

A Study on Restructuring of Administrative Management System of Local Governments

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A STUDY ON RESTRUCTURING OF ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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ABSTRACT: Social systems consist of process and rules. If relationships among social systems itself, purpose of social systems, social situation and subject of social systems are not appropriate, social systems don't work properly. Especially, social situation and subject of social system change constantly. So, maintenance for the social system is necessary. Furthermore, system to make social system is social system too. Therefore, social systems should be structured considering with hierarchy of social systems. Administrative management system is one of representative social systems. Some existing administrative management systems are not adapted to present social situation and subject of social system. So, administrative management systems should be restructured.

In this study, merger of municipalities, introduction of NPM (New Public Management) activity to a small local government and waste reduction activities of regional organization, which author concerned under social systems, are analyzed as a social system.

KEYWORDS: local government, administrative reforming

1. BACKGROUND

Recently, many local governments in Japan try to realize many kinds of administrative reformation. These administrative reformations intend to improve efficiency of administrative works. These are severe for administrative officers.

Administrative officers are required to work on administrative reforming based on intention of central government, politicians, residents and well-informed persons (from many fields). Furthermore, for administrative reforming, bad financial condition of local governments and changes in regulation of the central government should be considered. In such conciliation, some administrative reformation brought good results but others did not seem satisfactory.

In this study, characteristics of Japanese local governments were analyzed. Based on this analysis,

necessary matters to realize effective administrative reformation were found out.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPANESE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 The relation between central government and local government

Japanese modern administrative organization was structured after Meiji revolution (1868).

Driving force to establish new central government was the crisis which could turn to become a colony of European and American countries.

First mission of new central government was military conscription and establishing military organization. In this stage, local administrative organizations were subordinate organizations.

After World War 2, the General Head Quarter

(GHQ) made their policy that decentralization of Japanese administrative system aimed to weaken military strength of Japan.

In accordance with above policy, the GHQ made Japanese central government to transfer their authority for local government. Principal of local autonomy was established.

At present, central government and local governments are different organizations, and they are in equal footing as the law defines. But, actually, they still have “master and servant” relationship.

Almost local governmental organizations are structured to make them compatible with the central governmental organization.

Shortage of financial resources is the reason for making such structures for the local organizations. Due to the shortage of financial resources, local governments need to get financial support from the central government. To get financial support, local governments are required to make plan which is in accordance with central government policy. Policy and financial support menu are presented by each ministry. So, local governments make their organizations compatible to central government’s organization. Thus, administrative works of local governments followed the policy of each ministry and “master and servant” relationship have been kept until now.

2.2 Mechanism to create “master and servant” relationship between central government and local governments

Basis of “master and servant” relationship between central government and local governments is financial support from central government. But financial support is not only the reason to keep “master and servant” relationship between central government and local governments but following factors are also responsible for it.

(1) Avoiding responsibility of local government’s officials

When local governments hope to implement project using financial support from the central government, they apply grant or issuing local bonds to central government.

The central government on the basis of its own standards decides to adopt or reject the local governments’ applications. Responsibility on the project becomes unclear by the fact that central government has checked their application and shares over 50% of project cost.

If some problems happened in such project, local government officials can avoid their responsibility citing that “local government has followed central government’s standards”

Local government’s officials have incentive to avoid their responsibility by knowing the central government’s regulation, technical standard and financial support menu etc, and by following central government’s instructions and guide.

Moreover, personnel changes system which requires an official to rotate a post in every 3 or 4 years has made lack of sense of responsibility in the officials. If a problem happened to a project, staffs of the project in those days might have already transferred to another division.

(2) Characteristics of local government’s officials’ ability

Many business persons in Japan have had education which is mainly training to enhance skills in order to find out or select an answer from the sets of alternatives by using the given knowledge. Moreover, most of the public sector employment examination requires the candidate to have such knowledge to find out the right answer from the sets of answers. A person who can pass such kind of examination is good at in selecting an answer from the available resources but not able to think and

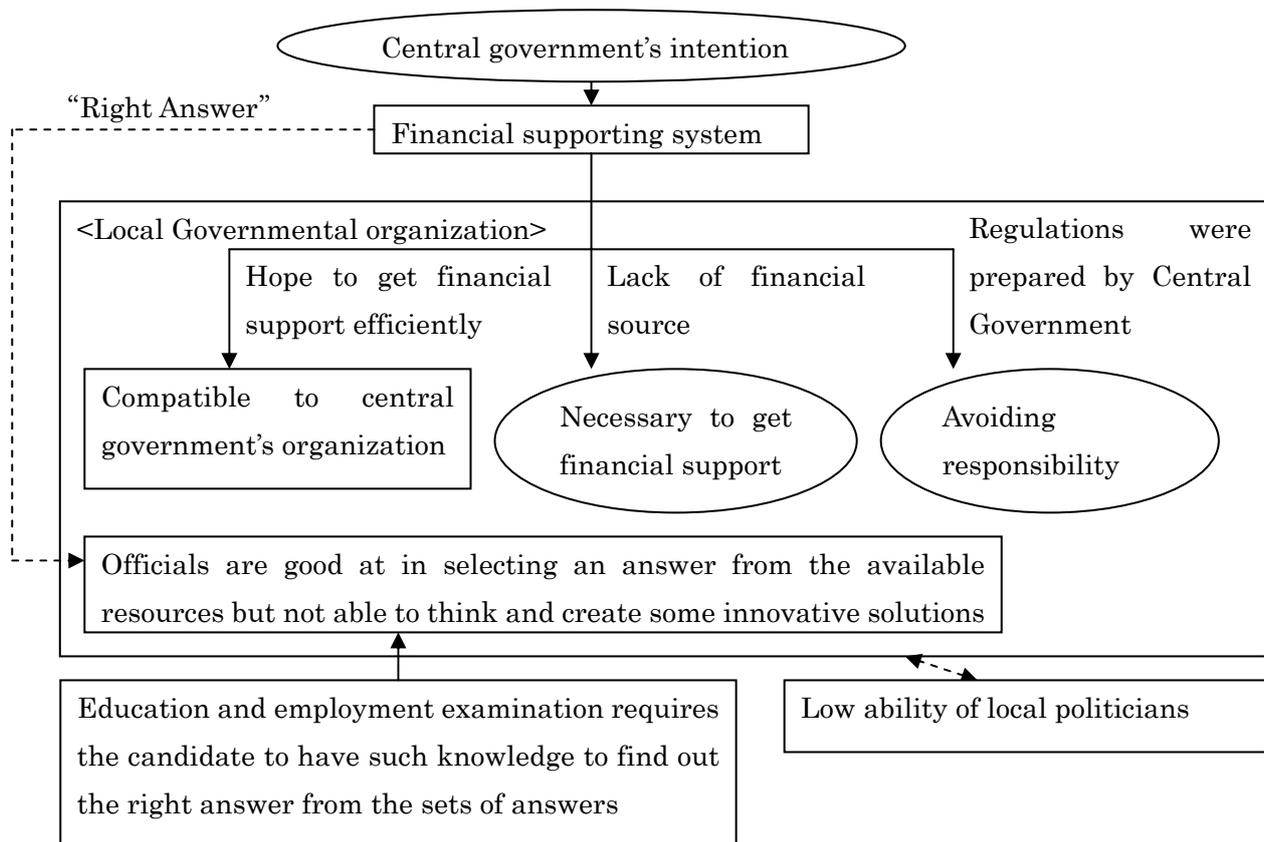


Figure1 Central government's intention has been realized in regional area

create some innovative solutions. Such educational system and requirements for getting employment do reflects the abilities of employees and cultures in local governmental organizations.

Central government's regulations, technical standards and financial support menu etc. are quite complicated.

A high level of knowledge and strong power of understanding are necessary in order to understand and handle these matters. "Excellent" local government's officials can make plan and implement regional development following central government's intention provided they have sufficient knowledge over the concerned policies, regulations, etc. of the central government.

Their knowledge and power of understanding are useful to arrive at the "right answer = central government's intention." They look like that they think it is the significance of their existence.

(3) Difference amount of knowledge and

information between local government's officials and local politicians

There is knowledge and information gap between local governments' officials and local politicians about each political matter. It is difficult for local politicians to point out problems of planning made by local government's officials and propose counterproposal.

Local government's officials know above condition. They want to follow central government's intention because of incentive for avoiding responsibility. In this way, central government's intention has been realized in regional area by high-ability of local government's officials. These structures are shown in Figure1.

2.3 Present administrative reforming of local government

Central government tried to reform the financial system by reducing grants & subsidies and transferring jobs and services to local government.

The taxing authority also will be transferred from central government to local governments. Along with these reforms, subsidies are being restructured, mainly by combining the existing subsidies into a single grant or project package consisting of multiple projects with a common strategic goal.

Background of these measures is diversification of resident's needs by improving quality of life. Central government cannot make uniform national vision for all the regions. Therefore, central government requires local governments to make their own regional vision.

In such condition, local government organization is required to change from organization which make plan and implement project following central government's intention to organization which can make plan and implement project by themselves. To realize this, Structure in Figure1 should be changed.

3. TO EXECUTE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMING

3.1 Plan was not made by local government's officials

Generally, many kinds of plans (ex. Master plan) for local governments are made by consultant under supervision of committees formed in local government. But consultant did not execute their plans.

The officials or members of committee in the local governments judge the plans made by consultants and give their decision to implement the project or not to go ahead.

Consultant makes same kind of planning for another local government. So, a plan made for a local government is tend to be similar to another local government. Local government's officials and members of committee are familiar with this matter.

Therefore, they doubt effects of plan made by

consultant. So, the plan is put aside sometime. But they do not cancel the plan; if a plan has been cancelled, local government's officials and members of committee should take responsibility for the inappropriateness of the plan.

3.2 Difficult to iron out for many stakeholders

Local governments have the role to administer employment. If some employments become unnecessary by executing the plan, negotiation may be difficult. So, local government's officials hesitate to execute the plan which affects the employment.

3.3 Incentive to avoid responsibility by changing previous system

In order to execute administrative reforming above hurdle should be cleared.

If local governments made their own plan and executed under their own system, they should take responsibility. But local government's officials have incentive to transfer their responsibility to central government.

4. CASE STUDY OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMING

What kind of administrative reforming was executed or not? Following cases were analyzed in section 5. Case 1, 2 and 3 were not executed however Case 4, 5 and 6 were executed.

4.1 Case1: Proposal of countermeasures for waste reduction in small local government

In a certain small local government, portfolio of the countermeasure for waste reduction was studied. Numerical target of waste reduction was 10%. Study organization was structured form local government officials and research group of university. Local government officials were selected from every division (General affairs, Planning, Public welfare, Construction and other industries, Education).

Effective and efficient countermeasure for waste reduction was proposed. But proposal was not executed. Study organization was not enough to work, and study was mostly done by research group of university. Furthermore, study fee was free. So, local government officials did not understand validity and proposal was put aside

4.2 Case2: Proposal of countermeasures for waste reduction for public organization

This public organization incinerates and disposes waste of 9 municipalities. This public organization requested Kochi University of Technology to make portfolio of the countermeasures for waste reduction. Effects of waste reduction by some measures were assessed from questionnaire survey for residents and trial waste correction in some houses. Proposed measures for waste reduction are following.

- If paper waste collection boxes stand everyday, amount of waste and cost of incineration and disposal will be decreased. So, paper waste collection boxes should stand everyday.
- If kitchen refuse collection boxes stand everyday, amount of waste will be decreased. By this decreasing, new incinerator which would be built in future can be compact. So, if ratio of correct kitchen refuse is over 30%, kitchen refuse collection boxes should stand everyday. If ratio of correct kitchen refuse is under 30%, kitchen refuse collection boxes should not stand everyday.
- It is necessary to trial waste correction in about 100 houses to verify effectiveness of these measures.

At study stage, these measures are understood by committee member and administrative officials. But proposed measures have not been executed yet.

This public organization has paid fee for researchers for this study. So, researchers, committee member and administrative officials have

responsibility for the proposed measures and execution of these measures for residents.

Administrative officials of this organization said that administrative officials of each municipality oppose proposed measure. Further, he said that resident oppose stand waste collection box everyday. Nobody has tried to solve these problems.

4.3 Case3: Failure of municipality merger

5 municipalities faced financial crisis and tried to merge. But finally, there was no agreement on place of new government office.

This merger was lead by prefectural government. First, these municipalities did not think about merger. Driving force of merger was to get “merger special case bond.”

Master plan of new municipality was made by consultant. But some members of committee said “It is a good plan. But is it adaptable to every municipality?”

4.4 Case4: Realization of municipality merger

After Case3 failure, 3 municipalities tried to merge again and succeeded. Master plan of new municipality was made by administrative officials of each municipality.

4.5 Case5: Kitchen refuses collection and composting system of local government

Following Kitchen refuses collection and composting system was established in certain local government.

- Kitchen refuse collection boxes stand everyday, resident can waste kitchen refuse at any time.
- Kitchen refuses from collection boxes are collected twice per week.
- Compost was made from kitchen refuses. This compost is distributed for residents.
- About 4,600 families participate to this system Before introducing new kitchen refuses

Table1 Relationship between planner and executor

Case No.	Planner	Executor	Result
Case1	Research group of University	Local government	not executed
Case2	Research group of University Committee	Local government	not executed
Case3	Prefecture Government Consulting firm Committee	Local government	not executed
Case4	Local government Committee	Local government	executed
Case5	Committee Private company	Local government Private company	executed
Case6	Residents' Group Specialist of environment matter Designer	Local government Residents' Group	executed

collection system, incinerator of this local government was not able to process all the waste due to limited capacity. This was driving force for introducing new system. Kitchen refuses collection and composting system were established by private company of this area.

Furthermore, over 50% of members of committee are ladies; they try to use this system by themselves. This is the reason for realizing and spreading this system.

4.6 Case6: Improvement of river environment and maintenance by resident's group

Water quality and river environment were improved. Planning of this project were made by designer, specialist of environment matter, administrative office and resident's group. At the design stage, member of above group explained their plan to other resident, and received feedback from residents. These activities made sense of "resident's river". This sense is the source for maintaining the river environment by them.

5. FACTORS TO REALIZE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMING

Table1 shows the relationship of planner and executor of case studies

To realize these plans, it is necessary to make local government change their jobs. So, local government officials may hesitate to exercise. Huge energy is required to be "Key person" who act as both planner and executor. Furthermore, "Key person" is required to take responsibilities.

Previously, planner and executor are separated in local governmental organization. Above condition may be on of the reasons for separating the planner and executor. For example, almost design engineer and construction site engineer of local governments are separated.

But, to realize administrative reform "Key person" who act as both planner and executor is necessary. "Key person" may be from public sector or private sector. In any case, motivation should be delivered to "Key person"

6. MEASURE FOR DELIVERING MOTIVATION FOR "KEY PERSON"

To deliver motivation for "Key person", introduction of "pay for performance system" could be thought. But there is no complete performance estimation system exists. As a consequence, there is possibility of reduction in motivation.

If "pay for performance system" is introduced, "Key person's" challenge split should be important

factor of estimation.

Local government officials have been following central government's intention, and their business system has not changed. This is one of the reasons of present financial crisis. If present condition is continued, local governments will be collapsed. Activity which changes their business system by their own ideas is quite important.

Many of methods given by another person are not useful. The other hand, method made by oneself to suite one's situation and stolen method from another person by one's mind are useful. To change business system, it is necessary to use someone's idea. New business system is deduced from primitive idea.

Japan has the culture of bottom-up decision-making and history of QC circle and "Kaizen" system. Management system which uses someone's primitive idea is required.

7. CONCLUSION

In this study, characteristics of Japanese local governments were analyzed. Characteristics of Japanese local governments were followings.

- There is "master and servant" relationship between central government and local governments.
- Basis of "master and servant" relationship between central government and local governments is financial support from central government.
- Other background of "master and servant" relationship are incentive for avoiding responsibility of local government's officials, high-ability of local government's officials, low ability of local politicians.

By considering above characteristics, factors for not executing administrative reforming are

followings.

- Plan of reforming is not made by administrative officials as executor.
- Difficult to iron out for many stakeholders
- Incentive to avoid responsibility for changing previous system

Based on analysis, necessary matters to realize effective administrative reforming were found out.

- "Key person" who act as both planner and executor
- To deliver motivation for "Key person"
- Management system which uses someone's primitive idea

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