



**SELINUS UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**EFFECTIVENESS OF ADMINISTRATIVE  
REFORMS ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN SRI LANKA**

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**A DISSERTATION**

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# Abstract

The main objectives of this research were to analyze the nature and role of public administration, administrative reforms and the role of public administrative leaders in service delivery in Sri Lanka in pursuit of strategic solutions. To attain these objectives a logical evaluation of the nature and role of public administration, administrative reforms and the role of leadership in service delivery was undertaken. A qualitative study was undertaken to evaluate the performance of public service to provide answers to the questions which are pertinent to the causes of ineffective, inferior and unsustainable delivery of services to citizens in Sri Lanka. A better understanding of how and what public leaders and functionaries in the central, provincial and local government institutions should do to facilitate and promote the delivery of services to the citizens was investigated.

The procedures of research included a thorough review of the literature and structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with elected leaders, bureaucratic leaders, trade union leaders, service recipients, general public leaders and religious leaders in different parts of the country. The leadership at the public administration was largely unaware of its natural role and lacked commitment in the application of full institutional capacity and human resources to support and accelerate the quality and effective service delivery to all its residents. There were a number of key administrative reforms have been implemented to provide efficient, effective and customer-friendly public services to the citizens. All those reforms have empowered administrative leaders to serve better to the public. However, leadership's lack of determination to enforce the legislative and regulatory imperatives to compel functionaries to respect the rule of law for the facilitation and promotion of the delivery of quality and effective services was concerning.

The high level of corruption and wastage of resources is of concern as this is worsened by the inability to implement budgeted projects and programs as well as failure to reduce bottlenecks in the provision of public services to the residents. In circumstances where some bureaucrats had skills and education to understand the dynamics of quality and effective service delivery, political interference and the absence of political willpower to render such services to the residents hindered the intended progress.

The study, among other findings, discovered that public officers did not harness the full capacity of their natural role to enforce administrative reforms to strengthen the service delivery to citizens, a situation exacerbated by endemic corruption. The leadership in provincial councils and the local government institutions should develop and implement strategies to facilitate and stimulate effective and quality service delivery to all residents in order to alleviate the deteriorating circumstances.

# Author's declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled 'Effectiveness of administrative reforms on public service delivery in Sri Lanka' represents the results of my own work except where specified in the thesis.

W.A.Jayasundera  
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# Abbreviations

AAT	Administrative Appeal Tribunal
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AG	Auditor General
ARC	Administrative Reforms Committee
CC	Constitutional Council
CCS	Ceylon Civil Service
COPA	Committee on Public Accounts
COPE	Committee on Public Enterprises
DDCs	District Development Councils
DDCs	Divisional Development Councils
DSs	Divisional Secretaries
GAs	Government Agents
GN	Grama Niladhari
HOD	Head of Department
ICTA	Information and Communication Technology Agency
IT	Information Technology
MCs	Municipal Councils
MPC&LG	Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government
MPS,PC& LG	Ministry Public Services, Provincial Councils and Local Government
MPs	Members of Parliament
NARC	National Administrative Reforms Council
NPM	New Public Management

NPS	National Productivity Secretariat
NPC	National Police Commission
NPSC	National Public Service Commission
PA	Performance Appraisal
PCs	Provincial Councils
PEs	Public Enterprises
PMAS	Public Management Assistants' service
PPS	Provincial Public Service
PPSCs	Provincial Public Service Commissions
PSs	Pradeshiya Sabhas
SAP	Structural Adjustment Reform Programme
SC	Supreme Court
SEMA	Strategic Enterprises Management Agency SL Sri Lanka
SLAS	Sri Lanka Administrative Service
SLIDA	Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration
UCs	Urban Councils
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Public service is a service which is provided by the government to people living within its jurisdiction, either directly or by financing private provision of services. Public sector provides services ranging from birth to death to its citizens. Public service activities and type of services are focused on helping people and providing them with what they need, rather than making profit.(Collins C, 1951)

Public service in Sri Lanka was could be traced back to 1798, when the Secretary of State for the Colonies appointed several officers to assist the British Governor of Ceylon in the administration of the coastal areas. That was the beginning of the Civil Service of the country and later on it was named as Ceylon Civil Service<sup>1</sup> (CCS) in 1833 based on the British Civil Service. In 1963 it was renamed as Ceylon Administrative Service with the inclusion of Divisional Revenue Officers' Service. It became the Sri Lanka Administrative Service in 1972 after Sri Lanka became a republic. At present Sri Lanka Administrative Service is considered as the major civil service of the country. (<https://www.pubad.gov.lk/>)

Public services play an important role in modern society. As a welfare state, the government carries out several public services in order to fulfill its welfare function. A number of public services are offered free of charge while certain services are provided at concessionary rates. Government spends a large sum of money in order to maintain these services. Tax money collected by the government and the other income of the government are used in providing these services. Provision of quality services is an important requirement, currently, in upgrading the living conditions of the people.

The Sri Lankan government has enacted legislation on providing these services. It is named as Essential Service Act and its purpose is smooth delivery of public services through government departments or public corporations or local authorities or cooperative societies. (Essential Service Act No.61 of 1979). In addition, there have been many administrative reforms introduced by the incumbent governments to improve the public services in Sri Lanka from 1948 to present. The implementation of such reforms has become the prime responsibility of the public sector leaders.

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<sup>1</sup>The **Ceylon Civil Service**, popularly known by its acronym **CCS**, was the premier civil service of the [Government of Ceylon](#) under British colonial rule and in the immediate post-independence period. Established in 1833, it functioned as part of the executive administration of the country to various degrees until Ceylon gained self-rule in 1948.

A number of surveys have been conducted to assess the citizen satisfaction level of the people about the public services they have experienced ( Kappaoda,2020)

The private sector organizations' fate is decided on how they treat the customers as their customers have alternative avenues to fulfill their needs. On the contrary, with the public sector which often enjoys a monopoly status, customers have a limited or no alternative. Hence, the public sector organizations pay less attention to the aspect of customer satisfaction.

## 1.2 Research problem

Sri Lanka practiced a feudal type of bureaucracy until it fell into the hands of Western imperialism. Many administrative changes in the British colonial period still influence the management practices of the present public service. As the first constitutional reform of Sri Lanka, the Colebrook proposals of 1832 established the Ceylon Civil Service and introduced a centralized bureaucratic system. Constitutional reforms in 1912, 1920, and 1924 introduced many changes to the public service; the Donoughmore reforms of 1931 expanded and democratized bureaucratic functions, and the Soulbury reforms of 1947 were introduced on the threshold of independence in 1948. The politically long-anticipated public service dream, however, did not come true until 1972, when the first Republican Constitution<sup>2</sup> was introduced. This categorically shifted the public service into the hands of the political authority. Meanwhile, the second Republican Constitution<sup>3</sup> appeared in 1978 with a highly politicized bureaucracy from top to street level. The development of public service in Sri Lanka has followed the historical political ideologies of the political party and path dependency of politico-administrative change. One of the major trends of Sri Lanka's public management is to test various changes in ways that leave minimal space for professionalism in a politically neutral public service.

Reforming the public administration was a persistent theme in Sri Lanka since independence. The unsuitability of rules, regulation and procedures adopted during the colonial period was one of the focus in early attempts on the reforms ( Nadarajah 1997). Since the 1960s, the public administration system has had to take the responsibilities of the developmental state that emerged from the politicization process (Somasundaram 1998).

An Administrative Reforms Committee (ARC) was appointed in early 1980s, and it issued several interim reports urging the government to introduce new public management oriented reforms into the public sector to cope up with the emerging new situation. The ARC, in its report on

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<sup>2</sup>The Constitution of Republic of Sri Lanka, adopted on 22 May 1972

<sup>3</sup> The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, adopted on 7September 1978

“Administrative Changes in support of Devolution” submitted in 1987, recommended the reorganization of the administrative system forecasting an emergence of a three-tier arrangement of governance that is central, provincial and local. It proposed to establish a new management group as the leaders of the central and provincial public services and initiate the reduction of staff in the public sector focusing on the cost – effectiveness in maintenance of the administrative system. However, the subsequent changes accompanied with the devolution of the government power produced what was intended by the ARC ( Wanasinghe, 1994).

During 1995-2002, an Administrative Task Force was established in the Presidential Secretariat and a Minister of Administrative Reforms also appointed. The proposal such as establishment of Senior Management Service<sup>4</sup> and a Management Assistants Service, introduction of flexible working hours, Citizen’s Charters and staff redundancy schemes were included in the reforms agenda. However, the establishment of the Senior Management Service was abandoned as there was pressure from the politicians to appoint their favorites. The establishment of Management Assistants Service, encompassing all clerical, stenography and office assistants’ services continued without much enthusiasm from senior members and trade unions. (Somasundaram,2006).

In 1992, the Divisional Secretariat system<sup>5</sup> was introduced to each division with the hope of delegating authority at the division level (Herath, 2008). The Divisional Secretariats are the institutes at the base level of the hierarchy, through which more than 90 percent of the government related services are delivered to the general public in Sri Lanka. At present, there are 332 Divisional Secretariat Divisions that include 14022 Grama Niladhari Divisions within the 25 Administrative Districts in the country as per Annual Report of Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018. Hence, the Divisional Secretariats being the institutes operating at the interface between the government and the general public are compelled to deliver services of high quality standards. The Division has today emerged as the new unit of administration in the delivery of services, implementation and operation of development programs. The nature and the scope of the division have quantitatively and qualitatively changed. The division level administration still functions as the closest administrative and decision-making unit to the people including those at grass-root level. This is also the unit through which essential services are delivered to the people and also to a great extent it is the implementing agency of the development programs and the coordinating agency of special programs. The Divisional Secretariat is now a much strengthened office with more staff to liaise/coordinate with agencies operating at the grass-root level along with the field officers such as technical supporting staff. Report (Kodithuwakku, 2007) states that one major role of the Government is to provide the necessary public services

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<sup>4</sup> Senior Management Service was not established in Sri Lanka

<sup>5</sup> Divisional Secretariat is the divisional level government organization which is responsible to provide regulatory services to the citizen.

that neither the private sector nor the non-profit sector wants to handle or can deliver with the existing resources. In this context, the Divisional Secretariat as a service provider needs to manage the service quality with existing resources and it has become so important to identify the customer expectations regarding service quality and delivery levels as well. The failure to do so would lead to frustration and dissatisfaction of the service recipients who would be either the general public or the various private and non-governmental organizations that would eventually be able to produce unproductive results. Furthermore, a study carried out by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the year 2006 has revealed that significant weaknesses exist in the Sri Lankan public administrative system in terms of its productivity and quality. This is applicable to the divisional secretariat as well. Some of the key problems that were discernible are attributed to bureaucratic controls, cumbersome processes and delays in providing services which tantamount to inherent weaknesses of the existing office system (Root et al., 2001; cited by Kodithuwakku, 2007). In this regard, Iqbal (2002) opined that the decisions taken by the bureaucracy<sup>6</sup>—the high ranking officials of this sector have a direct bearing on the quality of service. Iqbal further, commented that the government service in Sri Lanka leaves much to be desired, since the tentacles of politics that have spread over the government service sector have incapacitated it from achieving the intended goals (World Bank, 2012). As per Tiecher et al. (2002) and cited by Ranaweera (2015)

In 1996, the government of Sri Lanka enlisted the help of international consultants to address significant weaknesses in the country's public administration. Their study focused on reorganization of public administration structures, rationalization of public sector cadres and introduction of results-based management systems and procedures. The analysis focused on five main topics: consolidation of core strategic functions in the President's office; improvement of the policy coordination process at cabinet and ministerial levels; separation of policy-making, service delivery and regulatory functions of public administration; enhancing the effectiveness of line ministries through realigning tasks; and introduction of a results-based management system (RBM)<sup>7</sup> that links resource inputs with well-defined outputs of departments and offices. The urgency of public service reform has been an issue on the national agenda for some time. Until the institutional capacity and effectiveness of the public administration system is upgraded, the credibility of government efforts to bring about a more liberal and competitive market environment will be seriously in doubt.

Further, in 1996 the government introduced an individual performance appraisal system for government staff. The main reason for the evolution of the performance appraisal system in

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<sup>6</sup> a system of government in which most of the important decisions are taken by state officials rather than by elected representatives

<sup>7</sup> "management strategy by which processes, outputs and services contribute to the achievement of clearly stated expected accomplishments and objectives



the government was to rationalize the important decisions on individual employees such as promotion, training, and granting of salary increments, which were hitherto based on subjective judgments. Another reason was to give individual employees a sense of direction.

Governments the world over are increasingly viewing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a key enabler for accelerating and achieving economic and social development in their countries. ICT is seen as an important tool for improving delivery of public services, making government more transparent and accountable, broadening public participation, facilitating the sharing of information and knowledge among the people, and integrating marginalized groups and deprived regions.

After 2002, the Prime Minister's office took up the responsibility of creating a management oriented administrative culture. Within public administration, e- governance became the catchword. Some departments and ministries have computerized a public information system to expedite public delivery. As a result, services such as issuance of birth certificates, national identity cards, driving licenses, motor vehicle registration and passport have been expedited. The Department of Examination releases the results of the public examination on the internet. However, information technology (IT) is used by many ministries mainly to provide information on programs undertaken by the government.

The Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) was created in July 2003 to implement the e-Sri Lanka Roadmap<sup>8</sup>, as a government owned, limited private company reporting to the Minister of Economic Reform, Science and Technology of the Government of Sri Lanka. Prior to the establishment of ICTA, all ICT related matters had been the responsibility of CINTEC (The Council for Information Technology which had been in existence since 1983). ICTA was created as an apex body to provide leadership, to energize the process of using ICT for reform and economic growth and to create a more dynamic organization outside the rigidity of the government bureaucracy, more flexible and responsive to such a fast changing technology as ICT.

Through the use of ICT, the public demands that government performance be fast, cheap, and process oriented. Digitizing services in the public sector has steadily increased in recent years, causing information technology (IT) expenditures to rise and IT infrastructures to become more complex (Haki et al., 2012). E-government is commonly conceptualized as governments' use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) combined with organizational change to improve the structures and operations of government (Twizeyimana and Andersson 2019). E-governments are characterized by providing increased levels of convenient efficiency to

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<sup>8</sup> "e-Sri Lanka: an ICT Development Roadmap", (e-Sri Lanka Roadmap) elaborated in November 2002, recognized e-government as a critical area and spelt out the need to establish an institutional framework for planning and implementing egovernance.

citizens, thereby ensuring a better quality of customer service and convenience in accessing better information. E-government has been partitioned into four categories: Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), Government to Government(G2G) and Government to Employees (G2E). (Ebrahim and Irani, 2005) has developed a framework architecture which includes four layers; infrastructure layer, e-business layer, e-government layer, and access layer which will be discussed later. Regardless of how advanced a country in terms of ICT infrastructure and deployment is, many technical and nontechnical obstacles must be faced in the adoption and dissemination of e-government (Colesca, 2009).

Despite those reforms, there are still many service issues. As a result not only the citizens but also service providers (public officers) are not satisfied. The first problem faced by the public service is the inability to take independent decisions by the Public Service Commission (PSC). Even though it appears that the PSC is an independent commission, the appointment and dismissal of most senior public servants such as Additional Secretaries, District Secretaries and Heads of Departments are vested with the Cabinet of Ministers. Furthermore, according to the article 54, the President shall appoint all public officers required by the Constitution or other written law to be appointed by the President, as well as the Attorney-General and the Heads of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Police Force.

Sri Lanka's public service has experienced several changes in its history during the post-independence era. At the beginning, the constitutionally mandated Public Service Commission (PSC) played a significant role in managing the public service. Now its role is split among several authorities with the periodic constitutional changes. This has resulted in poor quality in the delivery of state services with increased political interference. It is observed that the higher public officials do not have the required freedom and autonomy to implement the policies to achieve their stated objectives. The entire public service both at national and provincial levels has deteriorated over the last five decades due to excessive political interference in appointments, transfers and promotions. In this scenario concepts such as professionalism, meritocracy and careerism have diminished in managing the public service to a great extent. Consequently, there is mounting criticism and dissatisfaction among the general public over the lack of responsiveness and accountability of public service delivery and maintenance of law and order in the country. The management in the public service has conventionally followed a highly centralized model.

Centralized agencies played a key role in recruitment, placement, career paths, remuneration, preparation of service minutes, and disciplinary matters. Line Ministries and departments have usually been the recipients of centrally recruited and administered staff. Critical to the performance of the bureaucracy is a well-functioning Public Service Commission (PSC), for it is this institution that promotes and safeguards the merit principle in the recruitment, promotion,

and career management of public servants. Thus, it may be argued that the PSC is the ultimate source of accountability for the public bureaucracy and de facto a core institution of accountability. The Commission is responsible for a merit-based recruitment process for the public service as well as for ensuring a fair, prompt and effective disciplinary action system. However, in recent years, the PSC's image has been seriously tarnished because of its excessive politicization and corruption. However, there are no specific instructions for recruitment for high posts such as Secretaries of the ministries available.

The politicization<sup>9</sup> Civil service is one of the most analyzed and debated issues of public management over the last five decades. Moreover, international agencies have strongly advocated for a more professional civil service via stronger merit-based human resource management and several studies have inquired into the progress countries have achieved on this bureaucratic professionalization agenda (see, for example Cortázar, Lafuente y Sanginés, 2014; Echebarría, 2006; Matheson, Weber, Manning & Arnould, 2007). Nevertheless, despite all the institutional reforms implemented by governments to control this phenomenon, politicization continues jeopardizing the governance and public management of countries (Geddes, 1994; Grindle, 2010 & 2012; Peters & Pierre, 2004).

Article 54 (1) states that the President appoints the PSC Chair and Members and of whom not less than three members must have held the office as public officers for more than fifteen years. The total absence of checks and balances for the Presidential appointment is a critical flaw. Beyond doubt, the amendment has made the President all powerful without any sound mechanism of checks and balances, which are absolutely necessary for a responsive democracy. The 19th Amendment had to some extent, provided for limited checks and balances. The 20th amendment has removed them completely. (Transparency International, 2014)

The second major problem in the Sri Lanka Public Service (SLPS) is lack of delegation of authority (Root, et al. 2001, ADB 2004b). The 13th Amendment (1987) to the Constitution of 1978 led to the establishment of Provincial Councils as a means of devolution of power to sub-national levels to meet the aspirations of the Tamil community. Even today adequate autonomy in the area of financial and human resources decisions have not been granted to these councils. Central government retains ultimate control (Leitan, 1992; World Bank, 2006).

The third major problem in the SLPS is overstaffing (Root et al., 2001). The total public sector employment increased by 61,000 to 1.528 million at end 2020 compared to 1.467 million in 2019. This includes employees in ministries, departments, district secretariats, divisional secretariats, provincial councils and semi-government institutions. The increase observed in

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<sup>9</sup> to make something or someone political, or more involved in or conscious of political matters.

public sector employment was due to the Government programme to provide jobs for 60,000 unemployed graduates and 100,000 persons in the lowest strata of income earners (<https://ceylontoday.lk/news/public-sector-employees-increase-61-000>).

According to Dissanayake and Fernando (2016), the public sector<sup>10</sup> is the major employer, the major provider of services to the citizens. If the public sector is not properly managed and doesn't perform well, it could not contribute much to the country's expectations. The quality of public sector leaders has become a critical issue in addition to the large number of the staff in the public sector.

The fourth major problem is the outdated systems and procedures followed by the public service to deliver public services to the citizens. If we take an inside look at our public sector today, we notice that it is bedeviled with counterproductive old-fashioned civil service policies and practices that impede the efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified employees and motivate them to perform to the best of their abilities. Low levels of salary packages, especially for positions demanding greater skills, undermine efforts to recruit and retain qualified employees. Excessively rigid procedures and practices impede the ability of public service officials to significantly affect the performance of their employees.(Lionel Wijesiri, 2020)

The fifth major problem is the widespread corruption in the public sector. The most common forms of corruption include facilitation payments paid to avoid bureaucratic red tape, bribe solicitation by government officials, nepotism and cronyism. There is a high-level of corruption in public procurement.

The main anti-corruption laws are the Penal Code and Bribery Act, which criminalize corruption and attempted corruption in the form of extortion, and active and passive bribery. No clear distinction between bribery and facilitation payments is made, but gifts given with a corrupt intent are prohibited under the Prevention of Corruption Act. While Sri Lanka's government has started to enforce the anti-corruption laws, enforcement remains constrained by a lack of resources and technical expertise, and powerful political elites often go unpunished for committing corruption crimes.

The above-mentioned key problems have seriously hindered the smooth service delivery operations of the public service. On the other hand, with the application of advance digital innovations<sup>11</sup>, the private sector was able to win the heart of the citizen by offering speedy,

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<sup>10</sup> The role of the public sector is to provide public goods and services to the citizen and regulate the affairs of the private sector.

<sup>11</sup> Digital innovation refers to the application of digital technology to existing business problems.

result oriented services to their customers. The citizen who interacts with the efficient private sector expects similar service experience from the public sector as well. When they realize that the public sector is not in a position to fulfill their expectations, they naturally criticize the affairs of the public sector as a whole.

The key objectives of the above-mentioned administrative reforms introduced from 1948 to 2020, were to ensure an effective service delivery system of the public service. However, when referring to news items both print media and electronic media, one finds the many dissatisfied citizens who interact with the public sector for their service demand. There is only a very few research conducted on assessing citizens satisfaction for public services, there are no attempts reported on linking administrative reforms and citizen satisfaction. Therefore, the present research focuses on the nature of administrative reforms and their impact on citizen satisfaction.

In short, this research attempts to answer the question of **what kind of reforms have been introduced by different reform missions? How much of those reforms have been effectively implemented by the public sector leaders? How much of these reforms were able to fulfill the citizen's expectations?**

### **1.3. Research objectives**

The research attempts to achieve following four specific objectives:

- I. To carry out a historical survey of public administration reforms introduced in Sri Lanka since 1948;
- II. Comparative assessment of various public administration reforms in terms of what were the needs to introduce such reforms time-to-time and what were the objectives to be achieved by each set of reforms;
- III. Assess the roles of the public sector leaders in implementing those reforms within the public sector organizations.
- IV. Evaluation of effectiveness of public administration reforms in terms of delivery of public administrative services and improving the quality of administrative services.
- V. Suggest possible solutions to enhance the citizens' satisfaction level of public services.

## **1.4. Scope of the research**

The focus of this research is limited to

- I. Public administration policies and procedures which have been enacted by the President, Cabinet of Ministers, PSC and the Ministries of Sri Lanka.
- II. Public administration reforms that had national level scope
- III. Public administrative procedures and practices which have a direct impact on public services delivery.
- IV. Assessing the effectiveness in terms of impact on improving the quality of services to the general public at grass-root level.

### **1.4.1. Research questions**

1. What major public sector reforms have been introduced in Sri Lanka since 1948?
2. What have been the primary causes of reforms?
3. What have been their impacts?
4. Were these really the most important things that should have been reformed?
5. Are there others more important? If so, why are they more important?
6. Which groups in Sri Lankan society stand to gain or lose through undertaken public service reforms?
7. In what way are public administrative and constitutional reforms linked in Sri Lanka?
8. The effectiveness of the public sector leaders in implementing reforms
9. What are the overall assessments of public opinion on the results of reforms implemented?
10. What would be more practical reforms to be introduced to make public service user friendly?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The result of the study has significance to different groups of stakeholders in public administration. While it may benefit policy makers and public administration practitioners, its major area of contribution will be the expansion of theory and understanding the dynamics of field of administrative reforms in Sri Lanka. Theory building in the field of social science does not only take much longer time, but also, depends on the result of studies carried out across diverse social spaces. Though theories of public administration and customer satisfaction may exist, there always exists the need to confirm, refute or expand those theories. The researcher hopes that a contribution in this direction would be made upon on the successful completion of

this study. Overall, such knowledge may be used for the improvement of the public service of Sri Lanka.

## **1.6 Structure of the Thesis**

The report emerging out of the study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter contains the Introduction to the Study. The contents here include the background to administrative reforms, state of the literature and Research gaps, Statement of the problem, general and specific objectives and research questions, relevance of the study

The second chapter includes the theoretical framework for the study, the research methodology employed in this study and data collection methods, reliability and validity of the study and limitation of the study.

In chapter three, the researcher focused on the history of the public service in Sri Lanka, key elements of the public administration system, the present system of administration and key administrative reforms introduced from 1948 to present will review.

Chapter four highlights the importance of citizen satisfaction aspects for the public delivery services, the citizens' views on public delivery services, the different leadership styles of both political and administrative leaders in delivering public services will be assessed.

The fifth chapter is devoted to a presentation of research data, the analysis of the research findings and the areas need attention for correction.

In chapter six is devoted to summary of the findings of the study, Discussions, policy implications, conclusions, recommendations, future research areas and contribution to knowledge.

# CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes research methodology employed in this research and data collection methods followed by discussion with selected key stakeholders for public sector institutions. In the process, the assessment of a theoretical framework<sup>12</sup> followed by a secondary data sources, description of study population, informed by stratified sampling approach, is carried out. A plan for data collection, addressing issues of validity and reliability as well as data analysis and interpretation of the study are expounded upon.

## 2.2 Administrative reforms

Administrative reform is not something that can be treated as a specific public policy field. It is a specific mechanism that enables the creation of better administrative policies. Administrative reforms are the first step towards designing and implementing effective administrative policies by changing the actual institutional arrangements, the processes, and the procedures of public administration. Thus, administrative reform can be considered and analytically treated as a specific policy process that has specific dynamics due to what is at stake; this means the redistribution of powers in the administrative arena among the different stakeholders, and especially between the policy makers and bureaucrats that are the most important actors in administrative policy. These characteristics are at the origin of the structural problem of administrative reform: It is difficult to design properly and very difficult to implement administrative reforms in a coherent way.

Outcomes of the administrative reforms are not predictable, because it is not simple to make hypotheses about how the various barriers and potential opportunities could mix to produce a specific outcome. Surely barriers are demanding. Institutional stickiness, hegemonic policy paradigms, deeply rooted administrative traditions, financial shortages, and robust vested interests are ponderous constraints to pursuing administrative reforms; however, there are always opportunities (crisis, contingency, and leaders and entrepreneurs searching to change equilibrium) that allow the cyclical opening of reform trajectories.

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<sup>12</sup> The qualitative research theories have been adopted in this research and it says that research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty.



To understand administrative reforms, it is necessary to see them in action and thus to observe how they develop over time. The trajectories of administrative reforms very often are characterized by following the zeitgeist and, thus, implementing policy solutions that are considered more legitimate in that specific time. But the spirit of the age can change suddenly, and thus, very often, the solutions adopted yesterday are the problems of the present time. This is because different models of administrative reforms have been cyclically adopted in the last several decades, and the prevailing solution of three decades ago (new public management) has been progressively replaced by other competing recipes like the new Weberian<sup>13</sup> state, the new public governance, digital era governance, and public value management.

By studying the trajectories of administrative reforms (the dynamics of administrative policies), it is possible to better understand not only whether and how administrative reforms have been adopted in a comparative perspective but also why some solutions have been adopted in one country but not in another. Thus, the focus on the trajectories allows us to order the complexity of administrative reform processes and to understand why convergence is difficult (due to the national legacies and the contingent way in which the most relevant drivers can interact with each other), and it helps us to understand that, while in the short to medium run administrative reforms are perceived to fail or at least to result unsatisfactorily, in the long run they can produce stable changes.

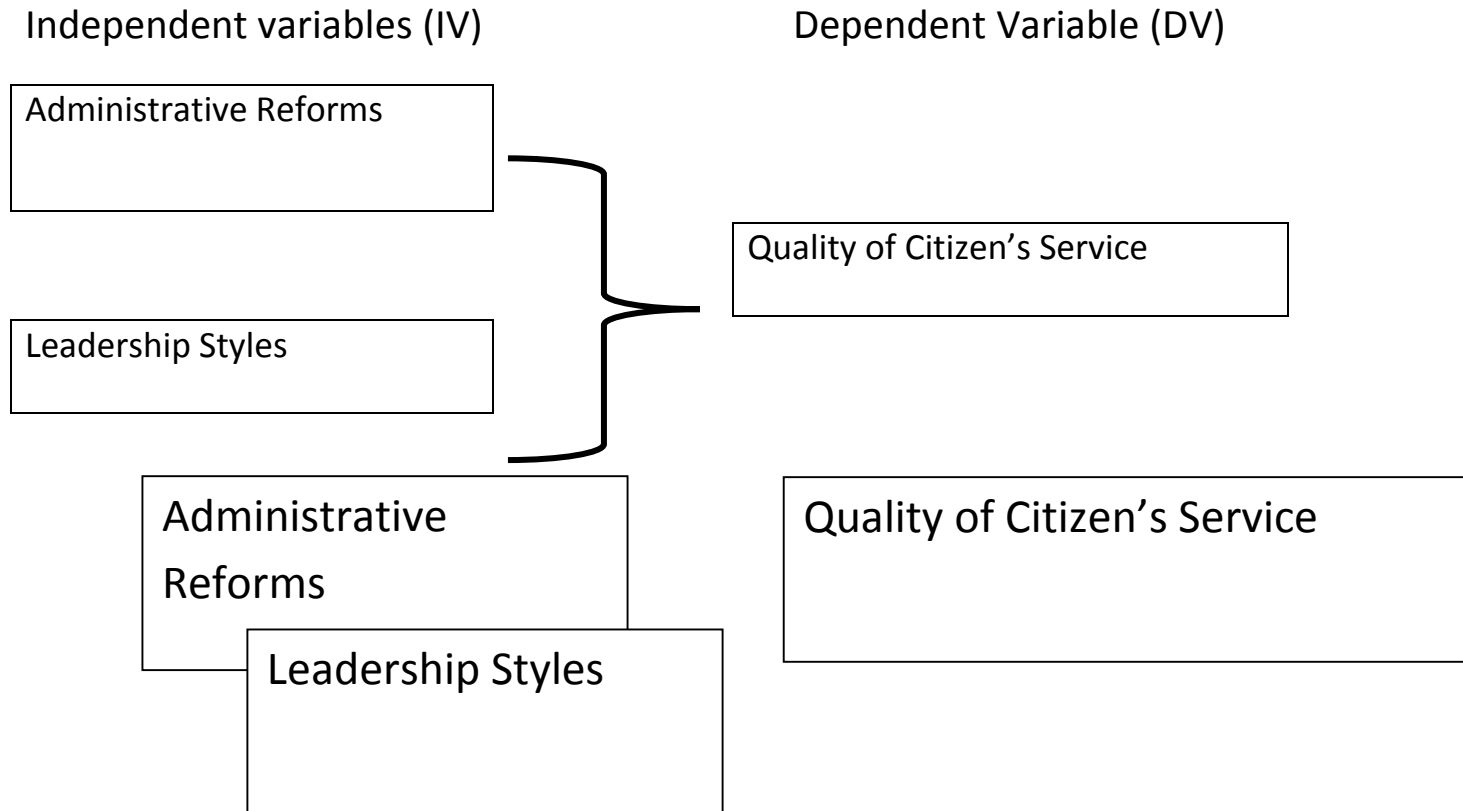
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<sup>13</sup> Weberian state means Max Weber's three-component theory of stratification in which social difference is determined by class, status, and power.

## 2.3. Theoretical framework of the study

The researcher wishes to develop the following theoretical framework for this research.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework



As per the name, an independent variable (IV) stands alone. The value does not change due to the impact of any other variable. The researcher manipulates or changes the independent variable to measure its impact on other variables. Similarly, a dependent variable (DV) as the name suggests depends on other variables. It is the variable that is being tested in the experiment. The researcher measures the outcome of the experiment to see how other variables cause changes in the value of a dependent variable.

Theoretically, several perspectives can be identified to explain administrative reform. These perspectives reflect a body of knowledge in organization theory with various schools of thought for collective action. They range from classical, formal theories of organization, reorganization,

and change and development to contemporary market theory, as well as the newest organizational elite theory that calls for fundamental change and reform in the structure and process of administrative systems. Guy Peters (1994) classifies most of this theoretical literature into three broad perspectives on administrative reform and reorganization—purposive (topdown) models, environmental (bottom-up) models, and institutional models. These models are useful in explaining and understanding the approaches and motives of reforms and reorganizations undertaken by modern governments. They also provide conceptual frameworks for analysis of organization and reorganization of modern governance and public administration. Finally, they help explain the relationship between reform and revolution in contemporary political and administrative systems. While any of these models may apply in particular situations, governments may also use a combination of the three. It is important to make some distinction between reorganization—structural changes—and reform—changes in procedures, processes, and relations within and among government administration (Peters, 1994). This useful distinction may appear superficial, as objectives of administrative reforms and reorganization can be considered simultaneously.

### **2.3.1 Top-Down Models**

The first set of theoretical models—a top-down model of government reform—is broadly purposive and top-down in its perspective on the process. This set of models assumes that certain actors—elites, powerful individuals, or authorities—have particular purposes in mind in the pursuit of reform and reorganization. These models assume that political leaders perceive problems or develop innovative ideas by reforming and reorganizing the public sector. One of these models is the administration as usual, which is commonly used in the real world of public administration, where perceived needs for reform and reorganization are determined at the top. According to Pollitt (1984), this approach is a “traditional, pragmatic” approach to the machinery of government and to changes in that machinery. Case studies in Britain (Chester and Wilson, 1968) refer to the “need” perceived by political elites to make changes in the administrative machinery of government (Peters, 1994). The cases in the United States and elsewhere are cited as having the same characteristic of reform and reorganization (Caiden, 1970, 1984; Seidman and Gilmour, 1986). The political science approach is the second category within the top-down models. Here, political reasons of “ungovernability,” government “overload,” and similar rationales are considered rationales of changes in government that affect public administration (see Pollitt, 1984; Rose and Peters, 1978; Snellen, 1985). Consequently, management cutbacks<sup>14</sup>, privatization<sup>15</sup>, and downsizing<sup>16</sup> are commonly used terms applied by the purposive, top-down models. Although these models are helpful, they

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<sup>14</sup> Management cutbacks means managing organizational change toward lower level of resource consumption and organizational activity.

<sup>15</sup> Privatization occurs when a government-owned business, operation, or property becomes owned by a private, non-government party.

<sup>16</sup> Downsizing is the permanent reduction of a organization's labor force through the elimination of unproductive workers or divisions

assume that the leading actors in the process are “central to identification, selection, and implementation of administrative changes” (Peters, 1994: 112). A major drawback of these models is that they are highly elitist in their approach to reform and reorganization, giving ordinary citizens and rank-and-file organizational members of governments little say in the process. The whole idea of reform can be totally dictated downward.

### 2.3.2. Bottom-Up, Environmentally Conditioning Models

These models are considered bottom-up approaches to administrative reorganization and reform. They assume those governments and their administrative systems—structures—have to adapt to the environmental conditions that tend to dictate changes in the structure. The environment may be economic, political, cultural, or social, but the underlying logic of these approaches is very similar. Structure must adapt to the environment to survive and continue its existence, as well as to develop patterns of organizations that are functional for the fulfillment of their collective goals. In the political science and public administration approaches to this set of models, governments and political/administrative elites detect innovations or pressures in the environment that require government response. Consequently, structures—administrative state or a particular organization of public administration—react by adopting changes through reform and reorganizations to adapt to the environment. Systems theory provides a clear theoretical explanation for this set of models. One problem associated with these models is that they do not indicate when and how changes in the environment signal administrative adaptation. Contingency approaches are the most familiar of the environmentally determined approaches (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1969). Systems theory in general, and its variant contingency theory, provides the best literature for explaining this set of models. The logic of this approach is the internal organizational reflection— both structurally and behaviorally—of environmental conditions that influence public administration. On the negative side, these approaches are poor predictors of organizational structure and behavior, and they assume that governments and their organizations are unable to change their environmental conditions for their purposes. Other models, such as population ecology approaches, also tend to explain the relationship between organizations and their environment by looking at two different sets of environments that organizations must adapt:

- (1) the ecology of organizations—that is, the population of organizations to which a particular organization belongs (Aldrich, 1979; Carroll, 1984); and
- (2) the broader general environment in which all other organizations operate.

To survive, all organizations experience birth, death, and survival, and organizations must maintain the equilibrium of their “ecosystems.”<sup>17</sup> Organizations must find niches in their environments and survive, as competing forces of the ecological environment determine their existence (Farazmand, 1994). Although ecological models are not often applied in public sector reorganization and reform, they are useful in that they give us an understanding of the evolution and sustainability of certain organizations in the environment, and how some sectoral

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<sup>17</sup> Ecosystem (or ecological system) consists of all the organisms and the abiotic pools (or physical environment) with which they interact

government organizations always try to find niches in the environment for their growth and development.

### **2.3.3. Institutional Models**

The institutional models represent a separate group of approaches to reorganization and reform. In addition, they are both a reaction to the earlier behavioral theories of organization and reorganization and a response to the inadequacy of the other models. This is particularly evident in the increasing interest in the “new institutionalism”<sup>18</sup> movement in which organizational changes must take place through changes and modifications of internal organizational values and culture, as well as structure. Rather than viewing organizational changes as emanating from individual organizational/political leaders under purposive models or responding to the environmental dictates, the institutional models focus on the need to modify collective values, culture, and structure to make the organization adaptive and dynamic (March and Olsen, 1984; Farazmand, 1997a). Culture is a concept, but so are the adaptability and institutionalization of values and cultures obtained from the environment on the one hand, and the institutionalization of the environment by organizational values and cultures on the other. This mutual adjustment is a key characteristic of the institutional models of organizational changes and development, and therefore to reorganization and reform of public administration. Thus, as much as they represent the search for efficient administration and management, a government’s administrative institutions—the bureaucracy and its values—represent important social and political values. Reform and reorganizations are more political and carry more significant values than is often perceived (Peters, 1994). This brief explanation is helpful in understanding and explaining government reforms. These models are also useful in drawing theoretical conclusions as to why some administrative reforms fail while others are successful, and yet the appearance of some successful reforms may have unintended negative consequences for the regimes in power. This relevance does not necessarily mean that all reforms are doomed to failure. Various factors are involved in producing the outcomes of reforms. The bottom-up approach was initially and partially applied, but then was quickly reversed. These lapses made the reforms and reorganizations meaningless and proved more destructive for the regime than anticipated. Similar observations can be seen in many developing nations.

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<sup>18</sup> New institutionalism or neo-institutionalism is an approach to the study of institutions that focuses on the constraining and enabling effects of formal and informal rules on the behavior of individuals and groups

### 2.3.4 Social contract theory

This study uses the social contract theory to evaluate the nature and role of public sector leadership in service delivery in public service in pursuit of strategic solutions. In addition, leadership theories are discussed briefly of the study to analyze the nature and role of leadership in service delivery. In the context of social contract theory, the elected members are supposed to represent the interest of the citizens' needs. The social contract theorists argued that the ruled has a right to set up rulers as much as they have a right to resist their bad behaviour or to remove them from power. In their opposition to the absolute monarchy by divine right theory, the social contract thinkers rejected the notion that the rulers, especially the kings, were destined to have a special place in God by enjoying His peculiar favour denied to other people in the world. They further opposed the idea that rulers or kings are the representatives of God on earth and challenged the belief that leaders or kings were God's deputies on earth; they did so to protect the rights of the ruled. The concept of a 'contract' was consciously selected to be used by its advocates to solidify the perception that political authority to rule rests with the governed, not with the leaders. Commenting on the nature of social contract theory, Plamenatz (1963) explained that:

"The theory of the social contract was first used in the sixteenth century in the interest of religious minorities...it asserts...that people having agreed to set up rulers over them for certain purposes, therefore have the right to resist or remove them if they persist in courses which defeat those purposes."

The social contract theory presupposes that the governed, as the custodians of rulers, has a right to choose any individual to preside over the government they have elected. It further states that the elected leaders derive authority which is limited from the people. The elected leaders are answerable to not one person but to the governed. The ruled are the ones who approve political authority to the leaders by means of devising a 'contract' with them. Explaining how political authority arises, Plamenatz (1963) remarks that:

"The contract theorists argued that political authority was, or must be supposed to have been, set up by agreement between those who became subject to it, and is therefore limited by the purpose which the agreement was intended to achieve...time makes the [political] authority legitimate, not so much because it is evidence of popular consent as because it is evidence that power is exercised for the public good."

In terms of the social contract theory<sup>19</sup>, it is not so much about the majority of the ruled who expressed consensus when a decision to set up the rulers was taken to rule over them, but

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<sup>19</sup> Social contract theory says that people live together in society in accordance with an agreement that establishes moral and political rules of behavior.

more about the need for political authority to be exercised in favour of the public good. The ruler rules to protect the interests of the ruled (Plamenatz, 1963). This means that if political authority is used for what it is not meant to achieve, the rulers presiding over such authority should be removed by the governed. The agreement among the ruled to choose certain rulers should produce an intended outcome. The social contract theorists condemn the notion that the monarchy, which gives rise to paternal authority on earth, resembles the kingdom of God in heaven. This perception was found to be a fallacy in the eyes of the social contract proponents. The social contract theorists asserted that every political authority should have a time-frame for the ruled to have security and peace of mind. For the ruled to have life and liberty, the contract thinkers believed that every government, whether established through conquests or by peaceful means, should exist on the basis of a covenant (Plamenatz, 1963). Placing an emphasis on the need for people's consensus on any recognized political authority or government, Plamenatz (1963:177-178) observes that:

“Those who held that political authority rests on the consent of the governed did not deny that many governments were in fact established by conquest or arose gradually out of paternal rule; they were concerned rather to assert that, no matter how they were established or arose, their authority rests on the consent of the persons subject to them. According to the contract theorists, it is the people who have the right to provide for their own security, and therefore the right to set up a government to give them security.”

What is certain is that social contract theory is mainly about the ruled reaching consensus on who should govern them and whether the rulers given such political authority would exercise it for the purposes it is set up for, that is, to achieve public good (Plamenatz, 1963). It follows that if the rulers mistreat or misgovern the ruled, the governed should exercise their power or consensus to remove them. With a social contract in place, it was believed that the ruled would have the right to resist the rulers or elected leaders who broke the covenant which binds them together. The social contract was largely concerned about affirming the right of the people to oppose their leaders when they are misgoverned by them. The same is true of the residents of the country, in that if their elected members fail to provide service delivery to them, they should have freedom to remove them from office and replace them with leaders who would serve their interests. What is certain, however, according to Languet and Plamenatz (1963) is that:

“...the right of resistance belongs to the people collectively and not to any subject who believes that the...[government] has broken the covenant. But how are the people to exercise their collective right? The people...act through their representatives. If the people, taken collectively, are one party to the covenant, it would seem that their representatives, whoever they are, must speak for the entire community; that they must be national and not merely local...These



‘representatives’...have the right to resist the...[government] in the people’s name, but apparently the people have no right to resist them!”

This is the case with the residents concerning their dilemma to remove elected members from political authority even if they fail them in providing service delivery. The elected members are deployed by their political parties and it is only their parties that can remove them. This creates a problem. In clarifying the need for a new system of holding members accountable for their actions, Heidelberg (2017) remonstrates that:

“In a representative system, elected members are supposed to be accountable through voting. Voting, in many (not all) cases, is a kind of post-factum accountability, an affirmation or punishment for actions during an official’s tenure...This assumption is at the core of the bifurcation of politics and administration, and its functional requirement is the condition that voting reveals preferences.”

Even if the members are not performing, the residents can only wait for the holding of the next elections before they could remove them from office. This kind of arrangement creates a gap which only serves to disadvantage the citizens. The residents in different parts of the country who are not provided with service delivery find themselves in a predicament, not knowing what to do leaders who are underperforming. Certain elected members claim to speak on behalf of the local communities but at the same time they assert that they cannot be challenged, whilst they themselves challenge those in charge of the public organizations. This is an example of a double standard on the part of the elected members. Therefore, the social contract theory is more appropriate and would be useful to analyze the views of the participants on questions about the overall nature and role of leadership in service delivery in the public service.

### **2.3.5. Generic prescription and policy transfer approaches**

This thesis seeks to describe and explain public sector reforms in Sri Lanka but it also identifies critical present-day issues in order to understand the prospects for ongoing reform. As also seen, an historical and institutionalist approach looks for the origins of the present in the past and argues that the way forward must focus on the specifics of the situation. This is in contrast with mainstream approaches to public administration that adopt a generic and prescriptive approach to ongoing reform, in effect, arguing that even developing countries can and should define their problems in standard terms and apply a more-or-less generic 'new public management' model as the solution. An example of this type of approach can be found in Bale and Dale (1998). They take the view that: Poorer countries can indeed extrapolate from the

experience of their higher income neighbor despite the different conditions under which they have to operate. New Zealand's comprehensive overhaul of its public sector affords both general principles and specific elements relevant to countries looking to improve the quality, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of their public service sectors, and a careful analysis of those reforms can ascertain what might be transferable and what principles might apply (Bale & Dale, 1998) Bale and Dale in the first instance claim that any developing country can adopt a developed country model despite the different cultural, political or socio-economic conditions. An historical institutionalist approach would reject this view. But it is also noteworthy that even a well-known admirer of the New Zealand system does the same.

Schick (1998) in his World Bank paper on "Why developing countries should not adopt the New Zealand model disagrees with the Bale and Dale type of approach – and does so in terms that support the intent of this thesis. He argues that NZ does not offer practical guidance on how developing countries should surmount deficiency in public management. NZ has implemented a large number and range of reforms since 1998. This includes accrual-based accounting and appropriations, budgeting for outputs rather than for inputs, decoupling service-delivery functions from the provision of policy advice, replacing department heads with chief executives appointed for a fixed term, discretion for managers to spend their operating budgets as they deem fit, individual employment contracts for most senior (and many middle) managers, a charge on the use of capital by government departments, annual purchase agreements between ministers and their departments, annual reports, and audited financial and performance statements (Schick, 1998). Each of these innovations is specific and can be considered on their own (Schick, 1998). Further, every element of reform has been designed to establish or strengthen contract-like relationships between the government and ministers as purchasers of goods and services, and departments and other entities as suppliers. A chief executive negotiates employment contracts with managers while promising results in negotiating purchase agreements with ministers and performance agreements with the State Services Commissioner. Contract-like agreements have been extended to policy advice by the ministers who opt to obtain information and ideas from external sources. Before the start of the year the outputs are specified in purchase agreements signed by the chief executive and the minister purchasing the services and after the year each department publish annual report that specifies the outputs actually produced, so that the government can determine whether the terms of various contracts have been fulfilled. Schick is of the view that —there are important preconditions for successfully implementing the new public management (NPM) approach; these should not be ignored by countries striving to uplift themselves after decades of mismanagement – clearly, Sri Lanka is an example of this. He argues that greater the shortcomings in a country's established management practices, the less suitable these reforms are. He particularly points out the danger of application of the "NZ Model" which gives public managers broad discretion to operate within an accountability framework that specifies the

results to be achieved and closely monitors performance. According to Schick (1998), formal contracts and internal markets were feasible for NZ because the country already was developed – it had a robust market sector and established mechanisms for enforcing contracts. He points out that if contracts and the rule of law are underdeveloped in business relations, it is highly improbable that they can be effectively applied in the conduct of the government business. Schick further emphasizes that developing countries with weak rule-based governments and market structures that are less robust should consider improvements before experimenting. Therefore, developing countries should consider their established structural and management settings first, before application of any foreign model. In other words, Schick seems to be arguing that something like an historical and institutional perspective is more appropriate in looking at any particular country and its attempts at reform. The approach adopted in this thesis also contrasts with another well-known approach in explaining the origins of public sector reform in developing countries, namely the 'policy transfer' approach. From this perspective, the fact that some reforms in Sri Lanka in recent times have reflected aspects of the 'new public management' agenda, could be explained by the fact that international agencies in their relationships with Sri Lanka, have created the conditions for a 'transfer' of ideas about public sector reform to that country. Authors such as Dolowitz and Marsh (1998) define 'policy transfer' as —the process by which knowledge of ideas, institutions, policies and programmes in one time and/or place is fed into the policy making arena in the development of policies and programmes in another time and/or place (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1998). For example, Shamsul Haque (1996) argues that the international agencies such as the World Bank, the US Agency for international Development, and the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) have influenced Third World countries to adopt pro-market policies; and John Campbell (1977) demonstrated how the institutional legacies of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia helped account for different national outcomes when IMF attempted to impose neoliberal policies on these countries as a condition for a loan guarantee (Dolo However, this framework has a limited focus, only on public policy transfer. It does not cover other broad questions which are critical in analyzing management change. This thesis raises several critical questions which need answers to analyze the history of public administration reform in Sri Lanka such as what are the drivers for historical administrative reform, how ideas about reform developed, what are the causes or successes and failures and consequences of reform and who won and loss due to reform. This drawback led to a search for a more comprehensive theoretical framework for this study. Instead, the conceptual and analytical framework developed for this study is one that is historical and institutionalist in character and which begins from the idea that empirical analysis of the actual history and dynamics of Sri Lanka's political and administrative system is critical to understand the present. One comparative model that is also based on these preferences can be found in the work of Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) and the next section summarizes this framework. (witz & Marsh, 1998).

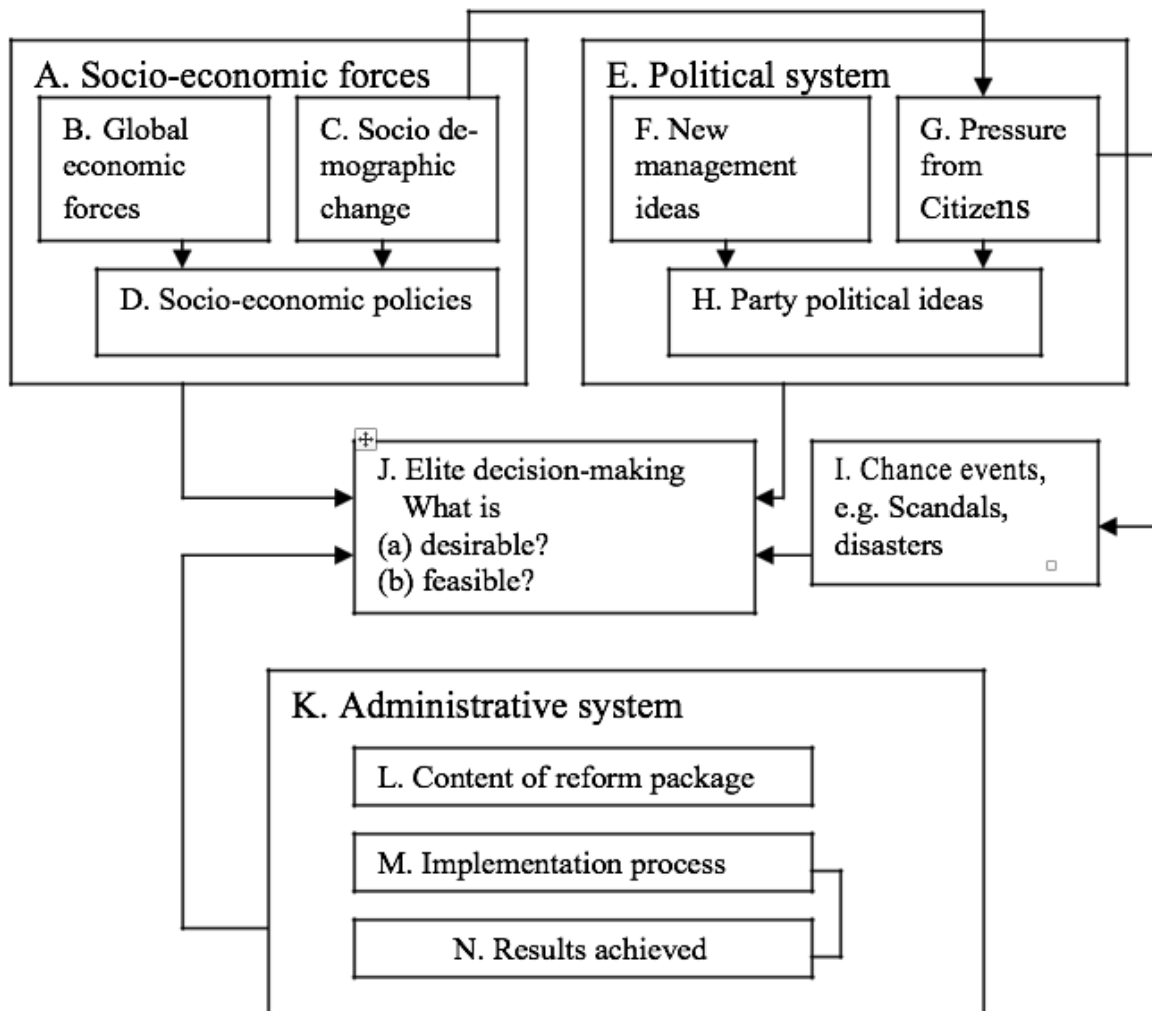
Dolowitz and Marsh (1998, p. 38) ask the following questions: —Why and when do actors engage in policy transfer? Who transfers policy? What is transferred? From where are lessons drawn? Are there different degrees of transfer? When do actors engage in policy transfer and how does this affect the process? and What restricts policy transfer? In this framework, Dolowitz and Marsh emphasizes the need to consider policy transfers between national, sub-national and international (cross country) units. They also consider the need for examination of the global past, more importantly research on their own nation's past because this type of search save time and resources, both political and economic, associated with cross-national policy transfers. These are the types of questions that might be asked in this thesis.

### **2.3.6. Historical Institutionalism: Pollitt and Bouckaert**

Pollitt and Bouckaert argue that in the field of public management reform the broader forces of economics and politics are always mediated through networks of institutions. —The specific characteristics of these networks, and of the individual institutions which compose them, frequently have a profound shaping effect upon what actually happens during the course of reform, therefore, upon the final results and outcomes of the change process (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004).

The basic assumption of this model is that the pattern of management change and the causes of influence differ from country to country because the effects of global and domestic forces are not uniform (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000, 2004). Accordingly, the socio-economic forces, political systems and administrative systems of the individual country are specific in the determination of the change agenda of a particular country. From this model the authors develop more detailed sets of typologies and specific theories that classify and explain specific patterns and trends, both within individual countries and across group of countries. This model is originally created through country specific experiences. Therefore, it represents a combination of the reform experiences of 12 developed countries (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004)

Figure 2 reproduces diagrammatic representation of the model.



(Source: Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004)

## **2.4 Research approach and methods of data collection**

The approach of this thesis is essentially exploratory and so the research design is historical and qualitative. Given the theoretical exploratory nature of the research in question, predominantly qualitative research is merited (Cresswell, 2003). Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a —field or life situation, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies, and organisations (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Also, qualitative research provides theories, models and descriptions of human experiences and perceptions within particular contexts. The researcher’s role in a qualitative study is to gain a holistic overview of the context under study, and attempt to capture data on the perceptions of local actors. It is primarily descriptive and interpretative, concentrating on a few selected individuals or phenomena in some detail (Borland, 2001). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explain that qualitative researcher use —a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand . According to Patton (2002) qualitative findings grow out of three types of data collection: direct observation, written documents and in-depth, open-ended interviews.<sup>20</sup> In order to answer the research questions identified earlier in this chapter, several different types of evidence needed to be collected and analyzed, particularly documentary and interview evidence.

Evidence regarding the history of reform in SL required the collection and analysis of a wide range of government documents of the time, supplemented by academic and practitioner research; Evidence regarding the reasons why certain reforms were initiated, the intentions behind them and the reasons why they succeeded or failed required talking to a selection of individuals who were involved or who observed them at first hand. Given its exploratory nature, this thesis adopts a pluralist methodology which was based on extensive literature review on past reforms and present situation of public administration, primary (qualitative interviewing) and secondary (official and unofficial documents) data collection in Sri Lanka.

### **2.4.1 Reasons for selecting the qualitative research method**

For the reasons given below this thesis adopted a qualitative research method as the main technique for the collection of data. The qualitative research method is more appropriate and useful in the collection of the subjective information from the participants as is evident in this thesis. Explaining the effectiveness of the qualitative research method, Leedy and Ormrod (2005) observe that: “We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying. In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep. We collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation.” Studying the nature and role of leadership is a complex task

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<sup>20</sup> Open-ended questions are questions that allow someone to give a free-form answer.

which requires the use of a qualitative research method to enable the researcher to examine different perspectives. Indeed, qualitative research method aided the researcher to obtain an in-depth sense of what participants think of the nature and role of administrative leadership. Since it allows the researcher to collect data from within the participants' context, the information produced can directly represent how people feel about the nature and role of leadership in public service delivery.

Commenting on the suitability and objectivity of qualitative research method in relation to the collection of quality information, Neuman (2011) remarks that: "...qualitative data are not imprecise or deficient; they are highly meaningful. Instead of trying to convert social life into variables or numbers, qualitative researchers borrow ideas from the people they study and place them within the context of a natural setting. They examine motifs, themes, distinctions, and ideas instead of variables, and they adopt the inductive approach of grounded theory. Qualitative data involve documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures and tone), observing specific behaviors, studying written documents, or examining visual images. These are all concrete aspects of the world. By employing a qualitative research method, the researcher can get a closer feeling of the general functioning of the participants.

As a source of value statements from the participants, qualitative method is useful to produce new ideas. Data collected in this way makes the information more current and relevant as it emanates from the people who understand the issues being investigated. Adding to the impact of applying techniques of qualitative research method, Babbie and Mouton (2010) note that: "One of the main strengths of qualitative research is the comprehensiveness of perspective it gives researchers. By going directly to the social phenomenon under study and observing it as completely as possible, they can develop a deeper and fuller understanding of it. Qualitative researchers may recognize several nuances of attitude and behaviour that might escape researchers using other methods.

Qualitative research is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys. Finally, flexibility is a major advantage of qualitative research. This design allows researcher to modify research plan at any time and adapt suitable methodology, time-frame, and other aspects of the study to suit the object of the study. This not only increases the validity of research findings but allows more control and freedom in the research process. Qualitative research method offers the researcher the ability to be flexible and change plans to suit the current situation during the collection of data. This is important because circumstances change without warning and as a result the researcher can accordingly adapt. Apart from giving the researcher freedom to plan the process of collecting data, qualitative research method can also make the findings more effective. In clarifying the issues of

subjectivity on the part of the participants, Haralambos (1985) expressly states that: “Unlike matter, man has consciousness. He sees, interprets and experiences the world in terms of meanings; he actively constructs his own social reality. Meanings do not have an independent existence, a reality of their own which is somehow separate from social actors. They are not imposed by an external society which constrains members to act in certain ways. Instead they are constructed and reconstructed by actors in the course of social interaction.”

In the process of collecting data and by using qualitative research method, there is an understanding that the participants are human beings who have their own ways of interpreting social reality. Indeed, the participants through the structured face-to-face interview offered their own comprehension of the events as they knew them. Whether the participants subjectively interacted with one another was not the issue; rather, the important matter was to record their perceptions of the overall questions on the nature and role of leadership in service delivery.

## **2.5. Data collection methods**

The researcher mainly used the structured face –to –face interview method to collect primary data. In addition, the telephone interviews are also used in this research. The reasons for employing face-to-face and interview methods are to explore in detail the respondents’ views in details. The historical perspectives of administrative reforms and related documents have been referred from secondary sources such as Administrative Reform committee reports, previous study report on the same subject, government publications, journal articles etc.

### **2.5.1. Structured face-to-face interview**

As a data collection technique, a structured face-to-face interview provides personal contact and interaction between the participants and the researcher. This means that the participants and the researcher meet face-to-face and engage in a communication process. The researcher asks questions and in turn the participant responds to them. Face-to-face interview enables primary data to be collected. It allows collection of first-hand information from the participants. In clarifying the reliability of the information collected through the structured interview, Haralambos (1985) succinctly notes that: “In a structured interview, the wording of the questions and the order in which they are asked remains the same in every case. The result is a fairly formal question-and-answer session. Data from structured interviews are generally regarded as more reliable. Since the order and wording of questions are the same for all respondents, it is more likely that they will be responding to the same stimuli. Thus, different answers to the same set of questions will indicate real differences between the respondents.



Different answers will not therefore simply reflect differences in the way questions are phrased. Thus, the more structured or standardized an interview, the more easily its results can be tested by researchers investigating other groups.”

The information collected through structured interview is more reliable, appropriate and verifiable compared to the data obtained by means of unstructured interview. The interviews are structured if they are conducted with the help of an interview schedule. The purpose of using the interview guide in a structured interview is to ensure that participants are asked the same questions with the possibility of posing supplementary questions. Asking the participants the same questions as set out in the interview guide helps to ensure consistency in the collection of data. It is also to make sure that there is no deviation from the set questions for all the participants to answer. Though the use of structured interview is demanding on both the interviewer and the interviewees, it is however useful as it allows the participants through a researcher’s certain line of questioning to reveal all that they know and understand about the phenomenon under investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2010).

Using reflective individual interview is one of the techniques of collecting data in the qualitative research method, and depending on the nature of questioning, the researcher might learn more about the way in which participants came to have certain perspectives on the nature and role of leadership in service delivery. It further opens up an opportunity for immediate supplementary questions that would not be asked if the researcher had adopted a questionnaire as a technique for data collection (Neuman, 2011).

It gives the researcher the flexibility to probe the participants to produce responses that may be regarded as socially undesirable which initially they might have believed may be negatively judged (Neuman, 2011). A structured face-to-face interview further offers the researcher an opportunity to clarify and simplify the questions which may seem difficult to participants. Through structured interview the participants are permitted to communicate their own views and freely express themselves. In general, structured face-to-face interview permits the researcher to build rapport with the participants. It allows the researcher to understand and sympathize with the participants concerning their circumstances which may include working or living conditions. However, the questions asked during the structured face-to-face interview were non-directive and did not communicate personal favorable opinions by showing neither approval nor disapproval of the views of the participants. Whilst the information collected through structured face-to-face interview and telephone interviews was presented in chapter five, it was also analyzed and interpreted in chapter six of this thesis.

### **2.5.2 Telephone interview**

Telephone interview is a data collection method when the interviewer communicates with the respondent on the telephone in accordance with the prepared questionnaire. Usually, standardized questionnaires with closed-ended questions are recommended for this kind of questioning. Consequently, telephone interview is short and focused on a collection of concentrated information. Therefore, by choosing telephone surveys Customer gets prompt answers to the questions of their interest, as telephone interviews are carried out in a 3 - 14 days' period. Telephone interview is a quantitative research tool practiced in public opinion, customer or other target group surveys.

### **2.5.3. Review of secondary data**

Another technique for the collection of data in this study was review of secondary data which was done by accessing archives. Archives were used as the sources to derive useful secondary information. The documents that were relevant to the reforms and role of leadership in service delivery in the public service were evaluated. On the other hand, legal enactments such as the Constitutions, rules and regulations and circulars were reviewed to understand how the public service is legislated, regulated, arranged and governed. Newspaper articles were read and analysed to obtain information in relation to the performance of leaders in the public organizations, proliferation of public protests and the occurrence of corruption. Relevant journal articles on public sector leadership and service delivery were reviewed. Academic books relevant to the nature and role of public sector, its leadership, service delivery and citizen satisfaction were studied and assessed to be able to explain related concepts. As an unassuming technique for data collection, review of secondary data was done to scrutinize and understand the nature of public service and role of leadership in service delivery and related issues to complement the primary data collected through the structured face-to-face interview.

## **2.6. Limitations**

There are two particular methodological issues that need to be noted. The first relates to the reading of historical and official documents. A researcher has to be careful that in reading in the present what was produced in the past, that their contents are interpreted correctly - that the researcher is able to understand their contents in the terms intended. In this case, the documents are all official documents produced in Sri Lanka since the 1948s. I, the researcher, in this case is Sri Lankan, a speaker of Sinhalese and English and a public servant of many years standing as mentioned above. This gives me the interpretative status of an 'insider' able to read these documents as they would have been intended (Schwartz and Jacobs 1979, Parts I and II; see also Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander 1995, Chapter 8) in the Sri Lankan context.

Where possible, to avoid the possibility of researcher bias in interpretation, my interpretations have been checked against the writings of Sri Lanka public administration academics (as cited in the text) and, in some cases, in discussion with them during the field work. In other instances throughout the text, interpretations are offered but with acknowledgement that they are those of the author - so that if biases are apparent, the reader can contextualise them. Similarly, the adoption of semi-structured interviews as a way of getting the insights of some key participants in the reform processes of the past in Sri Lanka raises other issues. In this case, to be efficient in data collection, questions were devised that asked the subjects to speak to matters that are absent in the historical record and matters that called on their expert judgments regarding the intentions and outcomes of reforms, particularly those surrounding the ARC.

The professional experience of the interviewer enabled me to ask questions that shared the world-view of the interview subjects and to interpret their responses within the meaning-frameworks in which they were intended (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander 1995). Moreover, as the analysis proceeded, the subjects were sent drafts of how their responses were interpreted and asked to confirm or correct them. However, it must be acknowledged that while the subjects were generous with their support, time and resources limited the time during which fieldwork could be undertaken. Many topics other than those selected for discussion could not be discussed or were discussed only briefly. If this work is only exploratory, it is to be hoped that others will follow and fill out what has been missed or covered only lightly in this study. The third methodological limitation of this study lies in the sample of past and present participants in Sri Lanka's reforms. The interviews were spread over three months from early September 2021 to late November 2021. During this period, the COVID 19 pandemic was severely spread all over the country and the mobility of people was restricted. Therefore, it was rather difficult to conduct face to face interviews.

## **2.7 Chapter summary**

The chapter has discussed the theoretical perspectives of the administrative reforms and data collection methods employed in this study. Main observations of literature will be employed in the analysis and interpretation of the study. The importance of the Pollitt & Bouckaert model has been highlighted in this since it has emphasized the challenges of reforms.

This study is primarily based on the qualitative research method. Hence, the structured face – to-face interviews and telephone interviews have been carried out with the selected sample of respondents. The nature of face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews has been described in this chapter. It also highlighted the importance of secondary data in conducting this research. Finally the research limitations are shown at the end of the chapter.

# **CHAPTER THREE: HISTORY AND PRESENT SITUATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN SRI LANKA**

## **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the evolution of the public administrative system introduced by the colonial rulers and discusses the current structure and the process of government in Sri Lanka. It examines the power invested in the three arms of the central government machinery: the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, and their operation in relation to public administration.

This chapter also highlights the key institutions established for governing the country to ensure democratic principles and their expected roles such as the office of the President, the Parliament and the judiciary. It further highlights the role of Provincial councils and local government as decentralized governing bodies introduced to ensure people participation in decision making process.

The last part of the chapter devoted to discuss the selected important administrative reforms to highlight their impacts on public service delivery operations.

## **3.2 Evolution of the public service**

The beginning of then Ceylon Civil Service was marked on 12 October 1798. The modern bureaucracy of Sri Lanka is a by-product of British colonial rule, introduced to administer the country (Warnapala, 1974). This was when Frederick North assumed office as the Governor General of the island, accompanied by a staff of eight. In September 1801, 24 staff members, recruited by the secretary of state in England, arrived to establish the nucleus of a 'covenanted' civil service (the 24 entered into a covenant promising faithfulness in their service) (Collins 1966). From its very beginning, the public service was strong and stable due to the experience and expertise of its members. They occupied key positions in the central government and ran the entire machinery of provincial administration. They played a dual role: as well as implementing policies, they also formulated them. According to Ekanayake (1985), some public servants were in the Executive Council and had the opportunity to influence all aspects of public policy.

Although constitutional developments from 1832 to 1921 reduced the significance of this dual role of the public service, it cannot be denied that for nearly a century, these public servants acted both as chief executors of government policy and as chief legislators. The constitutional developments, which primarily resulted in expanding the size and power of the Legislative Council<sup>21</sup>, reflected flexibility in colonial attitudes and affected the administrative structure and its restructuring (Collins 1951). Parallel to this development, the scope of public service expanded and a vast array of new administrative departments emerged. For instance, the Irrigation Department, the Public Works Department, and the Survey Department were established in 1889, the Forest Department in 1900, and the Department of Agriculture in 1912. This expansion of governmental activities led to the increased recruitment of personnel. In 1911, the number of public servants was 5375, and by 1921 it had been increased to 7951 (Tambiah 1955). On the one hand, this indicates the expansion of the socio-economic responsibility of the state towards its citizens. On the other hand, it gave opportunities to the local population to be widely represented in the bureaucracy. Sri Lankans occupied 12 and 32% of civil service positions in 1920 and 1925, respectively (Warnapala 1974). This marked the beginning of the gradual nationalization of the public service.

The Donoughmore Constitution<sup>22</sup> inaugurated an era of social and economic change that affected the role of the public service. The new tasks of the government demanded changes in the administrative structure and an increase in personnel. Article 31 of this constitution provided the legal provision to establish the first ever Public Service Commission (PSC). Up to 1948, the governor, who was the sole agent of the colonial crown, had all responsibility for recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary matters within the public service. The most important change that the constitution of 1948 brought was the immediate adaptation of the public service to the changing economic and social development goals of the new political leadership. The unique contribution of the political system was that it provided the first intensive test in bureaucratic adaptation.

The Soulbury Constitution<sup>23</sup> 1948 further strengthened the PSC such that it could work with total independence while enjoying the executive power of recruitment, promotion, transfer, and disciplinary control of personnel. The power vested in the PSC stemmed from Article 160(1) of the constitution (Unantenne,1983). This provision aimed at ensuring the principles of impartiality and political neutrality amongst those working in public organizations. While under

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<sup>21</sup> The Legislative Council of Ceylon was the legislative body of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) established in 1833, along with the Executive Council of Ceylon, on the recommendations of the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission.

<sup>22</sup> Donoughmore Commission, committee sent by the British government to Ceylon in 1927 to examine the Ceylonese constitution and to make recommendations for its revision. The commission's recommendations, reluctantly accepted by Ceylonese political leaders, served as the basis for the new constitution of 1931.

<sup>23</sup> The Soulbury Constitution provided a parliamentary form of Government for Ceylon and for a Judicial Service Commission and a Public Service Commission.

the political control of the cabinet or the members of parliament, the PSC was supposed to ensure that political interference from these same politicians be brought to a minimal level.

The modern bureaucracy of Sri Lanka is a by-product of British colonial rule, introduced to administer the country (Warnapala 1974). 12 October 1798 marked the beginning of the Ceylon Civil Service.

This was when Frederick North assumed office as the governor general of the island, accompanied by a staff of eight. In September 1801, 24 staff members, recruited by the secretary of state in England, arrived to establish the nucleus of a 'covenanted' civil service (the 24 entered into a covenant promising faithfulness in their service) (Collins 1966). From its very beginning, the public service was strong and stable due to the experience and expertise of its members. They occupied key positions in the central government and ran the entire machinery of provincial administration. They played a dual role: as well as implementing policies, they also formulated them. According to Ekanayake (1985), some public servants were in the Executive Council and had the opportunity to influence all aspects of public policy

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the experience and expertise of its members. They occupied key positions in the central government and ran the entire machinery of provincial administration. They played a dual role: as well as implementing policies, they also formulated them. According to Ekanayake (1985), some public servants were in the Executive Council and had the opportunity to influence all aspects of public policy. When Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, got independence (1948), it inherited a centralized administrative structure with two layers: the central government and local government which continued until 1987 with ad hoc modifications. It is arguable that the golden age of public administration in Ceylon/Sri Lanka were the years between 1948 and 1972, probably extending even up to 1989. Before 1948, it was a colonial, bureaucratic administration. Since 1948, Sri Lanka has had a Parliamentary democracy. The administrative system during this period was one of collaboration between the administrators and the politicians, each respecting the other's role.

There was a degree of autonomy for the public service. Most senior administrators of this period worked in English and so did the politicians. The administrators came largely from the University of Ceylon. Moreover, the parliamentarians were genuine representatives of the people, elected directly through a constituency system. The members of Parliament knew their constituents and they in turn knew their parliamentarians. These systems have gradually been eroded.

### **3.3 Present structure of government**

Sri Lanka is a Democratic Republic and a Unitary State which is governed by a semi-presidential system, a mixture of a presidential system and a parliamentary system. Most provisions of the constitution can be amended by a two-thirds majority in parliament. The amendment of certain basic features such as the clauses on language, religion, and reference to Sri Lanka as a unitary state require both a two-thirds majority and approval in a nationwide referendum.

The 13th amendment to the constitution (1987) changed this structure in an attempt at devolving power to the provinces with the view to addressing the ethnic conflict and building a three layer structure: the centre, the province and local level.

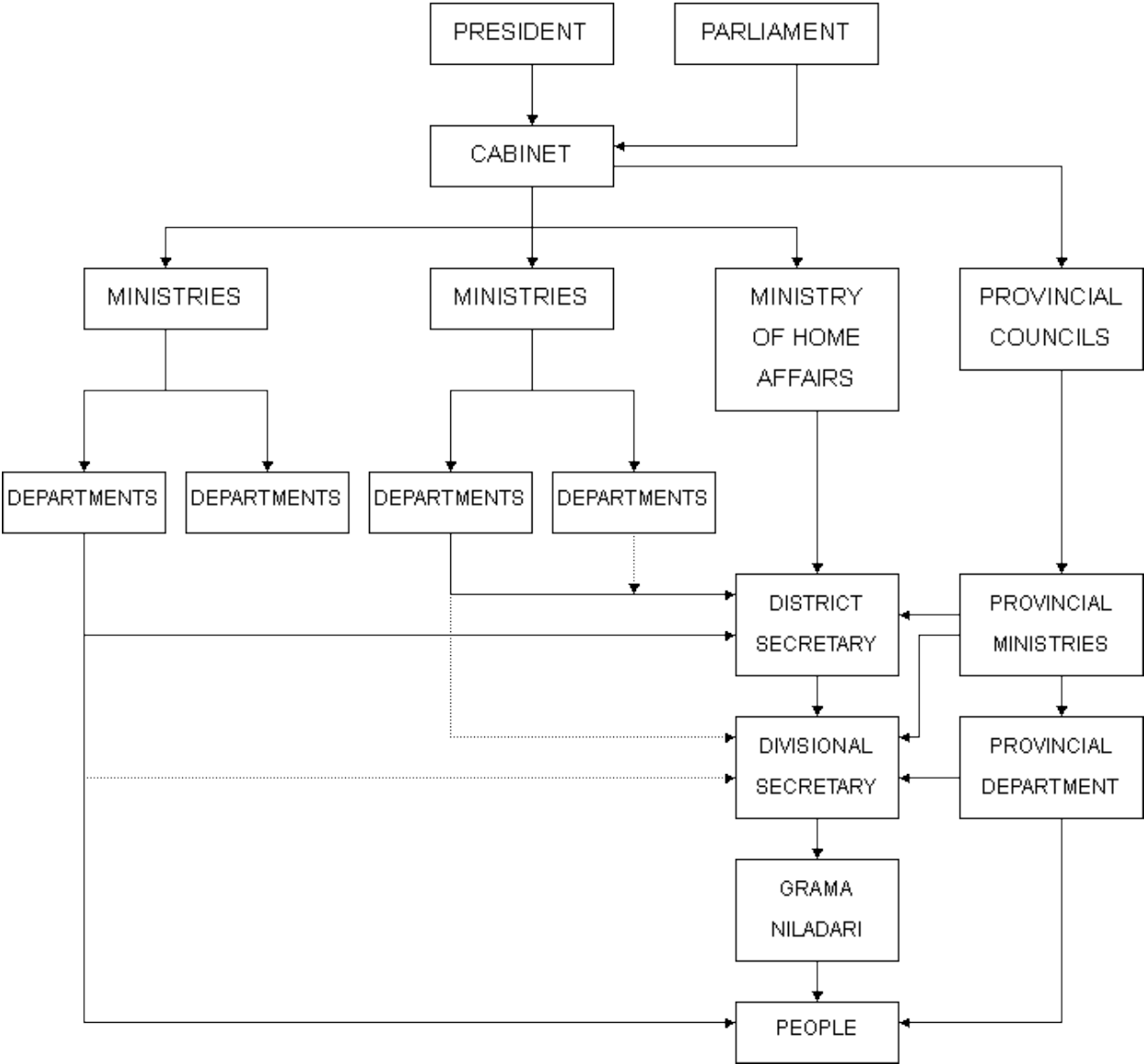
The Sri Lankan governance system is divided into three tiers: central, provincial and local. There are nine (9) provincial governments and the local governments are divided into three types of local councils. The local councils include 24 municipal councils, which cover cities and larger urban areas; 41 urban councils, which cover smaller towns, and 271 rural councils, which are also called *pradeshiya sabhas* as at 31/12/2020.

### **In common with many democracies, the Sri Lankan government has three branches**

- **Executive:** The President of Sri Lanka is the head of state, the commander in chief of the armed forces; head of government, and is popularly elected for a five-year term. The President heads the cabinet and appoints ministers from elected members of parliament. The President is immune from legal proceedings while in office with respect to any acts done or omitted to be done by him or her in either an official or private capacity. Following passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution in 2015, the President has two terms, which previously stood at no term limit.
- **Legislative:** The Parliament of Sri Lanka is a unicameral 225-member legislature with 196 members elected in multi-seat constituencies and 29 elected by proportional representation. Members are elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term. The president may summon, suspend, or end a legislative session and dissolve Parliament any time after four and a half years. The parliament reserves the power to make all laws. The president's deputy, the Prime Minister, leads the ruling party in parliament and shares many executive responsibilities, mainly in domestic affairs.
- **Judicial:** Sri Lanka's judiciary consists of a Supreme Court – the highest and final superior court of record, a Court of Appeal, High Courts and a number of subordinate courts. The highly complex legal system reflects diverse cultural influences. Criminal law is based almost entirely on British law. Basic Civil law derives from Roman law and Dutch law. Laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and inheritance are communal. Due to ancient customary practices and/or religion, the Sinhala customary law (Kandyan law), the Thesavalamai, and Sharia law are followed in special cases. The President appoints judges to the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the High Courts. A judicial service commission, composed of the Chief Justice and two Supreme Court judges, appoints, transfers, and dismisses lower court judges.



# ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE IN SRI LANKA



**Figure 3:** Local Government Commission report, 1988

## **3.4. Central Government structure**

Sri Lanka is a semi-presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Sri Lanka is both head of state and head of government, and it relies on a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers. Legislative power is vested in the Parliament. For decades, the party system was dominated by the socialist Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the conservative United National Party. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

### **3.4.1. Executive President**

The Executive President system came into effect from February 4, 1978 (Parliament, 2008). According to Articles 30(1) and 30(2) of the 1978 Constitution, the president is the Head of State, the Head of the Executive and of the Government, and the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. Unlike the role of earlier Governors General and the President, the new role of the Executive President is more powerful and political than ceremonial. The President is elected directly by the people for a period of five years, and can hold office only for two terms. As the Head of the Executive and of Government the President derives enormous powers and functions from the Constitution which make him/her —more powerful than the Prime Minister could have been under the former system (Wilson, 1980, p. 43). In addition to the ceremonial role, the President has the power to appoint a prime minister, cabinet ministers, non-cabinet ministers, and deputy ministers. The President also has the power to determine the number of ministers and assign portfolios to them and change such portfolios. In the absence of a constitutional cap on the number of ministers, the President can appoint any number of ministers to the Cabinet and outside the Cabinet. The President has the right to assign himself/herself any portfolio. For example, President Jayewardene held the portfolios of Defence, and Plan Implementation (Wilson, 1980). Under the 20th amendment to the Constitution, Sri Lanka's president will have the power to dissolve the 225-member legislature any time after it crosses the half-way mark of its five-year term.

The Constitution empowers the President with some legislative and judicial powers. In relation to legislative powers, the President can act on his/her own to determine when a Declaration of a State of Emergency becomes necessary. Parliamentary approval comes afterwards. In regard to judicial powers, the President is empowered to grant pardon to any offender convicted of any offence in any court within Sri Lanka. Article 35 of the Constitution provides immunity to the President from lawsuit. Firstly, no legal action can be instituted against the President (whilst he holds office) in any court on any matter. Secondly, the Standing Orders of Parliament do not authorise any reference to be made to him/her or for his/her conduct to be questioned except on a substantive motion (Wilson, 1980). For the last 30 years the President's actions had not been challenged by any court of law while he/she was in office. However, in 2008, for the first

time the Supreme Court faulted the former president Kumaratunga for abuse of power while she was in office and fined her (Ians, 2008). Thirdly, the President can be removed only through a resolution or an impeachment adopted by two thirds of the total membership of Parliament. Fourthly, the President will not be affected by any adverse vote of confidence against the government in Parliament i.e. —Cabinet goes but the President remains. (Wilson, 1980, p. 44).

Under the present structure, the power of government has shifted from the legislature to the Presidential Secretariat. For example, —the President ignored the existing strictures passed by the Parliamentary Select Committee for selecting the candidates for top public offices (Wijeweera, 1989, p.294). On many occasions, the President has given directives on matters and subjects that had been functionally and constitutionally assigned to ministers and on some occasions President made decisions on appointments of Chairmen and Board of Directors to public enterprises (Personal observations from 1984-2009, Wijeweera, 1989; Wilson, 1980,). According to Perera (1979), —It is his policy that prevails and has to be carried out by all the ministers including the Prime Minister (as cited in Wanrapala, 2004, p.24).

The President maintains firm control on the administration and the ministers through appointing secretaries to ministries at the centre and appointing Governors at the provinces. President Jayewardene obtained undated resignation letters from the Members of Parliament of his party as a control mechanism. The most critical factor of the Executive President System is that Parliament came to be devalued and the Executive of an “one man show” overrides the collective responsibility of the Cabinet. In summary, the Executive President is the apex of the SL government structure and is over-empowered by the 1978 Constitution, leading to dictatorial tendencies. As the former President Jayewardene boasted, the only thing that the executive President cannot do is to turn a woman into a man (Rahman, 2005, p.8).

### **3.4.2. Parliament**

Sri Lanka has a unicameral Parliament with 225 members of whom 196 are elected and 29 nominated by competing political parties in proportion to their share of the national vote. Elections are held under universal suffrage and proportional representation involving preferential voting for a state of candidates nominated by different political parties/groups. Parliament’s term is for a maximum period of six years. Constitutionally, Parliament is the supreme institution that has control over legislative agenda and budgetary allocations. However, in practise effective control over legislation and budget has been taken over by the President. There are no checks and balances by the legislature over the actions of the President, except of course, a very difficult procedure of Impeachment.

The formal organization and procedures of the Parliament follow British parliamentary practices. The majority of legislative responsibilities are delivered through Committees.

Currently there are seven committees for special purposes: Committee on Selection, Standing Orders, Public Accounts, Public Petitions, Privileges, Parliamentary Business, and Public Enterprises. In addition, there are 55 Consultative Committees (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2008). The underlying concept for having these committees is that they provide adequate safeguards to secure the proper use of delegated legislative powers by executive bodies. Of those Committees, three are important in this study: the Consultative, Public Accounts, and Public Enterprises, because they represent parliamentary oversight of the executive and allow a direct relationship between public officials and legislature.

The Committee of Selection, at the commencement of every session of Parliament, appoints consultative committees based on the number of cabinet ministries. This number has been increased due to proliferation of ministries over the years; for example; in 1996 there were 25 consultative committees. In 2000 this number was increased to 45 (Warnapala, 2004). Today this number has further increased to 55 (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2008). The objective of these committees is to discuss both the formulation and implementation of policies of ministries, thereby increasing the efficiency of public institutions. However, in practice participation of members in committee meetings is very weak, and they discuss matters relating to their individual interests rather than implementation of policies, so that the performance of these committees so far is inadequate.

Formally, Parliament has power to approve the budget of the Government each through the Annual Appropriation Act. Once it is approved, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for its effective implementation in its entirety while other ministries are liable for implementing their respective components. The Auditor General (AG) is constitutionally responsible for the review of accounts of public institutions: ministries, departments, public enterprises and business undertakings and reports to parliament. This report includes findings on matters related to non-compliance, deficiencies in systems and procedures, misuse of money and other resources, corruption or fraud. However, this report does not cover the overall efficiency and the effectiveness of the use of public money due to a lack of a performance audit system. The Sri Lanka financial management system does not classify expenses by output or outcome. Therefore, the expectation of the use of public funds efficiently and effectively (in the SL context) as mentioned by the AG is limited. The Standing Orders of parliament facilitate the COPE and COPA to request any information they need to carry out their functions effectively.

Conventionally, investigations are confined to those points highlighted in the AG's report, but the committee has the power to go beyond that if needed. The Committee of Public Accounts (COPA) and Committee of Public Enterprises (COPE) summons the Chief Accounting Officers (Secretaries of Ministries), Accounting Officers (Heads of Departments), and executives of Public Enterprises in their deliberations. The increased involvement of government activities in

all spheres in the economy and the proliferation of ministries have increased the volume of work of COPA. The complexity of issues in the public organisations such as changes of functions and changes in ministries and departments are so often key challenges faced by the COPA today (Auditor General, 2006; Warnapala, 2004).

### **3.4.3. Judiciary**

Article 125 of the 1978 constitution that sets the supreme law of the land, the judiciary is the only and exclusive institution empowered to interpret the provisions of the constitution. The legislature contended that it [the legislature] was the sole repository of sovereignty of the people and hence was supreme and not subject to the authority of any other constitutional body. However this interpretation of the constitution undermines the doctrine of separation of powers that requires the three institutions of the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary to exercise state power subject to the checks and balances of the three institutions functioning independent of each other. It has instead made governance subject to a duality of power exercised by the Executive and the Legislature. These checks and balances built into the functioning of the three arms of the constitution would ensure good governance. The undermining of any one of these three institutions would have a negative impact on the entire constitutional order.

In addition to the executive, legislature and the judiciary other pillars such as the public sector, law enforcement agencies, Auditor General and mass media make valuable contributions towards building a national integrity system by functioning with transparency and integrity. In addition these institutions by their independence and proper conduct create the required space to minimize corruption by preventing abuse of power, misuse of resources and enable the people to enjoy the fruits of good governance. The Judiciary of a country is specially committed to protect human rights, democratic values and to assess the legality of executive action and performs an exceptional function within a national system of integrity.( Bandaranayake, Shirani, 2013)

Public officials and institutions are required to be fair in action' and maintain the —principles of administrative law in decision making: principle of natural justice, the rule that requires a decision-maker to hear both sides, and the requirement that a person must not be a judge in his own cause and the doctrine of ultra vires or beyond the powers (Weerasooria, 2004, p. 146). Public organisations, including courts, are obliged to safeguard the fundamental rights of the people in their decisions and actions. When their decisions and actions are flawed the higher courts namely the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal has the power to correct them. Article 141 of the Constitution empowers the Court of Appeal to issue writs.

## 3.5 Provincial Councils

Decentralization policy has slowly evolved from 1948; de-concentrated central government ministries were first established in the 1950's to improve service delivery in rural areas. In the 1970s, there was an attempt to bring decision making to the local level with the creation of District level and Divisional level councils. The creation of the District Decentralized Budget in 1974 allowed for conditional transfer of funds from the central government for capital expenditures at the district level. These policies and institutions essentially continue to exist in Sri Lanka today.

Provincial Councils are established for every Province in Sri Lanka as specified in the Ninth Schedule (Western, Northwestern, Uva, Sabaragamuwa, Central, Eastern, Southern, North Central and Northern) with effect from such date as may be appointed by the President by order published in the Gazette. (Article 154A). Sri Lanka embarked on the decentralization of central power to sub-national provincial governments in 1987 primarily to mitigate the considerable ethnic conflict between the Tamil minority in the North and the Sinhalese majority populating the rest of the island. Decentralization is often considered a tool to reduce ethnic conflict and secessionism, although in practice the role of decentralization in addressing such tensions has been mixed (Brancati, 2006).

The Provincial Council so established is constituted when the members of such Council are elected in accordance with the law relating Provincial Council elections. The Constitution provides for the Parliament to allow two or three adjoining Provinces to form an administrative unit, with one elected Provincial Council, one Governor<sup>24</sup>, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers and to determine whether such Provinces should continue to be so administered. While there are nine provinces in Sri Lanka, eight (8) Provincial Councils were established in 1988 with the Northern and Eastern provinces temporarily merged into one in terms of the interim provisions of the Provincial Councils Act 42 of 1987 (Section 37 1A). The North East Provincial Council ceased to function in 1989 as its administration was taken over by the Government owing to the failure of the administrative machinery. The provinces were demerged in 2009 following a Supreme Court decision.

A Provincial Council:

- i. is an autonomous body being constituted in terms of the Constitution and hence does not come under the purview of any Ministry;
- ii. derives its power and authority from the Constitution and Acts of Parliament;

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<sup>24</sup> A Governor of a Province in Sri Lanka, is the head of the provincial council and representative of the President of Sri Lanka in the province.

- iii. undertake activities as provided for under the Ninth Schedule, which had earlier been undertaken by the Central Government Ministries, Departments, Corporations and Statutory Authorities.

The Provincial Council is thus constituted by a set of legal structures and positions performing political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities of government. It is their collective performance that makes the Provincial Council an organization, which is a unit of government given effect through the exercise of powers and the discharge of functions that are assigned under the 13th Amendment and the Provincial Councils Act. The performance of responsibilities in terms of these powers and functions involve the provision of public services within the province as set out under the Ninth Schedule, the Provincial List and the Concurrent List.

Although the Provincial Councils and the devolution proposals were meant for the North East which were the Tamil speaking part of the country and intended to settle the armed conflict, then J.R. Jayewardene government extended the Provincial Council system to all the provinces of the country. Hence the present Provincial Council system is based not on any specific regional or ethnic criteria but is directed to all the people of the country and seeks to empower the people in their own localities be it in North or South This system allows for decisions pertaining to the provinces to be taken closer to the local people and communities and not only by politicians and bureaucrats in Colombo. Thus, one might say that the Indian intervention brought something that was beneficial to the country and to all the communities. The system is criticized by some. They say that the foreign intervention may not always bring good results." A lesson to be learnt from this episode is that when you do not keep your house in order and there is dissension and disaffection, the neighbours and not so near neighbours will certainly want to look in, seeking to interfere and usually it is for their own benefit. If at the behest of a few people, i. e. ultranationalists and authoritarian oriented elements, we start to upset the existing political system and cause the minority communities to feel insecure and agitated it can once again lead to a situation where third parties intervene. The best policy is to keep the ship afloat, particularly in the context of the grim economic situation without destabilizing the political structure by abolishing the Provincial Councils, as is being suggested in some quarters' ' (Dayasiri,2010).

Another criticism made is that the Provincial Councils are like white elephants and have not been effective in delivering any services to the people while the State incurs additional expenses in keeping them running. This criticism has some substance to it and the reasons for its inability to deliver have to be examined while comparing it to similar bodies in other countries. In the United Kingdom which is a Unitary state similar powers have been devolved on the different ethnic regional units, i. e. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, (which is the Province of Ulster). All these units have their own legislative assemblies, and in the case of

Scotland a Parliament while at the same time they are represented in the Parliament in West Minster. In India too which has a quasi-federal Constitution the States have a Governor and Legislative Assemblies exercising powers not very different from those set out in the 13th Amendment. In all the above instances devolution has worked efficiently and the regional/provincial units have been able to work efficiently and deliver the required services to the people. So another review is needed to see why Provincial Councils in Lanka have not worked so well.

To begin with, in order to work efficiently adequate financial funding is required. Under the provisions of the Provincial Councils Act ( No.42 of 1987) the Governor of the Province is given controlling power over the finances of the province. The Provincial Council cannot pass any Statue imposing or abolishing any taxes without the consent of the Governor. Governors have not been cooperative in this regard. Hence the Councils have to depend largely on Central grants. The report of the Parliamentary Sub – Committee on Centre –Periphery Relations, November 2016, points out that in addition to the limited tax raising power vested in the provinces, there are limitations placed on obtaining loans and investments, and on seeking or at least administering projects financed by foreign aid and investments. The Committee concluded that “the corrosive effect of inadequate or unprincipled financing arrangements is that they impair Provincial and local service delivery, leading to an erosion of confidence in what are constitutionally established democratic institutions”.

The Provincial Councils Act gives the Governor control of the Provincial Public service and the provincial Public Service Commission. These are powers which even the President does not exercise over the National Public service. In Provinces where the ruling party at the Centre is also the party in control of a Provincial Council, Governors have been less assertive of their prerogatives and the Chief Ministers have been better able to operate efficiently. However, the Provincial Councils of the North and the East have had less leeway. In India on the other hand the Governors of the States act like constitutional heads and do not take over executive functions.

Another area which needs re-organization is the administrative service in the province. The Majority Report of the Experts Committee 2006, recommended that for devolution of power to be effective it should be devoid of duality and hence there should be a restructuring of the administration in the province. Another matter of concern is the allocation of subjects. Although the 13th Amendment sets out the allocation of subjects between the Province and the Centre in two lists and a third concurrent list, there are overlapping powers and the Provincial area of competence has come to be circumscribed. In order to function efficiently there has to be clarity in the allocation of subjects and this too is a matter which has to be



looked into. The shortcomings of the Provincial Council system have impeded their efficient functioning. Most of these stems from the Provincial Councils Act. This Act can be amended by a simple majority in Parliament. The administrative changes and restructuring of the administrative services in the province can be done by gazette notifications by the President as provided for in the 13th Amendment itself. This will not need any major constitutional changes.

Despite its shortcomings and the restrictions and encroachments by the Central Government, the Provincial Council system has taken root in the Country. It provides for people to enter into and engage in political activity at the Provincial level. Persons who have gained experience of political issues at the local level can thereafter gravitate to the national level. The minorities Tamil and Muslim are able to feel that they have some say in the management of their own affairs and within their localities. This is a safety valve which is necessary in any multi- ethnic state, as we see in the United Kingdom (UK) where the ethnic Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish have devolution of powers in respect of their local areas. Without attempting to do away with the Provincial Council System it should be implemented in full while making the necessary changes through amendments and administrative action, so as to make them more efficient in the delivery of services to the people in their localities.

Provincial Councils have been part of the Sri Lankan Constitution for over 30 years. It is time the bureaucrats in Colombo and the government ministers stopped viewing them with suspicion or antipathy and saw them as supportive institutions in the governance of the country, making for a more efficient administration and a more democratic form of governance for the whole country. The Tamil parties could, by working towards meaningful devolution and further empowered systems of Provincial Councils and Local Authorities, become engaged in a process that is in the national interest while promoting the aspirations and interests of the Tamil speaking people. It is to be hoped that the Provincial Council elections will be held early in the coming year and the continuity of the existing political system maintained.

The duplication of administrative structure was the primary reason why the Provincial Councils have become white elephants. In 2013, the top public servant of the country, Lalith Weeraratunga, the then Secretary to the President has said on Twitter that “the Provincial Councils system is a white elephant.”

Under the old system, the District Administration was pivoted on the Kachcheri<sup>25</sup>, which among other functions like enforcing the general laws and collecting revenue, also served as the provider of the general administrative services or the so-called housekeeping services such as

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<sup>25</sup> A kachcheri or district secretariat is the principal government department that administrates a district in Sri Lanka. Each of the 25 districts has a kachcheri.

providing space for the different departments or branch offices of the Central Government departments, providing centralised filing and record-keeping, centralised communications etc, retired Civil Servant, R.M.B. Senanayake (2005) stated. The Government Agent was the Head of the Kachcheri and he was empowered in many laws and legislative enactments as the person in whom power is vested in the district for the implementation of these laws. But when the functions of the Central Government were devolved to the Provincial Councils, the Kachcheri continued to be under the Central Government, although the Government Agent was designated as the District Secretary. He should really serve as the Secretary to the Provincial Council. But instead of doing so and bringing the Kachcheri under the Provincial Council, the government of the day set up new institutions to function under the Provincial Council. So, there is duplication of the costs of the administrative establishment, Senanayake pointed out.

The five-year term of all the nine Provincial Councils lapsed and the provincial administration is currently under the Provincial Governors. Last year, the opinion of the Supreme Court on holding the continuously postponed PC Elections were sought and the Supreme Court clarified that the old Elections Act was no longer applicable and that the Elections should be held according to the provisions of the newly proposed Act, of which the delimitation report is a compulsory pre-requirement. The Government appointed a committee to compile the delimitation report in accordance with the new Bill on Provincial Councils Elections, which later presented its report to Parliament. This report was defeated by a two-thirds majority. Hence, the issue is deadlocked.

Last year, Chairman of Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), current governing party Professor G.L. Peiris also raised the question of the future of Provincial Councils. "People would question the practical need for Provincial Councils if the Government delayed elections to them any further," he warned.

Rear Admiral Sarath Weerasekara, a former State Minister of Provincial Councils, currently holding the post of cabinet minister of Public Security asserted immediately after assuming office that land and Police powers will not be given to Provincial Councils. "Such powers will not be given to Provincial Councils until the harmful elements of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution are abolished," he said.

Last month, the National Joint Committee (NJC) has urged the Government to scrap the provincial council system and do away with the existing proportional representation system of elections. "We have now existed without these provincial councils for almost three years. The provincial councils are white elephants which this country cannot afford. The 13th Amendment provides for the creation of ethnic enclaves by amalgamation of provinces," the NJC statement said.

### 3.6. Local government

Local government institutions in Sri Lanka have been the commonly accepted local structure of administration of public health, local roads and public utility services. Despite the many institutional and structural deficiencies and difficulties, they have contributed immensely to national development in addition to the overall governance of their areas of jurisdiction. Using democratic principles and processes, they have been able to create and maintain a civil administration system that has helped the residents and the nation in many ways. The governing principles of government policy of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka aim to strengthen the local government.

*“strengthen and broaden the democratic structure of government and the democratic rights of the people by decentralizing the administration and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate at every level in national life and in government” (1978 Constitution, Chapter VI - Article 27.4).*

Local governments today are protected by 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the constitution, which prescribes a service delivery system in which public service responsibilities are shared between de-concentrated line agencies at the district and divisional level and local governments at the provincial and rural/urban level. The sub-national provincial governments were formally introduced by the Provincial Councils Act No.42 of 1987. The third tier (local) governments were originally introduced by the Urban Councils Ordinance 1939, with additional provisions outlined by the Municipal Councils Ordinance 1947 and the Pradeshiya Sabhas Act 1987.

The devolution of powers is defined through three lists that are enshrined in the 9<sup>th</sup> schedule of 13<sup>th</sup> amendment of the constitution. These lists define legislative powers and functional responsibilities of the central government, the provincial councils and the concurrent responsibilities of the provincial and central government. Local governments were recognized in the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment as entities of the provinces, which devolve service responsibilities according to provincial legislative ordinances. In practice, most local authorities share spending responsibilities with the provinces, and the division of labor between them is murky and unstable. The central government has retained the constitutional power to directly intervene in sub-national affairs for purposes of national planning, further constraining sub-national autonomy.

The local councils include 24 municipal councils, which cover cities and larger urban areas; 41 urban councils, which cover smaller towns, and 271 rural councils, which are also called Pradeshiya Sabhas. The breadth of functional responsibilities of local governments is limited to public health initiatives, solid waste management, public urban thoroughfares, public utility services and civil protection services like the fire brigade. Rural councils might be additionally

responsible for certain development projects. The provincial governments have a greater portfolio of service responsibilities, including law and order, provincial economic development and housing and local development, among others. The bulk of public services is still planned and administered by the central government. The public service responsibilities at the local level are limited to operation and maintenance and collection of local taxes and fees (CLDF 2012).

Local Authorities (LAs – Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas) represent the primary or lower tier of elected government. Their powers are guaranteed under the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. They derive their powers from respective Acts and Ordinances they are subjected to. In addition, the Provincial Councils can confer additional powers on LAs under the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Local authorities are

*“charged with the regulation, control and administration of all matters relating to health, public utility services and public thoroughfares and generally with the protection and promotion of the comfort, convenience and welfare of the people and all amenities”.*

The Pradeshiya Sabhas established in 1987 have a broad development mandate, to:

*“provide opportunities for the people to participate effectively in decision making process relating to the administrative and development activities at the local level”.*

Despite the above, LAs in Sri Lanka face several limitations that undermine their potential. These include: limited spatial and development planning capacities as well as technical skills required for implementation of development plans, budgets that are limited to recurring costs, poor revenue generation capacities, weak governance systems and processes (such as accounting, human resources etc.), and lack of participatory mechanisms to gain input and feedback from the public.

Local Authorities engage in generating own revenue locally from citizens and institutions and use the public funds directly for the benefits of the citizen. According to the Constitution of Sri Lanka and the main laws, in addition to the National Government and the nine provincial councils, all 341 Local Authorities are authorized to collect revenue from specified sources and spend the same for citizens needs in compliance with the existing regulatory framework.

The higher-level role is executed through a de-concentrated local administration. De-concentrated administrative units of the different line agencies and ministries have been set up to match the electoral districts (Perera, Bedgar 2001). These de-concentrated units are divided into two tiers, district and divisional. The functional responsibilities of these bodies include planning, coordinating between different line agencies and local government and implementing central government services at the local level (CLGF 2012). Although there is supposed to be

coordination, there are reports of inefficiencies in service delivery due to the existence of multiple service delivery agencies and channels (World Bank 2006).

From a fiscal perspective, local government in Sri Lanka is heavily dependent on central and provincial government transfers and loans. Own source revenues, which include property taxes, user fees and licensing charges, account for less than 1 percent in total public sector revenue. Transfers are in the form of block grants that flows to the local government from Provincial Councils. The transfer includes resources for staff expenses, operations and maintenances, capital expenditure and recurrent expenditures related to sub-national spending on roads, hospitals and other public service utilities (World Bank 2006).

Local bodies are permitted to develop their own budgets, create staff positions and hire personal. In practice, these roles are often not played for two primary reasons. In practice, staffing responsibilities at the local level have been large defined at the provincial level and staff are appointed through the Provincial Public Service. Tax and spending decisions are reflected in the annual budgeting process, but in practice the local level is allowed limited flexibility, and there is very little formal planning undertaken to produce an effective budget.

The Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils is responsible for all national policy formation regarding local government, and this is then implemented by the provincial councils. The Ministry oversees local government legislation and has the power to define local authorities and extend or reduce the term of elected officials by one year. At the national level, there is also a Finance Commission<sup>26</sup> that advises on the type and amount of fund transfer to provincial governments.

The governance (legislative and executive) structures differ between the provincial and the local governments. At the provincial level, there is an elected council (for a five- year term) led by a chief minister, who is the leader of the majority party. The chief minister appoints a cabinet of ministers to carry out the council's executive functions.

The local governments also have an elected council with a majority leader, but for a four- year term; there is no executive council or cabinet (as noted above, the role of local government administration is small compared to higher levels). Municipal councils have a mayor (again the majority party leader). Although higher level roles are dominant, certain policy issues, such as housing and community development, are supposed to be directed through the local council and this is done by an appointed committee. The mayor also has some discretion in appointing standing committees. Urban councils and pradeshiya sabhas are also led by a majority leader

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<sup>26</sup> The Finance Commission was established, by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in 1987 to facilitate the process of transfer of resources to the provinces, and provincial development planning

but are not mandated to appoint special committees. Legislative powers are highly limited at the local level, but municipal councils do have some authority to introduce new user fees and taxes.

As noted above, most local governments are unable to raise sufficient revenues to meet their service delivery obligations, so they are heavily dependent on central government for transfers. Revenues raised by municipal governments are differing greatly across different cities. Colombo raises over 50% of its own source revenue, 46% of which comes from property taxes. Batticaloa on the other hand has 60% of its revenues coming in from central and provincial government transfers and only 7% of its revenue coming from property taxes. Property taxes are reviewed by the central government every 5 years. Some places have special revenue problems, e.g. Batticaloa's property values suffered from the civil war and are only beginning to recover (Gunawardena 2013).

There are some challenges with horizontal accountability due to the above-noted conflicts or lack of clarity in responsibilities between administrative and government agencies. For example, the city/town planning functions of local governments have been taken over by the Urban Development Authority (UNDP 2009). Another concern is with solid waste management, one main municipal service delivery function. There is high absenteeism among laborers who collect and dispose waste and their supervisors. Since municipal governments have limited power under public sector employment regulations and they depend on provincial governments to subsidize their wage bill (and fear losing this revenue), they have little incentive to undertake any type of staff rationalization process.

The decentralization of most public schools to the provincial level has resulted in greater student enrollment but quality of education has deteriorated, as reflected in poorer performance in standardized tests (Herath, 2009).

Most available data on service delivery do not take into account quality of service, therefore does not paint the whole picture when it comes to efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Where such data are available, the results are not encouraging. For example, while Sri Lanka is well connected by roadway, over 90% of the roads are considered to be of poor quality (World Bank 2006). Most roads, other than main inter-provincial arterial highways, are operated and maintained by the provincial or local governments. Local governments are, as noted above, responsible for solid waste collection and disposal, but it is estimated that only 40% of the solid waste is actually collected, and there is currently no treatment facility for solid waste in any municipality. There is some documentation of huge regional variations in the extent of service delivery. Households in Western Province and the capital city Colombo enjoy 95% access to sanitation and electricity, while Trincomalee has only 46% coverage for sanitation

services. The conflict effected regions of North and East province are particularly impacted by poor services. These regions have poor roads and only 9% and 36% of households have access to electricity in these areas respectively (World Bank 2006).

Another key objective for the creation of provincial councils was to reduce conflict and improve service delivery in conflicted effected regions. The North and East province do not enjoy the same access or quality of service as the rest of the country, although some reports have indicated that this is slowly improving. Although it is not recent, one piece of empirical research into conflict reduction and decentralization concluded that local governance structures and institutions were not fully capable of reducing conflict and accommodating minority groups. The local government's inability to respond to local needs was rooted in its limited statutory powers, planning and budgeting capability and inadequate attention to priority issues of the local elected leaders (Bigdon, 2003).

Local government service delivery system in Sri Lanka has a unique potential like many other developed and developing countries. It affects the day-to-day activities of citizens at the grassroots level. Sri Lanka has been functioning with local government service delivery system for over hundred years, but it is yet to become the basis for a viable system of decentralized governance (Leitan 1979). Owing to certain flaws and irregularities, local government authorities could not succeed in its working, Pradeshiya Sabha in particular.

On the broader governance front, although there has been effort to increase in the representation of minority groups in local and provincial politics, there is only 6% representative of women in elected central government positions, and even less in local governments (UNDP 2009). Broader representation of minorities at the local level is in any case not necessarily very meaningful without local autonomy.

One study on local governments in Sri Lanka found that there has been an increase in corruption, insufficient transparency and poor accountability. There is a lack of transparency during elections as political aspirants can raise their own campaign financing, resulting in corrupt practices. For example there have been instances of vote buying and corruption in the issuance of voter ID cards. There is also a lack of audits of local government financial documents--there are internal procedures but the audits are not comprehensive, and there is no well functioning external audit. Generally, the financial activities of provincial councils are not made transparent to the public, and there is limited trust between the public and their elected local politicians and public servants (Ramesh et al 2013). (CLGF 2012, World Bank 2006).

Local Authorities being the ground level set of institutions which provide the services from birth to death, fulfilment of such requirements with quality and efficiency is high in importance. To fulfil the expectation of the service recipients, the political leadership, administrative leadership

and the supporting staff must perform their duties with high responsibility. To provide such a quality service to the public they should be equipped with required set of competencies. Hence identification of the actual training needs, target groups and provide them on accurate time will be the major components to strengthen the capacities of the Local Bodies.

### **3.7. Objectives of administrative reforms**

Public administration involves the development, implementation, and management of policies for the attainment of set goals and objectives that will be to the benefit of the general public. Since public administration involves taking decisions that affect the use of public resources, there is often the question of how to utilize the resources for maximum public good.

The growing interest in administrative reform in developing countries has several bases. Important among these are three: One relates to the concern for improved performance in public bureaucracy through modernization of methods, techniques, and procedures of work and more effective management of human resources. Another is the process of change required within the government sector to sustain efficient market-led economies in the emerging context of globalization. The third is the increasing concern for efficient and effective delivery of key public services through decentralization involving devolution and delegation of machinery of government for policy coordination. While these three principal forces are the prime movers, administrative reform is characteristically focused on the capacity of government to make and implement public policy, the effectiveness of public programs, and strengthening of public institutions on a sustainable basis within the caveats of responsiveness, accountability and equity.

The establishment of competent, effective, efficient, accountable, service-oriented, and transparent public administration is the final objective, towards which the public administration reform process is headed, but mostly due to fulfilling the needs of the citizens.

Achieving the objectives of administrative reforms makes it possible to positively impact all sectors, in particular, the realization of economic performance and the guarantee of a high rate of economic growth as well as the satisfaction of citizens who have become increasingly demanding regarding the quality of the services offered by the administration to the citizen. In this respect, the reforms introduced by the Sri Lankan authorities have brought major reforms to make public sector efficient, effective and responsive to the citizen.



A brief overview of post-independence administrative reforms in Sri Lanka and examines the major initiatives of successive governments from 1948 to 2020 in detail. The discussion is organized in chronological order as follows.

1. Part I: The reforms initiatives during the 1948s and 1960s
  - 1.1. Establishing an Organization and Methods Unit - 1951
  - 1.2. Enactment of Language Act- 1956
  - 1.3. Creation of branch offices Setting up public corporations – 1955
  - 1.4. Abolition of Ceylon Civil Service and Village Headman system - 1963
2. Part II: The reforms initiatives during the 1970s and 1980s
  - 2.1. Introduction of Divisional Development Councils -1971
  - 2.2. Abolition of the independent Public Service Commission (PSC) - 1972
  - 2.3. Establishment of District Political Authorities - 1973
  - 2.4. Introduction of Decentralized Budget - 1974
  - 2.5. Initiation of District Ministers -1978
  - 2.6. Re-establishment of PSC under Cabinet- 1978
  - 2.7. Introduction of District Development Councils - 1980
  - 2.8. Privatization of Public Enterprises - 1980
  - 2.9. Establishment of Administrative Reforms Committee -1987
  - 2.10. Introduction of Provincial Councils - 1988
  - 2.11. Introduction of individual performance appraisal system - 1989
3. Part III: The reforms initiatives during the 1990s and 2000s
  - 3.1. Invitation of UNDP mission - 1990
  - 3.2. Invitation of ADB team - 1996
  - 3.3. Initiation of Financial Management Reforms - 2000
  - 3.4. Re-establishment of independent NPSC - 2001
  - 3.5. Creation of Management Assistant Service – 2005
  - 3.6. Citizen charter -2008
  - 3.7. 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution – 2013
  - 3.8. Establishments of independent Commissions -2015
  - 3.9. Reducing the power of the Presedent – 19<sup>th</sup> amendment-2016
  - 3.10. Introduction of 20<sup>th</sup> amendment -2020

The researcher highlights the key administrative reforms introduced by the respective governments in the following sections.

### 3.8. Key administrative reforms introduced

The general election of 1956 brought S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake to power, and the aims and aspirations of his government were entirely different from those of the foregoing leaders who had held power for nearly a decade since independence. The new government introduced several radical reforms (Unantenne, 1983). One reform was to expand the size of bureaucracy by restructuring it. This was necessary on account of the Sinhala Only Act of 1956, which made the language of the majority community the official language. With the introduction of universal free education in 1945, education was extended to every nook and corner of the island. Thus, an educated Sinhala-speaking middle class with a predominantly rural background, nationalistic outlook, and a commitment to major social change began entering the public service at all levels (Unantenne, 1983). Nevertheless, until the 1970s, the public service enjoyed a fair amount of autonomy from political involvement and interference as a result of the constitutional provisions made in the Soulbury Constitution enacted in 1948.

The first Republican Constitution of 1972<sup>27</sup> made significant changes to the public service in Sri Lanka. It brought the country's entire administrative structure under the control of the cabinet of ministers. Article 106 (1) of the constitution stated that the cabinet ministers were responsible for the appointment, transfer, and disciplinary control of state officers—tasks which had thus far been performed by the independent Public Service Commission (PSC). Being vested with these responsibilities, the ministers were answerable to the National State Assembly. The provision of subjecting the affairs of public service to the political leadership marked the first-ever politicization of the service that had hitherto been governed by the independent commission established by the Soulbury Constitution (Country Study and Guide 1988). By replacing the PSC, the new constitution introduced two institutions for dealing with public service: the State Services Advisory Board (SSAB) and the State Service Disciplinary Board (SSDB).

The main responsibility of these boards was to assist the cabinet in implementing its duties regarding the public service. And since the power wielded by these boards was only advisory, the ministers were not compelled to accept it or put it into practice. The immediate impact of the constitution of 1972 on the public service came to expression in at least in three ways. First, it brought the bureaucracy, which until then had been protected from direct political interference, under the direct control of the cabinet and the National State Council. Second, it led to political considerations assuming the major role in managerial decisions that concerned the bureaucracy, contributing to an erosion of the political neutrality that had come to be the hallmark of the bureaucracy. Third, it led to gradual change in the behavioural culture of the bureaucracy itself—moving away from being a 'public service' to a 'political party-appendage'

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<sup>27</sup> The first republican Constitution of Sri Lanka was adopted on 22 May, 1972.

(Asian Development Bank 2004). De Silva (1993) explains this overall evolutionary process of the Sri Lankan public service thus: 'As politicians intervened in recruitment, offering jobs as patronage to followers, a politicized and overstaffed Public Service was no longer able to perform its role'.

The second Republican Constitution of 1978<sup>28</sup> re-established the PSC and gave it almost the same responsibilities as it had had before 1972 but subordinated it to the cabinet. Article 55 (2) further strengthened the political control over the public service by debarring the cabinet ministers from delegating their authority to the heads of departments. On 3 October 2001, the PSC was upgraded to an independent commission, making it responsible only to the parliament. It implemented the depoliticization of the public service by making the discretionary power of political authorities subject to checks and balances. According to Article 55(1) of the constitution, the PSC was empowered to formulate rules, regulations, and procedures pertaining to the recruitment, promotion, transfer, and disciplinary action against public officers. However, by enacting the 18th amendment, the provisions of the 17th amendment were rescinded. The PSC's power was brought back under the direct control of the cabinet, and the cabinet ministers were able to directly appoint the heads of departments. The 19th amendment, enacted on 15 May 2015, re-established the PSC as the body to oversee the administration of the public service. At present, it is believed that the PSC undertakes the all-important administrative responsibilities of managing public service personnel.

As the administrative culture of the country shows, public officers have traditionally enjoyed a high degree of prestige and social status. This can go far in accounting for why government jobs have been the most preferred form of employment. Service in government has tended to be considered a career path, chosen for life and pursued until retirement with few opportunities of mid-career entry. The recruitment system attends closely to the educational system, and access to the higher civil service is restricted to those with higher education (Wijenayake, 2000). In the early civil service, the method of recruitment and promotion depended on a formal system of evaluating candidates' educational and professional qualifications. Performance-based education was considered a means for improving the personality and character of public servants, but also a tool for earning respect and trust amongst the population. Until 1854, recruitment was done based on the Haileybury Entrance Examination. A system of open-competitive exams was introduced in 1856. In 1870, a system was initiated to hold exams simultaneously in Colombo and London (Warnapala, 1995). Meanwhile, the local candidates who were not recruited through examination were simply nominated by the governor but were still required to sit for non-competitive examinations.

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<sup>28</sup> The new Constitution, promulgated on 7 September 1978, provided for a unicameral parliament and an Executive President

The first significant public service reform was introduced in 1951 to improve organizational efficiency, recruitment, and training. Subsequent reforms took place in 1963, 1969, and 1972 to modernize administrative practices, while 1986 and 1994 were the most productive years for reforms overall. Most of the early reforms mainly aimed at introducing limited structural and functional adjustments; the reformers tinkered with the existing public service administration instead of instigating pinpointed or comprehensive changes (Wejeweera, 1988). The 1960s and '70s was a period of transition, from the colonially patterned bureaucracy to independent Sri Lankan bureaucracy, with some significant changes being proposed even if they were not implemented until the 1980s. In 1965, due to the increasingly poor performance of the public sector, the government that came to power created several institutions such as the Plan Implementation Committee and the Foreign Exchange Committee at the ministry level to improve quality, efficiency, and productivity. Deficiencies in public service performance prompted the appointment of a committee of secretaries to investigate and report on possible new financial regulations, tender procedures, and the organizational changes required in the context of development programmes (Nadarajah, 1997).

The government, which retained political power in 1970, created a separate ministry to administrate all public service affairs and matters. In 1972, the government promulgated the Republican Constitution which replaced the Soulbury Constitution of 1948. With this, the mechanisms of the Soulbury Constitution (i.e., the Independent Public Services Commission, the State Service Advisory Board (SSAB) and State Services Discipline Board (SSDB)) to protect public service appointments, recruitment procedures, promotions, disciplinary action, and protection from political interference and influence were rescinded. The Republican Constitution assigned the cabinet of ministers the responsibility of appointing, transferring, dismissing, and disciplining state officers (Wijeweera, 1988). It also provided that the decisions of the cabinet and of individual ministers who acted under delegated authority from the cabinet could not be questioned in a court of law. The subordination of the public service to the political authority transformed the independent public service to a politicized one. To give an example: Throughout the 1970s and the early '80s, on every occasion of recruiting teachers to the Department of Education, except in the case of science graduates whose supply was scarce, selections were based on the recommendations of politicians (De Silva, 1993).

In the mid-1980s, three major events significantly affected the public service: the Provincial Councils were established, so also the Administrative Reform Committee (ARC), and the Restructuring Management Unit (RMU) (Nadarajah, 1997). The RMU was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MFP) even though the functions legally belonged to the Ministry of Public Administration. The RMU was manned by some visiting expatriate and non-governmental personnel. It existed for four years. As Nadarajah explains, along with urging

that immediate action be taken to reduce overstaffing, inefficiency, and poor productivity in the public services, the RMU made four recommendations:

- To formulate a national policy on training
- To establish new sub-national institutions called Management Development and Training Units (MDTU).
- To develop a new policy for recruitment based on merit and examinations, thus to replace the patronage system
- To revitalize the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA), enabling it to play a proactive role in changing public administration through training and consultancy.

Some of these recommendations were accepted and implemented by the government such as enhancing the capacity of Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration's<sup>29</sup>(SLIDA) to train personnel, introduce new techniques, and provide consultancy services to the public service. But even by the end of the 1980s, no remarkable change took place in the public service. But, by the early 1990s, there was an urgent need for increased efficiency. The government that assumed power in 1994 identified the existing reality of public service and tried to change the situation by complying with the requirements of modern development activities.

Sri Lanka's public administration, at the time of independence in 1948, had some elements of good governance<sup>30</sup>. It had a dedicated professional staff, a transparent regulatory system, and one of the lowest levels of corruption in South Asia. Through the course of the first 25 years, the public sector expanded to encompass publicly funded social welfare services, poverty alleviation, and infrastructure through government agencies such as the Departments of Post and Telecommunication, the Road Development Authority, and so forth. State-owned enterprises were established to direct some sectors of the economy and to provide the key public goods and services. Theoretically, the second Republican Constitution of 1978 was designed to apply neo-liberal changes to bring the country in line with what was happening elsewhere in the world. However, the administrative modifications necessary for the smooth progress of neo-liberal ideology were never introduced. Consequently, in 1994 NPM reforms were introduced mainly to overcome these deficiencies in the public service and to bring the country's public administration in line with the global context. But there is more to be done to improve the New Public Management reforms.

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<sup>29</sup> The Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration is a research and training institute focusing on public policy and public administration in Sri Lanka.

<sup>30</sup> "governance" means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)

### 3.9. Administrative Reform Commission (ARC)

In 1986, President J.R. Jayawardana had appointed the ARC to carry out a comprehensive study of the public service. The ARC was tasked to identify the deficiencies and weaknesses and to make recommendations to overcome them. Committee identified three focal areas: the structure, the personnel system, and the work system and procedures (Administrative Reform Committee, 1987). Deficiencies in the personnel system are related to the concept of representative bureaucracy. However, the ARC did not focus on this when it introduced reforms; instead, it acknowledged the overstaffing and insufficient salary and highlighted four major deficiencies and weaknesses:

- The problems in cadre management and the compensation structure in the public service
- The absence of a national training policy and the inadequacy of institutional arrangements in training and management development
- The lack of proper institutional mechanisms for carrying out the tasks of personnel management for a professional public service
- The absence of a scientifically and objectively selected multidisciplinary group of senior managers to provide leadership to the public service.

The recommendations to overcome these problems were not implemented until the early 1990s due to politico-administrative disturbances. In 1994, with the change in government, certain discussions were held to formulate public administration reforms. As a result, that same year the government began launching several intermittent reform programs with the financial and technical cooperation of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Even though it is impossible to find a single coherent reform package during this period, the reform process was conceptualized within the neo-liberal ideology<sup>31</sup> of New Public Management (NPM). Major administrative reforms were needed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and responsiveness of the public service.

The administrative mechanisms had to be strengthened to coordinate planning and the execution of policies, programmes, and projects, and to achieve institutional stability. To this end, it was also necessary to recruit highly motivated staff who would give their best. To make the reforms successful, long-term effort and commitment were required. International pressure was another factor for why the government opted to implement NPM practices. One of the major areas emphasized by NPM to advance the public service was human resource development and the management of personnel.

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<sup>31</sup> Neoliberalism is contemporarily used to refer to market-oriented reform policies such as "eliminating price controls, deregulating capital markets, lowering trade barriers" and reducing, especially through privatization and austerity, state influence in the economy.

NPM reforms commenced under the sponsorship of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had given certain benefits. They included financial management reforms, re-establishing an independent PSC, and setting up a Management Assistant Service. In 1994, the UNDP mission was terminated due to its failure to contribute substantially to change public service. The ADB mission was initiated in 1996, and it focused on reorganizing the public administration structures, rationalizing public sector careers, and introducing result-based management systems<sup>32</sup> and procedures. The reform process had six major objectives (Roots and Vaughan 2001):

- To formulate strategic policies and to coordinate them in order to achieve effective policy outcomes
- To adopt a result-oriented philosophy as the guiding management principle
- To separate policy making, service delivery, and regulatory functions of government
- To realign responsibilities to support the goals of the government and to achieve them more effectively.
- To train staff to respond more effectively to the new concerns in the environment and thereby to realize their potential
- To redevelop surplus staff, if any, to new functions within government or to new opportunities in the private sector.

The human resource management reform was expected to reduce the number of cadres by introducing a voluntary early retirement plan with financial assistance. Sadly, no significant cadre reduction occurred during 1994–2004. The politicians responsible for activating this proposal saw it as threatening because it could reduce the possible number of votes they would receive in the next election: a reduction in personnel would definitely make public servants afraid of losing their jobs. The politicians perceived that in such an event, public servants and their trade unions would lend their support to the opposition. Hence, they reluctant to implement such a reform, even though they have agreed formulated those policies under pressure from external bodies such as the UNDP. To exemplify: in 1994, the president promised that in the forthcoming general elections, if her party won, the government would recruit 10,000 university graduates to the public sector on a permanent basis. Her party did win, and as promised, 10,000 graduates were hired. Likewise, in 2004, the president made another election pledge that if her government retained power for another six objectives of the NPM programme. Most objectives were to be achieved through structural and procedural reforms, but some related to the responsiveness of public administration. Drastic change in public administration was envisaged, but after a decade of implementing the reforms, they had failed to achieve what they set out for (Samaratunga and Bennington 2002,). Nevertheless,

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<sup>32</sup> Results-based management (RBM) is defined as orienting all action and use of resources towards achieving clearly defined and demonstrable results

some reforms completely changed the ideology of the public administration, in as much as the privatization of public enterprises was mainly aimed at having private entrepreneurs absorb certain costs and attend to certain financial and technical responsibilities which had thus far been the preserve of the government (Public Enterprises Reform Commission 2002). This dramatically reduced the importance of the public sector. Other reforms, by contrast, were aimed at institutional and human resource modifications and at introducing information technology for public administration.

The human resource management reform was expected to reduce the number of cadres by introducing a voluntary early retirement plan with financial assistance. Sadly, no significant cadre reduction occurred during 1994–2004. The politicians responsible for activating this proposal saw it as threatening to reduce the possible number of votes they would receive in the next election: a reduction in personnel would definitely make public servants afraid of losing their jobs. The public servants and their trade unions would then organize their support in favor of the opposition. The politicians knew that the unions for public servants wanted to protect as many jobs as possible; they also knew the strategies the unions use for dealing with governments, so they were reluctant to implement such a reform, even though they formulated the policies under pressure from external bodies such as the UNDP. To exemplify: in 1994, the president promised that in the forthcoming general elections, if her party won, the government would recruit 10,000 university graduates to the public sector on a permanent basis. Her party did win, and as promised, 10,000 graduates were hired. Likewise, in 2004, the president made another election pledge that if her government retained power for another six years, 40,000 graduates would be getting permanent positions in the public sector. After coming to power, the recruitment processes started and, as the initial step, more than 25,000 graduates were recruited to the public sector. Furthermore, in 2019, the Presidential candidate for the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (Pohottu) party promised to provide employment for all unemployed graduates. This shows that reforms in the area of human resource management and in achieving the optimal size of the bureaucracy had become mere rhetoric, with no real intention to achieve the expected or initial goals. The failure to implement this reform recommendation also appears to have triggered a negative reaction from international sources that supported structural adjustment. As such, it is crucial that administrative reform be reprioritized. The NPM reform programme sought to achieve a profound change in the government's method of operation. The public sector was to be pared back to its core functions such as policy formulation, general administration, and the provision of key services, with emphasis on achieving well-defined output objectives. Both the production and the delivery of goods and services that could be done by private entrepreneurs were to be privatized or decentralized to local levels.



According to its Articles 30 (1) and (2) of the 1978 constitution, the excessive power of the president as the head of the state as well as of the government has made the public service an instrument for carrying out the president's political will. Needless to say, the president deeply influences every phase of administration, which intensifies the extent of politicization in the public service. However, in order to limit the president's power over the public service, the 17th amendment was introduced in 2001. According to this amendment, the Constitutional Council should recommend suitable candidates for the selected commissions and offices, including the PSC. Nevertheless, due to political discrepancies, problems arose when the council members were chosen, so the amendment did not succeed. The 18th amendment was made in 2010. It replaced the foregoing amendment by appointing a Parliamentary Commission similar to the foregoing Constitutional Council, but with direct nominees from the ruling party who represent the political aspirations of the president. It is evident that the second Republican Constitution of 1978 granted excessive power to the president to exercise functions of office without checks and balances of any government institution. As a result, the president can influence every step of politico-administrative decision-making in favor of his or her position as the head of the ruling party and the government. The 20th amendment to 1978 Constitution enhances the executive powers to the President of the country. In addition, the president gets the authority to dissolve the parliament after one year. The proposed 20th amendment weakens the powers of Prime minister's office and cabinet.

The 20th Amendment has repealed the provisions on appointments to designated high posts with the oversight of the Constitutional Council. Appointments to the posts of Commanders of the Armed Forces have been a Presidential prerogative under the 1978 Constitution and the 19th Amendment, and this position has been retained in the 20th Amendment. However the post of Inspector General of Police has been omitted from the high posts coming within the purview of the new Parliamentary Council that has replaced the Constitutional Council. It is not clear how the Inspector General of Police will be appointed, though the Removal of Office Act 2002 determines the procedure for removal and, as in the case of the Attorney General, involves Parliamentary procedure.

The Auditor General's post is retained as a high post in the Constitution by the 20th Amendment. But he is appointed by the President, and can be removed by him at his discretion, holding office during "good behaviour." The oversight of the Constitutional Council on his appointment and removal, mandated by the 19th Amendment, has now been removed. This in a context where both the Audit Services Commission and the Procurement Commission established by the 19th Amendment have been abolished by the 20th Amendment. The serious negative implications of these changes for auditing key public institutions have been placed in the public domain by professional associations of auditors.

The 20th Amendment has abolished the Auditing Services Commission and the Procurement Commission. It has also repealed the detailed provisions in the 19th Amendment relating to other Commissions. There are new provisions relating to the Public Service Commission and the National Police Commission. The provisions on the Elections Commission limit their powers to monitor and set guidelines for the conduct of elections. A new provision provides for public complaints against the Police and for redress “according to law”. It is not clear how this procedure will be implemented.

The 19th Amendment provided for Presidential appointments and removal of members of the Commissions, but subject to oversight by the Constitutional Council. This procedure has been abolished. The President has full powers in regard to appointments and removal of members of the Commissions referred to in the 20th Amendment.

The transitional provisions on the continuity of Commissions and High Post appointments under the 19th Amendment, give the power of removal to the President. This would include removal of members of the current Human Rights Commission referred to above, at the discretion of the President.

The 20th Amendment is a dramatic turn around and has changed the “ground norm” again. The 20th Amendment that was in the public domain in 2019 as a strategy to eliminate the Presidential system of governance has now reversed by a constitutional change that will create an even stronger Executive Presidency.

*“Although public services operates incurring an enormous expense expecting an efficient and effective public service; owing to the rigid laws and regulations, and lengthy and outdated administrative methods and procedures, the public has to exert a lot of effort, time, and expense to connect with government agencies for their needs. Therefore, to increase the productivity and efficiency of the public service, making it client-centric, and to digitize the public service, an in addition to the allocation of Rs. 3,500 million a further Rs.500 million will be provided”. (Sri Lanka Finance Minister, Budget speech on 12/11/21)*

### **3.10. Establishment of Divisional Secretariat (DS)**

The Divisional Secretariat<sup>33</sup> (DS) system was established in Sri Lanka in 1987. The Divisional Secretariats are the grass root level administrative units which deliver more than 90 percent of the government services to the citizen. Apart from extending services to public, the DSs are responsible in directing and coordinating all the development activities taking place in the

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<sup>33</sup> The districts of Sri Lanka are divided into administrative sub-units known as divisional secretariats.

division. However, many other ministries and departments provide their services through Divisional Secretariat making the most common, grass root level citizen delivery point. The DSs function under the preview of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs. The main services which are delivered by DS are registration of persons and their life events, pensions, social benefits, motor vehicle registration, motor vehicle driving licenses and renewal of motor vehicle revenue licenses, passports, and issuance of various permits. Therefore, the Divisional Secretariat is identified as the “one stop shop” for delivering most critical government services to the citizen.

There are 25 District Secretariats for 25 administrative districts in the country. The District Secretariat which is headed by the District Secretary is the superior administrative units to the Divisional Secretariat. Generally, there are 5-25 DSs functioning under a District Secretariat. Therefore, Divisional Secretariats cover the entire island. A DS division is further broken in to smaller units and such units are called “Grama Niladarai” Divisions<sup>34</sup> (GN Division) which is a collection of few villages. There are 500 -800 families on average in a Divisional Secretaries’ Division and almost all such families are needed to interact with Divisional Secretariat for many matters related to their daily life.

The establishment of DS office was a drastic change in public service delivery system. Under the new DS system many public services could be obtained by the citizen at their convenience. The research done to assess the effectiveness of DS system proved successful (Nilwala,2013).

### **3.11. Introduction of the Public Management Assistants’ Service (PMAS)**

The other reform initiative during the period of the 1990s to 2000 was the introduction of the PMAS. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the SLPS consists of many sub-services based on division of work which prevailed from colonial time. In 2004, five such services, namely General Clerical, Shroff, Book Keepers, Store Keepers, Typists and Stenographers, were amalgamated into a single service called PMAS (Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, 2004 & 2005). Staff in the clerical service is now required to have competency in working with other office tools in relation to his/her specialty. Officers in other services such as typists and stenographers absorbed into this service should also acquire skills in the performance of duties which have not been entrusted to them under the old system (Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, 2005). As such, an officer needs to gain a variety of skills. The main objective of the establishment of the PMAS is to create one service consisting of officers who are endowed with

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<sup>34</sup> Grama Niladhari is a Sri Lankan public official appointed by the central government to carry out administrative duties in a grama niladhari division, which is a sub-unit of a divisional secretariat.

skills and knowledge on multi-duty systems in place of services which existed in government offices based on division of work. Under the new system it is expected to achieve: improvement of efficiency and productivity in the public service, improvement of speedy service delivery through improvement of multifunctional professional skills; ensuring job satisfaction; reduction in recurrent expenditure; and optimum utilisation of human resources, office spaces and equipment. Therefore, the staff attached to this service has to develop multi skills. However, the implementation of the reform was not without problems. Even after a lapse of two-and-a-half years from the introduction of the new system, it is observed that many public institutions are still confined to the old system. Some of the trade unions opposed this reform due to their vested interests and have taken legal action against this move. (Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, 2008). Similarly, existing staff of those services were reluctant to carry out multi functions, saying that they do not possess necessary skills; for example, clerks resist doing typing and typists resist doing other work than typing. However, with the passage of time, problems with the multi skills requirement for officers of the PMAS have decreased and most of the newcomers to PMAS service have developed those skill sets.

### **3.12. Performance Appraisal system (PA)**

The public sector in most countries, small or big, are going through profound restructuring, trying to provide improved services while at the same time having to drastically downsize in the face of major fiscal constraints.

*“A significant element of such reforms in the public sector is the initiatives underway to reform public administration, to reinvent government to use a popular expression” (Mayne and Zapico-Goni, 1997).*

This process of reforming public administration is seen as necessary to meet the dual challenges of improved services with fewer resources. One of the most popular tools used for reform activities at present is Performance Appraisal Systems.

*“Strengthening government performance – improving the productivity, quality, timeliness, responsiveness, and effectiveness of public agencies and programs – is important to all, as beneficiaries of public service and as taxpayers” (Wholey, 1989)*

However, as Wholey has also suggested, a number of political, bureaucratic, and technical obstacles constrain government performance. Furthermore, Performance Appraisal (PA) is considered to be a particularly controversial management practice anywhere it is being practiced.

At this point it is essential to provide few definitions of what performance appraisal means in the reform context. With the growing amount of literature on performance appraisal, so has the definitions increased over the years. Therefore, the following definitions have been chosen which could be regarded as most relevant to this study. Performance appraisal today is the assessment of an employee's job performance. It has two purposes: First appraisal serves an administrative purpose. It provides information for making salary, promotion, and layoff as well as providing documentation that can justify these decisions in court. Second, and perhaps more importantly, performance appraisal serves a development purpose. The information can be used to diagnose training needs, career planning, and the like. Feedback and coaching based on appraisal information provide the basis for improving day-to-day performance. (Robins & Couter, 1999) Performance appraisal is defined as evaluating an employee's current or past performance relative to his or her performance standards. The appraisal process therefore involves: Setting work standards; assessing the employee's actual performance relative to these standards; and providing feedback to the employee with the aim of motivating that person to eliminate performance deficiencies or to continue to perform above average. (Dessler, 2000) Performance appraisal is

*“the process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of employees in the organization, so that the organizational goals and objectives are more effectively achieved, while at the same time benefiting employees in terms of recognition, receiving feedback, catering for work and offering career guidance”.*  
(Lansbury, 1988).

In Sri Lanka, the first Performance Appraisal System was introduced for the whole of Public Service during 1997 to 2000. In April 2004 all government organizations were directed to implement the system across the board. Even so, from the experience of the previous two years and from the experience of the first appraisal system, it is beyond doubt that the current system will face fundamental obstacles to be institutionalized across the public service. Although performance appraisal is an incentive for production, for innovation, for adequate accountability and reinforces an organization's external orientation, there is another side of the coin (de Bruijn, 2002). Performance Appraisal creates many perverse effects as well. The reason behind the arguably low level of success faced with the use of performance appraisal in public service is supposedly due to a number of cultural, organizational and political factors that have been influencing and arguably decrementing in certain aspects the degree of institutionalization<sup>35</sup> of the system.

Performance appraisal (PA) is expected to provide answers to many of the questions in respect of people management in organizations. It has a variety of utility and serves as a summative

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<sup>35</sup> the action of establishing something as a convention or norm in an organization or culture

function (to assist in making equitable and effective personnel decisions); a formative function (to improve employee current and future performance); and an informative function (a communication to the employee dealing with upward and downward communication for self development) (Opatha, 20091 ). Ideally a good PA system can be used to achieve at least administrative purposes that include:

- (1) To grant salary/wage increment;
- (2) To select employees to be promoted;
- (3) To determine the gravity of disciplinary actions;
- (4) To terminate/confirm employment;
- (5) To validate selection tools; and
- (6) To reward employees (other than salary/wage increments and promotions) and development purposes that include:
  - i. To ascertain potential performance and development needs of the employee so as to develop him/her;
  - ii. To identify training needs of each employee so as to improve each employee's job performance;
  - iii. To counsel employee; and
  - iv. To assess results of training programs.

Studies pertaining to practice of PA in Sri Lankan organisations (Opatha, 1992, Opatha, 2003, Opatha, 2003, Opatha, 2005) reveal a significant gap between what should exist and what in fact is existing. One study was an empirical study, a formal personnel audit effort which dealt with an assessment of employee PA practices of four selected state corporations in Sri Lanka. This study attempted to explore and describe the PA practices in the selected corporations and to assess PA practices in the light of theoretical formulations and comment on major defects in PA in the selected corporations. Synthesis of the literature of theoretical arguments and research resulted in formation of an assessment framework of ideal PA system which was an original contribution to the body of knowledge<sup>36</sup>.

What are the possible reasons for not having an effective high quality PA system in most of the organizations in Sri Lanka? Possible reasons are:

1. It seems that responsible managers do not believe that PA is a driver of job performance and business performance and it has a variety of utility. In fact they do not have the right attitude about PA.
2. Some organizations have a culture that is not valuing excellence at work. Majority of employees are moderate in terms of job performance and having a fear and a dislike to

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<sup>36</sup> A set of accepted and agreed upon standards and nomenclatures pertaining to a field or profession

get their job performance evaluated. Also they have reluctance to see that few employees are excellent at work and are better than them owing to jealousy and inability to face competition.

3. Line managers in some organizations do not take PA as a serious method as it has no link with rewards and training and development.

4. The PA system has been introduced in some organizations as a human resource management programme, not as a general management programme initiated by the top management (not merely by Human Resource Department). Also doing PA has not been specified as an essential duty of job descriptions given to managers.

5. In some cases, there is no objective high quality PA system developed due to lack of expertise in PA and HRM.

There is a strongly felt need for developing an effective PA system and implement it in a planned way. A central question in this context is how to develop a good PA system and implement it as planned. PA is perceived as a systematic process which is composed of ten steps such as establishment of PA objectives; formulation of policies; establishment of PA criteria and standards; selection of method(s); design of forms and procedures; training of evaluators; appraisal in action; discussion of PA results; making decisions and storing; and finally review and renewal (Opatha, 2002, Opatha, 2009).

### **3.13. Introduction of Citizen Charters to public organizations**

A major turnaround for such change was the implementation of Citizen's Charter (CC) which was officially launched in Sri Lanka in 2008 through the ministry of public administration and home affairs. The main purpose of this implementation was to develop a more transparent, service receiver oriented administrative culture with a clear focus of enhancing current efficiency levels. In other terms a Citizen's Charter is a written commitment made by a public institution about its services to the citizens of that country. It is important to study how far CC has been implemented successfully and very less or almost no research has been done in Sri Lanka to identify the success or failure of implementing CC in government departments. CC creates a strong bridge between bureaucrats and the general public which is essential to move forward New Public Management (NPM) objectives of efficiency and customer centric service models. The important segments in CC such as complaint management and even service appraisal are essentially important elements for a successful service delivery and most importantly following a proper mechanism of service delivery; this will eliminate the informal cultural aspects where a number of middlemen are involved in these areas resulting in bribes and extra fees to receive services from government offices.

Citizens' charter was first implemented in the UK in 1991 and this was initiated in Sri Lanka in 2008 through the public administration circular 2008/05 which was sent out to all chief secretaries of provincial councils, heads of departments and heads of public corporations and statutory boards. This implementation was initiated by the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs and United Nations Development Program of Sri Lanka under the Local Governance Project (LoGoPro). A serious concentration was given to this project as this was an important stage towards decentralization and New Public Management (NPM) in essence. However, Citizens' charter is not a thoroughly and a widely researched area in Sri Lanka.

*"Citizen's charter is considered as an efficient, appropriate and relevant mode of delivering quality service on the basis of citizen's interests, needs and aspiration as well as encouraging their active participation in the formulation and implementation of policies that are essential to their daily lives." (McGuire 2002).*

The Citizens' Charter concept can reduce uncertainties through creating accountability and openness covering various processes in government entities by showcasing the proper guidelines for citizens about the services, responsible departments and the timelines involved for each of the services. Further to this the initiation of a complaint system is another significant step ahead in creating a more accountable government service atmosphere for service seekers. The UNDP further emphasizes on developing help desks at each service delivery points to better assist the citizens so that they can experience a hassle free service environment. In other words it can be mentioned that through the Citizens' Charter a proper customer centric atmosphere can be developed strategically.

The question lies in the fact that whether the importance of this initiation has been properly understood by the relevant authorities, as after the official circular was launched in 2008, it has taken one decade for the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs to officially send another circular [Public Administration Circular 6 No: 05/2008 (1)] in 2018 January, reminding all government entity heads about the importance of Citizens' Charter officially and emphasizing that it should be successfully implemented and monitored.

### **3.14. e-Government initiatives**

Governments the world over are increasingly viewing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a key enabler for accelerating and achieving economic and social development in their countries. ICT is seen as an important tool for improving delivery of public services, making government more transparent and accountable, broadening public participation, facilitating the sharing of information and knowledge among the people, and integrating marginalized groups and deprived regions.



The e-government<sup>37</sup> strategy in Sri Lanka is arguably one of the most comprehensive in the South Asian region and possibly among the countries in the whole of Asia. It is different because it takes a more holistic approach to development, where e-government is not an end in itself, but instead a piece of an intricate puzzle, which when put together, aim to significantly impact all sectors of the economy and society and help Sri Lanka as a nation and its people, to take a major leap forward economic and overall development. Sri Lanka's e-development strategy, "*e-Sri Lanka: an ICT Development Roadmap*", (e-Sri Lanka Roadmap) elaborated in November 2002, recognized e-government as a critical area and spelt out the need to establish an institutional framework for planning and implementing e-governance. Prior to the development of the e-Sri Lanka Roadmap, the country lacked a coherent national strategy for ICT, though a Ministry for ICT was briefly in existence in the year 2000. Up to this point, e-government activities were sporadic, ad hoc and often restricted to computerization of departments, generally the result of the efforts of a group of individuals with a vision to use ICT to improve the workplace.

The introduction of ICT in the Departments of Immigration and Emigration, Registration of Persons and Motor Vehicle Registration is a relatively successful example of this. The e-Sri Lanka Roadmap seeks to leverage ICTs towards achieving socio-economic development across multiple sectors of the economy and society. Significantly, the emphasis is not on ICT alone but on using ICT as a development tool to help to improve the lives of citizens. The human development and security aspect is specifically addressed, with key programmes aimed at serving the needs of poor citizens in rural communities who as with most developing nations form the bulk of the population.

The vision of e-Sri Lanka is "*to take the dividends of ICT to every village, to every citizen and to every business and transform the way government thinks and works*". The e-Sri Lanka vision and roadmap gave birth to a nation-wide ICT for development initiative, addressing all sectors of the economy and society, where ICT is used to enhance national competitiveness, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of citizens.

The Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) was created in July 2003 to implement the e-Sri Lanka Roadmap, as a government owned, limited private company reporting to the Minister of Economic Reform, Science and Technology of the then Government of Sri Lanka. Prior to the establishment of ICTA, all ICT related matters had been the responsibility of CINTEC (The Council for Information Technology which had been in existence since 1983). ICTA was created as an apex body to provide leadership, to energise the process of using ICT for reform and economic growth and to create a more dynamic organization outside

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<sup>37</sup> Electronic government (or e-Government) is the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to government functions and procedures with the purpose of increasing efficiency, transparency and citizen participation.

the rigidity of the government bureaucracy, more flexible and responsive to such a fast changing technology as ICT. Once operational, one of the immediate challenges ICTA faced was to take the e-Sri Lanka Roadmap from what was essentially a comprehensive vision document and five programme strategies, to a detailed plan of implementation, with actionable and fundable programmes and projects. This was achieved in a short period of time starting from the Agency's inception in July 2003, recruitment of core staff by September 2003, to preparation of a funding proposal for submission to the World Bank in February 2004. Besides responding quickly and positively to the request from the Government of Sri Lanka to fund key components of the e-Sri Lanka Roadmap, the World Bank played a critical role in facilitating this process.

### **3.15. Chapter summary**

This chapter examined the post-Independence key public administrative reform initiatives by successive governments in Sri Lanka from the 1948s to 2020. The principal aim of this examination was to identify the motivations and drivers of reforms, whether they were successes or failures, reasons for their failures, and consequences, to draw lessons from the past for future reforms. This examination illustrated the complexity and specificity of the Sri Lanka situation beginning with the language reforms in 1956 which led to several other reforms later. This speculates how the piecemeal reforms of the 1970s and 2020s inevitably failed and how their effects still shape the Sri Lanka political and administrative systems and therefore, must be accounted for in any future attempt to reform the public sector. This analysis provides a broad base for the argument that one cannot contemplate future reforms in Sri Lanka public service unless one understands the full complexity and specificity of what has happened in the recent past. In particular, the conceptual diagram of this study illustrated in Chapter 2 developed by Pollitt and Bouckaert also shows that the effects of public sector reforms depend on the history, structure, culture, and political economy of the country. The Sri Lanka experiences align with this argument of specificity and illustrates why public sector reforms prove to be impossible in Sri Lanka. The past reform experiences of Sri Lanka demonstrate that public administrative reforms cannot be successful without commensurate reforms in the political system of the nation. In other words, public sector reforms cannot be independent of the political reforms.

# CHAPTER FOUR : CITIZEN'S SATISFACTION AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

## 4.1. Introduction

The fourth chapter discusses the importance of citizen satisfaction on public delivery services and the responsibility of public sector leaders in offering those services to the citizens. As discussed in the previous chapter the key objective of introducing reforms is to strengthen the public delivery services to make the citizens happy. In doing so, public service organizations as well as public servants should demonstrate high performances and commitments. Particularly, public sector leaders both political as well as administrative should act as leaders in providing public delivery services to match with the citizens' expectations.

This chapter further assesses the nature and quality role of leadership in service delivery aspects in the public service. The different definitions of leadership by various scholars are appraised to inform the formulation of this study's leadership construct. Its attributes will be used as a point of reference to compare with the nature and quality role of leadership as practiced by the public leaders to understand whether they are compatible with, and relevant to each other. The various dimensions of leadership styles are also evaluated to understand what they are and how they are applied by leaders in a real-life situation. Moreover, few selected leadership theories are also analyzed to understand why and how were conceptualized. The quality roles of leadership as applied by leaders across the globe should produce better results in their various organizations when assessed against the performance of the leadership in the public sector. The evaluation of qualities of good governance<sup>38</sup> and good leadership is undertaken to understand the impact they have on the improvement of service delivery. The examination of the applicable institutional capacity and human resources is important because of its ability to empower public leaders to fully harness the entire system of public delivery systems. The problems that undermine the performance of leadership in the public service are also assessed to understand how they can be resolved.

## 4.2 Citizens' satisfaction

A major focus of the shift from traditional public administration to new public management was the major concentration it had on citizen's satisfaction which was often referred to as customer satisfaction since especially through the initiation of Citizen Charter reform it was strictly

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<sup>38</sup> Good Governance is an approach to government that is committed to creating a system founded in justice and peace that protects individual's human rights and civil liberties.

important to treat citizens as customers. A famous statement Henry Ford made in the earlier days when he started making cars was that *“you can have any car you want as long as it is Black”* and from that day to the present status private sector grew massively taking into consideration that customer satisfaction is the key to sustainability. However the public sector due to the monopolistic nature of the services delivered took a very lethargic turn towards the important of citizens’ satisfaction however through the new public management reforms it took a major turn into a very positive manner. There is a large array of literature written regarding citizen satisfaction and the important of citizen’s trust hence this segment will focus on mentioning some of the literature focused on citizen’s satisfaction. Abeyrathna et al (2017) stressed about the importance of citizens trust and citizens satisfaction, *“The high level of citizens’ trust and satisfaction over the performance of democratic institutions provide the backbone for a viable democracy. The low level of citizens’ trust and satisfaction in the public institutions pose a serious threat to the future of democracy.”* Therefore it is important to note that undoubtedly governments should keep a strong focus on the satisfaction of citizens in order for a sustainable political as well as economic prosperity.

Overall citizen satisfaction can be defined as a citizen's summative judgment regarding the performance of the government with respect to the quality of basic public services. Public management has given emphasis to determine the government performance, which particularly focuses to measure the outcomes. However objective measures are not always appropriate to recognize the outcomes of government services (Holzer, M 2004). To resolve this issue emphasis has given to connect internal activities along with the outcome which is appreciated by common people (Kelly, J.M, 2005). It would help to enhance effectiveness, efficiency of public services through reallocate resources and reorganize the process of service delivery (Ma, L 2016). Consequently citizen satisfaction with the public services has emerged as an area of interest for the academicians and managers in the subject of public management. Citizen satisfaction index is an instrument to identify the view of common people about their living area ( Nigro, H.O, 2016). The extent of citizen satisfaction is directly linked with the outcome of the administrative performance which can stimulate the reform in the government sector (Cigu, E. 2013). Existing literature has recognized the use of survey of citizen in assessing performance of government (Bao G.X, 2010). Citizen satisfaction survey is the commonly used measures in assessing the outcome of the action taken by government. Satisfaction survey plays a vital role in procurement of resources, and performance improvement, which help the public services are to be more proactive towards the needs of the citizen that will enhance people’s trust in government (Gao, J, 2012).

## 4.3. Definitions of the Terms

This section explains the “Definitions of Terms.” This gives the reader an understanding of the concepts or factors that will be discussed in this study, as well as contextual information as to how the researcher will be using those concepts in this study. The “Definitions of Terms” ensures that the readers will understand the components of the study in the way that will be presenting them, because often readers may have their own understanding of the terms, or not be familiar with them at all. In this section, it will provide a list of terms that will be used throughout the dissertation and definitions of each of them.

### 4.3.1. Concept of satisfaction

Satisfaction can be termed as a post consumption evaluation of quality of services. It is a mental state that arises after encountering a service and contrasting that with previously hold experiences. Therefore satisfaction is positively related with perception<sup>39</sup> about the performance. Along with the managerial measures, satisfaction is also used as a standard of service performance. Customer satisfaction is a familiar concept in marketing field. In consumer behavior literature it can be interpreted as the alternative among substitutes and brands. Expectations are regarded as the principal aspect of satisfaction studies. Expectations are created prior to actual experience about any goods or services and compare against the perception of performance. Expectations and perception individually and collectively influence the satisfaction. For the sustainable growth every institute should focus on customer satisfaction as the satisfied customer can spread their opinion, by Word of Mouth ( WOM) to many people which is beneficial for organization/institute. Citizens’ satisfaction with the public goods or services also gets the attention of public administrator or manager in late 1990s or early 20 s particularly for OECD countries. Citizen satisfaction plays a crucial role to realize the requirement of common people.

In the beginning of 1980 or late 70 s, elements of citizen satisfaction with civil services have been explored which include the relationship among demographic traits (age, income, gender, race etc.) and satisfaction. For instance, the outcome of some study suggested that Blacks were tend to be less satisfied with government service , suggesting, that jurisdictions with more black residents provide lower quality services or demographic characteristics show diverse levels of demand for services. A gap has been recognized between subjective and objective method of evaluation of governmental services. To bridge this gap academicians concentrated on the effect of perceived service quality, instead of objective quality, as a factor of satisfaction. Dissatisfaction linked with the perceived performance is considered as complain of citizen towards their local administration for being not up to the mark.

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<sup>39</sup> the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses

### 4.3.2. Concept and role of expectation to form satisfaction

The effect of consumer expectations has been well established with the products of private organization. However public organization has recognized the value of it in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century with the work of the government. Expectations can be termed as future intended subjective attitudes and viewpoint which includes a wide variety of things. Citizen expectations about public services have an imperative role on satisfaction judgment and their political voice which includes voting behavior. According to James,(2012), expectations are the *'judgments of what individuals or groups think either will or should happen under particular circumstances'*. Expectations can be categorized in two ways:

- 1) positive expectation and
- 2) normative expectations.

Positive expectations are defined as citizen's view about what will be the performance of a service whereas normative expectations are citizen's assumption about what service performance should be. Thus normative expectations specify that civilian have observation about what is realistic and desirable. Positive expectations not always bring out those results that individual consider as desirable likewise normative expectations not lead to those outcome that citizen assume as important. Both expectations have their own influence to outline satisfaction judgment with community services. Recently academicians have considered the impact of positive expectation on the satisfaction with the public services.

Numerous factors help to formulate the expectations in the private and public sector services. Impact of expectations has been recognized in the services of private organization. Oliver has explained the influence of informal communications, personal needs and past experience to form expectations about the perception of services. In case of public sector along with previous mentioned factors there are some other parameters that have strong impact to form expectations in public services. These factors are the amount of tax paid, availability of resources and other provisions related to service delivery. In this background provision of information also have a major role. Generally citizens are not well aware about all the governmental policies and performance. All this information may originate from different sources like the media, personal experiences, service provider themselves. The information is particularly important for those services which are not directly experienced by citizen or used very frequently. According to James & Wilson (2011), the information about the excellent performance would increase citizen satisfaction whereas satisfaction would decrease with the information of poor performance. In 2011, James has examined that the positive expectations would tend to increase with the information of excellent performance. Thus the public

administrator and politician can easily manipulated expectations through information to enhance citizen satisfaction with government services.

### **4.3.3. Definition and functions of service quality to form satisfaction**

The performance of any institution is significantly relying on the standard of services it gives to its clients/stakeholders. Generally after purchase customers judge the perceived services in contrast with their expectations. On the basis of this comparison customers will form their satisfaction judgment about the standard of perceived service. Therefore the conception of service quality is interlinked with the idea of satisfaction though both are different. According to some researchers customer satisfaction is short term as it is service specific experience whereas the judgment of quality is long term because it's a cognitive process<sup>40</sup>. Service quality can be defined as expectations and perception of a customer related to a service. Quality of a service can be assessed in two steps—

- 1) the way service is rendered and
- 2) the result of the rendered service.

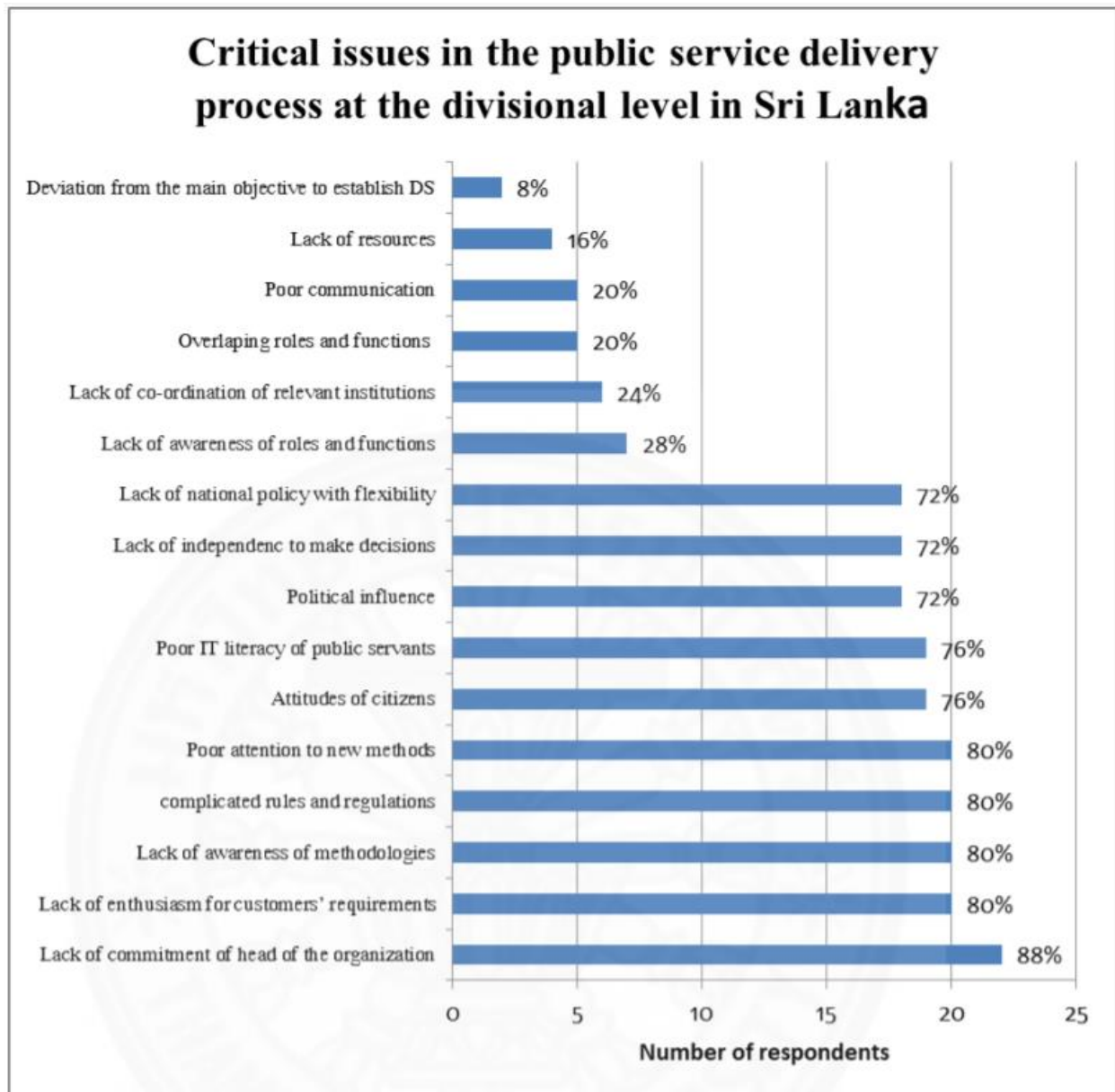
Gronroos (2013) have identified two areas of service quality namely—the technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality is concern about what consumer receives while functional quality emphasizes about the process (how). To fully understand the component of service quality for satisfaction nineteen conceptual models were introduced by researchers within 1984 to 2003. These models are vital for perceived the components related to service quality and the inter relation among those components. Due to diverse nature of service quality academicians have divided these models into two schools which consist with the school of America and the school of Northern Europe. Quality government services can be assessed by the experience and satisfaction of the citizen. Satisfaction can be obtained by innovation as along with improved service quality.

A survey conducted by Mrs. Don Kusalani de Silve for her Masters thesis has identified seventeen important issues with public service delivery process. She has conducted this survey through the twenty five Divisional Secretaries' experiences, thoughts and opinions. The critical issues identified are ranked.

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<sup>40</sup> Cognition is a term referring to the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension. These cognitive processes include thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, and problem-solving.

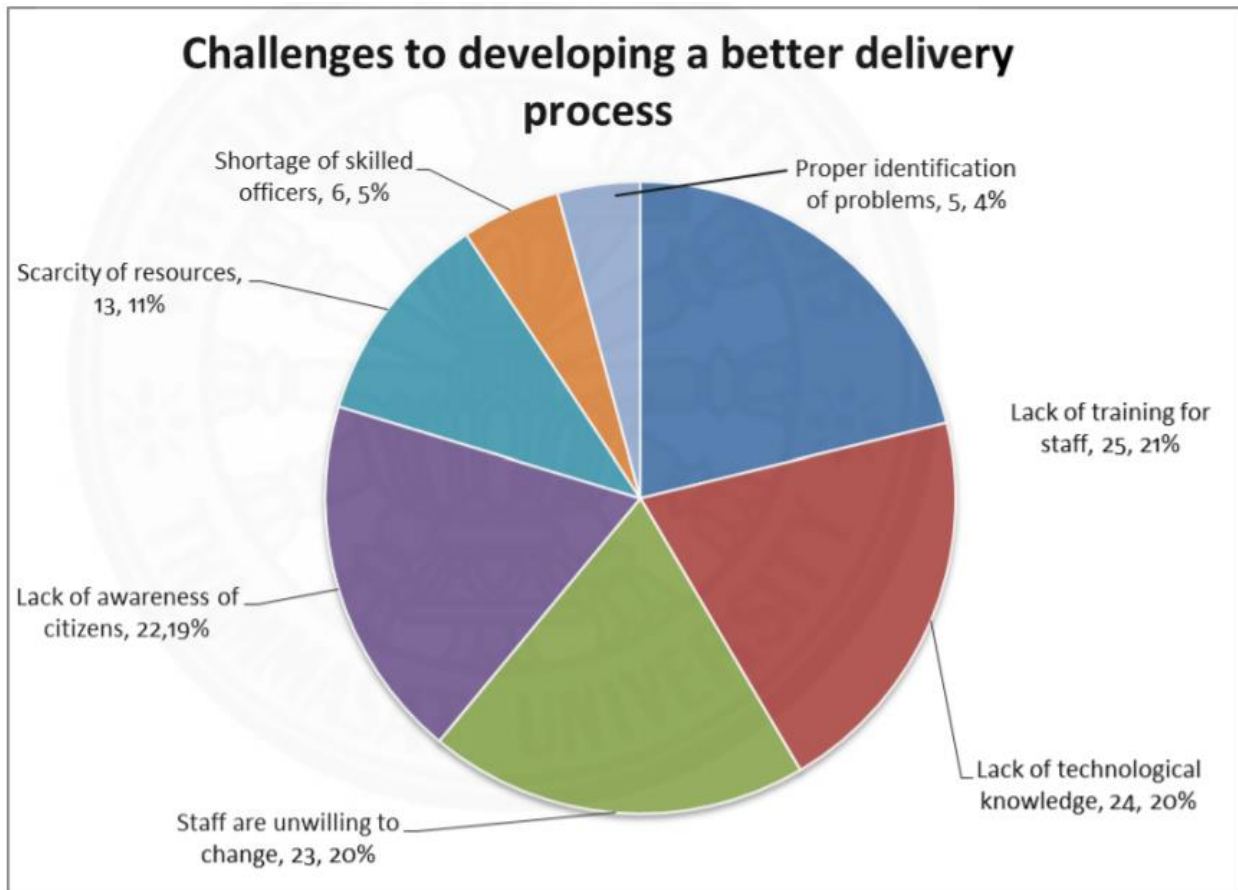
Figure 4- Critical issues in the public service delivery



The above analysis shows the lack of commitment of the head of the organization as the key reason (88%) for poor service delivery at the DS offices. Furthermore, reasons such as poor attention to new methods, complicated rules and regulations, lack of awareness of methodologies and lack of enthusiasm for customers' requirements have been identified in the said survey.



Figure 5 – Challengers to developing a better delivery process



It was revealed that lack of training and lack of technological knowledge as main challengers for better delivery process at the DS offices. In addition, unwillingness of the staff, lack of awareness about citizens, scarcity of resources, shortage of skilled offices and weak identification of problems have been revealed as other challenges for better service delivery in the DS offices.

**Figure 6- How to maximize customer' satisfaction**



When examine the strategies for maximize customer' satisfaction, 100% agreed to empower employees in the DS offices. In addition, the research suggested to introduce new programs according to customer feedback, simplify systems and procedures, encourage effective listening skills of officers, use technological appliances, answer to all questions of customers, manage time effectively and minimize unsatisfied customers by attending their demand in a friendly manner to make service delivery efficient and effective.

#### **4.4. Concept of Disconfirmation**

In the literature of consumer behavior disconfirmation is described as discrepancy or gap among expectations and perceived performance. Based on the outcome disconfirmation can be positive or negative. When the perceptions about the performance go beyond the expectation level it will lead to positive disconfirmation. In contrast, when performance cannot reach up to

expectation level it gives rise to negative disconfirmation. The SERVQUAL model<sup>41</sup> is established on the concept of disconfirmation. In marketing the influence of disconfirmation to shape satisfaction has been recognized for long ago. In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century the effect of disconfirmation has been identified in public management and the results are similar with the result of private sector. The result suggested that positive disconfirmation gives rise to high satisfaction.

## 4.5. Importance of the current study

After the development of New Public Management (NPM), Performance measurement in government sector has been adopted as a vital component around the world. In 1992 Osborne and Gaebler first time introduced the idea of “Reinventing Government” where they considered citizen as consumer. Here performance is calculated by effectiveness of service delivery and the improvement is indicated by increased level of satisfaction of beneficiaries. Involvement of common people in the evaluation is essential to build a strong relationship between government and citizen through trustworthiness. Amid last decades public sector has changed radically after introduction of citizen centric approach. The main changes include decentralization and citizen participation in decision making process. In this aspect citizen satisfaction survey become an inevitable tool to measure the performance of government. Studies suggested that the performance measurements fail to achieve its goal if the need of citizen has not been incorporated in that. As a result the process will become less effective for the governmental decision making. Akgul, (2010) rightly explained that without incorporating the expectation and perceptions of beneficiaries’ performance measurement cannot be achieved. Satisfaction is a mixture of cause and effect of various construct. In literature service specific expectations and disconfirmation is pointed out as two major components for the development of satisfaction judgment. This model has ruled private-sector to investigate consumer satisfaction for ages, however in recent times it has been connected with citizen satisfaction with services of public service by Van Ryzin (2012). This study will give the idea about how this model has modified in the field of public service over the progress of time and the applicability of this model in different governmental level (local government, provincial government and central government). Therefore this study can summarize the results of earlier studies and help to identify the loopholes for future development.

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<sup>41</sup> The SERVQUAL Model is derived from the study of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1985 and originally 10 dimensions of service quality were reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, tangibles.

## 4.6. Theoretical Background

Expectancy Disconfirmation Model (EDM) is a psychological theory, commonly used in marketing, especially in consumer behavior to determine the post purchase satisfaction of purchaser/buyer. Expectations-confirmation theory proposes that expectations, along with perception of performance, shaped post-purchase satisfaction. This relation is mediated through disconfirmation (either positive or negative) connecting expectations and performance. As indicated by this theory, individual formed their judgment about any product or service; with already possess set of beliefs with respect to the attributes or benefit of that product or service offered. Actual, performance of any item can be uncovered simply after the utilization which is contrasted against earlier desire level (prior expectation level). In literature, the gap between expectations and perceived/actual performance is termed as disconfirmation of expectation. Disconfirmation can be positive, when expectation exceeds performance or negative, when performances not reach up to the level of expectation. Role of disconfirmation as an indicator of client satisfaction have been proved in different studies of consumer behavior. The expectation level serves as a ground to form disconfirmation. Positive disconfirmation results in satisfaction, while the negative disconfirmation decreases it. Oliver (2013) has identified disconfirmation as the crucial element as expectation may change over the progress of time.

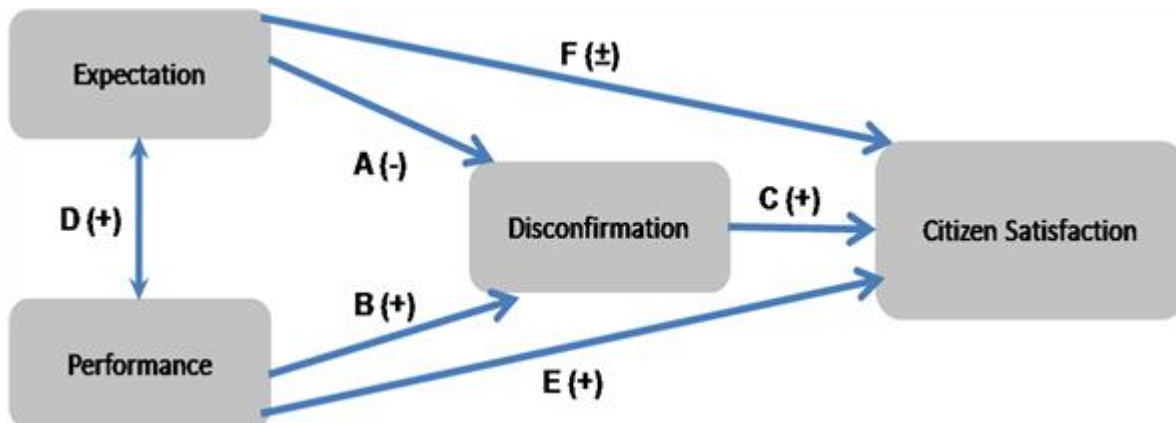


Figure 7. Expectancy disconfirmation with performance model (adopted from Ryzin, 2004).

The above figure demonstrates the performance-based model of expectancy disconfirmation, which is stable with the experimental along with the theoretical research in the practice of business literature. The relationship within the different variables demonstrated provides an insight about the important hypotheses associated with this model and its implication for the analysis of citizen satisfaction in public sectors.

The above diagram demonstrates the relationship among the key variables of EDM. It is hypothesized that high expectations give rise to more negative disconfirmation (path A), on the other hand link among performance and disconfirmation (link B) represents that high performance results in more positive disconfirmation. Disconfirmation, in turn, is positively influenced to frame satisfaction judgment (link C). It indicates that positive disconfirmation (beyond expectations) generates higher level of satisfaction, whereas negative disconfirmation (expectations going down) decreases the satisfaction level. Finally, expectations and performance are also believed to be positively interlinked (link D), particularly in case of empirical research, yet the particular direction of this relationship has not been specified yet. All these relationships in the figure principally describe the expansion of basic EDM. With the progress of time the core model has been refined with other directions that can work parallel in conjunction with the fundamental relations of EDM. Link E shows performance positively connected with satisfaction. It indicates that performance is a preliminary element which can influence the satisfaction beyond varying expectation level of individual. The direct and combine effect (with disconfirmation) of performance on satisfaction has been explored in literature. To assess citizen satisfaction if the link E appears relatively stronger, then it would propose that the formation of satisfaction is basically based on execution of performance only without considering the outcome of prior expectations. The direct impact of expectations on satisfactions is shown by the link F. Expectations can influence satisfaction when people are unable to evaluate the service performance of public service directly then the evaluation is done on the basis of previously hold expectation for reasons of dissonance reduction or ego defensiveness. As the quality of services provided by public service is strongly correlated with the view of citizen or individual's political attitudes, so therefore, individual can anticipate that this effect of assimilation would contribute to determine citizen satisfaction. This effect could be negative which is aligning with fundamental process of expectancy-disconfirmation as a means of performance perception. However, in some studies direct positive effect of expectations has been reported in literature. These two results are counter balancing each other apparently. As people apply the expectations as a referent point to form judgment about satisfaction and hence this satisfaction rating is attached with this baseline specifically it is relevant when evaluation is difficult or ambiguous.

## **4.7 The nature of leadership in service delivery under administrative reforms**

The role of leadership is a key for achieving the objectives of administrative reforms and to ensure public service delivery effectiveness. Both political as well as appointed leaders need to play decisive roles in changing administrative set up to satisfy the citizens for their demand for

public services. Most of the administrative reforms in Sri Lanka have been introduced after through studies carried out before taking decisions to implement those reforms. However, the role of the public sector leaders has been in questions in many times.

The nature of leadership means different things to people. There is no universal consensus as to what leadership includes and means. An assessment of various definitions put forward by different scholars provides a collective structure on which the definition of leadership could be grounded. An effort is made to assess a handful of widely held definitions of leadership. Bass (1990) defines leadership as:

*“...an interaction of two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situations and perceptions and expectations of the members...Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership...”*

Bass's (1990) description of leadership seems to be hierarchically rigid because of its emphasis on one member with the ability to contribute to the modification of other group members to acquire additional skills and inspiration. There is, however, an acknowledgement that other group members, depending on their capabilities, could also emerge as leaders if they influence group associates to alter their original perceptions of how they view what motivates or inspires them. What also stands out appears to be a reformation of members' expectations or situations. This means that members of a group should meet and communicate about what they need to accomplish. In the process of their discussions, whoever exerts power or authority to change other group members' capabilities so that they start to see or understand things differently would emerge a leader. Finucane (1974) quotes Julius Nyerere as saying that:

*"Leadership means talking and discussing with the people, explaining and persuading. It means making constructive suggestions and working with the people to show by actions what it is you are urging them to do. It means being one of the people and recognizing your equality with them. But giving leadership does not mean usurping the role of the people. The people must make decisions about their own future through democratic procedures. Leadership cannot replace democracy; it must be a part of democracy."*

From this definition it is apparent that a leader has a role to promote participatory leadership within the team members. This definition shows that decisions taken should be an outcome of people discussing issues as equals with a leader. It emphasizes that leadership should be a democratic process where people take decisions on the course they want to follow. A leader paves the way for a democratic process to unfold without assuming people's roles but

persuading them through useful proposals for people themselves to chart the way forward. Hallinger and Heck (1998) explain that:

*“Leadership enhances organizational performance and survival by affecting social structures, the regularized aspects of relationships existing among participants in an organization.”*

This definition is purposeful rather than explanatory as it focuses on what leadership does without elucidating how that can be achieved. If members share a similar vision within their group, there is a possibility of improving the performance and survival of an organization. This is so because leadership exists within the ambit of group members mingling together to change each other’s perspectives in an informal way. This view does not suggest that those in formal leadership positions should be rendered redundant but to reinforce the idea of collaboration between individuals of their own volition. Harris (2004) observes that:

*“Leadership...resides in the human potential available to be released within an organization.”*

The problem with this definition is that it assumes leadership to be innate to an individual, only waiting to be unleashed in the organization. It fails to recognize that leadership can take place outside the formal organization as long as there is a group of people working together to achieve a goal. This definition asserts that it is an organization that could realize people’s leadership attributes and not individuals themselves who may show such potential. It does not appreciate the fact that it is the individual who possesses these abilities to be a leader, independent of the organization. Leadership, as Harris explains, emerges within ‘human potential’ but does not need an organization in order to materialize. For example, if a person sees someone drowning in a river and starts calling for help, this person has spontaneously demonstrated leadership potential. This example shows that whilst leadership is indeed innate to a person’s potential, it can be fully cultivated and harnessed unexpectedly without hesitation.

## **4.8. Leadership construct for this study**

Based on the evaluated definitions, this study defines leadership as a process of controlling, providing direction and guidance to the associates and community members by involving and not usurping their roles in decision-making, and recognizing equality with them when power and authority is exercised. This definition considers every member in a team and people in a community to be equal without reducing the role that a leader plays not only in controlling the resources of an organization but also directing and guiding team members and communities. It further acknowledges a role that a leader undertakes to involve and not take over the power of

team associates in decision-making processes when control and authority are applied. This definition is central to the roles that group members and people play to change each other's circumstances and perceptions. Public service leadership is ordinarily projected to possess an ability to control the resources of local government institutions with a vision to direct and guide employees and people in the communities by involving but not usurping their role in decision-making and treating them as equals when power and authority are implemented. The same is true for leadership because residents expect resources to be controlled and used in a responsible manner in the process of directing and guiding group associates and for citizens to be involved and not isolated in decision-making; while also accepting equality with them when executing power and authority. The defining feature of leadership is the ability to facilitate and promote quality and effective delivery of services to the citizens in an accountable manner. This is the definition which will form the context within which an assessment and interpretation of the performance of leadership in the public service will be undertaken. Furthermore, the changing role of the public sector leadership is discussed in the context of the different administrative reforms introduced after 1948 in Sri Lanka.

#### **4.8.1. The dimensions of leadership styles**

Some of the dimensions of leadership styles are as old as the existence of the first national states<sup>42</sup> on earth. They are therefore widely acknowledged the world over. It can then be argued that some styles of leadership were used in the ancient and feudal times and are still used by the modern representative states (Engels, 1884). The dimensions of leadership styles have recently taken on a greater importance to the extent that no conversation of any political system is considered thorough unless a debate also includes them. It is a reality that every system of government, whether totalitarian or democratic, applies, in one way or another, some dimensions of leadership styles. It is thus important to undertake an assessment and scrutiny of not all but some of the greatest renowned dimensions of leadership styles in relation to the performance of leadership in the public sector institutions.

##### **4.8.1.1. Autocratic leadership**

Autocratic leadership refers to the concentration of power and authority in a leader who does not allow group members or people from communities to participate in decision-making. The power and authority are not shared among group associates but concentrated in the hands of an autocratic leader. Group members or people from communities have no influence in how power is applied in their communities. A leader dictates what should be done without providing any opportunity for opinions from group members or community members. An autocrat

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<sup>42</sup> France after the French Revolution (1787–99) is often cited as the first nation-state, some scholars consider the establishment of the English Commonwealth in 1649 as the earliest instance of nation-state creation.



dictates whilst dismissive of any suggestions. Harms, et al (2018) describe autocratic leadership as a system that:

*“...usually entails the leader taking all or nearly all responsibility for decisions, but often taking responsibility for subordinate performance...demanding the unquestioning obedience of their followers...”*

Viewed from this perspective, autocracy seems to be detrimental because as electors, people are supposed to be delegators and mandators of the members on what and how programmes and projects should be implemented in their communities. Decision-making, if any, should be taken in consensus with the residents. It is incorrect for a member to impose policies and decisions of the political party that deployed them to represent the local people. The local people, in contrast to the autocratic approach, have the right to question the conduct of members. In fact, members, as representatives of their constituencies in the council should consult with the communities they are serving. In practicing autocracy, members often call meetings but may only do this in order to pressure communities to approve their decisions instead of listening to the local people. However, where people have a right to protest against decisions of leaders, autocracy is unsustainable. Even in situations where there are clearly defined structures to ensure control and coordination, people still find a way to oppose the actions of autocratic members. Although it cannot be denied that autocracy still exists in several countries, it is argued that people accept it, not through their own volition but as a consequence of fear or intimidation. It has been proven that even during the ancient and feudal eras where slave-owners and the nobility ruled with iron hand, autocracy was still rejected but because the ruling classes had means and weapons of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class it appears, at face value, as if people accepted it voluntarily which is not accurate (Engels, 1884). A group of members alone deciding for local people who are the electorate, on important issues of leadership, governance and service delivery is unrealistic since decisions should be made only after debate has occurred in the communities. Although it is expected of a public leader to make decisions on behalf of the people, it is wrong to do so in a tyrannical or draconian<sup>43</sup> manner where people are not consulted. It is therefore unbecoming and selfish of ward leaders or public leaders to lead by means of a decree rather than in consultation with the communities. More importantly, contrary to autocracy, to prevent negative conduct on the part of members, communities should be expected to question and provide guidance on a way forward. Autocracy may result in little reassurance being afforded to the local people.

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<sup>43</sup> *Draconian* comes from *Draco*, the name of a 7th-century B.C. Athenian legislator who created a written code of law. Draco's code was intended to clarify preexistent laws, but its severity is what made it really memorable.

#### **4.8.1.2. Charismatic leadership**

Charismatic leadership refers to the interaction between leaders and people in which their self-confidence depends on the leaders' articulation of vision and mission accompanied by a desire to achieve goals, leaving people voluntarily abandoning self-centeredness in favour of collective success. A charismatic leader is usually a gifted leader and risk taker that individuals voluntarily support out of allegiance. Charismatic leaders are confident and clear about the vision the organization takes. A charismatic leader has an ability to instill trust in the community to minimize resistance, as Shamir and Howell (2018) comment that:

*"...the effectiveness of charismatic leadership [is] the degree of its influence on followers' self-concepts, values, and motivations."*

Although there is a persuasive argument that charismatic leadership is compelling in relation to mobilizing people to support their leader voluntarily, its success will definitely depend on the ability of the public leader and supporters to inspire each other's self-confidence. However, to suggest that the morals and inspirations of the followers are dependent on the charisma of a public leader does not make sense because they are still who they are before and after they decided to support them. It is a fundamental weakness to label the supporters' good virtues as being shaped by those of the charismatic leader.

#### **4.8.1.3. Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership refers to a leader who leads by means of changing people's attitudes to focus on the work at hand. This style of leadership encourages knowledge distribution among the supporters of a transformational leader which eventually cascades to the whole team (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010). To improve every supporter's aptitude, the transformational leader should ensure that communication of all innovation abilities is fully revealed to communities. Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) observe that:

*"Transformational leaders influence followers by elevating their goals beyond their own self-interest and providing them with the confidence to achieve their goals."*

Transformation is desirable if informed by the reality of what is happening within the communities. It should not be transformation for the sake of preaching it but must draw on the experiences of the local people. Changes should not be arbitrarily intended to suit a public leader's perceptions of reality; changes must be brought about to increase popular participation in decision-making and problem-solving. This implies that changes must emerge from the lived realities as a means of increasing local commitment and involvement of the management of development programmes to address local problems. The citizen shall have

achieved their goals, supported by the transformational leader, if they are able to contribute to the growth of their community's self-esteem.

#### **4.8.1.4. Exemplary leadership**

Exemplary leadership refers to a leader who inspires local people to collectively work together for the achievement of common goals. An exemplary leader models the way by using creativity and innovation to change the situation of the local people for the better through effective and efficient service delivery (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). If the local people are recognized and appreciated by their ward leaders they are more likely to find comfort and value in the roles that they play. Kouzes and Posner (2002) observe that exemplary leaders:

*"...model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart."*

According to this argument, it requires an exemplary leader to understand and appreciate the needs of the local people by means of encouraging communities to be part of the system. This is so especially because the exemplary leader leads by example. A leader who leads by example is likely to know and understand what programmes and projects communities are the most interesting in having. An exemplary leader understands what communities want by communicating openly, and may also enable members to facilitate and promote effective and quality service delivery on behalf of the communities. This is especially true because exemplary leaders care about the livelihoods of others, particularly the poor and the oppressed of their communities.

#### **4.8.1.5. Servant leadership**

Servant leadership is practiced by a leader who shows faithfulness and devotion when serving the interests and needs of the people who have shown their support. Like democracy in general, servant leadership is supposed to enhance members' political and administrative responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of services (Nengwekhulu, 2008). This is especially so because servant leaders listen and take advice from the people who are being led for direction and guidance. Starting from the leader and devolving to every supporter, servant leadership gives hope and encourages perseverance, and gives supporters conviction and determination to achieve the shared objectives. Servant leadership, practically speaking, is premised on the notion that a servant leader has gone through challenges on behalf of the exploited masses.

#### **4.8.1.6. Visionary leadership**

Visionary leadership envisions the future by inspiring people to support creativity and innovation in their own communities. It is premised on the basis that a leader is driven by a

vision which is not only stimulating, moving and reliable but also real when enacted to solve people's problems in their own communities. The visions of both visionary leaders and local people should be rooted in lived realities if they are to avoid misaligned outcomes. Westley and Mintzberg (1989) indicate that:

*“Visionary leadership encourages innovation - fiction becomes experiment. Visionary leadership inspires the impossible - fiction becomes truth.”*

The success of a visionary leader will require capacity from local leadership to guide and direct resources properly and use them where they are most required. For meaningful local democratic governance and effective accountability to occur in the municipalities, there is a need to capacitate local leadership with skills to improve the situation in places where formerly disadvantaged people mostly live. In a situation where there is limited quality local leadership capacity, there is a high probability of service delivery not taking place at all. Although visionary leadership should inspire innovation, it is unlikely that this will happen because members lack commitment and political will, the situation being further exacerbated by the fact that members do not have the skills and experience to utilize the budgeted funds adequately. The availability of skills in the municipalities will facilitate and promote innovation because innovative members will effectively carry out their functions and responsibilities to ensure services are provided to the residents.

*“Visionary leaders are equipped with a high level of commitment...They have a sense of personal integrity and radiate a sense of energy, vitality and will.”*

There is a strong argument that visionary leadership expedites efficient and authentic provision of service delivery, but this depends on the commitment and honesty of members to serve the communities they represent in the council with interest and empathy. The tendency of dishonest members in the public service has been to neglect their functions and responsibilities. As a result service delivery by members who are corrupt and deceiving to their constituencies has been disorganised and unproductive. In circumstances where members are not committed to their work, to talk, therefore, of exuding energy and willpower to provide service delivery remains a fantasy. It is clear that for visionary leadership to become a solid driver for enhancing political and bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of delivery of services, members must be advocates of clean governance and greater accountability. Visionary leadership and the study's leadership construct are well-matched in relation to their attributes. However, members did not meet the attributes of visionary leadership. Their lack of political and administrative accountability undermined their ability to practise visionary leadership.

#### **4.8.1.7. Strategic leadership**

Strategic leadership is about leaders who plan and execute development projects and programmes for the communities they serve with the approval of the local people. This type of leadership is built on the leader's ability to consult local people before strategic decisions are taken and implemented. Usman (2010) quotes Hitt (2005) in defining strategic leadership as:

*"...the ability to anticipate, envisions, maintain flexibility, and empower other to create strategic changes as necessary."*

While strategic leadership creates the opportunity for flexibility, it depends on the availability of members that can forecast and embrace unanticipated events. While fundamental changes are necessary for the survival and reproduction of any political and administrative system, it also depends on the ability of members to plan and have contingency plans to deal with unforeseen circumstances. Antonakis and House (2014) explain that:

*"Strategically, leaders monitor the external environment and identify strategies and goals...provide direction and resources, monitor performance and provide feedback."*

The question is whether the existence of strategic leadership in the public service can actually lead to enhancements in the provision of services to the communities. The attributes of strategic leadership and the study's leadership construct are in accord, but for members to be strategic, changes in attitude and behaviour are required. It is theoretically possible that public leaders who are strategically prepared will provide guidance and direction as to where resources should be deployed, but this also depends on the ability of the members to understand the ambitions, needs, frustrations and visions of the local people. Although this has not always been the case, it is, however, not possible to rule it out altogether. While there is sufficient indication that strategic leadership can enhance the management and provision of delivery of services, this depends on the capacity of members to increase flexibility and the rate of responsiveness to the problems that local people experience. With the high rate of members at parliament who do not provide consultation and feedback to the communities they represent and serve, members still do not respond adequately to their problems.

#### **4.8.1.8. Laissez-faire leadership**

Laissez-faire leadership is based on the belief that leaders should decide and do as they please free from government control and community involvement when exercising power and authority to serve private commercial interests. Tosunoglu and Ekmekci (2016) characterise laissez-faire leadership as:

*“...one of the ineffective and destructive leadership styles...erodes...trust in supervisors and organizations.”*

Laissez-faire leadership is the most discredited style in recent times for its explicit shortcomings, namely freedom from government control and community interventions, thereby serving private commercial interests. Contextually, laissez-faire leadership is undesirable in South Asia because colonialism and poor circumstances and for that reason there is a need for community involvement and government intervention to implement big infrastructure programmes to catalyse job opportunities. It will create distrust between members and communities, thereby allowing further systemic defects that may lead to abuse of the exploited communities. Practically, laissez-faire leadership does not serve as a guarantor for local democracy as it prevents community interventions. Real democracy can only exist where communities are involved and engaged in the development of projects and programmes relevant to the needs of the local people. Laissez-faire leadership, in fact, will perpetuate exploitation of the communities because of its narrow view of focusing on commercial interests rather than on the welfare of the people in general. In terms of laissez-faire perspectives, service delivery is treated as a commodity to buy and sell which undermines the constitutional right of residents and the core business of rendering services to the local people. These comments should not be interpreted as an indiscriminate rejection of laissez-faire leadership value in developed countries, but as a caution against its uncritical application in the municipalities of developing countries. The attributes of laissez-faire leadership and those of the study's leadership construct are direct opposites. In the context of South Asia, the involvement of the communities is important, but laissez-faire leadership does not support this view. As empirical evidence in chapter five indicates, bureaucrats influenced by political principals purposefully deviate from government policies and circumvent the set procurement rules to pursue their own private commercial interests to award tender contracts to friends and relatives for easy facilitation of bribes if local people are not involved or marginalised.

## **4.9. Quality leadership roles in service delivery**

The importance of quality roles of leadership can be highlighted as a necessary aspect of the process of effective and efficient service delivery system in the public service. It has recently become a norm that any assessment of leadership without discussing its roles is regarded as inadequate. Whether the quality roles of leadership will facilitate and promote provision of service delivery depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector leaders. What is important, however, is the fact that these quality roles have become a magnifying microscope through which the success or failure of leadership is evaluated, and for this reason, carefully chosen roles are assessed below.

#### **4.9.1. A frontline leadership role as a means for efficient delivery of services**

A frontline leadership role has been advocated and maintained because it is commonly held that it will lead to the facilitation and promotion of service delivery to the citizens. This is especially so because, as in a battle zone, the frontline role of leadership serves as a defensive buffer to the rest of the army. In the context of public service where delivery of services did not take place according to people's expectations and in circumstances where services were delivered, the quality was poor, and it is therefore argued that the frontline role of leadership can pave the way for delivery of quality and effective services. Mantzaris (2016) similarly argues that:

*"...leaders mentor their coworkers by encouraging learning, achievement and individual development. They provide meaning, act as role models, provide challenges, evoke emotions and foster a climate of trust in the workplace. Such actions enhance a clear collective vision and leaders strive to communicate it effectively to all the employees. They show trust and confidence in their subordinates and leave them space to breathe and grow. Their support and encouragement stimulate employees..."*

The features described here reflect the character and attitude of a frontline leadership role that can serve as a viable and flexible mechanism for promoting and facilitating community accountability and effective governance on the part of members (Nengwekhulu, 2008). A genuine frontline member will encourage and enable teamwork among the colleagues so that they can all contribute from plenary to implementation phases for the effective provision of delivery of services and help reconstruct confidence that the communities had already lost from the poorly performing leadership in the public service. In doing so, a member leading from the front will effectively communicate programmes and projects identified for the development of the communities to the workforce of the public service to create working collaborations.

#### **4.9.2. An innovative leadership role as a mechanism for quality service delivery**

The innovative role of leadership has also been understood as a mechanism for the facilitation and stimulation of quality service delivery to the communities (Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1998). Enhancing community service delivery will also be contingent on the quality of innovative skills of the members deployed in the public service to serve various communities. A multifaceted approach, which includes not only improved leadership performance but also inventive skills on the part of the public leaders, is essential if community service delivery is to improve. Although service delivery efficiency and effectiveness in general depends on the conducive political environment and other conditions within which projects and programmes are planned, budgeted and implemented, there is no question that a community service devoid of innovative leadership that seeks new ways of doing things is not likely to improve the nature

of delivered services. More importantly is that municipalities are required to invent new norms of accomplishing service delivery in consultation with the local people, as Denison, Hooijberg and Quinn (1998) explains:

*“The innovator is creative and envisions, encourages, and facilitates change.”*

Change is required to improve service delivery in most public organizations where a severe lack of services requires members who work inventively to develop solutions to address the lack of service delivery (Nengwekhulu, 2009). Mantzaris (2016) cautions that:

*“Since a leader of a public sector organisation is obligated to follow and comply with legislation, rules and regulations, as well as a wide array of statutory frameworks, innovation is thus a virtue of leadership that is important in shaping the success of such entities. Viewed from this perspective, members’ adherence to statutory frameworks must be a mechanism and opportunity for innovation and not as a punishment to be avoided at all costs. Members must see observance of legislation and regulations as not only a vehicle for community service delivery improvements, but rather as part of government apparatus to promote and facilitate good governance and effective accountability to strengthen the rule of law. More importantly, members must have faith and confidence in the application of the rule of law, not to see the rule of law as a stumbling block, but as an instrument by which municipalities are destined to accomplish the needs of the local people and thereby fulfil their constitutional mandate. However, without essential inventive skills on the part of members, it is doubtful whether any meaningful and quality service delivery will take place in the municipalities. With the dilapidated infrastructure not showing any sign of rehabilitation and the innovative role of leadership is not carried out to its fullest capacity”.*

#### **4.9.3. The motivation leadership role as an instrument for good service delivery**

The motivation role of leadership has been an instrument for encouraging and nurturing the workforce to enable and promote good community service delivery. From a workforce point of view, whether personnel are skilled or well qualified, this on its own cannot guarantee better performance without motivation from public leaders. Providing clarification on what public service motivation means, Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) observe that:

*“Public service motivations can be broadly defined as the beliefs, values, and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest to energize employees to do good for others and contribute to the well-being of organizations and society...leadership is characterized by idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation”.*



Improving service delivery will depend on the genuine motivation the workforce in the public service receives from the public leaders. For the municipalities to become centers of quality service delivery to the communities they serve, different ways of motivating those employed to provide a public service must be identified. As a starting point, public leaders should realize that, for quality service delivery to take place, treating the employees with respect and as fellow human beings is central to motivating them to perform better for the good of communities. If the employees perform better, this means that communities will also benefit because effective and efficient services will be delivered to them. Showing the effects of the workforce that is de-motivated by the nature of treatment from their public leaders, Nengwekhulu (2009) observed that:

*“Supervisors tend to treat subordinates as if they are extensions of office equipment. There is often no attempt to treat them not only as officials but also as human beings with feelings. Personal and family problems of subordinates are brushed aside as things which belong outside the work environment as if an individual can be dissected into two entities, the individual at work and the individual at home. The cumulative effect of this impersonal attitude is to de-motivate a subordinate and a de-motivated subordinate is not likely to perform at his or her best.”*

The basis of this argument is that any workforce should not be treated in a de-humanizing and demeaning way by their public leaders as this demoralizes and de-motivates them in providing effective and efficient services to the public and shifts their focus away from work. Irrespective of the skills an employee possesses, if their public leaders display impersonal and mechanical attitudes towards them, delivery of services will be impeded. Treating workers in a human and supportive manner by their public leaders, it is argued, can serve as a motivation and mechanism to promote and facilitate delivery of services to the communities. Like the public, the workforce deserves healthier treatment from their public leaders to ensure productivity and better results at the workplace. As representatives of their constituencies in the council, ward leaders like bureaucrats must always be accountable to the communities they serve; even in crises their interaction with the local people should be cordial and they must never display any impersonal or mechanical attitude as that might discourage people from seeking services that are ordinarily due to them. Achieving improved outcomes by the workers means that communities will also receive quality delivery of services due to them which under current circumstance is not happening.

#### **4.9.4. A synergy role of leadership as a mechanism for effective service delivery**

As advocated, a synergy<sup>44</sup> role of leadership is also understood to be a mechanism for effective service delivery. A successful leadership, in relation to providing real services to the communities, works with both communities they serve and the entire workforce in the municipalities. Creation of synergies between the workforce and communities is one of the main roles of a ward leader. A ward leader should consult with the communities concerning the services they need for the sake of organising and mobilising resources to carry out the work. Although the government had repeatedly indicated that its model of service delivery is people-centred, there is a lack of synergy between public leaders and employees in the municipalities. This is because of the rigidity of the mechanical system in the municipalities which consists of different hierarchies that undermine the practice of a synergy role of leadership, as Nengwekhulu (2009) cautions that:

*“...the public service is still organised along the Weberian model of public bureaucracy...The problem with the Weberian model of bureaucracy is its hierarchical rigidity, impersonality and mechanical human interactions. Such a model of organisational structure does not seem compatible with the vision of the new government...”*

The ability of a ward leader in constructing interactions and collaborations between employees themselves and communities is a desirable practice which is currently lacking in the municipalities. The quality of synergies can help to bring back the spirit of ‘caring’ to communities among public leaders. As sources for the facilitation and stimulation of effective community service delivery, synergies between the workforce itself and communities are indicators of good leadership and accountable governance. As an attribute of a good leadership practice, building of synergies is seen as a fundamental driver to dismantle ‘hierarchical rigidity, impersonal and mechanical human interactions’ that hamper quality provisions of community services (Nengwekhulu, 2009). Although synergies are not easy to create because of the nature of the diversity of the group dynamics, they depend also on the capability of a ward leader to reach out to both communities and employees to understand the significance of working together as part of the solution to enhance quality service delivery. The research suggests, however, that the leadership is unable to create much needed synergies that could not only facilitate and promote effective and quality community service delivery but also enhance collaboration among the public leaders and the entire workforce.

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<sup>44</sup> the combined power of a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately.

## 4.10. Impact of qualities of good governance and good leadership on improvement of service delivery

In recent years it is increasingly clear that a discussion of leadership without reference to governance is considered incomplete. Governance has become the gold standard against which leadership is discussed and its absence in the discussion of leadership indicates the absence of leadership itself. There is a positive impact between the two concepts in the performance of government institutions, but the justification for governance when leading and the persuasive motives for governance in leadership require further discussion.

Nengwekhulu (2008) defines governance as: *“...a systematic and continuous interaction between government and society.”* Viewed from this perspective, governance is an important framework or instrument for reaching out to the people and promoting not only leadership but good leadership within the government institutions. Governance, it is argued, provides a platform for collaboration and interaction between residents and ward leaders in the municipalities, to ameliorate the social, political and economic situations of the people.

Governance, in the context of the administrative school of thought, protects the interests and rights of the public by means of encouraging public leaders to interact with the people in a responsible manner, as the World Bank (1989) explains:

*“...an efficient public service; an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; the accountable administration of public funds; an independent public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature; respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government; a pluralistic institutional structure, and a free press.”*

To consider governance as a guarantor for the respect of law and human rights by public leaders, the public must receive services that are due to them without engaging in violent protests. Where corruption is common, governance can neither guarantee nor enable public service to the general population. This is so where public leaders do not respect the rule of law<sup>45</sup> and where public service is prioritised to the elites over the underprivileged. Remarking on the need for a diversified character of a public leader, Bao, Wang, Larsen and Morgan (2012) observe that:

*“Public officials must be good not only in doing traditional hierarchical management but also at creating and operating in loosely constructed networks and confederations that are held together by agreement rather than rules and the exercise of hard power. One*

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<sup>45</sup> Rule of law, the mechanism, process, institution, practice, or norm that supports the equality of all citizens before the law, secures a nonarbitrary form of government, and more generally prevents the arbitrary use of power.

*way of seeing the wide range of leadership competencies needed for high performance is to map what counts for successful problem-solving under different problem settings.”*

For the public, being actively involved in what the public leaders do as well as cultivating their own civic virtue are some of the features of good governance. Building trust and acceptance with the public requires public leaders who exercise what is called value-based good public governance. Acknowledging and involving the community structures in decision-making processes when solving people’s problems is fundamental to good leadership and good public governance. Good public governance entails local systems of governance that allow for processes of bargaining, negotiation and compromise to take place between the public leaders and the communities they represent in the legislative councils. The many perpetual unpremeditated but sometimes organised violent and public protests around the country in different councils are an indicator of what happens when public leaders fail to take their leadership responsibilities seriously and put public values at the centre of good public governance. Good public service leadership focuses on the creation of the authority that operates and responds effectively to the parallel distributed power settings within the local communities.

#### **4.11. Chapter summary**

This chapter focused on the assessment of the nature of leadership in the context of reforms and its quality roles in service delivery for citizens. At the beginning of the chapter, the background information on citizen satisfaction was discussed. It also highlighted the citizen satisfaction dimensions of the public service. The essential features and various forms of leadership were identified and explained. Different definitions of leadership were scrutinized and evaluated. There is limited agreement about what leadership means. It also argued that dimensions of leadership styles, for example, autocracy and democracy, cannot be applied arbitrarily without considering the context of the social and economic development of the citizens. For practical reasons the dimensions of leadership style are different and for them to be effective and efficient they depend on the character of the leader. It further argued that there are several important leadership roles that can serve as instruments to facilitate and promote the public service delivery but this also depends on the political will and commitment of the public leaders for the leadership roles to serve as mechanisms for the facilitation and stimulation of service delivery.

Most of the administrative reforms in Sri Lanka aimed to promote good governance principles while adhering to public sector rules and regulations. It further demonstrated that leadership is related to governance because leadership does not exist in isolation. It is governance which

facilitates and promotes effective and efficient leadership to become a driver for quality and credible delivery of services to the citizens of the country.

# **CHAPTER FIVE : PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS**

## **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the presentation of study findings. As mentioned in the first chapter, the main objectives of this research were to discuss the nature of reforms introduced to make public delivery service efficient and effective, to assess the role of public sector leaders in implementing those reforms programs and evaluate the effectiveness of reforms in terms of public service delivery and service quality improvements to make the citizens satisfied. This chapter includes the details of the primary survey conducted with the elected leaders, bureaucratic leaders, trade union leaders, service recipients, general public and religious leaders to assess their understanding on the reforms and the impact of reforms on citizen satisfaction. In this respect, the researcher has attempted to obtain the responses for the research questions mentioned in the first chapter.

The structured questionnaires were used to collect information regarding the effectiveness of administrative reforms and citizen satisfaction from a sample of respondents selected from a convenient sample. Both face to face and telephone interviews have been conducted. The measures were taken to minimize the errors in conducting the interviews. The responses to each of the questions are presented using the abovementioned strata.

There were a lot of publications on reforms and related subjects in Sri Lanka. Therefore, In addition to the primary survey method, information was collected from the secondary sources as well. This information is given at the end of the chapter.

## **5.2. The classification of the study population**

A total of one hundred thirty (130) participants were sampled using a stratified approach. Of this sampled number of participants, one hundred ten (110) were accessed and interviewed. A total number of 110 interviewed participants are equal to eighty five percent (85%) of a response rate, which is considered an adequate representative sample in a qualitative case study as opposed to a survey. The interviewing of one hundred ten participants was conducted during 01/10/2021 to 15/11/2021 in a structured face-to-face manner or using telephone as illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Classification and number of participants interviewed**

Participants' category	District	Age group	Number selected	Number interviewed
Politicians	Colombo/ Kurunegala/ Kandy	40 -60	06	05
Public officials Senior Executives	Colombo/Gampaha/Galle/ Hambantota/ Jaffna/ Bataloa/Ratnapura	30 – 60	12	10
Public officials Middle Management level officers	As above	30-60	25	20
Public officials First line manager	As above	30-60	25	20
Trade unionists	Colombo	50-60	07	05
Service recipients	Colombo/Gampaha/Kalutara/Kandy Puttalam/ Badulla	20- 70	25	22
General public	As above	20-70	25	23
Religious Leaders	Gampaha/ Kandy/ Anuradhapura	40-70	05	05
Total			130	110

### 5.3. Presentation of study findings

The presentation of study findings was based on ten questions designed to answer the five research objectives as highlighted in chapter one. The research questions: What major public sector reforms have been introduced in Sri Lanka since 1948? What have been the primary causes of reforms? What have been their impacts? Were these really the most important things that should have been reformed? Are there others more important? If so, why are they more important? Which groups in Sri Lankan society stand to gain or lose through undertaken public service reforms? In what way are public administrative and constitutional reforms linked in Sri Lanka? How is the effectiveness of the public sector leaders in implementing reforms? What are the overall assessments of public opinion on the results of reforms implemented?

The first question was on “what major public sector reforms have been introduced in Sri Lanka since 1948?” There were five politicians interviewed over the telephone. Two of them are State Ministers, two opposition members of parliament and one ruling party parliament member and their opinions are summarized below:

Elected leader one (interviewed on 10/10/2021) said that “I know that there were many reforms aimed at providing speedy services to the citizen. But results are frustrating. Only minor improvements made in the public sector service delivery. Citizens are suffering a lot in receiving public services”

Elected leader two (interviewed on 12/10/2021) said that “unaware of specific reforms in the public administration. However, he noted that there were certain improvements within public administration such as establishment of Divisional Secretariats to provide public services close to their residences.”

Elected leader three (interviewed on 15/10/2021) remarked that “the quality of public service is deteriorating day by day and citizens are very unhappy about this situation. It is better to think about alternative ways to offer public services”

Elected leader four (interviewed on 18/10/2021) explained that “introduction of IT solution for the public service delivery is improving. We need to use more and more e-services to citizens and need to educate the citizens on using e services.”

Elected leader five (interviewed on 22/10/2021) said that “I have been in the Parliament for more than 30 years by now. I have noted that many initiatives have been made to improve the public service delivery systems in key departments such as Immigration & Emigration, Registration of Persons and Registrar General by way of introducing one day services all of which have a heavy demand. I cannot be satisfied with kind of reforms introduced and implemented and hope that there should be more and more quick public services to the citizens at their convenience.”

Ten senior executives of the public service have been interviewed and they represent two Secretaries of Cabinet Ministries, two Secretaries of State Ministries, three Heads of Departments and three former Secretaries of Ministries and their views in summery form are given below:

Senior public sector executive officer one (interviewed on 02/10/2021) explained that “every administrative reforms have introduced by way of issuing circulars mainly from



the Public Administration Ministry. Once the instructions have been issued, the progress of the changes introduced rarely monitored. A good example would be the introduction of Performance Appraisal for public officers. Since it has not been monitored and guided properly, now it has become a just form filling exercise.”

Senior public sector executive officer two (interviewed on 04/10/2021) said that “public sector has a unique culture inherited by the colonial rulers. It’s very hard to change. Even though, many reforms have introduced targeting speedy service delivery to the citizen, many public officers are not sensitive to the citizens’ needs. Therefore, the end results are not make citizen satisfied. The COVID 19 situation has made the public delivery systems worse.”

Senior public sector executive officer three (interviewed on 05/10/2021) mentioned that “there is a remarkable improvement in the public service delivery systems using digital interventions. If more IT facilities are provided, we can see a vast improvement in the public service delivery systems.”

Senior public sector executive four (interviewed on 06/10/2021) said that “the leadership styles of some of the senior public officers are not oriented towards the citizens’ satisfaction. They very rarely look at the peoples’ points of views and mostly look at the rules and regulations. Then it becomes difficult to deliver public service quickly to make citizens happy.”

Senior public sector executive five (interviewed on 08/10/2021) explained “the political involvement in decision making in the public service is very serious. If you do not listen to the political leaders, then you will be targeted for taking revenge. Therefore, many senior public officers just carry out the orders from the political leaders and ignore the professional approaches of system development etc.”

Senior public sector executive six (interviewed on 10/10/2021) said that “the ARC recommendations have not implemented fully. The ARC committee has provided very valuable suggestions to improve the public service in Sri Lanka. If those suggestions have been implemented, then we have a totally different public service.”

Senior public sector executive seven (interviewed on 11/10/2021) described that “the public sector executives do not possess the skills of developing strategies to win their customers. Public sector does not like to recognize people who come to public sector organizations to obtain services, and do not consider them as customers. The mentality

of public servants are very bureaucratic and not customer friendly. This mind set has to be changed in the first place before any reforms are introduced. All reforms have been failed because the negative attitudes of the public sector employees.”

Senior public sector executive eight (interviewed on 13/10/2021) said that “ there is no relationship between reforms and citizens satisfaction. Public service is not much concerned with citizen satisfaction similar to the private sector. I do not think that there was any consideration of citizens’ satisfaction when they introduce administrative reforms.”

Senior public sector executive nine (interviewed on 15/10/2021) explained that “political and administrative leaders do not speak the same language. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a harmonious administrative system where citizens’ expectations get a high priority.”

Senior public sector executive ten (interviewed on 16/10/2021) said that “the corrupt practices of the public sector have severely undermined the effectiveness of the customer services of the public service delivery operations.”

Middle management executives represent five Deputy Directors, three provincial Directors, two Senior Assistant Secretaries, five sectional heads, three districts level Deputy Directors and two Divisional Secretaries and their opinions are given in the summary form.

Out of twenty middle level executives six respondents mentioned that they are aware of the different reforms introduced by the governments from time to time but expected results have not been fully realized. The establishment of Divisional Secretariat system was a useful reform introduced with the objectives of taking administration to the grass root level. However, the expected results have not been fully realized because of the lack of commitments of the employees of the Divisional Secretariat and the problems of unclear and rigid rules and regulations.

Another five respondents have expressed that they cannot see any improvements of the administrative systems even though certain reforms have been introduced. They believe the problem lies with the implementation side. Therefore, they wish to draw the attention of policy makers more on implementation details.

Further four respondents replied saying that citizen orientation was lacking in reforms introduced by the government. They suggest the citizen response system to be introduced to receive better results.

Five more respondents are unaware of the reforms in particular. They are aware of certain circular instructions such as performance appraisal, citizen charters etc. but not as administrative reforms.

With regard to the first line managers, all twenty respondents are unaware of the administrative reforms particularly. The reason may be that they are new to the public service, hence did not have enough time to understand the different reforms and their impacts.

All five trade union leaders are well aware of the reforms and the changes introduced by each reform program. Two of these trade union leaders have closely work with the authorities in suggesting certain reforms. Therefore, they have deep understanding on the specific changes introduced by these reforms. However, as trade union leaders, they are much concerned with the benefits of the members. In general, the trade union leaders are of the view that the country needs more reforms to satisfy the citizens.

In collecting information regarding the effectiveness of the reforms and their impact on citizen satisfaction, the researcher interviewed 22 service recipients from six districts. These respondents have first hand experiences about their service encounters. They have varied opinions about the administrative reforms introduced by the different governments. Ten out of twenty two respondents have appreciated the establishment of Divisional Secretariats to serve the citizen close to their residents. However, they emphasized the need for further improvements. Six respondents do not have any opinion about the reforms introduced.

The researcher has selected 23 respondents randomly from the general public. Majority of these respondents (16) do have some kind of association with the public sector, such as obtaining a permit or licenses. However, they are unaware of the public administration reforms and commented on the delays experienced in receiving public services.

Five religious leaders are also consulted to obtain their views on the public service. Two Buddhist clergies, two catholic priests and one Muslim priest have been interviewed. They have reserved opinions about the public service delivery system. They have appreciated the way the public services are offered. Since the religious leaders are respected by the society, they will naturally be treated in respectful manner when they seek service from the public organizations.

The second question was “what have been the primary causes of reforms?” This question was answered by two senior executives and one middle level executive only. One senior executive mentioned the primary cause of reforms was to improve the performance of the public sector. He highlighted the fact that the international donor agencies have insisted the government to introduced reforms to match with good governance principles. The other senior executive expressed that there was a pressure from the citizens to introduce reforms to expedite the the services request from the public institutions. The middle level executive officer mentioned the primary cause was the political will of the respective political leaders to introduced reforms. He cited Mr. Premadasa, former President who introduced the Divisional Secretariat system as an example.

The third question was “what their impact have been?”. One political leader and the same three respondents who answered the previous question have answered the question. The political leader expressed that his political party has introduced the Divisional Secretariat system and drastic changes happen to public service delivery system as a result. Under the DS system, the citizens were able to receive most of the public services at their own locality speedily. He said that the citizens much appreciate the new changes introduced by this reform. The three public service executives mentioned the importance of introducing the Management Assistant Service (PMAS) by amalgamating six different services and introduction of performance appraisal systems as long term strategies to improve public delivery systems.

The fourth question was on “were these really the most important things that should have been reformed?” Two political leaders, four senior executives, two middle level executives and two service recipients have answered this question. Both political leaders have the same opinion that the reforms already introduced were expected by the citizen for a long time. Two of the senior executives expressed that the reforms did not focus on the citizen needs and attention was drawn to system changers. They wish the reforms should focus more on the employees. Other two senior executives agreed that the reforms were meaningful and relevant. Two middle level executives expressed that there were more important areas that need reforms to change whole public service culture, to orient the service towards the citizens. The two service recipients wish to draw more attention on how to facilitate service delivery making convenience to the citizens.

The fifth question was on “are there others more important? If so, why are they more important? Six respondents have answered this question representing one political leader, one middle level executive officer and four service recipients. All of them have agreed that there should be more important reforms to make public service efficient. The reason for suggesting

this kind of reform is that they have noted that the public service is lethargic, ineffective and inefficient.

The sixth question was on “which groups in Sri Lankan society stand to gain or lose through undertaken public service reforms? Ten respondents have answered this question and all of them mentioned that the general public who expects the public services would benefit from the reforms.

The seventh question was on “in what way are public administrative and constitutional reforms linked in Sri Lanka?” Four political leaders and two senior executives have answered this question. Three political leaders have expressed that there is a strong relationship between public administration and constitutional reforms. They said that without constitutional reforms, public administration reforms cannot be done and it's a legal requirement. However, one political leader is of the opinion, public administration can introduce reforms in their own domain to make public administration effective. He says that there is no need for constitutional reforms as such. Two senior executives also share the same opinion.

The question on “the effectiveness of the public sector leaders in implementing reforms” have been answered by all political leaders, four senior executives, two middle level executives, two trade union leaders, four service recipients and one religious leader. All four political leaders expressed that public sector leaders need to be more dynamic and effective in implementing reforms. Political leaders are of the opinion that public sector leaders are not ready to work independently and always go behind the politicians for advice. However, two senior executives are of the view that the public leaders do not have independence to work professionally because the public service should work according to the wish of the political leaders. They highlight the sec. 52 (2) of the constitution which empower the Minister to order the Secretary to work on his orders. Other two senior executive expressed that they do not have enough resources to implement reforms. Two trade union leaders blamed the politicians for their undue influence to the public service. The service recipients expressed that public sector leaders are not sensitive to the citizens' grievances and they stick to the rules and regulations. The religious leader said that public sector leaders should perform as private sector executives.

The ninth question was on “what are the overall assessments of public opinion on the results of reforms implemented?” There were fifteen respondents from the sample (two political leaders, three senior executives, two middle level executives, three trade union leaders and five service recipients) who have answered the question. They all share the view that results of the reforms have not fulfilled the citizens' expectation on public service delivery operations. They want more reforms to expedite service delivery operations with a human touch.

The last question was on “what would be more practical reforms to be introduced to make public service user friendly?” The three political leaders expressed that public leaders performance should be linked to their reward system. Bad performers should be punished and they should be expelled from the public service. Two political leaders mentioned that there should be a good capacity development program for public servant to enhance their competencies. An effective monitoring system should be introduced to detect weak performance.

All five senior executives expressed that the public service should be independent and public service should be governed by an independent public service commission similar to the public service commission operated under the Soulbery Constitution during 1948 to 1972.

Nine middle level executives expressed that proper training should be given to them on a regular basis to make them equip on new customer service techniques while they mentioned that there should be reward system for high performers.

Ten service recipients wanted to introduce reform to punish public officers who willfully neglect citizens’ services. Furthermore, they suggested a compensation payment system towards citizens also need to be introduced.

Five general public wished to display information regarding service delivery operations and the kind of documents to be produced. They wanted the public media to carry those information to the citizens.

In addition to the above primary responses, the researcher has referred a number of documents on public service delivery and citizens’ satisfaction to understand the reasons for ineffectiveness. Most of these literature contained key reasons for poor citizen services from Sri Lankan public service due to the following key reasons:

## **5.4. Constitutional provisions which hinder the independence of public servants**

The history and functioning of the vast bureaucracy of the public service has to be understood within the framework of the three constitutions Sri Lanka has adopted since independence. i.e, the Independence Constitution, the 1972 Constitution and the 1978 Constitution.

The 1972 Constitution retained the Constitutional Head of State (called the President). However, it brought the functions of the earlier Public Service Commission under the Cabinet of Ministers thus directly bringing the public service under the governing political party. It established a State Services Advisory Board (SSAB) which only had advisory functions. It also established a State Services Disciplinary Board (SSDB). The administrative head of each Ministry; i.e., the Secretary, was subjected to the direction and control of his Minister. Therefore the political neutrality of the public service was eroded with the aim of strengthening the executive arm of the Government.

The 1978 Constitution further strengthened the executive by establishing the elected executive presidency thereby discarding the non-political Head of State. Under this Constitution, the appointments to the constitutionally protected posts were made by the President. Under the 1978 Constitution, the appointment, transfer, disciplinary control and dismissal of public servants have been under the control of the Public Service Commission which held authority delegated by the Cabinet. In terms of Article 56 (1) of the Constitution prior to the 17th Amendment, it consisted of at least five members and was appointed for a period of five years.

Reducing the delegated powers of the Public Service Commission under Article 55 is the proviso which states that the Cabinet may delegate its power of transfer in respect of any category of officers as may be specified to any Minister and where there is such delegation the Public Service Commission ceases to exercise such powers in respect of such categories of officers.

Article 55(4) also vested with the Cabinet the task of formulating schemes of recruitment and promotion etc., and codes of conduct for public officers and the procedure for the exercise and delegation of powers of appointment, transfer, disciplinary control and dismissal of public officers. As provided in Article 56 the Cabinet was also vested with the power to alter, vary and rescind decisions of the Public Service Commission or any of its committees.

Another step in public administration was taken with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution when the Provincial Councils Act was passed in 1987. These enactments provided for a Provincial Public Service and Provincial Public Service Commissions appointed by the respective Governors of the Provinces. By the end of the 20th century, it was the common perception that the decline in the administration of the country was due to political interference. Successive governments have faced repeated accusations of not taking meaningful steps to deal with this malady promptly and effectively.

Article 55(3) which reads as follows negates this expectation: 'Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article, the appointment, promotion, transfer, disciplinary control and dismissal of all heads of Departments shall vest in the Cabinet of Ministers, who shall exercise such powers after ascertaining the views of the Commission'.

This shows that the Cabinet retains power over Heads of Departments. In other words despite the provisions of Article 55(1), the public service continue to be in the grip of politicians who could manipulate it through respective Heads of Department.

Particularly, Sec.52 (2) of 1978 constitution says that:

*“The Secretary to the Ministry shall, subject to the direction and control of his Minister, exercise supervision over the departments of government or other institutions in the charge of his Minister.”*

This direction was very serious and the Secretary of a ministry is abided to follow the orders given by the Minister whether it is legal or otherwise.

## **5.5. Lack of will of public leaders**

Political will means a determination on the part of political leaders to prioritize and accelerate service delivery to the constituencies they represent in either legislative assemblies or local authorities (Nengwekhulu, 2008). Nengwekhulu (2008) observes that:

*“Without the necessary political will, it is doubtful whether any meaningful [service delivery] can take place...the level of political will... accompanied by the level of political awareness of the communities [is necessary]...”*

Determined and committed public leaders will provide service delivery to their constituencies, but for a meaningful process of service delivery to occur, there is a need for unconditional commitment and political will on the part of the leadership to treat delivery of services as a non-partisan obligation that requires serious attention. It is furthermore a societal obligation which requires the frontline and committed leadership to address directly. This should originate from the conviction that service delivery is not only desired but essential to uplift people from situations of social and economic disadvantage. Both the national and provincial governments should, more importantly, act as watchdogs<sup>46</sup> to enable and encourage the local authorities to fulfill the needs of the local people by means of delivering services. The local people themselves should also take initiative through local forums to compel the ward leaders to account to them about programmes and projects to be undertaken for the development of their communities. Without the necessary political will, it is uncertain whether the required service delivery will occur in the local authorities. The problem of poor service delivery will remain with the local people if there is no political will on the part of public leadership. Where there is an absence of genuine political will on the part of the leadership, the trend has been to exploit service delivery problems as a political game played during the local government elections campaigns

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<sup>46</sup> A person or organization that monitors and publicizes the behavior of others (individuals, corporations, governments) to discover undesirable activity.



to garner support of the local people. After the elections, the poor service delivery continues and the members often fail to honor their election promises until the next election cycle commences. This can only be addressed if members representing different communities are directly elected into a council position where they are directly accountable to uphold their election promises. However, if a certain political party is still elected that ultimately deploys its comrades into council to represent different communities, service delivery problems are likely to continue.

The national and provincial governments are also the same by appointing their own people to high posts and let them to run public organizations without concerning the needs of the citizens.

## **5.6. Competency levels of officers in the key leadership positions**

The Public Service in Sri Lanka is changing rapidly. Effective government requires dedicated and high-performing public service leaders who inspire others to do their best work for the country. They nurture productive relationships, build cohesive teams and create the organizational conditions for others to succeed. They are committed to the development of the leaders of tomorrow. They value diversity, promote the bilingual character of the public service, and uphold the values and ethics of the public sector. Leaders act with purpose and drive, balance adaptability with conviction and inspiration with stewardship, to achieve management excellence.

The Leadership Competencies define the behaviours expected of leaders in Public Service. These leaders play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining a modern, connected and high-performing public service that is ethical, professional and non-partisan.

Leaders establish strong working partnerships with individuals, teams and others to create opportunities and develop the organization. They are deliberate and resourceful about seeking the widest possible spectrum of perspectives. They create collaborative, respectful and trusting work environments where sound advice is valued. They demonstrate openness and flexibility to forge consensus and improve outcomes. They bring a whole-of-government perspective to their interactions. In negotiating solutions, they are open to alternatives and skillful at managing expectations. Leaders share recognition with their teams and partners. Leaders define the future and chart a path forward, often leading change and creating vision. They model public service values of respect, accountability, integrity, and excellence to build a positive roadmap for success. They are adept at understanding and communicating context, factoring in the

economic, social and political environment. Intellectually agile, they leverage their deep and broad knowledge, build on diverse ideas and perspectives and create consensus around compelling visions.

Leaders balance organizational and government-wide priorities and improve outcomes for the country. Leaders inspire and motivate the people they lead. They manage performance, provide constructive and respectful feedback to encourage and enable performance excellence. They lead by example, setting goals for themselves that are more demanding than those that they set for others. Focus on results, leaders mobilize and manage resources to deliver on the priorities of the Government, improve outcomes and add value. They consider context, risks and business intelligence to support high-quality and timely decisions. They anticipate, plan, monitor progress and adjust as needed. Leaders take personal responsibility for their actions and outcomes of their decisions.

Leaders have the courage and resilience to challenge convention. They create an environment that supports bold thinking, experimentation and intelligent risk taking. They use setbacks as a valuable source of insight and learning. Leaders take change in their stride, aligning and adjusting milestones and targets to maintain forward momentum. The deployment and appointment of leaders without relevant qualifications and competencies into key leadership positions in the public service is a cause for serious concern for poor public service delivery.

## **5.7. The poor teamwork in public service delivery operations**

A team is a group of people working together to achieve common objectives and willing to commit the energies necessary to ensure that those objectives are achieved. Effective and efficient teams are an essential element of the work conducted by the public services. When people work together in teams, it improves the service provided and helps them to achieve their goals. A motivated team is more likely to be efficient and therefore motivation can contribute to success. If a team has members who cooperate, they can inspire each other. This helps the team to solve problems and also identifies the individual skills within the team.

The public workforce has traditionally adopted a hierarchical and vertical style of leadership. In the traditional style, there is one central leader governing, directing, guiding, delegating and enforcing controls on a group of employees. Public employees perform tasks based on what they are told. There are few collaborations, inputs or partnerships between the leaders and

employees. The concept of leaders distributing powers among employees can be onerous because it goes against common norms of the traditional public sector workplace dynamic.

In order to contend with changing work conditions and market environments, there has been a shift to horizontal leadership. Within public sector organizations, there has been a noticeable and progressive shift toward team collaboration. The objectives of this deviation from the rigid hierarchical style of leadership are to increase employee productivity and raise morale. If there are more people working toward the same goals, there is a greater possibility of success.

To better understand the growing use of teams, the author conducted a content analysis and gathered focus groups. The content analysis included a review of six top public administration academic journals published between 1999 through 2012. The search generated four journals with 11 articles discussing teamwork and leadership. In a brief comparison, during the same period, the field of management had 41 articles and the field of leadership had 28 articles. The goal of the research was to examine the state of the teamwork and its use by the public service workforce. This secondary survey results revealed the important roles played by teams in achieving organizational goals.

Employees working in teams in the public sector are unique because of the diversity of the members. The constant interaction between employees begs the question what are the desired member characteristics in teams. Ideally, the characteristics, work ethics and traits that encompass the team should be clearly defined to ensure members communicate and operate effectively. An effective group consists of members that are committed to the common purpose, maximizing team success and personal success in the community objective.

Leading teams in the public sector is becoming significant for its academic and practical application. Multiple stakeholders in the public sector depend on the effectiveness of teams. While scholarly research on public sector teamwork has been burgeoning, there is still a paucity of literature on this topic. The purpose of the research was not to establish the necessity of teamwork but to provide a pragmatic evaluation of the state of teamwork and the desired member characteristics for its application in the public service workforce. Admittedly, teamwork may not be ideal or realistic in every situation but the importance of team work in service delivery cannot be ignored.

## 5.8. The prevalence of corruption and bribery in the public service

Corruption has become very complex today due to various local and global reasons. The World Bank and Transparency International<sup>47</sup> view corruption as the use of one's public position for illegitimate private gains. According to the International Chamber of Commerce the greatest impact of corruption is on the poor people who are least able to absorb its cost. Transparency International – Corruption is increasingly cited as a reason for withholding foreign aid or debt relief. If a country is unable to pay interest on its loans, it is due to its leaders siphoning off national earnings into their own bank accounts.

Transparency International further explains the cost of corruption as follows. Corruption impacts societies in a multitude of ways. In the worst cases, it costs lives. Short of this, it costs people their freedom, health or money. The cost of corruption can be divided into four main categories: political, economic, social and environmental.

On the political front, corruption is a major obstacle to democracy and the rule of law. In a democratic system, offices and institutions lose their legitimacy when they're misused for private advantage. This is harmful in established democracies, but even more so in newly emerging ones. It is extremely challenging to develop accountable political leadership in a corrupt climate.

Economically, corruption depletes national wealth. Corrupt politicians invest scarce public resources in projects that will line their pockets rather than benefit communities, and prioritise high-profile projects such as dams, power plants, pipelines and refineries over less spectacular but more urgent infrastructure projects such as schools, hospitals and roads. Corruption also hinders the development of fair market structures and distorts competition, which in turn deters investment. Corruption corrodes the social fabric of society. It undermines people's trust in the political system, in its institutions and its leadership. A distrustful or apathetic public can then become yet another hurdle to challenging corruption. Environmental degradation is another consequence of corrupt systems. The lack of, or non-enforcement of, environmental regulations and legislation means that precious natural resources are carelessly exploited, and entire ecological systems are ravaged. From mining, to logging, to carbon offsets, companies across the globe continue to pay bribes in return for unrestricted destruction.

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<sup>47</sup> Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption.

There is no doubt that the lower growth rate prevailing in Sri Lanka at present mainly due to political uncertainties and corruption. This leads to lower the foreign direct investments which the country really needs at this hour to move forward. Even in South Asia Sri Lanka is doing far below the potential. It is very sad and shameful that the performance of the country, having such talented educated people but yet having a bleak future as a country due to corrupt politicians. A study on present debt situation will reveal that all kinds of corruption finally become a burden to the society and the people in the country.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved and entrusted the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) with the task of formulating a National Action Plan for Combating Bribery and Corruption in Sri Lanka in October 2017. This culminated in developing the National Action Plan for Combatting Bribery and Corruption in Sri Lanka 2019 – 2023 (NAP) which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 05 February 2019. It was thus ceremonially launched on 18 March 2019 in Colombo.

Sri Lanka's legal framework to fight bribery and corruption is well developed. The country is a signatory to relevant international conventions (Jayawardena Kishali 2010 cited in Transparency International 2010). Sri Lanka has taken important steps in the struggle against corruption that has been a major barrier to achieve its development goal and efficient service delivery. Sri Lanka has a comprehensive legislative framework to combat bribery and corruption, and it is a signatory to numerous international conventions. A sound Anti-Corruption policy is one of the most important components of good governance. Curbing corruption in public sectors has always been a challenge to good governance predating recorded history. All the religions, new and old, have very detailed and strict jurisdictions against corruption. Sri Lanka's bribery offences are in the Penal Code and the Bribery Act. When the Penal Code was enacted and introduced in Sri Lanka some sections relating to Bribery (sections 158, 159, 160 and 161) were embedded in the Code. The laws existed in Sri Lanka since the enactment of the Penal Code in 1983 that made solicitation and the acceptance of a gratification by a public servant a punishable offence. The relevant provisions still remain, but the Bribery Act enacted in 1954 with later amendments is a comprehensive and an effective piece of legislation dealing with bribery and corruption offences (Ameer Ismail, 2013).

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor noted that,

*“there was an increase during the year 2012 in bribery and corruption complaints against public officials, particularly divisional secretariats, police personnel, and school principals. The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption appeared to be more active than*

*previous years in investigating complaints and taking legal action against the accused. The bribery commission received 3,163 complaints against government officers during the year, a significant increase in complaints over previous years. Of the 147 investigations into the complaints, there were 95 arrests, and 77 cases remained before the courts at the end of 2013”* (<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2012/sca/204411.htm>).

According to the 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) compiled by Transparency International, Sri Lanka remains in the lower half of the 180 countries that were considered in the survey. Sri Lanka is ranked 94th among 180 nations with a score of 38/100. Sri Lanka's score has remained constant over the past few years but has slipped in the rankings from 89th in 2018. (TI, 2021)

## **5.9. Poor living conditions of residents**

Despite the promising social indicators such as life expectancy, literacy rate etc which are nearly on par with those with developed nations , the continues growing of rural poverty is a serious problem for the national development of the country. Sri Lanka has been experiencing moderate growth in its GDP averaging 5.5% per annum between 2006 and 2009. Due to its relatively low GDP per capita currently Sri Lanka ranked in the bottom one third of the world. This could be due to the issue of poverty, specifically, rural poverty. Nearly 90% of the poor live in rural areas, with over 80% of Sri Lanka’s population still living in rural areas. Furthermore According to the World Bank, 42% of Sri Lanka’s population live on under US\$2 a day in 2005, with 6% living under US\$1 a day. This is evidence that poverty still remains widespread and continues to be a challenging problem of the country.

This highlights a link between isolation from social and economic infrastructure, cities and markets, as well as unorganized nature of the poor, their missing political participation and low education standards in rural areas.

Growth is expected to recover to 3.3 percent in 2021, but the medium-term outlook is clouded by pre-existing macroeconomic weaknesses and the economic scarring from the COVID-19 pandemic. With jobs and earnings lost, poverty is projected to remain above pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Official reserves remain low relative to short-term liabilities amid constrained market access. A severe foreign exchange shortage is exerting pressure on the exchange rate. Urgent policy measures are needed to address risks to debt sustainability and external stability.

Real GDP grew by 8.0 percent, year-on-year, in the first half of 2021 from a low base with significant contributions from manufacturing, trade, financial services, and real estate activity. The subsequent up-tick of COVID-19 infections likely weakened the pace of recovery in the second half of 2021. The crisis precipitated widespread losses in livelihoods, which are expected to have increased the \$3.20 poverty rate from 9.2 percent in 2019 to 11.7 percent in 2020.

Year-on-year inflation (measured by the Colombo Consumer Price Index) increased to 6.0 percent in August 2021 due to high food inflation (at 11.5 percent) and a fuel price hike in June (the first in 21 months). Food insecurity has been acute throughout the pandemic—a phone monitoring survey previously showed that 44 percent of households were concerned about running out of food, while weak safety nets heightened vulnerability. The government invoked emergency regulations to curb speculative practices of traders amid high food prices and shortages of some essential commodities. To curb rising inflationary pressures, the Central Bank increased policy rates by 50 basis points (Standing Deposit Facility to 5.0 percent and Standing Lending Facility to 6.0 percent) and the reserve ratio by 200 basis points.

External vulnerabilities have further elevated in the first half of 2021. The trade deficit widened as a rising import bill (despite restrictions on non-essential goods) driven by intermediate and investment goods, offset the increase in earnings from exports. While remittances showed a declining trend, weak tourism receipts widened the current account deficit. Official reserves declined to \$3.6 billion in August (equivalent to 2.0 months of imports, estimated as of August), as the government continued to use reserves for debt service. Reserves include the proceeds from the SDR allocation equivalent to \$787 million and excludes a currency swap of RMB 10 billion (equivalent to approximately \$ 1.5 billion) with the People’s Bank of China. The LKR depreciated by 7.4 percent against the US dollar in the first eight months according to the official exchange rate. However, the parallel market premia have been rising. Depleted net foreign assets in the banking system, at \$3.5 billion by July, suggests increasing challenges in meeting foreign exchange demand.

Fiscal accounts deteriorated in the first four months of 2021. An increase in expenditures (due to higher interest payments and a higher salary bill) offset a marginal improvement in revenue collection, compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. The Central Bank and the banking sector financed 38.7 percent and 41.4 percent of the budget deficit financing, respectively, with the remainder financed by domestic non-bank and foreign sources.

The above review of the economic situation shows the poverty level of most of Sri Lanka. In this situation, the citizens have to seek public delivery services for their living.

## 5.10. The proliferation of public protests against government's decisions

The right of Peaceful Assembly is recognized as a fundamental right of all Sri Lankan citizens by virtue of the Article 14(1) (b) of the Constitution of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka further reinforces the domestic validity of the right. As established by the Supreme Court,

*“the provisions of the Constitution and of other Law, including decisions of the Superior Courts in Sri Lanka, give adequate recognition to the Civil and Political Rights contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights....and the aforesaid rights recognized in the Covenant are justifiable through the medium of the legal and constitutional process prevailing in Sri Lanka”.*

The rich history of protests in Sri Lanka stands testament to the consistent and active exercise of this right by the citizenry on many occasions. Rooting from diverse causes such as public protests against constitutional violations, protests have been a customary method of airing public grievances in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the exercise of this right has been subject to various statutory restrictions in view of objectives such as national security, public tranquility, racial and religious harmony. There are also documented incidents of how the government has used force and intimidation to suppress the free exercise of the right for peaceful assembly. Incidents involving the deployment of tear-gas and water cannons against protesters, intimidation by the security forces including disproportionate surveillance measures and the use of extreme physical violence resulting in casualties and deaths has not been uncommon.

In such a context, many international organizations expressed their concern on a recent development in the country that can have implications on the free exercise of the Right of Peaceful Assembly. Earlier in February 2020, the Sri Lankan government decided to demarcate a separate location called the 'Agitation Site' (which is a patch of bare land opposite the Presidential Secretariat in the Galle Face Green, Colombo) to accommodate public protests and demonstrations. While certain parties welcomed the initiative due to its immediate benefits of easing traffic and non disruption of the day to day life by protests, deeper thought must be given to the potential implications it may have on the Right for Peaceful Assembly.

The right of peaceful assembly is often exercised in public places in order to attract the attention of the State, and also of the general public, which in turn has the effect of facilitating dialogue, pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness. Therefore restricting protests on the grounds that “protests are an “inconvenience to the general public” goes against the very objective of a protest and thereby, is against democratic values. Moreover the Human Rights



Committee has noted that legislation specifying a single remote area in which assemblies can be conducted unduly limits the right to freedom of expression and assembly. However it has to be noted that when the previous government mooted the idea of demarcating special areas for protest, many parties opposed the proposition on the grounds that it is a violation of Peoples' rights. Hence, the move was abandon.

The proliferation of public protests has been a common feature in present days. As a result, many public service delivery operations have been severely affected.

## **5.11. Public sector organization culture**

The core of Sri Lankan public Service Structures, laws comprises the institutions of Civil Service created in Sri Lanka in the 1830s at a time when the colonial rulers introduce the constitutional reforms for the country for the first time. The basic patterns based on the loyalty incentives at the expenses of performance incentives. Public Servants were not paid according to performance base but on the basis of self-established criteria of formal education. Performance was very secondary criterion of promotion. Moreover, mobility of Cross-departments or Ministries was highly restricted due to attendant economic disincentives. This situation of the public service did not change even after the independence of the country.

Rules and regulations, traditions, working methods are more or less based on the colonial system. Several attempts had been taken by successive governments since the 1960s to make some changes. But still it can be observed that those reform proposals with little intent of bringing about any fundamental changes were limited to small galvanizations such as trivial financial incentives. For instance, new comers to the Civil Service were assigned permanent positions after a probationary period without having established comprehensible and manageable criteria of evaluation. Based on these traditions, the organizational culture was evolved through 1980s to 1990s. Norms, beliefs and attitudes of the public service are laid on the centralization, seniority based promotions, recruitments based on formal education and retirement with pensions. New Management Reforms are basically challenging these principles of so called traditional bureaucratic system. Hence, proponents of reforms should expect a resistance from the bureaucrats whose attitudes and mindsets have been programmed or implemented on the above mentioned norms, belief and attitudes.

## **5.12. Chapter summary**

This chapter highlighted the responses of different categories of people in the Sri Lankan society revealed by the primary research conducted. Categories included the political leaders, senior public sector executives, middle level executives, first line managers, service recipients, members of general public, trade union leaders and religious leaders. The responses to the structured questionnaire administered to them in face –to-face interviews and telephone interviews have been presented in this chapter.

In addition, the reasons for poor public service delivery operations have been cited from the public documents to make the research more factual. Those publications revealed important insights about the reasons for inability to offer effective and efficient public delivery operations in Sri Lanka.

# **CHAPTER SIX : SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

## **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the chapters, presents conclusions and provides suggestions for improvements. Summary of chapters highlights the main points each chapter has achieved. Conclusions are presented in a detailed and specific manner with nature of reforms introduced and leadership performance in public service delivery to make citizens happy. It further makes strategic recommendations that emanate from the research findings and pertinent literature review by highlighting the most essential points which are faced by the public service to consider as possible solutions to the challenges that are experienced.

## **6.2. Summary of chapters**

Chapter one provided a brief introduction on administrative set up in Sri Lanka and the kind of reforms introduced. It outlined the problem statement, research objectives, scope of the research, research questions, and significance of the study. It further described the framework of each chapter. It is thus established that the chapter provided the necessary background, context and perspective to the nature and quality role of leadership in service delivery addressed in other chapters of the thesis.

Chapter two focuses on the analysis of research design and methodology in which a qualitative approach was adopted as the primary research method. It assessed and explained the conceptual framework in which a social contract theory was presented and used in the analysis of the nature and role of leadership in government institutions. The chapter further described the process, the assessment of a theoretical framework followed by a secondary data sources, description of study population, informed by stratified sampling approach, is carried out. A plan for data collection, addressing issues of validity and reliability as well as data analysis and interpretation of the study are expounded upon.

Chapter three assessed and evaluated the origin, place and role of the public service in Sri Lanka. It further discussed the evolution of the public administrative system introduced by the colonial rulers and discusses the current structure and the process of government in Sri Lanka. It examines the power invested in the three arms of the central government machinery: the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, and their operation in relation to public administration.

This chapter also highlights the key institutions established for governing the country to ensure democratic principles and their expected roles such as the office of the President, the Parliament and the judiciary. It further highlights the role of Provincial councils and local government as decentralized governing bodies introduced to ensure people participation in decision making process. The last part of the chapter devoted to discuss in detail the nature of important administrative reforms introduced during 1948 to date to highlight their impacts on public service delivery operations.

Chapter four discussed the citizens' satisfaction criteria and the assessment of the nature and quality role of leadership in public service delivery. It examined the concept of leadership by means of reviewing different definitions from scholarly literature. From these definitions that were assessed and evaluated, leadership is defined as a process of controlling, guiding and providing direction to the group associates and communities by involving and not usurping their role in decision-making and recognising equality with them when power and authority is exercised. It was recognised that the same definition could also be adapted to leadership which may be defined as the ability to control the resources with a vision to direct and guide workers and communities by involving them and not usurping their role in decision-making and engaging as equals when power and authority is implemented. Public sector leadership would mean a process of directing and guiding members of a team and communities to become involved and not isolated in decision-making and discharging power and authority in an equitable manner.

Chapter five focused on the presentation of research findings. The chapter presented empirical evidence collected from the sampled participants, namely elected leaders, bureaucratic leaders, trade union leaders, service recipients, members of general public and religious leaders, through a structured face-to-face and telephone interviews. Empirical evidence showed that the leadership was unaware of its natural role to facilitate and stimulate effective and quality delivery of services to the citizens.

The chapter further revealed that lack of political will on the part of public leaders leads to a failure in the delivery of services thereby breaking the covenant between themselves and the citizens. The deployment of uneducated and unskilled public leaders in the key strategic leadership positions derailed the facilitation and promotion of effective service delivery in the public service. It further exposed the poor attributes of leadership displayed by public leaders that constrained the effectiveness of political and administration leadership of the bureaucratic machinery in the public service resulting in poor implementation of quality delivery of services to the citizens. It highlighted the damage that results from corruption and bribery. In certain instances, corruption was committed by some public leaders and functionaries in the public service which further exacerbated the failure to facilitate and stimulate delivery of services to

the citizens. Furthermore, the squalid living conditions of the residents were cause for concern. It demonstrated that all these problems lead to the proliferation of public protests demanding the effective and efficient service delivery to citizens. The evaluated problems are still prevalent and continue to adversely affect the performance of leadership in the public service.

The last chapter summarizes the chapters, presents conclusions and provides suggestions for improvements. Summary of chapters highlights the main points each chapter has achieved. Conclusions are presented in a detailed and specific manner with nature of reforms introduced and leadership performance in public service delivery to make citizens happy. It further makes strategic recommendations that emanate from the research findings and pertinent literature review by highlighting the most essential points which are faced by the public service to consider as possible solutions to the challenges that are experienced.

### **6.3. Conclusion**

This study investigated the administrative reforms introduced by the respective governments and the nature and quality role of leadership in service delivery to satisfy the citizens. Through the integration of the literature review across this manuscript and views of the participants in all the six categories, the following research questions were answered.

1. What major public sector reforms have been introduced in Sri Lanka since 1948?
2. What have been the primary causes of reforms?
3. What have been their impacts?
4. Were these really the most important things that should have been reformed?
5. Are there others more important? If so, why are they more important?
6. Which groups in Sri Lankan society stand to gain or lose through undertaken public service reforms?
7. In what way are public administrative and constitutional reforms linked in Sri Lanka?
8. The effectiveness of the public sector leaders in implementing reforms
9. What are the overall assessments of public opinion on the results of reforms implemented?
10. What would be more practical reforms to be introduced to make public service user friendly?

The objective of the first question was to understand the level of awareness among the different categories of people in the society about the reforms introduced by the respective government with the aim of providing public services to make the citizens happy. Those reforms have been introduced from 1948 to up to now; many people did not specifically

identify them. This shows that many people are unaware of the reforms introduced for their benefits.

The purpose of the second question was to see the understanding level of respondents about the causes of reforms. Except the political leaders, senior executives and trade union leaders, others who answered the survey have not had the basic understanding of the reasons for reforms.

The third question was targeted to know the impact of reforms over the public service delivery operations. However, many respondents have not seen the impact of reforms to improve the citizens' satisfaction level. They believe that the improvements introduced by reforms have not significance.

The objective of the fourth question was to assess the views of the respondents about the priority of reforms introduced by the respective governments. Many were of the view that there are more important areas need improvements.

The intention of the fifth question was to know the respondents' opinion on the more important areas that need reforms. On answering this question, many highlighted the customer satisfaction aspects need to be reformed.

The sixth question aimed to know the vulnerable groups in terms of gains or lost as a result of the reforms. The majority of the view that public service recipients have not been benefited, even though, many reforms introduced to improve the public service delivery operations.

The objective of the seventh question was to understand the relationship between administration and constitutional reforms. Many respondents have not see the direct relationship between these two aspects.

The eighth question wished to know the role of leadership in implementing reforms. The respondents have fully agreed on this point and expressed the leadership play a pivotal role in implementing reforms.

The intention of the ninth question was to understand the public views on the reforms introduced by the respective governments. The respondents did not see the reforms positively.

The last question was asked to know the respondents' suggestions on new reforms. Many respondents suggested that the reforms should facilitate to deliver those citizens' services in a friendly environment.

## **6.4 Strategic recommendations**

The study revealed that the key weaknesses of reforms introduced by the respective governments were due to lack of political will to properly implement those reforms to give benefits to the citizens. In this respect, creating an independent and conducive working environment within the public service is a must. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the independence of the public service has drastically eroded over the last few decades.

As a result, the nature and role of leadership in service delivery confirmed the existence of weaknesses on the part of public leaders, both politicians and bureaucrats, and that they failed to take full advantage of potential available in reforms when dealing with problems in the public service. The following recommendations are made to address these shortcomings and challenges.

First, a genuine constitutional reform is needed to restore full independence of public servants to work professionally to serve the citizen in an efficient and effective manner. There should be a mechanism to disassociate the political influences from the public service. The present political culture should be changed and the politician should limit their role only to make public policies and develop means to ensure implementation.

Second, it is recommended that public leaders should focus strongly on the eradication of corruption. To remove corruption requires the leadership to be accountable and transparent by respecting the rule of law so that the facilitation and promotion of effective and quality delivery of services can take place. The leadership should deal decisively with corruption as it was found that it occurred in all the administration levels of the public service. It is noted that corruption undermines efforts to radically bring about social and economic transformation thereby making the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality difficult. Public leaders are further cautioned that corruption stood out as the most important contributor in the failure to deliver quality and effective services to residents. It is also proposed that public leaders should take actions to stop wastage of public resources in the public sector as this too, contributed to the ineffective and inefficient delivery of services. It is further recommended that elected leaders should avoid political discord in the public service and give priority to solving problems which

the citizens are experiencing in obtaining public services. Public leaders should reinforce the legislative and regulatory imperatives to compel the functionaries to respect and apply the rule of law when evaluating and managing the processes of procurement to reduce corruption.

Third, public leaders should guide and direct resources where they are most needed to improve the livelihoods of the citizens. It is proposed that public sector leaders should work towards uniting all the people in the communities they represent regardless of their political affiliation to promote and facilitate democracy, good governance and transparency.

Fourth, it is recommended that public leaders should utilize full capacity of their natural quality role of leadership to accelerate and facilitate effective and quality service delivery because politicians and bureaucrats alike has not perform most of their leadership roles. Public leaders should be in the frontline to serve as examples to the employees and harness full capacity of the entire workforce to establish teams, networks and collaboration across hierarchical rigidity to encourage creativity of subordinates and facilitate and promote of quality and effective delivery of services in the public service. Public leaders should encourage innovation among the employees so that they create new ways of solving problems and doing things differently in the public service. It is also suggested that the entire workforce at the public service should be motivated by public leaders in the form of building synergies to break the gridlock of impersonal and mechanical human interaction which may exist between the workforce of the public service and citizens.

Fifth, it is proposed that public leaders should facilitate and promote delivery of services that are effective and of high quality to all the citizens regardless of whether they live in a less resourced or better resourced area. The public leaders should communicate successes and failures of projects and programmes and resolve community problems speedily, fulfill promises made during election campaigns, improve visibility and avoid renegeing on their leadership responsibilities. Public meetings should not be used by political leaders to politicize or depoliticize the residents; instead, public meetings should be used for planning and to address problems communities are experiencing in the constituencies where ward leaders are deployed.

Sixth, it is suggested that there should be a systematic and continuous interaction between public leaders and residents as it is seen as the basis for good leadership which can promote and facilitate the delivery of quality and effective services. It is proposed that public leaders should enhance and consolidate the social contract they have with communities, not only bound by the rules and power structure, but also through loosely constructed networks and confederations held together by agreement. It is further recommended that public leaders



deployed to strategic leadership positions should have the necessary skills to understand the complex bureaucratic government machinery. It is suggested that, in order to reduce high levels of nepotism, bribery and corruption, the public service should appoint qualifying and skilled individuals who must be vetted before signing employment contracts. It is further recommended that public leaders should exercise their political will and commitment to enhance good governance and public accountability so that they are able to provide full disclosure of facts and information to the residents as to how and why decisions are made.

Seventh, it is recommended that public leaders should modify the competencies of the employees of the public service through initiating the development and management of the institutional capacity to reinvigorate their efficiency and effectiveness in the facilitation and promotion of delivery of services. It is suggested that the leadership in the public service should have a proper plan to manage and maintain existing infrastructure to avoid collapse of the system. It is further recommended that elected leaders should not interfere in the work of functionaries, particularly the supply chain management and processes of acquisition of goods and services. A fair process of awarding contracts should entail the evaluation of the individual's work status, income, occupation, age, family members and other relevant historical information to establish the authenticity of the allocation.

Eight, it is recommended that the leadership in the public service should play a leading role in designing short-term and long-term training courses to train public officers so that they can fully understand its place and role. It is suggested that, although the public officers are seen to be well placed and playing its role, its powers should be extended in line with the constitution. It is suggested that the leadership should decisively deal with corruption within the ranks of public service to reduce the high rate of crime, and that public officers should form partnerships with citizens to fight crime. Public officers are fully equipped and resourced to deal with crime; what is lacking is commitment and corruption in their ranks. Corrupt public officers should be dismissed after following a due process.

Ninth, it is suggested to introduce an effective performance appraisal (PA) system to evaluate the performance of public officers across their hierarchy. Before implementing, it is mandatory to provide good understanding of the proposed PA system to all categories of public officers. A proper performance review meeting system is to be introduced with examples to follow the good practices within the public service. Qualities of citizen service delivery operations such as speed, kindness, helpfulness etc should be rated high. If possible 360 degree evaluation system is to be introduced. The good performers in the public service should be motivated through financial and non-financial benefits. The best employees who serve public in an impressive manner could be selected through annual competition. The employee motivation should be a

part of public service. The promotions, scholarships and attractive positions in the public service are to be offered to high performers.

Tenth, it is suggested to give equal perks also to staff positions in the public service, putting them par with the line positions. Currently, there is a higher recognition and associated perks ascribed for line positions of the command structure, and as a result, specialists who should be holding staff positions also aspire for line positions. As there are limited line positions especially at the top, for which perks are attached, there is frustration among professionals, who have fewer chances to rise. Reforms should address these kind of discrepancies, as satisfied employees are the key to satisfied customers. When the specialists get a chance to assume line position posts their services as specialists is lost to the organization. This is a second reason why reforms should address this issue.

Eleventh, a system to be developed to receive suggestions from all public service stakeholders to identify the areas that need reforms. Once these suggestions are evaluated, they should be attended after prioritizing considering the stakeholders' expectations. A sound monitoring and supervising system need to be introduced and any deviations should be immediately attended.

Twelfth, sufficient resources are needed to be provided to the public organizations to attend public delivery services in an effective manner. At present, most of the public sector organizations are functioning with a minimum budget.

Thirteenth, the "meeting culture" of the public service is to be abandon. Facilities and training for "Online meeting system" are to be provided immediately.

Fourteenth, "Online service delivery" operations within the public service have to be popularized with citizen engagements and education. The benefits of online system have to be emphasised.

Fifteenth, media should be employed to promote public service as a user friendly, quick, non complicated service provider where applicable. The best practices could be highlighted and those who contributed for those practices should be appreciated.

## 6.5 Final conclusion

Administrative reforms, leadership and citizens' satisfaction are complex concepts that have been researched extensively around the world, but which has proven to be elusive and continue to be studied. Even though, they are three different categories of concepts, there are strong connections with each other. Hence, one need to deeply analyze the inter connectivity among these concepts to make citizens' life convenient and make public service responsive.

Administrative reforms have been introduced long ago and still continuing, introducing new reforms on various matters in the public service. When the reasons for not achieving of the expected results are examined, the weak role of public sector leaders in implementing those reforms emerges as the key reason. Therefore, the role of public service leaders needs a thorough study. This research has attempted to analyze the leadership roles and functions in relations to the citizens' satisfaction over public service delivery operations.

The citizens' satisfaction is an area where public service has given less priority. For historical reasons and monopoly situation in the public service warranted the "supplier driven" mentality of most of the public officers. The "demand driven" public service is the wish of many citizens. Those factors have been discussed in this research and certain strategic recommendations have been suggested for policy makers for their consideration to make public service as a citizen friendly, efficient and effective service provider.

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