
**Rhetoric and Reality of New Public Management:
*Indian Experience***

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ABSTRACT

New Public Management has emerged, gradually, since the 1980s as a, major manifestation of the competitive state approach, this new paradigm which has gained wider usage, with varied labels- reinventing, reengineering, quality management, and performance management- focuses basically on changes in the structure and processes of government. The very term management instead of administration emphasizes that efficiency is more important than mere adherence to rules and regulations. The major initiatives to reform government processes are built around a shared set of notions. Government has to be deregulated public agencies must be entrepreneurial, mission driven and service oriented public managers are to be risk- takers who welcome participation and reward performance. They themselves are to be judged on their performance. These reform initiatives are targeted at the multiple performance failures of government and the need to build public confidence, the stumbling blocks to responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency.

This paper would focus on chief features of NPM and reforms initiated taken by the Indian government in the line of NPM. There are NPM success stories as well as failures in the developing world. The ecology of Indian governance has a different context and it is different to developed and even developing countries to some extent.

Keywords: *New public management, reforms, effectiveness and efficiency, entrepreneurial, Participation, Performance.*

INTRODUCTION:

New Public Management has emerged, gradually, since the 1980s as a, major manifestation of the competitive state approach, this new paradigm which has gained wider usage, with varied labels—reinventing, reengineering, quality management, and performance management— focuses basically on changes in the structure and processes of government The

very term management instead of administration emphasizes that efficiency is more important than mere adherence to rules and regulations.ⁱ

Kaboolian (1998) identifies three common factors that appear to support the thesis of globalization of NPM:

- The use of the economic market as a model for political and administrative relationships.
- Similarity in the goals they pursue and the technologies they utilize.
- The use of administrative techniques such as customer service, performance-based contracting, competition, market incentives and deregulation.ⁱⁱ

Globalisation appears to be a major factor in stirring the debate on reinventing public administration. Cerny (1994) considers that globalisation has caused state policies 'to converge on a more liberal, deregulatory approach because of the changing structural character of the international system— its greater structural complexity and interpenetratedness- which in turn transforms the changing position of states themselves within that system'.ⁱⁱⁱ The result is the emerging globalised nature of public administration. This is based on a number of structural adjustments or readjustments that have been taking place around the globe. The readjustments have been in the form of redefining the scope and boundaries of the public and private sectors, of administrative reforms or civil service reforms, of organizational reconfiguration and many others.^{iv} The developed as well as developing countries have been prompted by several considerations for initiating the public management reforms.

NPM that evolved and gained prominence in the discipline of public administration was possibly a rehash of Taylorism and New right philosophy. Yet being an attempt at synthesizing managerial principles, it definitely was a step forward in holding public administration in a good stead. In addition, in the present globalization context, the prevailing scenario compels the administrators to revisit the managerial reforms to upgrade the public sector in order to enable it to compete with the market sector.

New public Management as a paradigm, as many consider it could find place in the discipline of public administration due to dearth of a dominant paradigm at that time, Any paradigm needs to be tested in uniform as well as different contextual setting for bringing about a set of generalization. This calls for national and comparative studies to provide

explanations and justify its utility. New Public Management being a conglomeration of managerial and economics-based precepts, techniques and practices assumed a form of administrative improvement suited to each country. In the process, it resulted in a myriad of organizational and structural changes globally transcending national boundaries and encompassing several policy areas such as education, health. communication, etc, in a short span of time making a dent in the discipline and practice of public administration.

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