
UNIT 16 EMERGING CONCEPTS: NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT, REINVENTING GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

Structure

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16.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit, will you able to:

- Appreciate the theoretical foundations of New Public Management
- Throw light on the internationalisation of public governance
- Examine the relationship between the State and the market; and
- Analyse the concept of Business Process Engineering

16.1 INTRODUCTION

New Public Management (NPM) is the new thrust of administrative reforms sweeping through the world. The term has been in use in recent times to describe a management culture that emphasises the centrality of the citizen or customer, as well as accountability for results. Its other important dimension relates to structural or organisational choices that promote decentralised control through a wide variety of alternative service delivery mechanisms, including quasi-markets with public and private service providers competing for resources from policy makers and donors. It is wrong to assume that NPM claims that government should stop performing certain tasks. The central spirit of NPM is about getting things done better.

Market has emerged as the central determining entity for solving most jurisdictional problems emerging due to the rise of multi-actor domains in public service delivery. NPM has also become an ideological tool to balance devolution and globalisation on the one hand and government and wider society on the other. The straightjacketed administration-people relationship is now a broad based and multifaceted interlinking of several spheres of authority looking after collective interests. NPM has transformed the former public administration to the latter as governance. Jon Pierre and B. Guy Peters (2003) refer to governance as the changing role of the government in society and its changing capacity to pursue collective interests under severe external and internal constraints. NPM is assumed to be a tool for Good Governance in the present times. This Unit will give us a broad outline of the theoretical underpinnings of NPM and will throw light on the internationalisation of public governance. It will also make an attempt to bring about the relationship between the State and the market in the light of the concept of Business Process Engineering.

16.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

NPM emerged as a critique of bureaucratic model of Max Weber. The failure of the first and the second development decades during which United Nations had focussed upon developmental issues of the Third World turned out to be lost decades. Bureau-pathologies such as red-tapism, nepotism, alienation from people and corruption acted as speed breakers to progress. Consequently, international markets also failed to brighten up and therefore the recessionary trends continued to bring into it the commodity price crashes. The impact of these dangerous market trends threatened not only the Third World markets due to comparatively high tariffs on their goods but also the developed countries for the fact that stagnation and protectionism together prevented the entrepreneurship embedded in their market system. Thus, the initiatives of international financial agencies like the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to move out of the existing system, which asphyxiates the virtues of free trade, became integral to the aid strategies around the world. The theoretical foundations of NPM have therefore been borrowed more from economic rather than political and administrative theory. Cost-effective governance would mean a system, which reduces the element of public choice, lowers agency maintenance cost and the cost of transacting business.

As the World Bank document clarifies: “NPM was conceived as a means to improve efficiency and responsiveness to political principals. Its origin were in parliamentary democracies with curiously strong executive powers, centralised governments and little administrative law. In this archetypal setting, NPM seems to embody the idea of a cascading chain of contracts leading to a single (usually ministerial) principal who is interested in getting better results within a sector portfolio over which he or she has significant and relatively unchallenged authority”.

NPM has emerged as the new hope against inefficient and deficit loaded governments and opaque governance. Citizens derive manifold discounts on State services and governments are slated to be more accountable and people-oriented. This mission driven approach to governance is described as the one which is not dogmatic about the protectionist boundaries of State action but is more open to collaborative work and about networking for better service provisions which may cut costs and perform more efficiently. While cost cutting is one major aspect of this reform mantra, it is not the only one. It seeks efficiency, accountability, people’s participation and debureaucratisation through increased entrepreneurship in society and public-private

partnership. NPM, thus, becomes a hybrid of early managerial approaches like the scientific management, human relations and the modern welfare participative State models.

The characteristic of the traditional model, which has come under sharp attack is described as 'Big solutions meant nationwide and uniform social programmes, planned and administered in a centralised fashion by big, hierarchically organised government agencies and financed out of all-purpose tax funds.' Thus, NPM has its foundations in economy management on the pattern of market management and by virtue of it, is embedded into economic theories of Public Choice, Agency Cost and Transaction Cost Analysis. The rise of the New Right literature is an indicator that State activity is under sharp attack and there is a concerted drive to reduce its burden of activities by making it function like a market.

Public Choice perspective as provided by Buchanan (1986) *Liberty, Market and State* directs the strongest accusation against bureaucratic model of government in its wastefulness because politicians and public servants have no incentive to minimise spendings. *First*, they are influenced by special group demands; *second*, the bureaucracy remains self-serving, and thus is most collaborative with politicians who are self-aggrandising; *third*, efficiency is subjected to electoralism and not rational calculation. Niskanen (1971) argues that the bureaucrat tends to expand production of public services beyond the socially optimum level.

Agency Cost theory, as explained in Williamson's *Markets and Hierarchies* (1990), treats one party as an agent which carries out work on behalf of the principal. Their interests do not necessarily coincide and when this is aligned with the principal's inability to monitor the agent then there arises an incentive to underperform. Agents would design contracts in a manner, which may shift responsibility to factors, which may appear to be outside their control. Thus, the argument of Williamson that best contracts are the ones, which are self-enforcing, stands reaffirmed.

Transaction Cost Analysis is also well explained in Williamson's work. He suggests that the most efficient form of institutional governance is the one in which transaction costs are controlled and minimised. A transaction cost is the cost of exchanges undertaken to transact work. This is dependent upon factors such as uncertainty, bounded rationality, complexity, opportunism and asset specificity. Whether hierarchies or markets, transaction cost better managed on the basis of the institutional capacity to control is the above factors is a crucial query, which needs deliberation.

Thus, a theory of government failure has been brought forth in the last phase of the decade of 80s. Wolf (1988) tried developing the theory of government failure like the theories of market failure to establish that this would lead these public services to inefficiency and wastefulness. Globalisation and the new 'knowledge society' has increased the demand and the concomitant growth of public goods. As a consequence, there would be oversupply of public services, their uncontrollable expansion, lack of performance appraisal mechanisms and therefore the resultant downfall of the bureaucratic State.

Management of public services on the basis of market mechanism has brought back the managerialist traditions in public administration, which were given by F.W.Taylor, Luther Gulick, L.Urwick, Herbert Simon and J. March. The only difference between the 'old managerialism' and the 'new managerialism' is in that the latter one is based upon the new institutional approaches in which institutions are justified on economic rationale rather than their ability to provide public welfare.

16.3 INTERNATIONALISATION OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

The failure of the first and the second developmental decades of the 1960s and the 1970s was followed by an unprecedented commodity price crashes in the international market in the earlier part of the decade of 1980s. This trend generated a wave of displeasure against the governments all over the world. This displeasure was more focussed and issue-based in the developed world. By contrast, the developing world passed through an unmanageable economic crisis due to failure of expensive but failed poverty eradication programmes, unstable politics and arbitrary trends in the international market. The message was loud and clear that the State was too large to be manageable and there must be more freedom for private parties to manage areas where the State has been seemingly failing. Greater entrepreneurship and open competition became the watchwords of reforms. The supply and delivery of goods and services started getting transferred from the government to private agencies. The complete turnaround of the traditional model was dictated by the requirements of the market, and endorsed by the international donor agencies.

This change started featuring in the aid programmes in which the donor agencies started emphasising on decentralisation, liberalisation, performance appraisal mechanisms, privatisation and cost-effectiveness of the poverty eradication programmes undertaken in developing countries. An explicit statement of intent is reflected in the World Bank Report 1996 entitled *From Plan to Market*. It indicates two changes in the prospective programmes of governance; *first*, that failed decades of planning provides the rationale for marketisation. *Second*, that market could take over wherever the State has failed to provide.

Thus, the new reform drive was pushed by donor agencies like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and UNDP. The impetus was cost saving and meaningful performance audits. There appeared a sense of urgency in bringing reforms because of the market stagnation settling in the developed industrialised countries because of practised protectionism in the developing world. A huge storehouse of beneficial transactions was blocked for both the international investors as well as developing countries because of stringent and arbitrary rules of the market controlled by bureaucracy, which was proved to be wasteful and self-aggrandising. The purpose was to eliminate this iron halo of the bureaucratic State, reduce the element of public choice; and set the markets free in a manner that the flow of capital from one place to another is enhanced with smooth and simple market rationality rather than big plans, which only add to public deficits.

The international aspect of NPM has facilitated its easy conversion into the concept of 'Good Governance'. Since then the same reform package based upon management-oriented approaches has been propagated by the OECD (1995, 1996 and 2000), Department for International Development (DFID) U.K. 1997, and the UNDP (1996, 1998). Despite the abundance of failed stories about the implementation of these reform drives, the multilateral donor agencies receive widespread publicity to stray and sundry stories of miniscule successes in the form of reports titled as "Mauritius: Managing Success and East Asian Miracle". It would be interesting at this point to elaborate the ten propositions of policy reforms given by Williamson (*op.cit.*) which manifest the changes most likely to influence the nature of the State and which became the notorious *Washington Consensus* prescription for reforms all over the world. The suggested propositions laid accent on:

- Fiscal discipline
- Redirection of public expenditure priorities towards fields offering both high economic returns and the potential to improve income distribution, such as primary health care, primary education and infrastructure
- Tax reforms to lower marginal rates and broaden the tax base
- Interest rate liberalisation
- Competitive exchange rate
- Trade liberalisation
- Liberalisation of inflows of Foreign Direct Investment.
- Privatisation
- Deregulation to abolish barriers to entry and exit
- Secure property rights.

These propositions reflect the Neo-liberal agenda of the World Bank. Together they ensure efficiency and economy in administrative functioning. According to a UN document 1998 ‘The bashing of the State characterised the policy thrust of the Washington Consensus’. Another commentator even equated it with new imperialism. However, a well-deserving explanation has been given by Williamson (*op.cit.*) who coined this term ‘Washington Consensus’ in 1989, “My version of the Washington Consensus began with the proposition that the inflation caused by lack of fiscal discipline is bad for income distribution. In the mid-1990s, there has been a realisation about the need to adapt global practices into local norms and community institutions”.

The management approach to public administration in USA, in 1990s, gained pace several due to liberalisation of economy. There have been attempts towards government renewal. Renewal aims at bringing transformation in the existing situation to meet the contemporary demands. A significant development in the NPM movement has been government renewal; with a view to make the government function optimally, effectively and efficiently. Governmental renewal has been considered a conscious and organised process formally initiated by the government, to transform internal and external political and administrative structures and policies, to promote optimal public management in the light of dominant values of Good Governance (Bemelmans, 1999).

In 1992, the transformation of governmental systems found shape in the concept of ‘Reinventing Government’ by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. In their work ‘Reinventing Government, How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector’, they made an elaborate case for transforming the bureaucratic government into an entrepreneurial government. By reinventing government, they envisaged a government, which is never static, but adaptable, responsive, efficient and effective, it is said to be more market oriented providing quality goods and services that respond to citizen’s preferences.

Reinventing Government is said to assume ten different forms namely catalytic, community-oriented, competitive, mission-driven, result-oriented, customer-driven, enterprising, anticipatory, decentralised and market-oriented. We shall be discussing these in detail in Unit of MPA–012. The reinventing government model presented by Osborne and Gaebler is a wider exercise in the NPM. It reaffirms the reform agenda of increased efficiency decentralisation, accountability and marketisation. The

influence of U.K. ideas led to the exercise of National Performance Review (NPR) under the leadership of the then Vice-President Al Gore. The basic objective has been to transform the culture of federal organisations, by making them performance-based and custom-oriented. This has also been discussed in Unit of MPA-012.

The Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Conferences in 1994 on “Government in Transition” and on “The New Public Administration: Global Challenges-Local Solutions” in 1996 also attempted to focus upon the new role of public managers in providing high quality services that citizens’ value and tried to bridge the gap that occurs between the global demands and local experiments. The Conferences advocated the new paradigm, which is explainable under five components:

- i) Delivery of high quality services
- ii) Increased managerial autonomy
- iii) Rigorous performance measurement of individuals and organisations
- iv) Managerial support services to facilitate achievement of policy target
- v) Receptiveness to competition.

The new paradigm indicates a strong alignment and partnership between public and private spheres. This change is visible even in the Terms of Reference of India’s Fifth Pay Commission 1998, which marks a conscious departure from the Administrative Reforms Commission of 1966. The Pay Commission laid emphasis on the need to “Examine the work methods and work environment as also the variety of allowances and benefits in kind that are presently available to the aforementioned categories in addition to pay structure, and to suggest rationalisation and simplification thereof with a view to promoting efficiency in administration, reducing redundant paperwork and optimising the size of the government machinery”. The changed paradigm gives priority to the fact that the functions of the government should first be defined, accounted for and their transaction costs assessed. It was expected that NPM would inspire this scientific approach in governance to replace the arbitrary monopoly administration by the State and by doing so the flow of international capital from one country to another would lead to growth of markets and thereby international prosperity.

This international element of NPM was a clean break from the older bureaucratic State model that survived upon protectionism, rule-orientedness and secrecy of transactions. The new model was, however, based upon simplistic assumptions about the social and anthropological features, ethnic complexities and ecological variations in different societies. Thus, the most valid criticism against NPM was that ‘this one size does not fit all’.

16.4 STATE AND MARKETS: A NEW RELATIONSHIP FOR BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

The relationship between the State and the market has become more intricate in the present times. The transformation of reform mechanism from a centralised, monopoly business conducted by welfare based bureaucratic system to a competitive market mechanism involves a fundamental change in institutions of governance. It is also not very clear whether the introduction of this mechanism would overcome the inherent problems of public sector organisations. Keiron Walsh (1995) warns of a danger that if care is not taken then one would find public sector adopting those private sector

approaches to their management precisely at the time when they are being abandoned as ineffective in private sector. Therefore, the whole cycle of business transformation has to seriously consider developments in law, economics and organisation theory before going the whole hog of reengineering the processes.

Business Process Reengineering or BPR is always the resuscitation exercise for a sinking firm or company. Thus cost-cutting and capacity building is put at the core of reengineering. It is a device to meet increasing competition in the market through qualitative improvement and standardisation of products in terms of global requirements. Because BPR, in the present context, has risen along with globalisation and increased transnational businesses, the reengineering efforts have unintentionally fallen into the lap of perceived successes of information technology. Most international companies like Ford, and IBM have been able to downsize and prevent wastage through the application of information technology. Thus, BPR has mistakenly got clubbed with the expansion of cyber technology although it is a much wider and more comprehensive concept than what is assumed by management theorists.

BPR has been in use since F.W.Taylor's time. In his epoch making book *The Art of Cutting Metals*, Taylor tried to seek the best way out and in his later book *Scientific Management*, he provided the best way to reengineer business processes. Thus, the usage of 'reengineering' has become synonymous with 'finding the best or the most efficient way for conducting business'. NPM also shares this objective for managing government business to produce more efficiency and productivity.

Henri Fayol was the real progenitor of 'reengineering' and he traced it to the concept of 'optimum advantage from all available resources'. This has found place in the modern impact assessment methodologies for business under the name of 'cost-benefit approaches'. Lyndall Urwick and Luther Gulick improved the concept by adding a subjective human resource element of 'workers' empowerment' when they wrote 'It is not enough to hold people accountable for certain activities, it is also essential to delegate to them the necessary authority to discharge their responsibilities.' NPM shares the following fundamentals of BPR:

- Customer is placed at the centre
- Organisational barriers are broken down by increased decentralisation, public-private partnership and networking
- Work processes are designed to suit the organisational goals and not vice versa
- Role of the leader or the manager as a guide, who facilitates, coordinates and inspires entrepreneurship amongst employees is encouraged
- Decision making has to go down to the local level to push innovations from bottom upwards
- Appropriate information system has to be facilitated to make information available to everyone, since initiatives are expected to emerge from local levels,
- Performance appraisal systems have to be revamped in a manner that productivity and profits are linked to bonuses

This whole new BPR system is designed to overcome the contingencies of the globalising world and the stability of capital investments. Hence, it rests upon the reliability of a flawless information and communication technology system. This is where it differs from Taylor's system in which lack of this technology prevented the

networking and clustering approaches from reaching the big business processes. In the present context, this technology system has proved to be a great cost-cutting device and a tool for strategic management of business.

16.5 ASSESSMENT OF BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

BPR like NPM is considered to be a transient concept as every era has applied some form of BPR system to withstand the changes in the socio-economic circumstances and productive techniques. Thus, BPR is just a technique and not a theory, which can be traced to its scientific laws. Therefore, it is considered in management literature as ‘old wine in new bottles.’ Organisational theorists who extended the human relations literature after the Hawthorne Experiments such as R.M. Cyert and J.G. March have criticised BPR as a paradoxical approach for the reason that on the one hand it promotes workers’ empowerment and local initiative while on the other, it strengthens the concept of an omnipotent team manager who can be ruthless and play havoc with the career of his team-mates. Thomas H. Davenport in 1995 raised a vital question, “Will participative makeovers of business processes succeed where reengineering has failed?” He criticised both the design as well as the information technology aspect of it and suggested that a more appropriate approach to business should be “ethnographic” for designs and “ecological” for information systems. It means that if applied in terms of ethnographic and ecological perspectives then business would fulfil the requirements of participativeness by increasing communication and understanding amongst team members. Business and information set up should be contextual and in consonance with the needs and demands of the particular system.

NPM was born out of the disappointments with Weberian bureaucratic State model. The reasons have been many; consistent failures of planning programmes, high cost implementation, unaccountable expenditures, rising corruption and increasing deficits. There were some pathological symptoms, which got embedded into the system itself. They were secrecy, centralisation, monopoly business practices leading to license-quota regime, inward-looking administrative system and an alienated bureaucracy, which could not strike a chord with people. Unit 14 of this Course has also dealt with some of the characteristic features of NPM. You will read about NPM in detail in Unit of our Course (012) on Administrative Theory.

NPM was therefore provoked by the failure of the Welfare State model based upon Keynesian economics. The annoyance of researchers and practitioners was manifested in bureaucratic bashing which characterised administrative literature of 1980s and 1990s. Margaret Thatcher in UK and Ronald Reagan in USA became the whistle blowers for a change towards greater orientation for adopting business like practices in administration. Two most revolutionary changes that occurred were, *first* introduction of outsourcing administrative responsibilities and *second* introduction of competition. Suddenly, bureaucracy catapulted its performance to protect itself from downsizing and gradual elimination. Administrators became conscious about factors of speed, transparency, people’s participation, new technology and customer accountability that were completely non-existent in the previous system.

The changes primarily strived to improve service delivery system to people and win back their confidence. Thus, wherever administrative departments were found lacking in training and technological usage, the services were outsourced to private parties and public-private partnerships became the new symbol of Good Governance. NPM laid down the indicators for Good Governance and good business. Since NPM

evoked cost-effective implementation, investments in technology became a new drive for governments. Foreign Direct Investments were encouraged to inspire competition in public lives and sick public assets were sold off to bidders from transnational businesses. Liberalisation led to privatisation of public assets and NPM indicated a new Business Process Reengineering (BPR), which could help attain the objective of the new paradigm change in administration.

However, the NPM type changes were neither new nor people-friendly. They were also laden with several paradoxes which mesmerised the understanding of public administration and business administration. BPR, as we read before, had been in use since the time of F.W.Taylor and H.Fayol. The adoption of business principles were the prime demand of both the Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians but none had actually tried to confuse a customer with the citizen, or State with a business enterprise. NPM's focus on letting a government function in a businesslike fashion has led to the exclusion of the poor, deprived and handicapped citizens who are not able to meet the criteria of competition and neither do they have the assets to be a customer. Many services formerly arriving to them in cheaper manner like education, health and food have now become expensive due to transnational companies undertaking these State run responsibilities.

Moreover, BPR has also not served the purpose of developing and transitional countries for the simple reason that they are not oriented to the huge mass of people waiting for welfare to overcome their subsistence under the poverty line. Poverty eradication programmes are now donor agency based and the interest of the donors becomes more important than the needs of welfare recipients. Technological upgradation in BPR practices has favoured the home countries of technology transfers rather than the host ones. More so, the sustainability of NPM and BPR rests upon a parallel reform mechanism for law, economics and electoral system. Failure of most governments in setting up a social security net for increasing number of socially excluded people, a legal framework for defining property rights and right to education, and provision of medical services and employment has disillusioned people in developing countries and thus opposition to the State is being directed against NPM and BPR.

16.6 CONCLUSION

The public administrative organisations have always taken recourse to administrative reforms to meet their goals of efficiency and productivity with the advent of market as a major player in governance; the administration has gone in for NPM and BPR type of managerial reforms to put its house in order. Problem with this type of reform model is that it is not new and indigenous. In developing countries where more than half the population is poor, where institutions are not equipped to handle change and where social and legal network is wanting, these NPM and BPR initiatives are not sustainable.

Despite the embeddedness of these principles in the New Right agenda and their leanings towards the business-like State, they supposedly have the potential to work better with changes in other legal parameters protecting the poor in developing and transitional countries. However, most governments with unstable political regimes have failed to undertake the desired changes. Thus, NPM and BPR have turned out to be more forced and 'coerced' administrative reforms rather than a home-made and situation-specific sustainable change model for attending to the authentic and need

based requirements of the developing countries including their capacity to compete with the developed world. The purpose of this Unit has been to highlight some of the features of NPM Reinventing Government and BPR, and discuss the constraints in their applicability to situations in the developing countries.

16.7 KEY CONCEPTS

Foreign Direct Investment

Investment made by a foreign individual or company in productive capacity of another country, be it purchase of land, equipment or buildings or constructions of new equipment by foreign company. Foreign Direct Investment or FDI also refers to the purchase of controlling interest in existing operations and businesses. The multinational firms, which seek to tap natural resources, access lucrative or emerging markets and keep production costs down by accessing low wage labour pools in developing countries are FDI investors.

www.halilaxinitative.org.bhp/resources-glassory.

Knowledge Society

Literally defined, it is a society that creates, shares and uses knowledge for the prosperity and well being of its people. The term 'Knowledge Society' has been coined by Peter Drucker. Today's society is defined as the "Information Society", a society in which low cost Information and Communication Technology are in general use. The most valuable asset is investment in intangible human and social capital and the key factors are knowledge and creativity. This new society presents great opportunities in the form of employment possibilities, new tools for education and training, easier access to public services, increased inclusion of disadvantaged people or regions

europa.eu.int/comm./employment-social/knowledge-society/index-en.htm.

New Rights Agenda

It draws its sustenance from the Neo-liberal perspective, which propagates State minimalism. The agenda is to strip government of all social welfare functions and all economic regulatory activity. Instead, government would revert to the sole role of protecting property and sovereignty through the use of its police/military power. New Right is used in several countries as a descriptive term for various forms of conservatism that emerged in the mid-to-late 20th century. Once called laissez-faire-unrestricted freedom-particularly in business, New Right is essentially the label given to New Zealand's Rogermonics policies and its overseas equivalents of Reaganomics and Thatcherism. We have also explained New Right Philosophy in the key concepts of Unit 1.

Steven E. Miller, June 13, 2003 [Common Dreams.org](http://CommonDreams.org), and www.embassy.org.nz/encycl/n2encyc.htm.

Old Managerialism and New Managerialism

Old Managerialism is basically Taylorism. It is based on the tenets of scientific management as propounded by F.W. Taylor and endorsed by many thinkers like Lyndal Urwick, Luther Gulick, and J. March etc. It believed in 'one best way of doing work' and 'science of a work methods'. Based on management principles to improve productivity and efficiency of output. The New Public Management (NPM) along with Reinventing Government and Entrepreneurial Government revisits the efficacy

of managerial principles once again. NPM lays stress on transparency, efficiency outcomes, and incentives to transform governance just as the old managerialism. The difference is that new managerial philosophy unlike its old 'avatar' is based on economic rationality of market efficacy and confuses citizen with customer and government with business enterprise.

16.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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16.9 ACTIVITIES

1. Graphically trace the theoretical foundations of NPM on a chart paper.
2. Visit some Public Sector Undertaking that has recently opened up to the private sector and pen down your observations in terms of the relationship between NPM and BPR strategies being implemented in that Undertaking.