

## Precepts and practice of bureaucracy

Tilak Wijesundara

Dept of Sociology,  
University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka.  
E-mail: wtilak@soc.ruh.ac.lk

Bureaucracy is considered as a structure through which people can achieve their goals within a rational context. Functioning bureaucracies in the western world show more closeness to Ideal Type when compared with those in the Third World. It is because the bureaucratic system existed in the western world was created for the fulfillment of its own requirements whereas it was imported to the Third World countries in their colonial period. So, the third world countries embraced the bureaucratic system within no rational context. That is why malpractices are seen in association with the third world bureaucracies.

This research focuses to find out the real function of the bureaucracy in Sri Lanka as a Third World country and was conducted in seven districts. Data were collected from randomly selected 80 employees and 80 customers of bureaucratic organizations. Selected employees consisted of executives, and middle and lower level employees. Every possible effort was made to choose a reasonable sample representing all the qualities.

Results suggest that private sector organizations function better than government organizations due to economic, social, cultural and psychological factors. A higher tendency towards the rapid advancement of career was evident in private sector. Most of government offices were politically influenced in number of ways. Majority of workers in government organizations had negative attitudes. They worked as they could not help working. They were always fed up with work and not interested in work. Clearly majority of them considered the work as a burden. So the work never generated happiness and mirth at all. Most of rules and regulations were found to be outdated. The informal norms associated with them were not in favor of work. In contrast majority of workers in private sector organizations considered the work as a honor. They were obsessed with and head over heels in work. Work generated pleasure to them. Modern technique seemed to be used whenever possible. Customers were treated well. But customers who came to government organizations were ill-treated.

Key words: Bureaucracy; Social requirement; Rationality; Sociology of organisations