

Henley Modeled Institution Informed Transformative Potential of Nepal's Administrative Staff College

Maki I. Tsumagari

Research and Consulting Service Department, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Nepal
Email: maki.tsumagari@gmail.com

Antovna Gyawali

Centre for Organizational Development, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Nepal

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Abstract

Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames in the United Kingdom has left a distinctive mark in the development history of executive training. It was a pioneer in drawing managerial staff from both civil service and business sectors for collaborative learning. Henley modeled institutions sprang up in different parts of the world, either as locally contextualized versions of the prototype or modified ones to cater to civil service cohort only. Although not a direct offshoot, the administrative staff college in Nepal is documented as having learned from Henley at its founding in 1982, and much of whose training structure is still retained today. The objective of the study was to review the transformation that Henley modeled administrative staff colleges took in response to the needs of time, and to draw an analysis informative for Nepal's administrative staff college to plan out its future course. This comparative public administration study treated Henley model as a benchmark and shed light on the transformation of some Henley modeled institutions, including the original Henley. The finding revealed that there is a decisive factor for Henley modeled institutions' survival. It was if the institution could continue to provide a meaningful platform for public and private sector leaders to contemplate how to co-lead the changing society. In Nepal, executive training strategically tailored for a mix of public and private sector managers is a domain yet to grow. Devising a way to involve non-public sector minds into the forum of executive training for select civil servants seems a logical lesson drawn from the transformative experiences of Henley modeled institutions, for it allows the civil service institution to continue to be relevant to the needs of the changing society it serves.

Keywords: Administrative Staff College, Comparative Public Administration, Executive MBA, Executive Training, Henley Model

Introduction

Administrative Staff College as a Distinctive Model of Executive Training

Called "the most interesting educational experiment in the world today for the student of comparative administration and business and government" (Dimock, 1956: 1), the Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames, United Kingdom, pioneered in a new approach to leadership training. It enrolled a fixed proportion of trainees at mid-point in career from public and private employment for a balanced classroom composition and stressed on group work as well as self-instruction rather than formal lectures. Founded in 1946, Henley came to be widely regarded as civilian equivalent of defense college for post-World War II (Kumar, 2019) and within ten years Henley modeled institutions sprang up in different parts of the world.

Nepal's Administrative Staff College

The initial interest in setting up an administrative staff college in Nepal is traced to the state visit of King Birendra to the UK in 1980. His visit led the UK Government to send two experts for an assessment of Nepal's civil service training, whose recommendation was the establishment of Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) (Tuladhar, 2007). Although not planned to create a replica, Henley had already been known to Nepali officials at relevant government units through the Henley modeled institutions in South Asia. Chambers and Glentworth (1986) documented that "the combination of practical intensive training and closeness and responsiveness to government and public service priorities (of Henley) had particular appeal" (p. 2) to Nepali officials. The primary concern of the administration at that time having been low delivery of development work, establishment of an administrative staff college was included as a part of administrative reform (Pradhan, 1986).

With a slogan, "a strong and competent development administration in which civil servants would be trained by a single strong agency" (Chambers & Glentworth, 1986: 2), NASC was founded in 1982. Unlike Henley, NASC was established as a purely governmental entity exclusively training public sector personnel for different levels of administration, from pre-service training for newly hired officers to those eyeing for promotion to the highest rank of secretary positions. Accordingly, the model adopted was a contextualized version, adapting the prototype except for blending of public and private sector minds for co-leading the society principle. In the course of close to 40 years since establishment, much of the training structure of Nepal Administrative Staff College is retained where predominant focus continues to be placed on public sector discussion by public sector professionals. However, this boundary setting was precisely the issue that many Henley modeled institutions had to adjust over the years to continue to be relevant in the changing society where non-public sector came to play increasing roles.

The objective of the study was to review the transformation that Henley modeled administrative staff colleges took in response to the needs of time, and to draw an analysis informative for Nepal's administrative staff college to plan out its future course. This comparative public administration study treated Henley model as a benchmark and shed light on the transformation of some Henley modeled institutions, including the original Henley. This ecological view is premised on the assumption that organizations continue to change its form/structure and business in response to the needs/wants of the clients which are shaped by the society at that moment in time (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Method

This comparative public administration (CPA) study is an empirical research based on archival and other existing records. It treats characteristics of the Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames as benchmark. Jreisat (2006: 15) explains about the value of using benchmark in CPA study as "to identify differences in performance and the reasons for these differences". The use of benchmark provides an apt lens to assess the given situation considering the larger landscape of its operating environment. In reference to Henley as a benchmark, the study chose four institutional cases to trace how the modeled institutions developed under changing environment. They were: Administrative Staff College of India in Hyderabad (ASCI) as a case that has retained Henley attributes; the original Henley and the successor of Australian Administrative Staff College, both of which changed into business school; and Henley model's successor in New Zealand that ceased. The study then drew an analysis on how predecessor experiences of later evolutions could lend light to onward path taking of Nepal's administrative staff college.

Findings

Henley Model as a Prototype of Administrative Staff College

Henley possessed new, unique features as a non-degree training institution for professionals envisaged to move higher in the career ladder. This study defines that Henley model is derived from the three main constructs: (a) platform to blend public and private sector minds to co-lead the society; (b) focus on mid-level managers with higher responsibility potential, and; (c) syndicate-based training as an overarching approach.

Platform to blend public and private sector minds to co-lead the society: Henley exemplified a new approach to leadership training by enrolling fixed proportion of trainees from public and private sectors to make a balanced class composition beneficial for collaborative learning (Dimock, 1956). This blend composition was considered essential for Henley to train future leaders to become able to understand and respond to society's common problems from where each stands. In order to thrust such a principle, Henley was designed to be entirely financed by private funds from business sector. Participation fees were shouldered by both public and private sector trainee sending institutions.

Focus on mid-level managers with higher responsibility potential: Henley targeted mid-level professionals for them to nurture administrative and managerial capabilities so that they could move into positions of seniority prepared to lead (Dimock, 1956). For such a goal on the horizon, the average intake age is recorded as 39, not too early in the career with insufficient experiences to share, and not too late with little time to exercise strengthened capabilities. Because Henley was the incubator for promotion oriented managers who were sponsored by their own organizations to which they would return and move up, degree provision was not the focus, both of Henley as well as sponsoring institutions along with sponsored trainees.

Syndicate-based training as an overarching approach: At Henley, syndicate, or cohort arrangement, involved twelve-weeks of residential training for participants who were organized into six groups of ten members each. The group consisted of members coming from civil services, private and public corporations, local governments, and foreign representatives, most of whom came from countries that were former colonies of the UK (Kumar, 2019). The ethos of such a mixed group comes from the belief that "cross section of skills" build up Henley program (Dimock, 1956:70). The emphasis was collaborative learning among the participants, each bringing to the table career bred, specialist knowledge that other members of the cohort were not familiar with. The role of the faculties, then, became more of facilitating the exchanges rather than acting as professors to teach contents. This was envisaged to lead the participants to "deep-level processing" and "development of higher-order skills" (Kumar, 2019: 10-11).

Henley Modeled Institutions

For the distinctive features described, Henley model received attention from outside the UK and the rest of the world followed suit in establishing their localized versions of administrative staff colleges. According to Kumar (2019)'s recent in-depth archival research, Henley modeled institutions were established in countries such as India, Iran, Pakistan, Philippines and East Africa and West Indies as part of post-colonial development, and Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and Norway as part of post-World War II economic development.

Henley modeled institution that has sustained the model: Among the Henley modeled institutions, that of India provides an exemplary case as Henley model being sustained. Since its establishment in 1957, the Administrative Staff College of India in Hyderabad (ASCI) has prided itself as the first and foremost institution of joint purpose and joint initiative of the Government of India and the industry (Administrative Staff College of India, n.d.). The fundamental aim of ASCI being to arrange a platform for exchanging ideas and experiences

as a driver for training participants to assume higher responsibilities (Sarkar, 2010), the training modalities of Henley were strictly adhered and retained.

Sustenance of Henley model at ASCI is captured by Kumar (2019). For the period from 1958 through 1973, Ford Foundation of the United States (US) made grants to ASCI with a condition to accept and internalize case study-based instruction. Such move by Ford Foundation in the post-World War II developing part of the world was facilitated by US academic institutions, predominantly Harvard Business School, MIT Sloan School of Management, and Syracuse University's Maxwell School (of Citizenship and Public Affairs) (Cornwall-Jones, 1985). Rigorous case study-based teaching developed by these American institutions require fluid yet structured procedure by a gifted instructor and did not co-exist as pedagogical approach with Henley's syndicate at ASCI, whose emphasis was on facilitating. In the end, despite the effort by Ford Foundation in remaking ASCI, Henley model's ethos has persisted at ASCI to date (Kumar, 2019).

Henley modeled institutions that have integrated into business schools: In 1991, Henley was renamed from Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames to Henley Management College upon receipt of the Royal Charter of the College. And in 2008, Henley Management College merged with the University of Reading to form Henley Business School (Henley Business School, n.d.). Although not explicitly referencing the name Administrative Staff College, the website of Henley Business School proudly traces the history to its time stating that "founded in 1945, Henley is one of the oldest business schools in the UK and part of the University of Reading" (Henley Business School University of Reading, n.d.).

Similar path was taken by the administrative staff college counterpart in Australia. In the tide of growth of specialist professional institutions that deliver executive education, Australian Administrative Staff College (AASC) was established in 1954 as a residential college. Later it became Mount Eliza Business School, and in 2004 merged with the Melbourne Business School (MBS) of the University of Melbourne (Allen & Wana, 2016). Its unique ownership is noted as hybrid ownership (World University Ranking, n.d.) in reference to the configuration of the board of directors: the University owning 45% of the seats and various business interests 55%. MBS's *Annual Financial Report* (Melbourne Business School Limited, 2019) confirms that from the original incorporation on 21 February 1955, the institution was registered under the Corporation Law as a Public Company Limited by Shares and Guarantee.

Today, the successors of the original Henley and AASC, namely Henley Business School and MBS, seem to be fully capitalizing on the legacy of what Henley model left behind by offering a whole array of management and leadership education. Yet, for the conversion of the institutions into degree granting ones as part of university system, both maintain sizable in-house academic professors, the caliber not prioritized by Henley model. Henley Business School's executive education portfolio includes Executive MBA-Global, Flexible Executive MBA, Flexible Executive MBA-Senior Leaders Master's Degree Apprenticeship. In addition, it also offers tailor-made programs. On its website, the School prides that "for 75 years, Henley Business School has developed confident, agile and resilient business leaders" (Henley Business School, 2020), tracing back to the years of Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames. MBS' programs for executive minded professionals stands with no less confidence through extensive offering that range from Executive MBA, Senior Executive MBA, short courses, to custom solutions (Melbourne Business School, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

Henley modeled institution that ceased: New Zealand Administrative Staff College (later renamed as New Zealand College of Management) was established in 1952, as a partnership between the public and the private sector (Cameron, first published in 2000). The objective was to improve the standards of administration and management in all sections of New Zealand Society (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.). Its hallmark was residential courses

in management development targeting young private and public sector managers (McKinnon, 2004). After three decades of success, in 1988, College faced a crisis in the aftermath of the stock market crash and the 1988 State Sector Act, a trigger for the public sector reform to incorporate business like management in public organizations (New Zealand State Services Commission, 2019). No longer a sole operator in the field, the College had to compete with increasing number of management development providers. Not being able to cope with radical changes in its operating environment (McKinnon, 2004), New Zealand Administrative Staff College, in the name of New Zealand College of Management, ceased in December 2003 (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

Summary of Finding

The finding revealed that there is a decisive factor for Henley modeled institutions' survival. It was if the institution could continue to provide a meaningful platform for public and private sector leaders to contemplate how to co-lead the changing society. ASCI continued to meet the needs of the society by maintaining its original principle of joint purpose and joint initiative of the government and the industry. The original Henley and AASC transformed into business schools so that blending public and private sector clientele was better accommodated. It was unfortunate that New Zealand Administrative Staff College could not ride the tide of the country's public sector reform. If managed well, the New Zealand staff college might have adapted into an entity to embody the country's new public management principle. The four institutional cases thus suggest that civil servants only might have become an outdated approach for executive training, and for a mandate of guiding citizens and their society at large, a more inclusive approach is the default practice of today.

Discussion

Eco-System Surrounding Nepal's Professional Training

Public sector institutions: The origin of Nepal's landscape of civil service training institutions can be traced to the country's first periodic plan, *Five-Year Plan* (1956-1961) (National Planning Commission, n.d.). In order to raise production, employment, standards of living and general well-being throughout the country, its thematically organized chapters described respective human resource requirement to implement the plan. Broadly speaking, development of the required human resource was planned by three approaches.

The first approach was to send staff abroad (e.g., administrators and higher-level technicians in village development; specialists in co-operative organization; personnel for the main engineering and technical posts of wireless communication; select junior staff for all requisite levels in power sector, mining engineers and other higher-grade technical personnel in minerals and mining; select advanced students for training in the fields of greatest need in commerce and tourism). The second approach was to train on the job either by the foreign experts or by own effort (e.g., cadastral survey; communications; power; industry). The third approach was to train at the in-country institutions (e.g., junior technical personnel for wireless communications; research, teaching, and extension work in agriculture).

The continued emphasis on prioritizing human resource development for the country's growth in the successive periodic development plans have led to many ministries having own in-house professional training institutions (Table 1).

Their predominant training focus is to foster technical capabilities required for their functional domain. Among the institutions, two institutions additionally offer academic courses in collaboration with Tribhuvan University: Master's degree in strategic studies and security offered by Army Command and Staff College and master's degree in strategic studies and security, development and peace studies by Armed Police Force Command and Staff College.

Regarding senior administrators' executive training, through the highly selective process coordinated by Public Service Commission, participants are sent to NASC for Senior

Executive Development Programme (SEDP) as a requirement for promotion to secretary positions. At NASC, public sector minds are mixed with those of colleagues from different ministries and public institutions through the program, yet the mixing is done within the public sector domain.

Table 1 List of Professional Training Institutions under Ministries

| Name of Training Institution | Name of Ministry | Established |
|--|---|-------------|
| Postal Training Centre | Ministry of Information and Communication | 1962 |
| Cooperative Training and Research Centre | Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation | 1962 |
| Forest Research and Training Centre | Ministry of Forests and Environment | 1963 |
| Nepal Police Academy | Ministry of Home Affairs | 1966 |
| Land Management Training Centre | Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation | 1968 |
| Civil Aviation Academy of Nepal | Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation | 1974 |
| Public Finance Management Training Centre | Ministry of Finance | 1980 |
| Army Command and Staff College | Ministry of Home Affairs | 1990 |
| National Centre for Educational Development | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology | 1993 |
| Institute of Foreign Affairs | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 1993 |
| National Health Training Centre | Ministry of Health and Population | 1993 |
| Local Development Training Academy | Ministry of Federal Affairs & General Administration | 1993 |
| National Judicial Academy | Ministry of Law and Justice | 2004 |
| Personnel Training Academy | Ministry of General Administration | 2010 |
| Armed Police Force Command and Staff College | Ministry of Home Affairs | 2015 |

Non-public sector institutions: A number of business schools offer MBA program in Nepal. Eight out of 10 such programs listed in 2019 edition of *Top Ten MBA Colleges of Nepal* (New Business Age, 2019)¹ are located within the country's capital region of Kathmandu Valley (Table 2).

Out of the eight institutions listed in Table 2, Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) and Ace Institute of Management offer Executive MBA degree program tailored for executive minded professionals. These two programs stand out against the rest in terms of their entry requirement criteria on prior work experience: Both require three years of minimum work experience while many other schools set minimum work years for application at one year. Also, both receive career minded mid-level professionals at around 30 and plus years of age, drawn to equip themselves to prepare for future promotion possibilities. Majority work outside the government sector, in corporate as well as nonprofit sectors, and are self-financing. Public sector students to KUSOM have predominantly been from Nepal

¹ Annually conducted by an advertising and brand communications firm that publishes monthly business magazine. Although award criteria cover wide range of institutional wealth such as availability of own website, course conduction in reference to predetermined syllabus, its focus on quality dimension is weak and thus this study references this ranking only for the purpose of capturing major institutions that offer MBA programs in Kathmandu area.

Rastra Bank, central bank of Nepal (B. Malla, personal communication, August 18, 2020; P. Rajopadhyay, personal communication, August 23, 2020).

Table 2 Kathmandu Based, New Business Age 2019 Top 10 Ranked MBA Offering Institutions

| Name o Institution that Offers MBA Program | Name of Affiliated University | Established |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Kathmandu University School of Management | Kathmandu University | 1993 |
| Ace Institute of Management | Pokhara University, Queen Margaret University | 1999 |
| Uniglobe College | Pokhara University | 2009 |
| SIAM College | Pokhara University | 2010 |
| Kathmandu Don Bosco | Purbanchal University | 2010 |
| Presidential Business School | Westcliff University, USA | 2011 |
| DAV Business School | Purbanchal University | 2011 |
| Phoenix College of Management | Lincoln University, Malaysia | 2012 |

Predecessors' Experience Informed Potential for Nepal's Administrative Staff College

From a snapshot on the landscape of eco-system surrounding Nepal's professional training industry, it seems executive training for mid-level, career minded professionals in a strategically mixed public and private sector environment does not seem germinated in the country. On the other hand, Henley modeled institutions that have survived till today evidenced that being able to offer a platform for sharing ideas of leaders from different part of the society makes the continuous value of the institution.

With an advantage of being a key institution that draws public sector minds, NASC might be well situated to offer a Henley modeled co-learning platform by devising a way to involve non-public sector leaders so that the learning environment can approximate the real world society that the civil service serves. Since NASC is not a pure replica of Henley in an operating environment that has its own features, this potential certainly requires a separate, due assessment. To encourage exploration for onward path taking, this study supports the 2019 address of NASC's founding executive director who called for a re-birth of NASC to keep up with the time (Pradhan, 2019). This was not his first time to address such a view. His belief had already been documented back in 1986:

"It is only by keeping in close touch with sister institutions throughout the world the College will be able to measure its development against the performance of others and, in time, to achieve a standard that will allow NASC justifiably to be described as a centre of excellence." (Pradhan, 1986: 153)

This study traced the evolution that Henley modeled staff colleges took and delineated what mattered for executive training for civil service in order to continue to respond to the prevailing needs of the society. There seems potential for an institution such as Nepal's administrative staff college to learn from the predecessors by venturing into executive training for a well-structured mix of career minded mid-level professionals of both public and private sectors. It will be a significant new step for the institution. The study does not negate the necessity of a range of considerations for such a venture: NASC's ownership being different from Henley model, the scope of its pre-existing executive training experience limited to the top tier cohort of civil servants, need for appraising operating landscape unique to Nepal, to name a few. Yet, the study concurs with the 2019's re-address by NASC's founding executive director who called NASC to keep up with time in own way.

Conclusion

Through an eco-system-based approach, the study attempted to look at the institutional evolution of administrative staff colleges around the world that were considered as modelled after Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames in the UK. The predecessor experiences indicate that an executive training institution continues to thrive by being relevant to the needs of the society through conscious adaptation. This study provided reference cases of how Henley modeled institutions went about navigating their own circumstances. Use of CPA allowed the study to discuss four case institutions, that come from different countries with varied circumstances, based on a benchmark as a Henley modeled institution, and to draw a point of consideration for Nepal's administrative staff college to ponder for its future.

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