ELUCIDATION OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN POLICE: A CASE STUDY OF NCR

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ABSTRACT

Introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in public sector organizations typically results in an overhaul of the existing traditional management system, with renewed emphasis on improving efficiency and performance of the public sector organization. Public sector organizations and countries suffering from corruption, non-performance, bureaucracy, incompetence and high operational costs were in dire need of a new management system that would assist in bringing down operational costs, help manage resources and budget, minimize bureaucracy, eliminate corruption and improve the overall performance of the sector. In this study, the police sector of New Delhi NCR was studied in order to determine the feasibility of the of NPM strategies for bringing about reforms within the system. Detailed interviews were conducted among the top management of the police in the New Delhi, Gurgaon and Noida areas along with a survey among the personnel of all three police forces. Primary data analysis revealed that common perception of NPM among the upper management of the police pertained to better management practices, decrease in bureaucracy, budget and resource management and clear delegation and decentralization of leadership. Moreover, NPM implementation within the police sector was expected to face several challenges including, lack of co-operation from personnel, reserved opinions from policy makers and ministers, confusion during the change in management, assessment problems and resource and budget control. While the primary objective of the Indian Police is to serve and protect the citizens of India, as a sector it was found to be different from other sectors, in terms of lack of competition and market performance pressure, increased pressure of accountability to the public, pressure of positive public image and demand for complex, flexible and sensitive management.

1.   Introduction

Despite absence of a universally accepted definition, New Public Management (NPM) is said to be the most popular reform model adopted during 1990s (Matei and Flogaitis 2011). The concept however began in the late 1970s and early 1980s and has its roots in countries like United Kingdom and United States (Gruening 2001). New Public Management refers to an approach in public administration utilizing the knowledge and experiences of business management and other disciplines. This is an all-inclusive approach as it includes in an undifferentiated manner varied forms of reforms. However, particular focus of the NPM approach lies in performance improvement and accomplishing budgetary sustainability. To be more precise, NPM aims at improving efficiency, effectiveness, and overall performance of public services in modern bureaucracies (Vigoda 2003).

NPM mainly revolves around implementation of strategies inspired by management of *private sector* into the field of public administration (Osborne 2006). The private sector strategic approach is deployed in public sectors through NPM with the primary objective of augmenting value and competencies of varied services provided by them. Thus NPM proposes to bring about professionalism within public administration organizations (Leicht et al. 2009). NPM is based upon the supposition that private organizations are comparatively efficient than public service organization (Ehsan and Naz 2003).

One the most important features of NPM which differentiates it from traditional formats is that NPM postulates promotion of professionalism and modernization based upon individual's experiences through a gradual process rather than just burdening it on organizations (Leicht et al. 2009). Thus NPM is about developing a culture that would support breeding of such qualities which in the long run would trigger creation of a professionally managed public administration organization (Leicht et al. 2009). Another feature of NPM is that it concentrates on development of entrepreneurial qualities amongst people within public administration organization by motivating them to take leadership through innovative approaches. People are educated and motivated to be flexible to new ideas and thus foster innovation espousal (Damanpour and Schneider 2008).

In brief it can be clearly specified that NPM is a kind of administrative viewpoint that is responsible for developing an efficient organizational design within government organizations. NPM proposes to bring about reformatory changes within government organizations without affecting the core values and services for which these organizations are developed.

Current research work aims at assessing the feasibility of New Public Management (NPM) practices for bringing in reforms in the Indian police operating in the National Capital Region (NCR).

2.   Literature Review

a)   Properties

The properties of New Public Management have been discussed by a wide range of eminent scholars like McLaughlin & Ferlie (2005), Stiles et al. (2006) and Bozeman (2007) to name a few. De Campos (2004) cited that among the essential characteristics of NPM, decentralization is regarded as the most significant one as many public sector organizations implement New Public Management practices to have decentralization of activities which results in enhanced efficiency, upgraded governance, enhanced equity and enriched development and reduction in poverty. Stiles et al. (2006) while pointing about the features of NPM gave Malaysian perspective of NPM and asserted that developing countries have endeavored to implement New Public Financial Management modifications, comprising of decentralization of policymaking, the institution of fiscal management arrangements, and weightage on productivity and performance principles. Though privatization has been regarded as an essential characteristic of NPM, Bozeman (2007) elucidated that NPM is slackly assimilated managerial viewpoint while privatization efforts have wider impact. Capocchi (2008) said that New Public management entails bookkeeping logic that is essentially needed for good management in the public sector. In the same year, Adams & Smith (2008) propounded that under the arena of new public management, the functioning of government becomes highly technological. Increased information technology is expended; hence emerging as an essential feature of NPM. Walle & Hammerschmid (2011) explicated change in management style as an epic feature of NPM. On the other hand, Rosta (2011) also explicated the generic element categories of NPM. He divided them into various categories to give a clear picture of the features prevailing in the organization.

Cunningham & Harney (2012) explicated freedom to manage affairs as vital element of New Public Management. Lægreid (2014) asserted that in the wave of new public management, rise of public accountability has been considerably noticed.

Based on the above literature review, the following properties are summarized and presented:

Figure 1: Properties of NPM

Source: Author

b)   Benefits/ advantages of NPM

Decentralization has been pointed out as one of the most important advantage of NPM. It leads to greater flexibility in the organization with the speedy redressed of the queries of the customers. Christensen & Lægreid (2010) asserted that NPM paved way for solving the problems of modern public organizations. It has resulted in reorganization, modification and improvement in the working efficiency of the organization. In a report by Alonso et al. (2011), it was elucidated that with the implementation of NPM in public sector, expenditure and employees were comparatively reduced. Badie et al. (2011) elucidated that efficiency and

effectiveness of public sector operations are improved with its introduction in the public sector. Walle & Hammerschmid (2011) identified that NPM is a good managerial approach which intends to improve managerial functions on one hand and leads to decentralization, disaggregation and downsizing on other hand. Claeys (2013) explicated accountability as yet another benefit driven from New Public Management. In the same year, Miller & McTavish (2013) propounded that reduction of public expenditure is possible through NPM. Through NPM, quality of public services is improved along with cost efficiencies and savings.In the subsequent year, Kakouris (2014)elucidated that New Public Management is a synonym to breakdown of customary public structures and implementation of private sector management pattern with perfect account of objectives and performance in order to boost the service productivity, efficacy, and excellence and exhibit greater limpidity and answerability but without upsetting negatively any intentions and mattersof democratization, involvement, ingenuousness, and non-corruption.

c)   Empirical Review

Thomas & Davies (2005) focused on the public services in UK in their study and found that the investigation helped in getting a more comprehensive and wide-ranging understanding of confrontation that can be a reason for diverse motivations and ways in which persons struggle to alter meanings. In the same year, Dunleavy (2005) in his study titled New Public Management Is Dead--Long Live Digital-Era Governance while studying 7 coutries namely United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Netherlands, and Japan propounded that disaggregation, competition, and incentivization are the three notions which are foundations of New Public Management. Talking about the importance of NPM, Hernes (2005) in study elucidated that they explored tension and organizational responses by the introduction of NPM in an organizationDent (2005) compared the influence of New Public Management (NPM) in his study which dealt with the fitness systems, and particularly, health centers of the UK, Germany and Italy. In the same year, Heffernan (2005) through his study focused on the UK government's policy toward the language of service customer in the perspective of New Public Management. The importance of language was stated followed by the shift towards NPM and modifications that have expedited the shift from client to service customer, offering some of the consequences these modifications have had on communal work in UK.O'Flynn (2007b) in study asserted that

Public sector reform has been an ordinary practice across the globe in spite of its diverse practices and emphases. Samaratunge et al. (2008) chose Southern and Southeast Asian nations, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in their study to explore certain creativities of new public management (NPM) in the county to examine cross-country variations. No study has been carried out in recent times which makes it difficult to determine the prevailing circumstances and thus resulting in gap in literature.

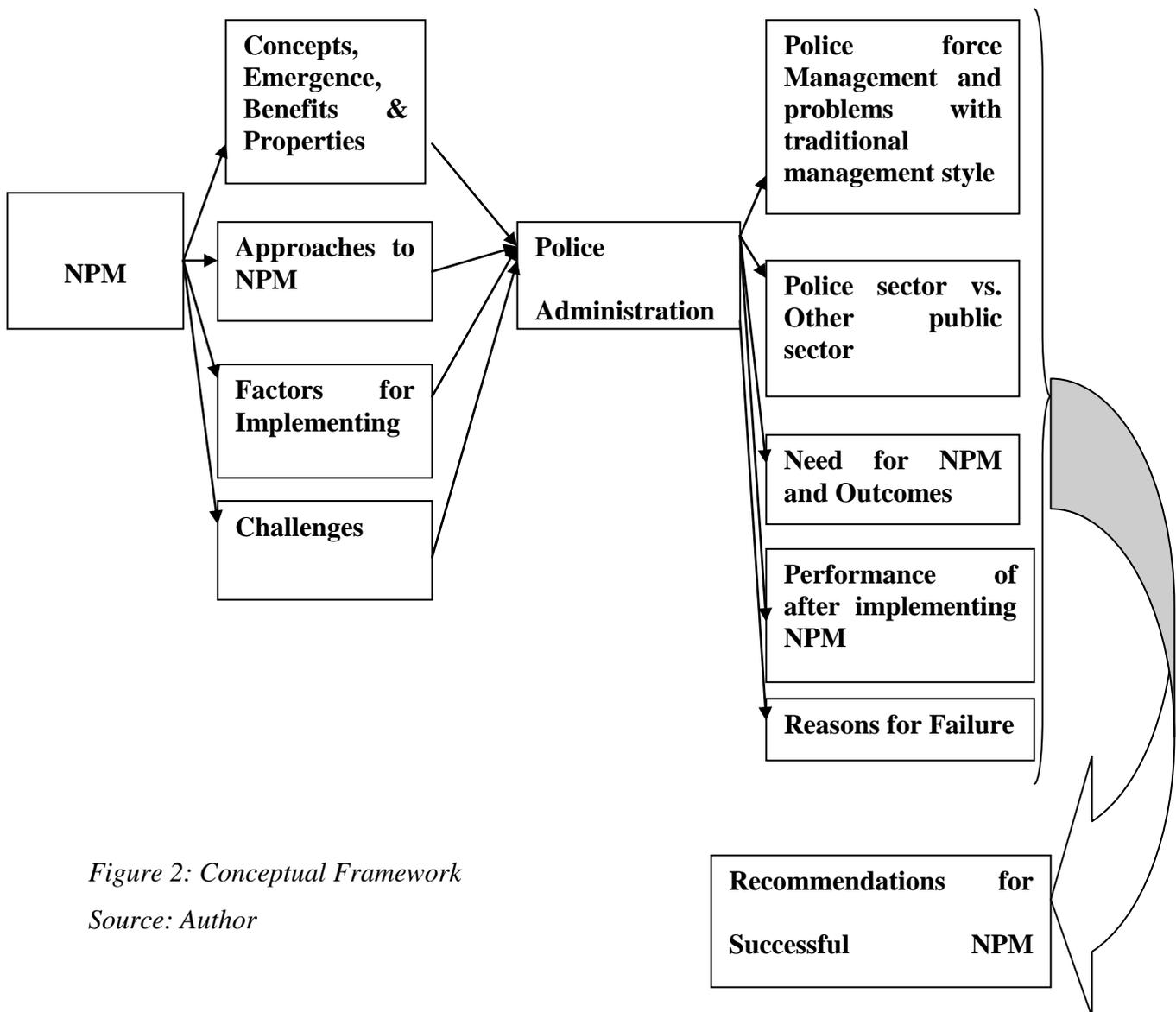**d)** **Conceptual framework**

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author

3.   Research Methodology

In the current research topic, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approach since both the opinions of NPM implementers and experts and also reactions and opinions of employees/ police force were needed and taken.In the current research scenario, the interviews of senior officials for expert opinions is used in this research. The researcher required an in-depth analysis and opinions of senior officials/ experts of NPM in police force that is purposive sample selection. The researcher developed a structured an Open-ended questionnaire for the purpose of interviews with senior police officials, which included in-depth questions pertaining to the strategies, opportunities and challenges expected by the top management in implementing NPM in the Delhi-NCR circle, as well as opinions and views for the success of such a management technique. The interview with senior officials (one from each city) was conducted face-to-face after getting appropriate permissions, during which detailed views regarding NPM in police force was discussed.

4.   Data Analysis

The three senior officials interviewed belonged to the top management of the New Delhi-NCR police force, with a minimum of 15 years of experience in the force. While Mr. A, the Deputy Commissioner of Police within the New Delhi Police force (aged 49) has an experience of 24 years in the police force, Mr. Z, the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) (aged 47) of Gurgaon Police, has experience of 20 years in the police force. Furthermore, the Senior Superintendent of Police of Noida Police force (aged 50), Mr. R has had an experience of 25 years in the force.

a)   Indian Police and the concept of NPM

When discussing the concept of New Public Management in general, Mr. A was of opinion that the strategy of NPM in the present scenario would include changing the management and the protocols followed by the Indian Police force. The current protocols are heavily influenced by bureaucracy, typical of any public sector and needs to undergo a lot of steps, without a clear direction before taking any decision. In case of Mr. Mr. Z, from Gurgaon, he was of belief that NPM would help his personnel think more creatively, in order to solve crimes and also to serve

the people better, but most importantly, manage the budget and resources provide, without letting it interfere in their activities.Lastly, Mr. R explained that according to him, NPM would bring about dynamic changes in terms of strategic management such that there is a clear delegation and decentralization of work. More importantly, he felt NPM would help them achieve the objectives of the police sector that is to maintain law and order in their area of control and also to get rid of corruption.

b)   Problems of the Management style of the Police Force

A large number of problems were found in the typical management style of the police force of Delhi-NCR. While the senior leader of Noida, Mr. R stressed upon the problem of overall management style as not having any, quoting, '*there is absolutely no established style of management in the police force of Delhi, which can be followed by the top and middle management of police, even though there is the constant problem of duty overlapping among the senior members, leading to confusion and chaos'.* In case of Mr. A, the management style had problems mainly pertaining to too many top police officials to manage the force, which often leads to confliction instructions and action plans that ultimately affects the overall performance and timeliness of action of the police force. Adding to this, Mr. Z explained that the main management style of police force had a big loophole because of the unclear definition and establishment of duties and distribution of work among the officials in any team, which has often led to repetitive tasks completion or ignoring certain jobs.

c)   Unique management of police sector from other public sectors

Main difference, according to Mr. A, is that while the police sector is a type of public sector, its objectives do not pertain to efficiency and performance in market, which allows it to perform without the fear of competition and consequence. However, he was quick to point out that where there was no competition and market dominance, the police force had pressure to maintain a positive public image and satisfy its primary stakeholders, the public and the government. Mr. Z, on the other hand was of the opinion that the management style in the police force has vast and direct real life consequences which in turn needs a flexible and sensitive management as well as work climate, unlike other public sectors. Lastly, Mr. R quoting, '*no other public sector has more political influence on the management style than the police sector',* emphasized upon the

primary problem of political influences and subsequent corruption of the police force by politicians.

d)   Need of NPM implementation in police sector

Explaining the dire need for applying NPM strategies within his workforce management, Mr. A pointed to change of the overall management system and the requirement for a clear and systematic distribution of duties and activities among middle and top management personnel, Mr. Z, on the other hand strongly wished for eradication of low police morale which is often as a result of unsatisfactory job and lack of resources and improved response time of action of the entire police force. The objectives for NPM strategy in the Gurgaon police force was to, '*develop a strong police force, with high sense of commitment and pride among my personnel and to make it an efficient organization'*. Mr. R, to this pointed to the need for a strict and defined management style focusing solely upon efficiency as well as transparency, and at the same time preventing corruption. The ultimate aim of employing NPM strategies within the Noida police force was to increasingly utilize resources in a sustainable way and prevent wastage of any sorts.

e)   NPM Concepts, Principles and Strategies in Delhi-NCR police force

Pertaining to the different strategies of NPM, Mr. A strongly voted for the advantages of technology within the police force, specifically for improved management of resources, financial, human as well as material. Mr Z, moreover explained that the top management of Gurgaon Police wished to apply the decentralization and delegation strategy of NPM, with an ultimate goal of improved efficiency and performance of the police force. Lastly, Mr. R vouched for the advantage of establishing a goal-oriented and performance-oriented work culture, which would encourage personnel and lift their morale, not to mention increased competition among personnel for performance and efficiency. Among the different characteristics of NPM, emphasis on performance, productivity, efficacy and cost-effect proficiency has been given predominantly (Fatemi and Behmanesh 2012).

f)   Personnel in planning and implementation of NPM in Delhi-NCR police force

With respect to planning and implementation of NPM among the New Delhi police force, Mr. A revealed that al the top management as well as the certain Delhi Government officials were involved in the planning stage as well as developing policies for NPM. In case of implementing, although the main monitoring job falls on the top management, Mr. A stressed on the actual

implementation of NPM strategies by the middle management. Mr Z, on the other hand emphasized on the inclusion of the middle management in the planning as well as implementation stages of NPM, since the middle management are the primary implementers of any management strategies in any organization. In contrast, Mr. R pointed out that the responsibility of planning and implementation of NPM in Noida Police force fell solely on the top management, since they aimed to adapt a hands-on approach for the entire management transition process within the police force.

g)   Performance indicators for implementation of NPM

Talking about the performance indicators employed as a result of NPM implementation, Mr. A elaborated upon the use of both internal as well as external performance indicators. While the internal indicators would deal with the response of employees/personnel towards NPM, their satisfaction, efficiency and moral; external indicators would include overall police department output, rate of file processing, public image and resources and budget assessments. Mr. Z was of the opinion that by establishing strict output based performance indicators, a true evaluation of the NPM strategies would be possible. According to him, the output indicators include decision making time limits, changing public perception, changing morale of police employees and allocation of resources within the department. Furthermore, Mr. R mentioned that change in efficiency of activities within the sector was the biggest indicator for NPM strategies, like increasing partnerships for processing cases, increased moral and commitment within employees, initiatives for spreading awareness among communities and sustainable utilization of resources. Typical performance indicators for NPM are divided into different areas of focus like, Planning and measuring, stakeholders, resource management, employee development and partnership working (good practise guidelines) (Promberger and Rauskala 2003). As a result, the performance indicators as mentioned by the senior officials pertained to both internal and external performance, which are both important for smooth functioning of the police force.

h)   Challenges in implementation of NPM

The biggest challenge, in case of all the interview respondents, found to be common was the lack of cooperation from different stakeholders of the police sector. While Mr. A was expecting more non-cooperation from the police force personnel against change in management, Mr. Z was of the opinion that policymakers and relevant government officials would not be open to city wide change of management. Mr. R however was expecting resistance from the entire workforce,

which according to him was the biggest challenge to be dealt with before the planning stage. Other challenging factors as expected by the respondents included, independence from political control effect on daily operations as a result of transition, confusion in delegation and assessing work and personnel among the middle level managers, employing special executives for resource and budget planning and management, adaption of employees towards using latest technology for routine and specific activities and finally establishment of a feedback system for effective monitoring of the new strategies. In a system when NPM along with e-Governance is established, the typical challenges to be faced includes political timing, resources allocation, political mandate, distinction between administrative and political responsibilities, coordination among different departments and use of standards (Ask and Grönlund 2008).

5.   Conclusion

As seen from the qualitative primary research data analysis, NPM according to the top management police officials, ranged according to the advantages it offered to them on the basis of the challenges they are facing in their current organizations. The primary objective of the Indian Police is to serve and protect the citizens of India, provide security and also to uphold the law, without fear or favour to any party. Subsequently, the primary duty of all police personnel revolves around provision of security and ensuring the law is upheld among the citizen. Primarily the role of the Indian Police is to protect the life, dignity, freedom of the citizens of India, as well as their belongings and ensuring that peace is maintained among the public (Bharti 2006). The analysis revealed that the need for a clear and strategic management system with clear definition of duties and responsibilities, streamlining and avoiding overlapping of duties and activities, improved response time, efficiency and transparency, among other factors. It can be seen that in order to live up to the demands and expectations of the media and general public, to improve performance and efficiency and to get rid of bureaucracy and corruption that has strongly affected the police force in India.

Following the study of different factors of NPM strategies and the consequent impact of such strategies on the police force of New Delhi-NCR, several areas were found to be lacked in focus and hence must be addressed for an all-encompassing successful effect of NPM implementation.

Firstly, an official study needs to be conducted by the Government of India in applying NPM strategies in the police force, considering the importance of national security and basic responsibility of maintaining law and order in the country. Furthermore, there is a need for special emphasis on adoption of latest technology and software among the police sector, in order to be kept updated of the latest developments within the country as well as the world. Technology, in the form of software, hardware and important equipment can immensely aid police personnel in undertaking their job, improving their performance efficiency and monitoring criminal and related activities within the areas of their jurisdiction. Lastly, continuous awareness needs to be initiated among the police regarding the advantages of NPM for better cooperation and higher success rate post implementation.

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