WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES
THAT HELP OR HINDER SOCIETAL HARMONY

On the Important Function of Public Administration in
Constructing a Harmonious Society

Wang Xiangdong
Shaanxi Administration school
Xi’an Shaanxi 710068
wxd1228@126.com
Abstract: It needs great effort from all walks of field to accomplish constructing the harmonious society, and all ranks of government have played an important role in it. Government has public administration function, it possesses and dominates all the resources in the whole society. It represents social fairness, equity and justice, leading the direction of social development. It plays a very important role in the process for constructing the harmonious society. This thesis puts forward eight main functions of the public administration.

Key words: the harmonious society; public administration; equity; development

The harmonious society, which is based on the law framework and moral rules, is a coordinated society among human beings, nature and society. It has always been human being’s goal to realize constructing harmony of society. It is also a historic mission to all ranks of government. Government has public administration function and it possesses and dominate all the resources in the whole society. It represents social fairness, equity and justice, leading the direction of social development. In the process of constructing the harmonious society, public administration is the basis for realizing public governing and the main body for public management. In macroscopic view, public administration has the function of organizing managing and leading. In microscopic view, it has an important function in managing social public affairs, dealing with people’s inner contradictions, maintaining social public order, carrying out work, protecting ecology and environment, etc. In general, there are mainly eight aspects which mainly demonstrate the important functions.

1. Offering opportunity fairly and pushing on the development coordinately

Public administration depends on government. Government has the function for public administration. Its responsibility is to build a road by creating the environment which is beneficial to national economic development and increasing people’s income, ensuring that everybody has opportunity. The government should offer people opportunities fairly. As for everybody in the society, only when opportunities are offered equally can we have equality. A harmonious society should provide opportunities for everyone in the society and let them participate and share them. Of course, because of people’s different history, family culture and individual background, their ability and degree are quite different. But in the government’s view, fair, equal opportunities should be given to everybody so that they can participate in the economic development. Besides, everyone in the society should have the opportunity to enjoy and share the fruit of social and economic development. So a basic condition for a harmonious society is to create various opportunities for everyone to develop and share the fruit of its achievement. Only through public administration can everyone have such fair opportunity and realize its benefits. Thus the whole society can get along well between people and the society, speeding up the pace for developing coordinately.
2. **Eliminating social contradiction, embodying the fairness of society**

Nowadays there are many contradictions in our society such as the gap between the rich and the poor, the weak groups’ right protection, the differences between cities and countries, “Three Farmers” issues, coalmine collapse, environment pollution, etc. If they are not well coped with, the contradiction will be intensified. Equity and fairness are the basis for the stability of the society. In the multivariable society, fairness is a kind of social bond and a conduct regulation. The core of harmonious society is fairness. A harmonious society is full of fairness energy and efficiency.

Dealing with people’s inner contradiction properly and keeping the social stable are the most important parts in constructing the harmonious society. They are important functions for public administration. The public administration should obey and carry out policies, properly dealing with poverty-stricken issue, migration issue, “Three Farmers” issue, coalmine collapse issue, the difference between cities and countries issue, the city rebuilding issue, laid-out workers issue, enterprises reforming issue, etc. We should safeguard people’s legal rights and interests. We should lay our emphasis safeguard on the prevention of the contradictions, establish a perfect system to deal with people’s inner contradiction. Without market economy, China can not become prosperous; without harmonious society, China can not be stable. Constructing a harmonious society is a great challenge to public administration.

The process for constructing harmonious society should make poor people get rich and let them become the main body in our society. We should establish a system to embody its fairness and lessen or eliminate people’s contradictions. Last year, as for the relationship between efficiency and fairness, people put forward some new ideas and thoughts. This problem will be researched and discussed further this year. In fact, the idea “Efficiency first, Fairness Second” has not jumped out of people’s traditional mind. We still lay emphasis on economic increase, GDP is the most important one, This contradicts with our scientific development notion. Public administration can set “Fairness” as a new goal. Economic increasing, technology development, income allocation and people’s welfare are the real goal. Human beings must be the center in the development. The highest value standard is equality and fairness. We should eliminate the factors which obstacle the realization of equality and fairness. Thus it can greatly push on the scientific development. We must admit that under the condition of market economy, the existence of social differences is inevitable and unavoidable. But we must see that through the work of public administration, it is possible for all ranks of people to get along with each other harmoniously.

3. **Cultivating social organization and realizing public management**

Public administration can solve the nature of non-government organization issues. Social organization is a bridge between people, man and society and it is the basic unit in the whole society. The social organization is the one which consists of people with same goal. Social organization has the difference between formal and informal one. As the “Third Department” of
informal organization, the non-government and non-profit-making group or organization is a very important change in the turning period of our government. Constructing harmonious society must realize harmonious public management. The harmonious public management can push on the harmonious society development.

In the developed countries, many complex contradictions between employers and employees are all solved by ways of negotiation, consultation and compromise. The social organizations have become a buffer between government and people. But in China, due to being lack of this buffer, the contradictions between different ranks of people and different group of people sometimes turns into the contradictions between government and the masses. So we should strengthen the cultivation of various social organizations. The public administration should do research and improve the social organizations, especially the management for the regulation and law of the non-profit-making organization so as to ensure it to operate within the framework of law. At the same time government should push on the development of the non-profit-making organization through increasing the services to the society. The non-profit-making organization should play its role fully in the field of social services. This is also a way for changing the function of public administration and a good access or method for utilizing social forces fully. In the process of creating good environment for the non-profit-making organization and accelerating the speed of its development, the government management department should quit from the enterprises management. It will take the role in social institution management, shifting the responsibility to the society. Government should cooperate with the Third Department coordinately. The cooperation between government and citizens will influence the harmonious public management directly and this will influence the construction of the harmonious society greatly. In the process of constructing harmonious society, the time requires government to change from single-polarized to a multi-polarized one. The importance of cooperation between government and the social organizations, citizens is that it has formed social governing multi-polarization. If social organizations or citizens have no opportunities to participate in the social governing, this society is not a harmonious one. This participation is an important characteristic of modern harmonious society and it is also the public administration's key function.

4. Developing the social capital and keeping the society stable and in order

The social capital is a kind of important resource, which means that all social members should trust each other, respect each other, have friendly relations with each other, and be responsible for each other. Nowadays, the severe lack of social capital in our country and the wide spread of fake communities are the hard challenges that our country is facing in the long-term development. When talking about the current social responsibilities and the state of people’s mental shackles, some people often say the moral degeneration of the world is getting worse day by day. Since the Reform and Opening to the Outside World, the market economy has promoted the increase in economy, and improved the living standard of the people. But people’s social responsibility and mental shackles are getting worse. The extreme thought “Putting money above everything else” is getting some people to lose the support of belief, idea, ideal, ideology, lack social responsibility, and to be impractical in people’s mental
world, but to pursue material things. Social responsibilities and mental world are probably the moral resources that our citizens lack most at present, which many scholars and representatives of all fields agree with. The society is short of conviction; citizens and enterprises are short of social responsibilities, and people are short of sincerity and trust. The deep influence of all this on the development of Chinese society has appeared gradually, and it will affect the modes of behavior and thinking of many generations. The public administration work can remodel our belief and idea, propagate the mental civilization, strengthen the moral construction and develop social capital, and at the same time take strong measures against unhealthy tendencies, fight against corruption, and then promote the sequence of production, work and life to be stable, and ensure stability order in society.

Public administration always maintains that only by attaching importance to the construction of a clean and honest administration can social turbulence be avoided.

In the process of carrying out public service, some countries in northern European think highly of their own construction of a clean and honest administration, and regard it as the cornerstone of realizing a harmonious society. But our government is weak in this aspect. The corruptive phenomenon of abusing one’s power to seek personal gain, and seeking rent of rights often happen, which has become a big obstacle in leading to harmonious society. Fighting against corruption and enhancing the construction of a clean and honest administration is the required for the government in building a harmonious society. The following is what the northern European countries have done when building the cornerstone of incorrupt government: moral restraint, legal restraint, standard systems, open government affairs, and multivariate supervision. It is the strict and effective measures that make the governments of the northern European countries come out in front among the nearly 100 model countries in the construction of a clean and honest administration (Finland is No. one). Corruption is the direct cause that leads to the conflict between the government and its public, and disrupts stability and pubic order. The governments at different levels in our country must pay special attention to their own construction of a clean and honest administration, punish corruption resolutely, overcome their own shortcomings thoroughly. Only by doing so can they become the leaders in building a harmonious society. Recently, governments at all levels have made a great progress in fighting against corruption. Public administration can surely play an important role in keeping the society stable and in order.

5. Being efficient and inexpensive, and making people feel convenient when managing public affairs

The basic function of the public administration is to strengthen the construction and management of the society, and constantly improve the management level of social public affairs. Excellent order of management is the important mark of building a harmonious society, and the major responsibility of public administration.

In order to improve the management level, enforce the law by standard, manage the public affairs well, maintain the social order and make the society stable, it’s necessary to
study the law of social management, constantly perfect the social management systems, establish and perfect a new social management model, in which the government takes responsibility, the society provides help, and the public participate.

No matter how changeable the function of the public administration may be, the management of social affairs is necessary. At present, the government must invest more capital in such social undertakings as education, culture, public health, sports and so forth. If there are no good material conditions in social cause, there will surely appear a lot more social problems, which is a common view all over the world. of course, we should also realize that the management of modern society is more important than its construction. This management is not carried out only by the central government, but by public administration systems containing social organizations, citizens and governments at all levels. The government should lay down transparent index systems of social affairs, rules of social management to do all kinds of work well. It should also train a great number of social workers, organize plenty of volunteers to give assistance in social affairs management. The more widely and deeply the public participate, the stronger it shows the ability for the public administration to administrate the social affairs is . it's necessary to be involved in creating a market environment in which competition is fair and equal so as to cohere with the relations between economic development and social development, and provide the society with public products that cannot be provided by market. The public administration system should establish a social health index just as an enterprise does, for example, the degree of the public satisfaction—the surroundings that provides satisfaction for the public. The public administration work needs to be measured by means of the digitized index system, and showed by data. Meanwhile, it’s recommended that early warning system should be formed so as to correct mistakes in time and surely make the social affairs be handled according to standard and in good order, and promote the harmonious development of the society.

The important target of the public administration is efficiency, cheapness, and making people feel convenient. Ren Yuling, a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and one of the consultants of the State Council, said, “ The proportion of the officials to the ordinary citizens is one to twenty-six, which is 306 times higher than that in the Western Han Dynasty, and 35 times higher than that in the late Qing Dynasty. Even with the proportion of one to sixty-seven at the beginning of the economic reform and the proportion of one to forty ten years ago, the proportion of the officials in the whole citizens is increasing most quickly, which makes us very worried.” One of the present problems, which cannot be allowed to be neglected in establishing a harmonious society, is the big government, small society and low efficiency. So it’s urgent to raise work efficiency, and make things convenient for the people. Now what the public pay close attention to is how to be efficient and cheap in work and how to provide convenience for the people. And this is a severe challenge to how the public administration plays an important role, and is related to the rise and decline of our country, and the stability of our society. In the current stage, it’s very urgent for China, a developing country, to change the state of the government’s high price and low efficiency, and form a transparent, open, efficient public administration system which makes things convenient for the people. So far as the government is concerned, its task in simplifying administrative structure, pushing
forward the electronic government administration and the government affairs on the Internet is very tough. Now by means of the historic chance of forming a harmonious society, the public administration system should get rid of all kinds of sources that caused our government to be high in expenses and low in efficiency, and make our government efficient and convenient for the people.

6. Drawing up public policy and optimizing public service

In forming the harmonious society, the important effect of the public policy is undoubted. I think that the analysis should be made in the two following aspects: First, seen against the large background of the whole society, multivariate interest groups have formed in China so far. And faced with a same policy, different interest groups and people of all ranks differ from each other in terms of interest inclination and value tendency. So when making decisions in public policy, it should be thought over how different interest groups are allowed to join in the process of working out policies and to express their wishes and demands. In other words, the process of drawing up the public policy and carrying it out is in reality the process of mixing together the rights and interests of different interest groups. Second, the values for the government to pursue the fairness and justice is very important when promoting the progress of the society. Of course, it’s very necessary to lay down good policies to realize it because only good policies can fully coordinate the social relations among people. If we cannot tackle the question of fairness very well or pay special attention to the weak groups in our society, it will not be a fair, honest, trustworthy, friendly or harmonious society. Working out the public policy is just to epitomize the basic value tendency in forming a harmonious society, and a direct method of realizing the values of a harmonious society.

Drawing up the public policy is the major function of public administration, and working out good public policy is the main method for the public administration to promote the harmonious development of the society. When laying down the public policy, the public administrative activities of multivariate subject can attract more ideas from every field, but in the past, the decisions of significant questions were mainly made by the government though there was the system of listening to the opinions of common people about them, which was usually a mere formality, and couldn’t satisfy the common people’s wishes. There was a common phenomenon that the department which needed to listen to the opinions of common people about some important questions would look for related experts for administrating affairs of state, which led to the lack of supervision in the process of working out the public policy. It was common that the law-makers were also law enforcement personnel. The interest of government agencies tends to be mixed in making the public policy. Take the system of taxi in Beijing for example, the plates of taxi are limited, which caused the taxi trade to be a monopoly one. The cause of this question was also that the government led to the administrative monopoly through administrative rights, and cause some monopoly administrative departments or businesses to get very high monopoly profits.

Obviously, it’s the duty of the public administration to improve the quality of making decisions in the public policy. The public administration system of multivariate subject can
strengthen the citizen society effectively through democratic ways. Citizens can be organized to participate in the public politics of the state and making decisions in public policy. They can also help and supervise the government to reorganize and readjust the relations of all interests groups so as to avoid trades monopoly. And in the course of laying down the public policy, the function of the public administration is to pay close attention to the weak groups of the society, constantly pursue the value of fairness and justice to provide excellent and efficient public service for the masses. That the public administration draws up the public policy through democratic ways is good for using scientific methods, being open and transparent, the supervision of the public, correcting mistakes in time if there are any in administration. And at the same time, it is beneficial to setting up the system of finding out who is to blame. It's also good for resolutely investigating and affixing the responsibility for those who have promoted their private interests under the guise of serving the public, make wrong decisions, seek the rent of their rights and play favoritism and commit irregularities. Thus, it can lay solid foundations for developing public service fields and improving the level of the public service, and then really optimize public service.

7. Planning the interests relations as a whole, and keeping the society stable

In social fields, to plan the interests relations of all sides as a whole is the important conditions to promote the healthy and stable development of the society. It's also the important way to realize a harmonious society. The Five Overall Planning which the Central Committee put forward shows clearly the direction for the public administration. Only by giving fully scope to the function of public administration can the interests of every side be planned as a whole. Let's read a group of data: In 2000, the nonnative workers in the businesses of Shenzhen earned 500 yuan per month on average while the native workers earned more than 2000 yuan per month on average. The census system leads to the “double-track pricing system” in employment. As a result, the nonnative workers have done temporary work in a city for many years, but they are still the groups at the verge of the city. Also, there are double-track pricing system in education, medical care and social welfare. This leads to the severe inclination of interest relation, which needs urgently to be coordinated by means of the public administration.

When encouraging people to be rich through legal and reasonable ways, the government can regulate, combine and adjust the society by means of finance, tax, ensuring supply, welfare and salvage, and improve and perfect the system of making decisions to deeply understand the conditions of the people, fully reflect the will of the people, widely collect the wisdom of the people and value the financial resources of the people, which should become a system, and form the mechanism of coordinating the interests of all sides in which the public interests can be fully expressed, efficiently balanced and scientifically coordinated. At present, the macro-regulation and macro-control that we are conducting is just the significant measures of planning as a whole the interests of all sides. The government must establish the rules and regulations of chance equality and distribution according to work to really, fully and continuously arouse the vigor of the public. The rules of the chances equality demands that such unfair elements as the gifted privilege and status degree be abandoned so as to guarantee that every member of the society will be able to have the conditions of equal
competition, get fair treatment, and then open up the space of free creation and take full advantage of their ability and potentials.

Experts in academic circles think that only by setting up the ideas that the interests of the people are the most important, conforming to the wish of the people, attaching the importance to the interests of the people, and ensuring the people’ rights can the public administration grasp the main points in work, and increase the stability of the society. When dealing with group events, the government ought to adopt the policy of persuasion instead of stopping up. Some leading officials, when seeing groups applying for an audience with higher authorities to complain to them, usually do not meet the masses, but hide themselves, which is not recommended while Ren Changxia, one of the model police officers, would ask the common people to come into the hall, listen carefully to their problems and demands, try to punish wickedness and encourage virtue, instead of shifting responsibility onto others and use evasive answers, which relieve effectively the contrary in public security, and safeguard the social stability. In order to guarantee that the common people live and work in peace and happiness, the public administration system must consolidate the responsibility system for government’s upholding stability, the system of the public discussion, the system of social supervision and system of routine check. The rules of possession management must be carried out in all social affairs, and the long-lasting system of safeguarding stability must be established and perfected. The social management network must be set up, in which the government's regulation and control system can be interconnected with the social coordination system. The function of the governments administration can be relatively complemented with the function of the social autonomy. The government's administrative force can be interacted with the social adjustment force to form the system of covering the whole society effectively and managing it in the whole way, and then realize the goal of maintaining the stability of the society.

8. Making use of the resources reasonably, and promoting continual development

It's another important function of the public administration to distribute resources properly, develop the resources effectively, use the resources reasonably and explore the way to continual development both in economy and society. The Party Committee has pointed out that a well-to-do society will have been built in its entirety by the year 2020. So the next 15 years will be an important period of accelerating the proceedings of town construction, which will need more resources of land, minerals, water, energy and so on, and the contrary of supply and demand of the resources will be more serious. Facts always tell us that the economic increase of a country should never depend on excessive use of the resources to be realized, otherwise this country will pay a high price in its resources and environment.

Our government has pointed out that the increase patterns of the national economy should be changed, but little progress has been achieved. On the whole, there still exists waste of resources. With the acceleration of the economy increase, there appears a serious shortage of water, minerals and other resources. On the other hand, waste is very serious. The rate of comprehensive utilization of energy is only 33 percent in our country, which is 10
percent lower than that of developed countries. The energy consumption of output value in a certain unit is twice as much as that of the other countries on average. At present, the problem of environment pollution is very serious and worrying. Our country ranks one hundred and thirty-third in the continual index of environment among the 144 countries (or areas). Obviously, low output value and serious environmental pollution will cause our country to be very short of resources, and our environment to be seriously polluted before becoming rich. Facts show that it’s very difficult for the present resources situation of our country to bear the weight of the wasting-mode economic development.

Solving the problem of resources waste and environmental pollution cannot only rely on market, virtue or education, but the public administration, which can regulate and control it strategically. We should set up a completely new mode of social development, and make the ideas of saving resources and the strategy of continual development run through all the fields of production, circulation, consumption and social life, and then change thoroughly the increase mode of traditional economy, and save the resources to a maximum, and improve the rate of resource utilization on every side. The government should develop the function of the public administration to the full, mobilize all the social forces, obtain as much economic and social efficiency as possible with as little resources and economic price as possible, handle correctly the relations among the economic construction, population increase, resources utilization and environment protection in order that human beings can live in perfect harmony with the nature, and then promote the harmonious development of the society.

(Translated by Lv Yunkang)

吕允康 译