though, during the time of British rule significant reforms were carried out. When Sri Lanka became independent in 1948, public service was brought under the public service commission established on the recommendations of the Soulbury Commission (Iqbal 2002). It has been developing step by step. In the second republic constitution of Sri Lanka, it has carried out the ministries, departments and commissions which are appointed by the president. Many public institutions are established under the law and services are brought to the people in national, provincial, district, divisional and rural level. Divisional secretariat provides the services to the citizen in particular division.

Addalaichenai D.S. Division is situated in Ampara district of Eastern Sri Lanka. It has four villages as follows; Addalaichenai, Palamunai, Oluvil, Deegavapi and 32 G.S. division. Its population (2009) is 43,632 (planning division, Addalaichenai divisional secretariat). There are three major ethnic and religious groups living together. They are Muslims, Tamils, and Sinhalese. Addalaichenai divisional secretariat delivers the services equally, although, people of this area are not satisfied on this service delivery. And there are many issues in service delivery faced by people and administrators.

Findings and Discussion

This study explores that Addalaichenai divisional secretariat is an important public

institution to deliver the public services which are essential to the people in this area. It has many divisions such as land, administrative, social service, accounting, cultural and planning to provide the different types of services. Even though, all division of Addalaichenai divisional secretariat deliver the lots of services through the various ways such as direct service delivery, mobile service, Samurdhi and other ways, they face many issues in this regard. This part finds out the issues in public service delivery. There are two types of issues, one is faced by the people and other one is faced by the administrators.

Issues faced by the People

Public service delivery is made for the people who are citizens of the country. It helps the people to get the services quickly and easily to fulfill their needs and develop them. But practically, people face many problems to get these services. As far as the issues faced by the people are concerned, they are found out from the interviews.

The first issue is that, people do not identify the administrator who is responsible for a particular service. As well as people do not have awareness on public service delivery and they do not understand the administrator's instructions and criticize the officers. So that administrators also do their works without interesting. Some time administrators do not give the necessary information to the citizens and they deride the people. In this situation, people disturb other officers to ask some information and services. It is also concerned as an annoyance of administrators.

Other issues in public service delivery are discrimination and unequal treatment.

Sometime administrators are unfair to deliver the services. They almost concern the people who are relatives and friends. When some services have to be delivered to the specific number of people, the administrators propose their relatives. It mostly affects the innocent general public.

As the mobile services are delivered for a few days, all people of this area are not able to get these services. Most of the people are going to get these services, a limited period of time is not enough to fulfill their needs and deliver the services. Nowadays, the administrators inform the people about the mobile service, but they do not give any information about the documents which are wanted to bring.

Some administrators are lazy to do their works. They are often gathering and talking in their working hours. When people go to meet them, they are not in their seats. Some time, they always find a fault from people and scold them, people are returned and their works are postponed.

When the service delivery, some administrators are not flexible to the citizens and they follow the rules and regulations harshly. It makes the people to the negative mind on the administrators. The service delivery not only depends on a division but also mingle with other divisions. If one division is delay to do its works, it will affect rest of them.

Public, as the tax payers, have a lots of rights on public service delivery, but most of them do not know about all these rights but the right to be informed. In divisional secretariat, information are given through directly, through the telephone, notice board, notice, and annual report. But they do not give these information on the accurate period. Most of the people do not satisfy with the enjoyment of this right.

Issues, faced by administrators

The process of public service delivery is implemented by the administrators who get the authority from the government. They facilitate the people to get the services and welfares effective and efficiency. This study explores that when they deliver the services, they face many issues in proper service delivery. The issues faced by the administrators are as follow.

A basic problem for those who administer the public services is that while citizens usually want more from government, they generally are inclined to pay less in taxes. This is because payment of services in the public sector is almost always separated from the delivery of services; and where citizens do not pay directly for a service, government has difficulty imposing limits. It causes to deliver the limited services.

As far as Addalalaichenai divisional secretariat is concerned, most of the administratorø language is Tamil. As many government secular received in Sinhala, a translator must be there. There is a translator in this divisional secretariat. If he has a leave for any reasons, the works will be remained still he come back. A service is not delivered immediately, and it has many procedures and takes a few days. But people who do not understand this, they scold and disturb the administrators.

Other issue is the lack of modern facilities. Its buildings and furniture have been broken and there is not enough the technical equipment. It has not the appropriate environment to do the office work. Excepting the few division, there is no enough space to work and keep the things.

Although e-governance system is spoken in worldwide, there is a traditional way following to deliver the services in this

divisional secretariat. And political influence is as an issue in public service delivery, though, it is not a major issue but a little.

The reasons of these issues are as follow: the main reason is the lack of awareness of the citizens. They think that, they are only correct and most of the administrators are liars.

As the institutional arrangements are followed very strictly and the administrators are not flexible to the citizens, people hesitate to tell their needs and problems. Administrators cannot do their works independently as political influence is in public service delivery. Other one is the lack of facilities including the basic and modern. It causes to delay.

Most of the characteristics of good governance are not followed by the administrators. In modern era, there are not enough facilities in Addalaichenai divisional secretariat. People do not have the knowledge about the public service delivery and administrators do not provide the knowledge to the citizens. As people are trying to get the luxury life, these services are not enough to achieve the above.

Changing the public policy is a next reason to make an issue in public service delivery. One time government introduces a policy and orders to implement, but before the complete implementation, government orders again to stop the policy and introduce another policy. It not only disturbs the administrators but also people are affected by these changes.

Recommendations

As the result of this study, there are many issues faced in service delivery of Addalaichenai divisional secretariat. These issues are shown as challenges to drive the usual common life.

So that, the recommendations are proposed below to handle the above issues and make the public service delivery effective and efficiency in this divisional secretariat.

The modern facilities should be given to the divisional secretariat and sufficient furniture and place should be allocated and it should be changed as a suitable place for working. Electrical equipment should be given and new public management system must be implemented to deliver the public service easily.

The administrators in divisional secretariat should learn and get the training in other languages including English. As well as administrators have to get the IT training ability and make the opportunities to do their work on computer.

To avoid the lateness, there should be maintained the time management and administrators should be compelled to work on time.

As transparency and accountability must be maintained in every public institution, the reports, publications, projects, news, notice should be reached the people through the media or what else. They should be instructed about the positive things which are gained by their service to people and nation, and the negative things which are the consequences of the lack of service delivery.

As well as if public opinion on public service delivery which are either positive or negative and their suggestions get from the people, it will help to improve the public service delivery and correct the mistakes.

Awareness programs should be organized in every G.S. division and instruct the people the day to come to the office and bring the documents to get the particular service. Like

that must be given the explanation of the issues in public service delivery and its affects. And citizen's charter must be given to the service consumer.

Administrators must be flexible when it is necessary for delivering the services to the citizens who are vulnerable.

Conclusion

As a result of this study, many issues are found out in public service delivery, it has become difficult to provide the required services to the citizens in efficiency and effectiveness manner. Divisional secretariat has the authority to deliver the services, though, it has no sufficient public support in this regard. Even, emerging the contemporary developments also does not make the changes in service delivery mechanism. Therefore, the divisional secretariat has to take the necessary actions to redesign the system of public service delivery with the co-ordination of people and administrators who are related to particular issues. It would make the opportunities to reduce and resolve the above issues and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service delivery.

Bibliography

Allan Rosenbaum, (2002, December 10-11). *Cooperative Delivery of Public Services: Reflections on the Dynamics of Public Sector – Private Sector – Civil Society Collaboration on Governmental Service Delivery*. The Fourth Global Forum on Reinventing Government: Capacity Development Workshops. Retrieved from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan006494.pdf>

Anita Karwal. *Effective Public Service Delivery and e-Governance: Who Drives Whom*. Ahmedabad: Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration. Retrieved from http://www.csi-sigegov.org/casestudies/02_effect_public_service.pdf

- Brendan Martin. (2004). *What is public about public services?*. London: World Development Report. Retrieved from <http://www.publicworld.org/docs/WhatIsPublic.pdf>
- Carine Bachman & Christian Staerkle. *The Meanings of Citizenship: From Status to Social Process*. Retrieved from <http://www.cimera.org/files/reports/rr1/chapter2.pdf>
- Center for tax policy and administration. *Taxpayer's Rights and Obligations – Practice Note*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/tax/taxadministration/17851176.pdf>
- Gerrit Van Der Walddt. (2004). *Managing performance in the public sector: Concepts, Consideration and Challenges*. Jata and Co Ltd.
- Iqbal, M.C.M. (2002). *The Public Service of Sri Lanka*. Annual Report in the State of Human Rights in Sri Lanka. Retrieved from <http://www.ruleoflawsrilanka.org/resources/writings-of-m-c-m-iqbal/the-public-service-of-sri-lanka>
- Jean-Claude Thoenig, (2003). *Institutional theories and public institutions: Tradition and Appropriateness*. Retrieved from http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/13/99/54/PDF/Institutional_theories._Pre-draft.pdf
- Leslie Seidle, F. (1995). *Rethinking the delivery of public services to citizens*. Institute for research on public policy.
- Lionard I. Ruchelman. (1989). *A workbook in redesigning public services*. Albany: State university of New York press.
- Michael S. Josephson. (2005). *Preserving the public trust: The Five Principles of Public Service Ethics*. California: Josephson Institute of Ethics Los Angeles.
- Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs. (2007). *Citizen-Client Charter. (2007)*. Retrieved from <http://www.idpsrilanka.lk/Doc/Related%20Articles/Citizen%20Charter%20of%20Sr%20Lanka%20%20English%20.pdf>
- Organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD). (2011). *Together for Better Public Services: Partnering with citizens and civil society*. Retrieved from <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/product/4211131e.pdf>
- Peter C. HUmperes. (1998). *Improving public service delivery*. Ireland: Institute of Public Administration.
- Peter Kinderman & Frances Butler. (2006). *Implementing a human rights approach within public services: An Outline Psychological Perspective*. A Report for the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Retrieved from [http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Human %20 Rights % 20 committee/Implementing_ a_ Human_ Rights_ Approach_ within_ Public_ Service.pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Human%20Rights%20committee/Implementing_a_Human_Rights_Approach_within_Public_Service.pdf)
- Pradeep, H.U.S. (2011). *Challenges of local government service delivery: A Case Study of Matara Municipal Council*. (Master thesis, North South University). Retrieved from [http://mppg-nsu.org/attachments/339_Pradeep %20 Thesis. pdf](http://mppg-nsu.org/attachments/339_Pradeep%20Thesis.pdf)
- Ranjaneer Kusumsiri De Alwis. (2009). *The history of and prospects for public sector reforms in Sri Lanka*. (Ph.D. Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington). Retrieved from <http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/1444/thesis.pdf?sequence=1>.
- The Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. (2008). *Public Service Act 2008*. Retrieved from [http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisltn/current/p/public Serv A08 .PDF](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisltn/current/p/public%20Serv%20A08.PDF)
- UNDP, (1999), *Evaluation of UNDP Role in Decentralization and Local Governance*. Working Paper. New York: UNDP.
- William H. Holly., Kenneth M. Jennings., & Roger S. Wolters. (2009). *The labor relation process*. USA: South Western Cengage Learning.