



STUDY MATERIAL

VIVEKANANDA
COLLEGE
THAKURPUKUR
NAAC ACCREDITED GRADE – 'A'

SUBJECT : POLITICAL SCIENCE

Topic : Fred Riggs Prismatic model of
Administration

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Fred Riggs

Fred W. Riggs (1917-2008)

- ❖ Professor Emeritus at political science Department of University of Hawaii.
- ❖ One of the pioneers in Administrative Model.
- ❖ Well known for his works in Comparative Public Administration.
- ❖ His theory finds lots of relevance in developing countries.



Background of the Model

- ❖ After the Second World War, many Afro-Asian countries gained independence.
- ❖ They emerged out of the dark experience of imperial exploitation.
- ❖ These countries embarked upon a complex process of socio-economic reconstruction to ensure speedy development.
- ❖ In the process of their development, they got assistance from the developed countries of the west-----specially from U.S.A.
- ❖ But the results were most disappointing.
- ❖ Failure of the US Government's technical assistance programme for public administration in developing countries motivated the members of the Comparative Administration Group to find out about the administrative problems of the third world countries.

The Riggsian Model

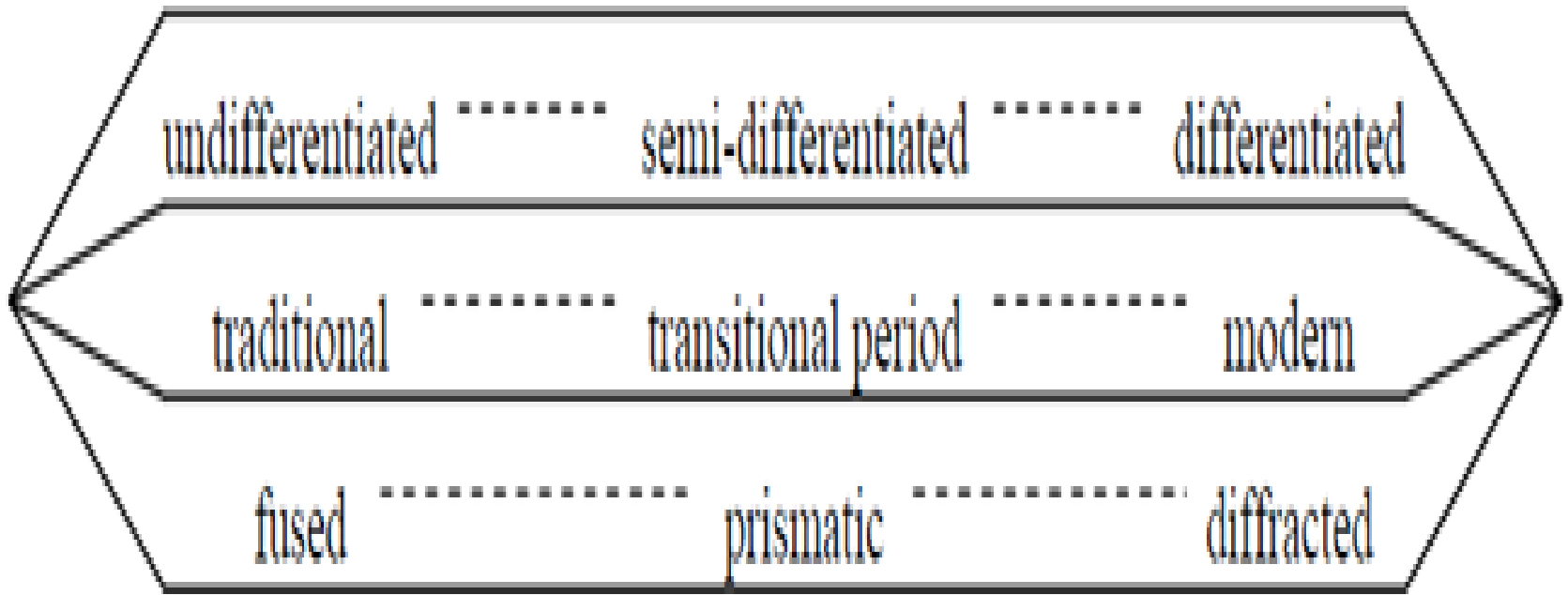
- ❖ As the long time Chairman of the CAG, Fred W. Riggs was a prime mover of academic interest and research in the field of development administration.
- ❖ Riggs pointed out the vital interconnection between the administrative system and the social system in which it is embedded.
- ❖ Administrative structure, behaviour and processes constitute an inseparable part of the entire society.
- ❖ Their understanding is possible only within the context of the web of social relations within which the public administration works.
- ❖ This is known as the *Ecological Approach to the study of Public Administration*.

Riggsian classification of societies

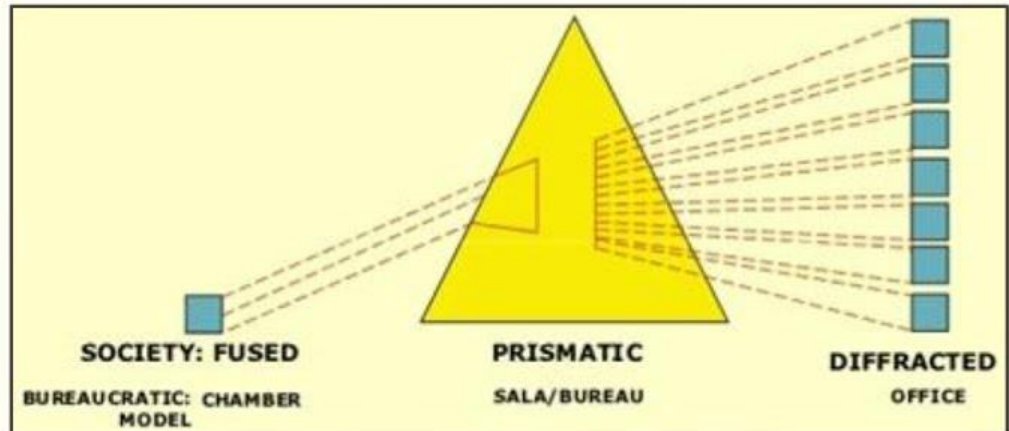
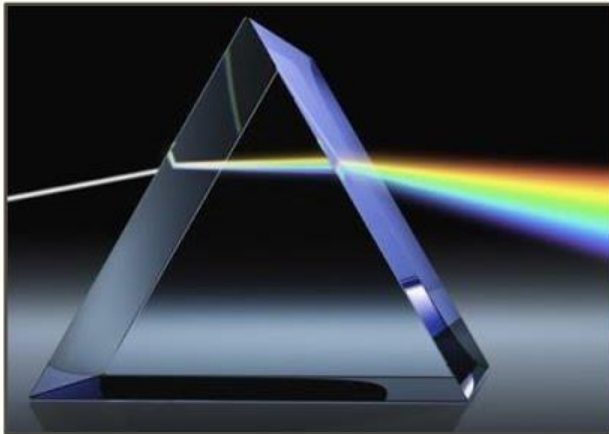
- ❖ Riggs has classified societies into agraria , transisia and industria.
- ❖ Corresponding to these three types of societies, Riggs postulated three ideal administrative systems.
 - Agraria – chamber
 - Transitia – SALA
 - Industria – Office
- ❖ Riggs had drawn upon the structural – functional approach in his model.
- ❖ Riggs argued that development is a process of increasing autonomy of social systems made possible by a rising level of diffraction.
- ❖ To Riggs, societal development is indicated by the emergence of differentiated structures performing specific functions.

Fused, Prismatic, Diffracted

- ❖ Any traditional, primitive, agricultural society has less number of structures performing an wide array of functions.
- ❖ In the modern, developed, industrial societies, we find a number of specialised structures each performing a specific function.
- ❖ In the intermediate developing, transitional societies, structural differentiation starts but is not complete.
- ❖ The transitional society is continually in the throes of change; as it moves along, it differentiates in terms of specific functions.



Fused – Prismatic – Diffracted



Use of analogy in the Riggsian Model

- ❖ Using an analogy, Riggs pictures the process of differentiation as sunlight passing through a thunderstorm and appearing as a rainbow.
- ❖ Most traditional societies are like sunlight in its natural form; a few critical structures performing most of the societal functions.
- ❖ The mixed state of structures is like pure white light----- **fused**, according to the science of optics.
- ❖ To extend the analogy, the pure white light passes through the thunderstorm which acts as a prism to change it into a multi-coloured rainbow.
- ❖ The condition of the developing societies is like the light trapper inside the prism----- neither totally fused nor entirely diffracted.
- ❖ Here modern societal structures are half-born and co-exists with the traditional ones in an uneasy companionship.`
- ❖ The developed modern industrial societies are like the rainbow, getting diffracted into seven distinct colours.
- ❖ Modern societies have structural differentiation , with functional specification.

Different types of administration in different societies:

- ❖ Riggs main emphasis was on the ecology of administration.
- ❖ He was of the opinion that Public Administration in any society depends on administrative ecology.
- ❖ The administrators have to function within the environment of politics, economy and the larger societal system.
- ❖ Hence Riggs gave the idea of the ideal type of administrative system for each of the different types of society.
- ❖ Thus for a traditional agrarian society, there is the chamber form of administration, which is structurally fused but functionally diffused.
- ❖ For a modern industrial society, there is the bureau or office model, which is structurally diffracted and functionally specific.
- ❖ For the developing intermediate societies, Riggs used the Spanish word Sala to denote their ideal form of administration.

Characteristic features of the SALA model of administration:

- ❖ Sala model of administration combines both the pure chamber (fused) and (refracted) office traits.
- ❖ In the Sala model both administrative rationality and non-administrative considerations are recognised.
- ❖ It is characterised by:
 - heterogeneity: the simultaneous presence, side by side, of quite kinds of systems, practices and viewpoints.
 - formalism: the extent to which discrepancy exists between the prescriptive and the descriptive, between formal and effective power, between impressions and actual practices.
 - overlapping: the extent to which what is described as administrative behaviour is actually determined by non-administrative criteria.

Later modifications:

- ❖ Riggs in his later publication entitled Prismatic Society Revisited(1975), suggested anew definition of prismatic society based on a two- dimensional approach.
- ❖ Along with the original dimension of differentiation, a second dimension of degree of integration was added.
- ❖ The possibility of mal-integration or lack of coordination amongst social structures accompanies the process of differentiation.
- ❖ Accordingly, Riggs further subdivided societies into finer types on the basis of degree of integration.
- ❖ Accordingly, diffracted societies are reconceptualised as eodiffracted, orthodiffracted and neodiffracted.
- ❖ Similarly, Prismatic societies are fine grained into eoprismatic, orthoprismatic and neoprismatic.
- ❖ Riggs' prismatic SALA model enables us to cope with many problems of transitional societies that slip through the net of established social sciences.

Thank You

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