

Fred W. Riggs

Fred W. Riggs, born in Kuling, China in 1917 received his doctorate in Political Science from Columbia University in 1948.

He served as a Research Associate of the Foreign Policy Association during 1948-51, As Assistant to the Director of the Public Administration Clearing House in New York between 1951-55, and as a Member of the Department of Government Indiana University, from 1956 through 1967.

Since 1967 he has been a professor of Political Science at the University of Hawaii.

He has also been a Senior Specialist at the East-West Center, University of Hawaii, and a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences, Stanford.

He was also the first Chairman of Comparative administration Group.

In Political Science and Public Administration, more specifically in Comparative administration and development administration, Riggs has published a number of books and papers.

Fred W. Riggs, a pioneer in administrative Model building, he developed many analytical models and approaches to study public administration in a comparative perspective.

The administrative theories and models, which were mostly developed before the Second World War, were generally the offshoots of industrial revolution.

These theories originated in the Western countries, mainly in the USA.

The developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which adopted western administrative models found that these models developed in particular environments to suit particular systems were not useful and valid for all systems.

The models were found to be more suitable to maintain the existing systems than for changing the systems which is the priority task of all developing nations.

These models and theories also failed to help in understanding the administrative systems in developing countries.

It is in this context that the need for developing entirely new concepts arose and the result is the emergence of the concept of comparative public administration which emphasized on cross-cultural and

cross-national administrative studies.

In the study of comparative public Administration Riggs identified three broad trends —

- ① normative to empirical
- ② ideographic to nomathetic and
- ③ non-ecological to ~~ecog~~ ecological

The Major focus of an empirical study is to arrive at inferences on the basis of extensive field study instead of normative descriptions.

Ideographic approach concentrates on the "Unique Cases or Case Study" of a single agency or country.

On the other hand, the nomathetic approach seeks generalizable laws, hypotheses, that assert regularity of behaviour and correlations with variables.

Riggs emphasized the need to study administrative systems in the ecological perspective so as to gain a comprehensive and indepth understanding of the administrative dynamics.

Riggs depended heavily on the concepts developed in other subjects to explain the ecology of public administration. He borrowed concepts from sociology, physics, and biology to propose new theories and models in public administration.

He also extensively borrowed a number of new words from other subjects, apart from coining a few to convey his ideas.

That is why it is correctly said that the terms used by Riggs to explain his models are peculiarly Riggsian.

Riggs used three important analytical tools to explain his administrative theories, viz.,

- ① ecological approach
- ② structural-functional approach
- ③ ideal models

Ecological Approach —

Administration and its environment influence each other and the understanding of the dynamics of this process is necessary to understand administration. This approach is termed ecological approach.

Ecology is a term borrowed from biology. It ~~deals~~ deals with the science concerned with interrelationship of organism and their environment. It is concerned with the interplay of living organisms and their physical and social environment and how organisms and environment are kept in balance for survival and other important objectives.

The ecology of public administration, being the interaction of administration and its environment, requires a deeper understanding of the society and the various factors affecting its functioning.

The ecological approach in the study of the public administration was initiated by J.M. Gaus, Robert A. Dahl and Robert A. Merton long before Riggs.

"Ecology of public Administration", according to J.M. Gaus, includes the study of "people, area or property, physical and social technology, wants of the people, thoughts, individually and emergency conditions."

Developing the concept further, Riggs analysed the relationship between the administration and economic, social, technological, political and communication factors in a larger perspective.

He explained illustratively how environmental conditions influence administrative system, on the basis of his studies in Thailand and Philippines.