

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECTOR DELIVERY PROCESS

Abstract

The provision of better services has been a foremost goal of a public sector service department, and leadership has been a challenging managerial aspect in this sector, mainly because the chain of responsibility and answerability is not clear and the process of managerial assessment in service delivery has for long remained a recessive factor. Various researches have provided evidence that leadership can have a positive effect on service delivery in the public sector and thereby, this study has assessed the impact of leadership in service delivery by assessing the betterment of public sector services as a result of leadership in this area. The study provides a brief understanding of the leadership traits and how the implementation of these traits affect the services in the public sector. This provides an effective understanding of role of leadership in service delivery in public sector, creating positive outcomes for effective service provision, better response system and increased efficacy of public sector programs in comparison to the past instances of public sector service delivery.

Key Words: leadership, traits, public sector, service delivery, efficacy

1.1 Research Context

The public sector of various countries have been the backbone of economy, with major industries and sectors falling under the public sector category. The public sector industries and companies have various processes and tasks that resemble the tasks and processes of a private enterprise, but

the vision and mission is not set and the long term outlook of individuals associated with these companies is for job security, good compensation and less work pressure (Rosenbaum and Kauzya, 2007). This limits extensive economic growth of the company, as managers and leaders of the company are also complacent as the employees. However, for the overall growth and development of the economy, it is important for its public sector to flourish. Public sector includes maximum number of employment. They chiefly contribute to the supporting services to the public, such as transportation, education, healthcare, energy production, among others (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). Improving the service delivery is one of the means via which the public sector can grow due to its immense involvement in service industry. Also, when compared with the private sector, the service delivery to customers is not as good as that of private sector. Thus, it can be stated that there is a need to improve the service delivery in public sector for its growth and development. One way to improve the service delivery in public sector is guidance via effective leadership. Public sector needs good and effective leadership to control complacency and imbibe the culture and spirit of performance in the individual employees' public sector. Thus, the present study focuses on understanding the relation between effective leadership and its impact on the service delivery in public sector. The research context involves understanding of the need of leadership in public sector, assessment of processes that need leadership input, provide trait assessment for effectiveness of leadership in imbibing better service delivery performance, and providing the impact of each trait with the level of improvement in service delivery (Heintzman and Marson, 2005).

1.2 Aim of the study and methodology

The study is being undertaken to understand the ways in which leadership can facilitate in improving the service delivery in public sector, through the effective assessment of the impact leadership has on the delivery processes.

The methodology of the study includes presentation of review based on the available literature on the effective leadership and its impact on the service delivery in public sector. The review will be conducted through secondary research of journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles, management pieces and editorials on public sector delivery assessment. These sources will help collaborate evidence on the impact leadership has on service delivery.

1.3 Discussion

1.3.1 Effective Leadership traits and their implementation in Public Sector

1.3.1.1 Effective Communication

Communication is the key to good results, and communication helps understand the needs and expectations of people and also provides a medium for leaders to tell how a certain process needs to be executed. In terms of public service, administrators need to understand the concerns of public, translate the needs into effective policies, tasks and regulations through internal communication with team members (Fountain, 2001). Good communication helps in understanding needs, translate need into results through actions and bring about change in the service delivery format of public sector.

1.3.1.2 Empathy

Public sector service delivery departments need leaders who are empathic, as public service is all about understanding what the public wants. Being emphatic provides leaders the vision to see the

situation from the perspective of the needy individual, and then strive to work to make situations easier (Morris and Jones, 1999; Christensen and Lægreid, 2007). Empathy is a characteristic that is fundamental to leadership. Many leadership theories suggest the ability to have and display empathy is a significant part of leadership. Transformational leaders need empathy in order to show their followers that they care for their needs and achievement (Bass, 1985). Authentic leaders also need to have empathy in order to be aware of others (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008).

1.3.1.3 Constancy

Public service is a constant service platform where needs of the public are continuous and require attention at all times. Leaders in public sector do not enjoy times of less workload or a relaxed atmosphere due to less traffic in terms of problem solving (Borins, 2002). Thus, leaders need to inculcate constancy for being able to provide continuous support. This type of trait in leaders also help in keeping the service requests to a manageable level, in comparison to those public sector service delivery segments where leaders do not show consistency and the work piles up, leads to bad public service delivery and mass public inconvenience (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995).

1.3.1.4 Self-awareness

In public setting, leaders have to deal with many influences and also dealing with daily conflicts, managing individuals who have diverse opinions on how tasks should be carried out, and also manage feedback (positive as well as negative) from the public (Head and Alford, 2015). A leader who is self-aware would be more inclined to understand motivations, assess driving force and situation where the different individuals are situated, and work in an emphatic way to balance all aspects of public service, the supplier side and the demand side. Self-awareness helps

leaders find solution to problems in a way that all sides are accommodated along with inspiring confidence and support from all sides (Huh and Kwon, 2011).

1.3.1.5 Emotional Resonance

Public sector service delivery requires caring and constant attention and devotion to public affairs, which is a tiring task yet needs to be done continuously by the employees. Leaders have to, thus, be emotionally attuned to both sides- the public as well as the employees. This kind of leadership is known as resonant leadership, where leaders have attributes such that they are caring, optimistic, aware, visionary, supportive as well as emphatic (DE VRIES, BEKKERS and TUMMERS, 2016). Emotional resonance in leaders helps them understand issues and challenges of both fronts and helps them make decisions and come up with solutions that can help overcome the challenges in a way that can benefit all stakeholders.

1.3.1.6 Humility

Humility is a very important trait in every individual, but more so in leaders as having ego and pride in leaders can be very devastating for any sector's progress, especially in public sector where there is little supervision on leaders. Humility helps the leaders govern without seeming to be like daunting individuals (Bason, 2018). Public leaders such as Barack Obama who are perceived as humble have a successful run of the office, and employees under them along with the public are often happy and satisfied with the work they do, even if it is not astoundingly good. Humility in leaders, especially public leaders, clears the misconceptions of many employees serving in public sector and look at public issues with a clear perspective, leading to better work in the direction of improving the overall aspect of public service (Rasul and Rogger, 2018).

1.3.1.7 Taking risks

Risk taking individuals in service are very less, as the job is secure and there is not much competition in public sector. However, service delivery is an area in public sector that needs innovation and creativity, new processes, alternative solutions in case problems may arise through traditional methods of service delivery execution (Ali, 2004). Here, leaders who take risks can be a success as they can help come up with alternative service provisions without disruption of public service such as electricity, water provision, transportation, waste disposal, among others.

1.3.2 Leadership effectiveness and service delivery in public sector- Issues

1.3.2.1 Lack of technical competency and expertise in public sector leaders

Service delivery in public sector deals with various delivery aspects, such as electricity issues, transportation issues, waste disposal issues, etc. Each of these service delivery issues need solutions from a technical aspect. Leaders in these respective spheres have been appointed either through direct entry or in many cases, have been promoted from a junior position to the leadership position (LÊgreid, 2017). The promoted individuals may lack the requires skills and managerial qualities required in a leader to solve the issues arisen due to lack of expertise and technical competency, raising problems in effective leadership and seamless service delivery.

1.3.2.2 Lack of accountability in public sector leaders

Public sector has been implicated in many instances for lack of accountability of leaders and employees in service issues and defaults arising at various instances. This lack of accountability decreases the level of effectiveness in leaders and provides a large gap in efficient service delivery (Brix, Lust and Woolcock, 2015).

1.3.2.3 Political Interference

Public sector is a sector run by the government and the government is set to change after a period of time. This leads the public sector leaders to deal with different higher management governmental authority over a period of time, some of which may not have the same ideals for service delivery but may have their own ideas as to how the departments should run (Bason, 2018). This political interference may create problems in conducting good leadership and hence may provide problems in service delivery to the public.

1.3.2.4 Corruption

Public leaders also have the inclination to not conduct their work with full integrity and honor. Public In general, the behaviors of public service leaders may not be in tandem with the wishes of the public, mainly due to the corruption these leaders commit (Rasul and Rogger, 2018). The public service leaders are often status conscious, mainly due to the importance of their rank and their positional power in the state or the country, leading them to think in a self-centered manner without overseeing and managing the department well, leading to ineffective public service.

1.3.2.5 Lack of funding

Lack of funding also remains a concern in terms of effective service delivery, which is an aspect that leadership cannot overturn. The funding for public sector comes from the government and provision of the same depends on the governmental budget (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). Lack of allocation of sufficient funds can also hinder effective leadership, leading to loss of service delivery efficiency.

1.3.3 Theoretical Analysis- Improving Leadership effectiveness leading to effective service delivery in Public Sector

The public administration in today's era is becoming increasingly complex, mainly due to the different expectations of the public, improving standard of living of the citizens and changing reforms by the government due to change in the government (LÊgreid, 2017). The public sector leaders are being challenged to solve complex problems and come up with solutions in a technologically efficient way in limited resources while being public oriented (Head and Alford, 2015). The solutions are expected to be ideologically charged but the problems remain complex and unsolvable, such as continued economic well-being and taking care of crime as well as delinquency. Leaders, at this time, face many challenges that were not present before but also have powers and solutions that were not also achievable before. The main aspect that needs to be taken care by these leaders is to create leadership that helps them solve problems and also keep the service delivery functional at all times (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995). The process through which these leaders can have effective service delivery is to mobilize resources to their maximum extent and manage expenditures in a way that it is sustainable as well as well-planned. This can be practiced by a leader only if he/ she is effective enough to meet the changing needs of the citizens and motivate the public sector employees to work as per the expectations of the public while dealing with the issues of limited resources, political and governmental interferences and the issues of red-tapism, corruption, and blame game. There are many new options and strategies along with tools and techniques that the leaders can learn and upgrade their skills set to generate effective solutions, create effective resource utilization strategies and provide effective delivery of public services (Fountain, 2001). New information technology processes can be used to manage resources in a more efficient way (Morris and Jones, 1999).

Thus, it is very important for public sector leaders to involve in analytic work and create a better structure of their scope of work that is fully functional despite problems. This will facilitate in meeting the necessary goals for development in the service sector of public administration.

1.4 Conclusion of the study

Leadership involves traits that not only are process and performance oriented, but also emotional and motivational oriented, both for the consumer side and the employee side. Inculcation of leadership traits in management of public sector service delivery can, thus, create a long-term positive impact in the department or sector (Christensen and Lægheid, 2007). Effective leadership skills can also help provide effective steps for conflict management in a publically charged atmosphere and help provide efficient results and outcomes. The problems and issues in public sector service delivery can only be solved through effective leadership, a wholly encompassing leadership that is able to extract possible results from the resources and funding and also provide leadership goals for the future for continued performance of the public sector. The role of leaders in public sector is not only to provide results and take care of the employees, but also to assess and provide for the needs and expectations of the public (Rosenbaum and Kauzya, 2007). Taking care of problems related to corruption and entitlement can happen through counselling of leaders, grooming through technical education and managerial workshops and through setting up incentives for goals achieved. The implications of effective leadership can be far-reaching in the public sector, with positive evolution of economic outcomes of the country and development of a strong service network for the public, resulting in a better society as a whole (Heintzman and Marson, 2005).

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