A Roundup of Business Process Reengineering in Public Services of Sri Lanka

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Abstract: By the turn of the recent millennium, Sri Lankan governance infrastructure stood at a crossroads. Already burdened by a colonial heritage, the governance system was further affected in a big way by a protracted civil war in the country that last for almost three decades. As the war ended, there were calls for a comprehensive restructuring of the governance system. In a way, that was a good omen for the country, because in most such cases the systematic inertia normally plays against any redefinition of the power structure that comes with a highly concentric system of governance. Luckily, the environment was ripe for acceptance of new ideas, and change was welcome in many government circles. At the same time, one should not rush to premature conclusions. Not everyone was happy and welcoming the planned restructuring and the anticipated consequences thereof. It was the time when a major business process reengineering (BPR) regime was introduced in the country. The regime covered multiple areas of governance, ranging from new laws and policies that changed the governance structure in a major way. In this paper, we present a chronicle of the events and actions that were taken in the country to bring a major reform initiative in the governance structure in Sri Lanka. We try to understand the cause and effect relationship also while compiling a list of actions that took place during the last ten years or so. We try to understand the underlying motives and consequences of certain laws, policies and measures put into place as part of the BPR regime. Our findings suggest that the regime has produced mixed results across various areas of governance. The reforms have produced certain results; however, the results are not similar and across the board. In short, the degree to which various regime measure have impacted different service areas is not consistent across the spectrum. We hope that our study will bring greater clarity to the scope and outcomes of the BPR regime. The results have an academic as well as professional utility for anyone who is engaged in understanding or improving the public service delivery situation.

Keywords: BPR; public service delivery; Sri Lanka