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Public administration in socio-economic dev

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The developing countries of the world started taking various activities for economic development in the sixties. After five decades, different countries have reached different stages of development.

Five decades after the independence of Bangladesh, it has reached a satisfactory stage of development. Despite facing a huge challenge with a large population in a small territory, Bangladesh has become a "model" for other developing countries by overcoming many ups and downs.

The contribution of various policies, strategies and activities of the state behind this is undeniable. The role of the country's peasants, workers, traders and above all, the general public was very important.

However, in a state system, it is not possible to manage and implement any activities without government, semi-government and private sector organisations, call it development activities or any other socio-economic activities.

Bangladesh is now at a crossroads of socio-economic development. Along with economic development, we have to make proper arrangements for social development, various aspects of people's lives, such as health, communication and civil rights.

So far, the main strategy for development has been achieving rapid economic growth. This has led to the development of various sectors of the economy. But with that came income inequality and wealth inequality. This is one of our main challenges.

Lately, Covid-19 has come up with enormous challenges. As a result of the pandemic, the income of the poor and marginalised people has decreased. A huge population has become unemployed, which means new poor people are being added to the pool of the impoverished population.

Efforts to overcome this situation require comprehensive and integrated socio-economic development.

Satisfactory and lasting solutions can be found through four main processes: Bringing our people, especially the poor and marginalised, into the mainstream of the economy; Ensuring the rights of poor and marginalised people to the benefits of development, especially growth, so that they are not unjustly deprived; Ensuring the participation of the general public at various levels of administration and politics; Ensuring people-oriented public administration.

The main point in this article is the fourth process.

First, we need to understand the characteristics of people-oriented public administration. The four features are: First, participatory governance of the people; Second, it will be efficient administration; Third, there must be honesty, devotion and a sense of discipline; Fourth, the administrator must be altruistic and sensitive to the people.

In order to have these four characteristics, the person involved in public administration must be well-educated and trained and skilled in performance. But through education and training, "hard skills" can only be acquired. The rest of the features have to be acquired through what we call "soft skills".

The "soft skills" and qualities are usually acquired by people through discussion, interaction, teamwork, and from examples and case studies and so on, which are continuous and usually a lot more informal. It can often be gleaned from the advice, experience and work ethic of senior officials.

In the case of Bangladesh, we see that the importance and interest in "soft skills" in public administration, especially in the public sector, is relatively low. On the other hand, education and training, which are largely institutionalised, are predominant.

The above characteristics, however, cannot be automatically instilled in people and society. It requires addressing three important issues: Institutional structure (system); The right process for everyone to participate; Active persons i.e., persons of administration, employees of the civil society organisations and persons engaged in business and trade.

These three issues and the four features mentioned above will make "people-oriented public administration".

Bangladesh needs to move forward in terms of its role and the various aspects of public administration discussed above.

One of the features of this century is that no state can function as an isolated island. The impact of global trade, business and technology has fallen on all states. Added to this is the call for social development and poverty alleviation, the necessary institutional reform and market economy, and the need for free flow of information and the introduction of new technologies.

The current pandemic has brought stagnation to all sectors of the state, including economic, social and administrative. Everyone is busy and anxious trying to prevent the pandemic by combining life and livelihood.

Three more aspects have necessitated efficient and people-oriented administration. These are: Moving from low-middle-income to high-middle-income country; To be considered as a developing country and, later as a developed country; Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

State public administration is very important to take Bangladesh from the current situation to a more advanced stage and build an equitable and welfare state by overcoming all the uncertainties and weaknesses.

Seven concrete steps are essential to make state public administration people-oriented.

They are: (A) Decentralisation of administration: division of responsibilities between different geographical levels and different organisations through devolution, de-concentration and delegation from the centre; (B) Strengthening local government institutions: Ensuring the effectiveness of local government institutions in meeting the various needs of human life, including administration, economic activities, education, health, social development, civic protection as per various articles of the Constitution; (C) Accountability of public administration: Two special aspects are needed -- transparency and public hearing of issues and policies; (D) Establishing liaison with concerned citizens motivated by social consciousness; Above all, to give importance to the overall advice of the political representatives of the people in charge of policymaking. However, it should be noted that all persons in public administration must be completely free from the influence of political parties; (E) Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration: by increasing the amount of work of skilled administrators and increasing the quality of work, the public will get satisfactory public services; (F) Access to information about public administration activities. The public needs to be informed regularly and accurately by reducing confidentiality about the administration; (G) Regulation should prevail. The use of discretionary power of bureaucrats should be kept to a minimum. This will reduce corruption and opacity in the administration.

This article gives some ideas of the basic issues that have arisen in the present day. Addressing them will make public administration ready to take Bangladesh forward to establish a truly welfare state in the near future.

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