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“SPECIAL ISSUE ON CIVIL SERVICE”



IC Centre for Governance
NEW DELHI

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The Journal of Governance

IC Centre for Governance

Niryat Bhawan, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110057

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EDITORIAL

I saw myself as a mercenary, serving any government that chose to pay me, loyally and within the limits imposed by a robustly practical conscience... To my mind, anyone who serves for money is a rice soldier and he has nothing to be ashamed of, provided he sells only his sword and not his honour. R P Noronha

I believe that within the larger crisis of governance, there is another crisis of the civil services that has been gathering over decades in our country. It is a recognized fact that we have an almost incorruptible system of recruiting our higher civil servants based entirely on merit. They undergo rigorous training in their disciplines and are given enormous responsibilities from the first day of their postings. It is also true that the civil services have acquitted themselves rather efficiently in country's development. The uninterrupted march of democracy and stability of the Nation during the last six decades is not entirely without the contribution of our civil servants. I think that despite hiccups they have performed well in maintaining the stability of the nation and sanity of the system of governance.

But however much we may take pride in the quality of our civil servants, it cannot also be denied that they have suffered from a bias towards status quo, inability to learn from the future, working in compartments rather than trying cross-cutting initiatives and failing to be seen as people friendly. In fact, the media and public perception view the rusted 'steel frame' as a well-operated gang of corrupt and incompetent members.

That's the crisis of the civil services.

The civil servant of the 21st century will have to be more accountable for his (or her) services to the common man. A high performing civil servant will be critical to good governance and to the effective delivery of public services. He will have to find his identity not only in his work but also in public perception. Yet I do not see a public debate about the future of the civil service either in public discourse or in the media.

Instead the discussion has been confined to the more visible but relatively narrow issue of politicization of bureaucracy.

It is surprising that even after 64 years of the Constitution making provisions for the higher civil services; they have not found an identity of their own. Despite the privilege conferred on them by Articles 310-311, they have failed in developing a vision of their own. They have not fixed the benchmarks for their conduct and processes. There are no safeguards against failing to deliver services to the people.

While Indian politics has thrown up new paradigms from time to time, the civil services do not provide a single example of collective ethical leadership. We have seen a JP movement in the seventies for people's governance, a VP Singh effect during eighties against corruption, a NTR storming the citadel of mal-governance by the Congress government, a Jayaprakash Narayan in Andhra Pradesh. The latest example is the movement of Aam Aadmi Party successfully rousing public sentiment against government corruption. In the civil services, there are many cases where civil servants have fought their individual battles against injustice, but these cases have failed to stir a larger mass of fellow bureaucrats.

Did the senior civil servants commit mistakes in not realizing their relevance to the game of governance? Have they made errors? I think they have.

The biggest mistake they committed was that there was no sense of urgency in the senior bureaucrats. Their complacency levels were very high, at least in the first three decades after independence. There was nothing that could displace the All India Services from the heights bestowed on them by the founding fathers of the republic. They reveled in the trust placed on them by Sardar Patel and kept repeating what he had said in his address to the probationers of the first batch of civil servants on 21 April 1947. They did not see the dangers and possibilities clearly. B K Nehru merely pointed out the follies of other colleagues and political bosses, but did not give a roadmap of what needed to be done. (Nice guys come second)

They failed to create sufficient urgency in their transactions with the citizen. For them, there was no need to force changes in the mode of administration from the pre-independence era. They underestimated their designated role in the system and

were happy to live in their comfort zones. They did not realize that their actions reinforced the status quo. They did not see the crises that could develop by their lack of foresight.

Without a sense of urgency, people do not put in the extra effort that is often essential. They would not make the needed sacrifices. Instead they would cling to the status quo.

Another major mistake of the senior bureaucrats was to act alone. Most of the brilliant officers, who could have set the standards of service, were loners. GG Somaiah in his memoirs thinks that the honest always stand alone. Even the initiatives taken by them were not shared with their teams. The civil hierarchy did not work like a machine.

The individual alone, however competent and charismatic he may be, does not possess the endowments to overcome the inertia of the system. Team building is essentially based on shared perspective and shared goals. A coalition of leaders is more effective than a solitary leader. The aggregation of seniority, reputations, knowledge, abilities and expertise has the power to drive the bulk of administration.

RP Noronha was a little more candid about the risks of acting in the way they did. "One of most common criticisms of the Service was that we were snobs. I do not think we were. The fact of the matter is that isolation or exclusiveness is a necessary insurance for anyone who wields the kind of power a member of ICS or IAS wields... But what were we like as people? Very ordinary I think. Neither plastic saints not complete back guards, although some of us did try... An officer resists political pressure either because he is built that way, or because he knows that he will be protected if he does the right thing..." (A Tale told by an idiot)

Unfortunately, no one saw the importance of collective leadership. Individual leaderships attract countervailing forces. A forceful boss can start an initiative but cannot bring about behavioural change in his followers. After his departure, the initiative is either forgotten or is replaced by the initiative of his successor

If a strong guiding coalition had developed in the initial years of administration, its continuance in spite of change in the incumbents would have reduced, if not altogether removed, the massive inertia inherited from the colonial administration.

The third mistake was to ignore the requirement of a sensible civil service vision. The vision helps the constituents to understand their value and inspire positive action to realize the vision. Its reiteration is a constant reminder to the new entrants of their place in the sun. Without a cogent vision, the bureaucracy as a whole ended in a confusing array of disjointed and incompatible projects, schemes and programmes destined to vapourise into nothingness.

The net result is that there exists no harmony within any civil service. Unlike the defence services, the civil services have not been able to create a brand image of 'Civilian' despite having virtually held sway over every nook and corner of a citizen's life. The only dubious brand the civil servant carries is that of an arrogant 'babu' who is also sometimes corrupt.

I believe that there are significant lessons to be learnt from the experience of the last six decades. Perhaps the civil servants of today need to subvert their personal aspirations and start seriously thinking about the civil service of tomorrow. Or is it too much to expect?

Prabhat Kumar

B P Verghese

Ethics and Standards in Governance

The permanent civil service is the bedrock of governance in the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy. Unlike the American practice under which senior appointments are made by the incumbent ruling party, the British tradition we follow has a permanent civil service to provide institutional continuity irrespective of the ideology or predilections of changing governments. This is an apt structure though it is possible partly to combine the two traditions to some advantage by evolving a system whereby the permanent civil service is supplemented, even enriched, by the lateral entry of professional expertise from the open market as indeed has sometimes happened, though infrequently. The growing complexity of government calls for such expertise.

Administration constitutes the backbone of governance, which is a larger term that includes policies, ideologies and public relations. The kernel lies in what Alexander Pope declaimed long back, “For forms of government, let fools contest; that which is best administered is best”. In other words, administration or the management of governance must be informed by pragmatism. To execute this obviously requires a trained body of men and women with professional experience of operating the “system” and able over time not merely to administer policy but offer objective advice to the Minister who must ultimately steer the ship of state within the bounds of the collective responsibility of the cabinet and bear political responsibility for outcomes.

This must not lead to a “Yes, Minister” type of relationship, as sometimes happens. Weak or unsure Ministers out of their depth can be guided to the point of sub-consciously accepting dictation (“draft notes” or briefs) from senior officials on whom they have come to rely beyond prudent limits. Only worse is a situation where a timid or crafty Secretary drafts or says what

the Minister would like to see or hear in order to curry favour.

India at Independence decided broadly to adopt the “steel frame” patterned under the Raj, built around the ICS and other so-called Imperial services, not all of which were however retained. While the ICS constituted an elite body of generalists trained especially around land revenue that underpinned the budget, specialist cadres such as the political and judicial services and the so-called finance-commerce pool were carved out. Defence was controlled directly by the Commander-in-Chief and, as in all other matters, generally by, the India Office in London, through the Viceroy. Post-1947, the political service was reconstituted as the Indian Foreign Service while oversight of the Princely States was absorbed by a transitional Ministry of States and, finally, Home Affairs.

The terms and conditions of work of the civil services were defined and entrenched in the Constitution (Articles 309-312). These provisions protected these Union services from capricious treatment almost to the point of assuring their “permanence” to the detriment sometimes of cadre management and discipline.

Training for the higher civil service was repatriated to India from the UK during World War II and thus was born what was to become the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration in Mussoorie. Reservations were introduced for enrolment of Scheduled Castes and Tribes as a matter of positive discrimination to ensure their participation in governance in the face of the historic discrimination these communities have suffered.

While the training and refresher courses are necessary, certain deficiencies need correction. The first is the appallingly poor level of Indian history and geography taught in schools, which is a national disgrace. The Indian history taught more or less ends with the adoption of the Constitution in 1951 and is largely confined to events in Aryavarta and Delhi with scant regard for our rich and varied regional histories. Thereafter all teaching is ad hoc or episodic. The result is a degree of illiteracy or dependence at the highest levels on hearsay. The teaching of geography often ends at Class X and it is amazing how little so-called well-educated men and women holding positions of great responsibility know of India. A people who

do not know their geography and history walk and work blind.

Historical fragmentation and ignorance is aggravated by a wholly mistaken classification, archival and cartographic policy that zealously conceals contemporary reality and denies citizens and administrators the benefit of learning from experience. Worse, as foreign nations open up their archives, international and Indian scholars rewrite our partition and post-colonial history as seen by the British, Americans, Russians, Chinese and everybody else. The Indian version remains missing or gets downgraded and Indians and Indian administrators learn a coloured history.

We are also not taught about the large cultural and political “further India” that extends into South East, West and Central Asia. Nor, in our concern with boundaries, are we aware of our borders and their significance for trade, diplomacy and strategic planning. Even the Army lacks accurate maps (on account of so-called border security) leading to a lot of nonsense being talked about highly sensitive issues like Siachen, where the U.S. Defence Agency has redrawn the LOC/LAC to the advantage of Pakistan and China by appropriating hundreds of square kilometres of Indian territory – all this without a murmur of protest

The administration has become a victim and perpetuator of this extraordinary policy that undermines India. The fault might lie in the school classroom and educational curricula or in policy formulation, but if the training of civil servants fails to fill in such obvious and vital gaps then it is seriously flawed.

Likewise, the training of civil servants has another gap in so far as there is no attempt to emphasise and deepen understanding of the word “Fraternity, assuring the Dignity of the individual”, one of the three pillars, alongside Liberty and Equality on which the Constitution rests. Ambedkar’s closing address to the Constituent Assembly must be compulsory reading for all probationers to understand the “social contradictions” that might overwhelm the Republic unless steadfastly countered. And that is the deep crisis that confronts the country today – exclusivity, communalism, casteism, linguism, localism, identity and vote-bank politics, gender discrimination and “cultural nationalism” which do not

allow economic reform and parliamentary democracy to flourish. Secularism has been hollowed out to mean equal respect for everybody's communalism!

Where is the training for civil servants in comparative religion or cultural appreciation, in tribal history and traditions and the roots of Dalit oppression which flourishes to this day? If these subjects do not figure in the civil service curriculum, surely something is wanting.

Once a civil servant is launched he or she is allocated a state cadre and is posted to the districts. District service was of paramount importance in the Raj and officers won their spurs there. An able district/divisional officer was assured of recognition and could rise to the top. Now, with land revenue virtually abolished, district service is seen as a chore to be endured while planning a transfer to the Secretariat. With panchayati raj coming into its own, the civil service wants both to defend its turf and powers and yet strive to escape the heat and dust of a district posting and step into the corridors of power.

Many district posts in "difficult" or "uncongenial" areas are shunned and remain unfilled or unattended on one pretext or another. Thus vacancies and under-staffing is reported from the Northeast, the Naxal belt, hill regions and places where officers feel "forgotten" or lack educational, health and cultural facilities. There is work to be done but few to do it and do it with zest. Fortunately there are notable exceptions whose devotion and dedication earn them the enduring love and respect of the local people.

The Indian Frontier Administrative Service was encadred in the mid-1950 to serve initially in the then-called North East Frontier Area (NEFA) but later all over the Northeast, the Himalayan highlands and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The IFAS was recruited from the open market and many military and police personnel, tea garden managers and others addicted to open air and adventurous living enrolled. The IFAS was a success and its USP was a field and people oriented, single-line, single-window administration under Political Officers (DCs) who constituted "Government". Secretariats were far away. Government was in the field, largely oral and on the spot, minus a lot of legalise and files.

Alas the IFAS was unfortunately disbanded in 1969-70 “for lack of promotional opportunities” it was said. Thus was ended a fine cadre and a style of administration that took government to the people, something on the lines of the old district administration in its heyday. A similar cadre needs to be revived today for the Naxal areas and other difficult postings. A variant might be to ask IAS officers, and others, to side-step into this special cadre with incentives and promotional ladders that earn distinction and promotion to the very top despite limited secretariat experience.

As government has grown, governance has shrunk. Numbers have increased and in some Northeastern States government service has become an industry and employment machine, with a very high ratio of officials to the overall population. In other states and the Centre too, employees, especially the lower echelons, have proliferated and even at the toptops have multiplied beyond the numbers necessary. Decisions are not taken at appropriate levels and files are pushed up and up with the result that a Secretary to the Government does the job his Deputy or Joint Secretary once did. We now have added tiers such as Secretary-Generals, Secretaries and Special and Additional Secretaries, all treading on one another's toes with no great benefit to sound administration.

Even Ministers do not decide, but remit matters to a strange new creation called the GOM (Groups of Ministers) whose numbers have again proliferated unconscionably and have undermined collective cabinet responsibility. Cabinets too often sit on issues for weeks, months and years, impeding good governance. In short, the decision making process has been subverted and time lost in files travelling up and down and roundabout, each move taking days if not weeks.

The fragmentation of Ministries too has led to a proliferating bureaucracy both in the Centre and the States. Hoards of parasitic appointments follow to service these super numeraries. This has been done largely to accommodate all manner of coalition partners, troublesome party men and regional or communal satraps. This too resulted in problems of turf and the balkanisation of administrative responsibilities without coordinating mechanisms. All of this makes for inefficiency and often results in issues lying attended as they fall between the cracks. Administrative reform committees have come and

gone but Bumbledom goes on forever with ministerial connivance.

The Defence sector remained as Lord Ismay left it when the British departed until the Kargil Review Committee called for review. Three main recommendations were made which have yet only been partially implemented if at all. The three Services have yet to be upgraded as independent and equal limbs of Government rather than being treated as subordinate entities of the Defence Ministry. The present position has nothing to do with civil supremacy, which has never been questioned. An overbearing bureaucratic protocol has only weakened and slowed down the decision making process at the cost of national preparedness. The idea of a chief of defence staff in place of a looser arrangement of a rotating chairman of the joint chiefs of staff committee has been left hanging in the balance, earlier, because of fanciful civilian fears of giving rise to Bonapartist tendencies and, latterly, on account of inter-service rivalries. Jointness has been introduced with an Integrated Command; but this reform has a long way to go.

A wholly false sense of secrecy long precluded the opening up of defence production to Indian industry other than the public sector. This has only recently been relaxed with permission granted for private sector design and production with even a degree of foreign collaboration. However, indigenous production has long been thwarted by denigrating the efforts of the DRDO in terms of quality and price. India is today the world's largest importer of arms and it is a shame that defence procurement has become a lucrative avenue of rent-seeking. We must show greater confidence in our own scientists and designers so that we learn from our own mistakes and not gift others the advantage of learning from their mistakes at our expense.

Whether in matters of Defence or civil administration, there has been a truly monumental failure in realising the importance of timely and full information and devising appropriate mechanisms for such communication so that all concerned sing from the same page. With the communications revolution more than ever before, information is power. It is agenda setting, shapes perceptions and combats disinformation. Look at any major internal or international crisis that has confronted India to see how inadequate communication has resulted in confusion, uncertainty, delay, and self-goals, ending in finger-pointing.

Corruption has increased because zealous protection of civil servants, an important parameter in itself, has not been matched by an equivalent emphasis on accountability. Instead, we have witch-hunting (witness the recent cases of Durga Shakti Nagpal and Ashok Khemka, both IAS officers), transfers and promotions to shunt out inconvenient officers and bring in loyalists and fixers. The so-called “single directive” enjoins that no officer of the rank of Joint Secretary and above shall be investigated, let alone arraigned, without governmental approval. Such approval has been very grudgingly given. Even so, punishments are not condign but minimal and vendetta is alleged by political opponents. There is a quid pro quo for all of this. Police reforms have been debated ad nauseum since 1978, but even with the prodding of the Supreme Court, little has been implemented. The excuse that the States must act is bogus as the Congress, now in power, has failed to move with determination even in states controlled by it. The sad fact is that the Police have been reduced to being hatchet men of the party in power.

The same is true of the CBI which has been denied the autonomy it needs and seeks and reduced to a being a handmade of the Central Government. The same is true of the Intelligence Services, which lack an oversight body to monitor their activities to his day.

No communal riot can last more than a day if the police act formally and the Army is called out in aid of civil power. In Gujarat 2002, effective police officers who acted swiftly and firmly to stem violence were immediately “promoted” and transferred out. With all this cultivated impedimenta to governance, corruption and *dadas* flourish. Underworld dons and mafia syndicates gain a following and street power that can even defy the government because they deliver instant, rough and ready justice. The criminal justice system has broken down and cannot be repaired until governments and corrupt politicians want and deliver good governance. These are harsh judgements but the truth often hurts.

Transparency and whistle-blower protection to encourage honest officials to follow their better instincts are of course needed. But the RTI by itself cannot be pushed too far. Movements like Anna Hazare’s were symptomatic of public anger and disgust. But talk of direct democracy and total openness even to the extent of sharing of all files, cabinet briefs

and so forth to ensure pre-legislative consensus on the streets and bazars is to travel the road to anarchy.

Of all the reforms India needs, system reform is paramount. Much can be achieved even within the present framework if systems are tweaked to get rid of irrelevancies and antiquated procedures. Structures too matter. Three examples will suffice.

The Fifth Schedule, which safeguards tribal interest through the guardianship of the Governor and constitutes a social contract between the Indian State and Tribal India solemnised on January 26, 1950 has been brazenly cast aside to create an administrative vacuum that has fostered Naxalism as a default option. The Supreme Court has caustically observed this to have been the result of “constitutional oversight”! Who cares? We are content to fight Left Wing Extremism with guns rather than just constitutional practice, which is the only lasting remedy.

The Northeast remains troubled and resentful as the very concept and administrative structure foisted on it is faulty. The Northeast is more than an ad hoc grouping of peripheral states. It is essentially a geo-political and strategic construct defined by its tenuous physical link with “heartland” India through the vulnerable Siliguri neck that narrows to a mere 22 kilometres and to its Mongoloid racial and cultural identity akin to the lands beyond to the north and east. There has seldom been any understanding of this in Delhi. Logically, it should include North Bengal and Darjeeling as a single homogenous developmental and strategic entity bordering four countries and with an external boundary of about 4500 kilometres. West Bengal should have little problem with this arrangement that does not entail severance but benefit from NEC funding in the same manner as several districts in Haryana, U.P, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh benefit from being part of the National Capital Region or from Yunnan’s association with select ESCAP programmes in the Mekong sub-regional cooperation grouping.

The North Eastern Council was intended to be the Northeast’s planning agency but has instead been reduced to a somewhat powerless and inefficiently-structured disbursement body for Central funds. The Department for NE Regional Development bears the unfortunate acronym, DoNER, and is

located 1500 kilometres away in Delhi, operating by remote control. Compare this with the Departments of Atomic Energy and of Space that are located in Mumbai and Bangalore respectively, with small liaison offices in Delhi. Distance breeds alienation.

As already mentioned, yet another failure of administration lies in failing to promote Fraternity and the Dignity of the individual which, with Liberty and Equality, constitute the tripod on which our constitutional edifice rests. No one from Nehru onwards has ever mentioned the word Fraternity in any speech, document or programme. It is as though the word does not exist in India's political and social lexicon. It did, however, find powerful and prophetic mention by Ambedkar who warned of danger from mounting social contradictions if this cardinal value was ignored. Fraternity must find place in the basic vocabulary of administration and good governance.

Again, consider the crass folly and deceit in total avoidance of any "endeavour" on the part of the State to introduce a uniform civil code in terms of Article 44. Its absence fosters gender discrimination through iniquitous property relationships under all personal laws and perpetuates the medieval tyranny of the most conservative clergy of all faiths and obsolete institutions like khaps in determining the secular relationships of Indian citizens and slotting them in various sub-denominational categories on pain of extreme punishment like "honour" killings. How do we tolerate this on the absolutely erroneous thesis that personal law cannot co-exist with a uniform civil code. The Special Marriage Act is part of a uniform code and Goa has a uniform civil code as a legacy of Portuguese rule.

Though Gandhi advocated a decentralised state built from the village panchayat upwards on the principle of subsidiarity, the Founding Fathers opted for a Union of States with a strong centre with residuary powers. With the refugee influx, war in Kashmir and the outstanding problem of integration of Princely India, this was considered prudent. Single party dominance also resulted in a strong centre with the Congress working Committee or AICC taking federal decisions. That began to change with the gradual ending of one-party rule. This commenced in 1967 and gained impetus with economic reforms and the ending of the licence-permit raj in 1992.

Along with a larger degree of economic autonomy, coalitional representation has vested regional political parties and States greater leeway in policymaking at the Centre. This has, however, gone to excess with some states stalling programmes and reforms on the ground that absence of their consent would violate federalism. Thus the proposal to establish a National Centre for Counter-Terrorism and permit multi-brand retail were torpedoed or log delayed. The passage of the Lok Pal Bill was similarly stalled while the new land acquisition R&R and compensation policy was greatly modified under state pressure. This is acceptable up to a point as a manifestation of greater democratisation, but is totally unacceptable when West Bengal vetoes the Teesta accord and land boundary agreement with Bangladesh and Tamil Nadu wants India to act differently vis a vis Sri Lanka, thus running parallel foreign policies.

The IAS and other all-India services were intended to hold the country together within a common administrative system imbued with shared values. They have certainly helped the Centre hold. Yet ideological strains have intervened and some have argued that true states autonomy would be best served by abolishing the all-India services. There are not too many takers for such a measure as this would appear retrograde. Hopefully the IAS and its counterparts will never be diminished or disbanded.

Individual civil servants have rendered yeoman service in a variety of fields and difficult circumstances, even beyond the call of duty. Some as whistle-blowers or standouts on issues of principle have paid a heavy price, even with their life, for standing up for what is right. Standards of efficiency, foresight and dynamism are essential for good governance. But without integrity and ethical conduct these fall short of what the country demands and deserves.

A P Saxena

Civil Services-The Changing Role- Issues of Trust & Governance

Of late there seems to be an emerging debate-indeed an attack- on civil service and its performance, covering as well, the overarching domain of governance. Civil service, so it is argued, is under stress leading to a trust deficit as the performing arm of the Indian state. Perception of performance cannot be quantified, much less measured, but it can be damaging since the civil service is unable to respond to the critics by the very nature of its organization, goals and mandated tasks. The aftermath of continuing overblown stress on faultiness in the civil services is casting a long shadow on its competence and capabilities. Indeed the Indian state, becomes, so it seems, by default a party writing, as if it were, an obituary of its own active functioning apparatus of governance

The faultiness and the resulting perception- too painful to be true-are vastly enlarged by some overseas writers-often not improperly labelled as India barometers who only see in shades of black. For example, Patrick French in 'India - The World is what is' even asserts that the term "India Story" is unacceptable being the story of a nearly failing state and its Civil Service(1) is a "fatuous phrase if ever there was one- a story told for millennium . It is so because "the Indian state is a failed system bureaucrats who can change have nothing to gain and plenty to lose.

The follow-up arguments raised by French to attack the Civil Service are to say the least ridiculous or a basket of literary humbug.

A century old(1912) diary entry of Edwin Montague, an arch imperialist much disliked for the infamous reforms that allude to his role in its drafting, is dug out by French as part of the narration to describe graphically the plight of an

impoverished Calcutta rickshaw man. Such writers, working overtime to attack Indian State and the civil service had not read, except through thick coloured colonial lenses and need to improve their abysmal ignorance about Indian history-past and present. Does the writer know about the habitat of the cycle rickshaw man in Bengal? Writing behind the bars of British Jail in Ahmednagar (1945) Jawaharlal Nehru had painfully recorded how there had been a complete ruin of the economic structure of Bengal by the British colonialists and millions of people had been literally burnt up by the late 30's (*The Discovery India*)

The great Bengal Famine was not far away. To quote Jawaharlal Nehru again” Yet while all this was happening, the streets of Calcutta were strewn with corpses (the rickshawman not excluded) the social life of the upper ten thousand of Calcutta-the British aristocracy -was dancing and feasting-’ a flaunt of luxury”. The horse races of Calcutta continued and attracted the usual fashionable throngs. Transport was lacking for food but racehorses came in special boxes by rail from other parts of the country. While the estimates of the number of deaths in Bengal(1943-44) vary, the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, after an extensive scientific survey estimated the famine deaths at 3.4 million. Even an official Famine Enquiry Committee presided over by John Woodward estimated 1.5 million as a direct result of famine (2). All this has been deeply researched in the magisterial studies on Bengal Famine by Nobel Laurate Amartya Sen(3)

The plight of the Calcutta rickshawman raised by French to attack the civil services to arouse sympathy sounds an insulting,convulated argument against the Indian story, the Indian State and its civil services. All this while not only Bengal but indeed India was under a military occupation of an insensitive alien rule.

Patrick French and his group of India baiters will be well advised to recall the famous oration of Edmund Burke during Fox’s India Bill (1 Dec, 1783) (4) where he famously asserted that “India does not consist of an abject and barbarous populace, much less gang of savages ,but a people for ages civilized, and cultivated by all the arts of polished life, whilst we were yet in the woods’. And further ‘the English conquerors were even worse than the Tartars, predecessors and later invaders (5)

Yes, a military rule it was, abetted by the British Civilian, crushing all including the cycle rickshaw man, as recorded by the British Army commander on the scene in Calcutta. Lt General Sir Francis Tucker, G.O.C of the powerful Eastern Command (till he left his post 23 Nov,47 has recorded with considerable feeling in his Memoirs "*While Memory Serves*" (6) the unjustified exit of the Imperial power.

Two days after Independence, in his Diary Entry dated 17 August, Tucker notes "I have a feeling that the Indian Union is being run by a team of clergy, Victorian governesses and school teachers". Again, a few days later Tucker conclusively states (Diary Entry dt 23 Aug). Their great struggle for freedom will make later generations smile, for it was conducted against 500 or so Britons in the I.C.S. The land that was held by British bayonets had a population of close to 400 million, an area of one and a half million square miles and a peace time British garrison of some fifty thousand men..One British soldier holding down with his bayonets had a population of close to 400 million, an area of one and a half million square miles and a peace time British garrison of some fifty thousand man..One British soldier holding down with his bayonet about 10,000 Indians"! In fact Tucker tries to convincingly argue that "we did not quit because the common man disliked us. He trusted us to the very end. We left because we could do no more against the obstacles of that Hindu faith, the scorn and rancour of the few educated Indian and because the world at large accused us of the sin of imperialism and treated us accordingly.'

No wonder the last page of the five hundred page long "Memoirs" has a drawing of the sit-down Celebration Dinner Plan of 28 senior most British civil and military officers on 2 June (9.00pm)- the ultimate colonial arrogance since by that time (2 June) the Transfer of Power Plan had already been broadcast.

In between the Memoirs, Tucker has lavished praise on the British civilians and their work style, trying to upgrade the incorrigible Indian Babus...who displayed bewildering ignorance about the Britons "who had conducted Indian destiny for 200 years'. But all this notwithstanding, the British had to leave true to their democratic principle-(and) continued to attempt to induce India to take control of her own destiny within the Empire!

But long before General Tucker wrote his memoirs, even in the balmy days of the Empire, the district Civil Service administration was under intense political scrutiny, particularly from 1919 till independence. Not only the district had to be efficiently run but the call of Pax Britannica had to be heard loud and clear, all around. It was even considered dangerous for the Collector to stay more than three years (exceptions apart) because of the suspicion of the seniors in the secretariat that the officer may develop personal involvement in local issues. The district officer was considered still the best out post to cultivate compradors and ensure constant support from rich landlords and sundry collaborators (7)

Nothing was left to chance and the prescribed Record, Book of the work of the Collectors was precious intelligence for serving as well as incoming Collectors. In Bombay Province there was a 'Zamindars Book' a confidential dossier where all Assistant Collectors and Collectors recorded their opinions about Zamindars and useful allies

In U.P one of the senior ICS officers Pannalal (U.P-1936) wrote a comprehensive '*Handbook for the Guidance of Junior Collectors*' marked confidential. It was meticulously drafted and merits a recall to understand the Civil Service tasks and mindset in the then prevailing colonial context (8)

The expected performance of the Civil Services in the secretariat reflected in reality a continuing conflict, even fear, on the performance of the functions outlined in the Pannalal Manual, and yet to ensure that the machinery remained loyal to the British rule. It was indeed a unique operational model for the civil services, crafted to achieve the goals of the Empire.

Receiving visitors is one of most important duties of a collector. Properly treated your 'mulaqitis' can keep you informed of conditions in the district in a way in which the official reports cannot, and thus be of great assistance to you in the successful administration of your district. Do not, therefore, be lead to look upon them as unavoidable evil, rather learn to cultivate their good will. You shall make brief notes about each of your important visitors-official or non-official and have these systematically kept in the confidential almirah. In case of a non-official, your note should indicate his position in life, the influence he wields in society, his views, and how for he may/ you may count for help'. (9)

Let us pause and try to further understand the fractured perceptions about the Civil Services-its duties and performance. Is there really a widening gap today between performance and populist expectations, usually overblown in crisis situations routinely facing the services. Can the Civil Service look beyond and locate some supporting, sympathetic space to comprehend the problems facing the overworked, harassed base level functionary at the district level performing 24 *7 tasks ranging from civil administration to animal husbandry to horticulture and so on. In fact it seems the civil services apparatus is nearly crushed and crushed too hard, not due to lack of performance, skills but others as well, e.g the press, the political elements and assorted activist of all hues and shade. To make matters worse a constant shower of media allegations makes the function ever so vulnerable, making even routine performance difficult. And there is no coping, escape mechanism, to meet the unending requirements for instant time bound action reports with stiff deadlines, even from judicial authorities.

The pulverized Civil Service officials have today become the ultimate end point of bureaucratic bashing. And there is little help from the political masters. But it was not always so, at least in the decades after independence. An instance worth recalling relates to a rather heated debate in Parliament (2 Aug 1952) on the controversial Preventive Detention Bill. The discussions were marked by harsh attack on the Civil services especially at the District level. Jawaharlal Nehru was present in the House although and had to respond especially as agitated members wished to know his response. Nehru analyzed the implied administrative issues and in a detailed reply conveyed a direct assertion of faith the performance capability of personnel from the district level upward.

A substantive part of his closing statement is worth a recall in today's scenario "Much has been said against the district magistrate and the police. I am not here as an apologist for them, but I do submit to this House that it is not right and not fair to run down our services like this. There are good, bad and indifferent people everywhere. But this method of running down people, who have to shoulder heavy responsibilities and often to face crises, is not fair because they never get a chance to defend themselves in public. They make mistakes, they, nevertheless try to function according to their judgment and discretion (10)

As Jawaharlal Nehru stressed civil service will continue to operate under stress to meet the unforeseen challenges Civil Service in the days ahead will be only well served by an uncontested aura of competence along with a discernible forward movement of the system.

Let us not forget that today civil service is the only viable structure in place in the prevailing Constitutional structure. They are robust and able to face major social, political, even legal turbulence. To quote Granville Austen, a well known authority on Indian Constitution, ‘institutions have become firmly established, surviving self-serving behavior and containing within their framework the hurly burly of politics. The constitutions processes for administration and the distribution of powers have made procedures and practices regular (11) If a number of these provisions and actions under them might now be altered, the Constitution has established clearly the basis from which change might proceed.

As Austen further explains: ‘The citizens of India have taken this Constitution as ‘the text –the scripture, even a new *Dharamashastra*, for public life, for if it seemed to fit their society, so it suited them well...Constitution has been the source of country’s political stability and its open society.. Stability consists of continuity and a measurable degree of predictability, stability and the open society support each other reciprocally..And finally truly great issues are seldom resolved, future generations also would have to face many of them ‘.

Is it too much to suggest and hope that the Civil Service will become a driving part of these tasks of resolving great issue?

What is the envelope of these great issues vi-a vis the civil services? Governments constant reiteration of social justice and equity has fostered high expectations. The idea that “we have rights” has spread and citizens at all levels may not tolerate their absence. The reference to failings of great officials made public by acid penned press may reduce the awe of official but yet ‘the framework of hierarchy, for the most part has kept things orderly’ (12)

Not to be left behind a self-serving advocacy crowd who seem to have high jacked our public discourse, are equally busy in the task of disfiguring the civil service perception. An academic in a University has taken serious umbrage at a

proposal to provide medical treatment abroad to IAS/IPS officers for a defined range of medical conditions. The arguments raised include, “a high rising fiscal deficit and the depreciating value of the rupees”. These macro level policy issues are recalled to demolish the proposal as “doubly bizarre”, reflecting the financial ramification of bureaucratic generosity. It is even argued *in extremis* that the proposed order could send wrong signals about public health care in India. The rhetoric casts doubt on the integrity of scrutiny personnel, even leading to ‘medical tourism’. The proposed privilege so it is claimed shows utter callousness in policy thinking and is morally reprehensible and irresponsible.

What about the academic performance of the University, one may ask, many in the capital almost providing educational tourism. First complied in 2004, the QDS World University rankings currently considers over 2000 institutions and ranks over 900. The top 400 are further ranked individually and those placed below are ranked in groups. In the rankings of 2013-14 released last month, yet again no University finds a place in the top 2000 (13)

Does it explain why tens of thousands of students register for degree courses at tax payers coast are burning midnight oil to compete in the all India Civil Services entrance examination-arguably one of the toughest in the world. In the two tier examination the first screening examination called the prelims is itself a massive elimination task. In the 2013 prelims, out of 3, 17,962 candidates only 4.71%(14989) succeeded to be eligible for the main.

Is an aspirational career in the civil service so demeaning, as suggested by the critics, but yet remains the preferred career goal in the eyes of lakhs of bright young aspirants?

Let us now go back to the sob-story stitched by Patrick French and other similar India baiters, which at best only echo the failed feelings of British rulers even upto the decades close to independence. The performance record of the then Indian state and its civil and military arm cries out to be noted here.

For a nation which had once been the richest upto 1820, and amounted for 23% of the global GDP, India had been reduced by 1947 into one of the poorest, most backward, most illiterate and diseased societies on earth. The imperial rule

left behind a society with 16% literacy and practically no domestic industry. And of course a fractured, divided civil service thriving on compradors. But since 1947, the literacy rate is up from 16% to 47%, reduced child mortality had increase life expectancy from 16 to 17 years (14)

And all this without any “imported” civil servants from its erstwhile rulers who had predicted dire consequences after withdrawal of power.

Let us pause and revert in today’s context some trust defining features vis-a vis the civil services-the structure, behavior patterns, norms and values. It is useful to recall these non-quantifiable factors as they impact the functional and spatial performance of Civil Service tasks. Overlooking there may lead to a creeping loss of collective identity of the services, so necessary to face unforeseen situations e.g, rapid, frequent movements in job and work locations. In the prevailing situation of often overpoliticised and unnecessary frequency of transfers, it may not be a needless recital of the manta that the membership of any service is voluntary without any element of conscription. The services-individuals and /or groups-have to accept that a mutually supporting scaffolding of trust-however one-sided and irreversible –has to be accepted to the extent possible and relied upon.

At the same time, political leadership (routinely considered as the evil party in the exercise) even at the highest level has to recognize that it is in larger natural interest, and of course, their own:

(a) to build up the services in the context of reachable important priorities and avoid any further fracturing of the perception and resulting loss of trust; and

(b) refrain from issuing impossible instructions and needlessly tempering with the services.

Such balanced thinking and approach helped and served the country well in the worst post-partition days.

Jawaharlal Nehru intervening in the Constituent Assembly Debates in December 1947, when the performance of the services was vehemently criticised by members of all sides, even admonished the members. Rebutting the attack on the trust and performance of the services, Nehry asserted, first thing must come first and today the thing is the security and stability of India-a task which the services are doing admirably.

The massive scale of emerging, comprehensive welfare programmes mounted by the Indian State for the people as the only face of accelerated development reaffirms a comprehensive state inspired social action governance which is overarching and time-bound. The recent Food Security Act 2013 is an outstanding example of a policy approach designed to achieve specific targeted food delivery specifically toward the promised goals to eliminate hunger.

The Food Security Act(2013) today emerges as a unique country wide intervention for Delivery of Commitment with no administrative precedents in terms of any food plan or project and even expected work flow outline for the implied tasks.

The critics, nevertheless keep expressing their dissent over its excessive Financial burden etc. Yet as more knowledgeable experts have noted; at most the extra expenditure on Food Security Bill will be no more than 0.3% a year. In the larger development context Jean Dreeze and Amartya Sen have convincingly argued nowhere has capital growth preceded improvement in human development indices.(16)

Administratively it may involve a circular cumulative challenge to the available corpus of management skills-as known to the occupants of the state apparatus. But none of the serving individuals and/or 'services' will be in a position to assume a know all position resting on a support base of rules, regulations and precedents.

Is it too much to suggest that the hunger free features of post-industrialisation may well redefine India, already described as 'emerging' global economy. There is ,at the same time , no reason to disbelieve that Civil Service administration and its systematic base will fully comprehend the new administrative web and navigate comfortably the new seamless and transparent set up needed to push the new social welfare measures needed to push the new social welfare measures. The author feels that the CS personnel operating the new programmes ,whatever be their beliefs ,convictions , even way of life have an embossed set of positive set of values. A sense of CS values in administration is intuitive even though there is no proving the real existence of values that will satisfy the largest intellect. Administrative applications and interpretations may be modified, even subjected to arguments but let us ensure

that ‘the criticism of civil services notwithstanding administrative convictions for unimpaired achievement by the civil services are not mislaid as early as spectacles, for unlike spectacles they are not easily mislaid. In the new large intersecting welfare programmes performance standards can be distorted by an excessive emphasis on hierarchic principles or even excess of reference to precedents all in the name of “Openness”.

As Paul Appleby famously stated in his 1956 Report to the Indian governments, specific decisions are reversed by too many persons in the different organs in the governments in detailed and repetitive terms (17). Jawaharlal Nehru too reiterated and again during the decades after independence, the new role that state needs to be comprehended without any caveat. It had to be different from what it was in the pre-independent period when the individual needs could not be met by an administrative style in the mould of a colonial state. A measure like the Food Security Act will erase the Fatalistic views of impoverished masses while facing crucial crisis situations involving hunger.

Mahatma Gandhi said, For majority of Indians God must appear in the form of bread. True, for majority of impoverished, God has appeared in the form of Food Security Act 2013.

In the years ahead will the civil services be traversing on a highway of hope or despair? There is no need to be despondent while working in a dynamic web of compact expectations, often from colliding directions and/or stakeholders.

In either case, the highway ahead for civil services may be more like a vascular system of the country where different operating systems-macro and micro will constantly meet and intersect. There shall be an inevitable layering in the system-inspiring leadership and guidance, changing and challenging job content and even blank sheets without any direction or detail.

While no blueprints can be generated for the future of the civil services and its incumbents traversing the highway of hope, shall need to have clarity of vision and a fixity of purpose setting aside controversies and doubts about its capacity and competence to complete the tasks ahead. Meanwhile to scrape the dust of mistrust being smeared at the civil service, the torch of confidence in its trust based performance-timely and assured-has to be held high and kept burning.

In a signed article, 'Making the Future Happen' Dr. Man Mohan Singh, as an M. P on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of the Republic made some memorable observations which merit a serious recall in the prevailing discourse about the tasks and performance of civil services. He noted how competitive populism along with frequent changes in postings and transfers are increasingly being used to make civil servants a subservient tool in the hands of politicians.. And again 'while India has sometimes been described as *over-regulated* but *under governed*, the India state will continue to have a vast –promotional role in steering the development process'. Further, the issue is not one of minimal governance but effective governance. India now faces a major crisis of governance in which the credibility of all major institutions of the state is seriously in doubt'. These words stated with great prescience over sixty years back portray the issue facing the civil services to day-the issue of trust and the perception about performance deficits in the midst of alleged overgovernance dealing with the routine which will be unacceptable to the generations ahead.

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Re-designing the Indian Administrative Service

India's Civil Services, of which the Indian Administrative Service is the most prominent, have a long and distinguished lineage. Indeed, the term 'Civil Services' comes from India, when it was used by the East India Company to differentiate military officials from those engaged in administration. Following the First War of Indian Independence in 1857, administrative responsibilities were taken over by the Imperial Civil Service (I.C.S.), though this term came into formal use only in 1886. In 1935, the then British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, speaking of the ICS in the House of Commons, said that it was "the steel frame on which the whole structure of our Government and of our administration in India rests." The Indian Administrative Service officers have been compared to Formula One drivers caught in a traffic jam! A study of perceptions by the intelligentsia is not very flattering:

Table 1 Ranking of the comparative perceptions of Indian Civil Service officers by politicians, technocrats and academicians

Perception	Politicians	Technocrats	Academicians
Project self as an expert	1	1	1
Concern and focus on own career	2	1	4
Self-opinionated	3	2	2
Power hungry	2	4	6
Shrewd and manipulative	4	3	7
Procedure and rule focused	6	5	4
Arrogant	3	9	5
Inaccessible	3	6	9
Judgmental and critical	7	8	3
Action and result focused	5	8	10
Concern for minor details	8	7	11

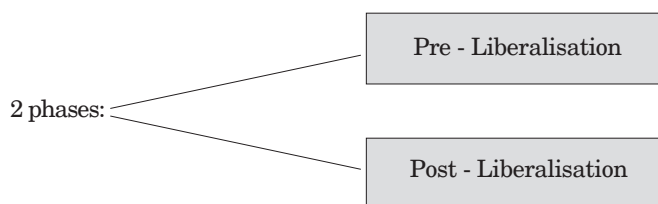
Alignment with institution	12	9	12
Intellectually of high calibre	11	12	8
Understanding and helpful	9	10	13
Respects others' competence	9	10	13
Conscientious	14	11	12
Trustworthy	10	11	17
Risk taker	13	13	15
Treats others with dignity	16	16	14
Innovative and creative	17	15	17
Visionary and transformational	15	14	16

The ranking used here is in descending order. Rank 1 means a perception that the concerned characteristic is predominant, while rank 16 or 17 means that the characteristic in question is the least dominant.

Source: Singh, P. and A. Bhandarkar. 1994. IAS Profile, Myths and Realities. New Delhi: Wiley, pp 21-22.

A look at the role played by I.A.S. officers is essential

- Their fixed/unchanging role;
- Change in priority areas with changing perspectives:



Fixed/Unchanging Role:

- Maintain the integrity & unity of the country.
- Provide impartial and objective advice to the political leadership.
- Enforce the legal framework.
- Implement effectively the programmes and policies of the Government.
- Ensure compliance to rules, regulations, procedures and processes.

- Take speedy and equitable decisions keeping in view the public interest.

Pre-Liberalisation Role: Priority areas:

- Operate a command economy.
- Micro-manage the industrial sector (the License-Permit Raj).
- Focus on developmental efforts under Community Development and subsequent programmes.
- Promote 'welfarism', especially of the weaker & marginalised sections of society.
- Strengthen local institutions under Panchayati Raj.
- Oversee the process of planned development under the framework of the Five Year Plans.

Post-Liberalisation: Priority Areas:

- Act as a facilitator for economic growth.
- Regulate the sectors opened up after liberalisation (12 Regulatory Bodies set up after 1991).
- Provide transparent and accountable Governance systems (compulsions of the RTI Act).
- Improve service delivery mechanisms (pressure of the Public Service Delivery Acts).
- Achieve Departmental targets (as set out in RFDs).
- Provide rights - based entitlements under Acts (RTE, Right to Food, MGNREGA).

Three areas, in particular can be pin-pointed for the current sorry state of affairs regarding the I.A.S.:

- The lack of a Competency Framework: There is a clear absence of a system that ensures a job-person fit. Consequently, the processes of recruitment, training, placement, transfer, promotion, empanelment and career advancement are deeply flawed, as they depend on random perceptions, political compulsions, and whims and fancies. This needs to be corrected, and an enabling environment created that places a premium on the assessment and development of competencies as the basis for Human Resource management, insofar as it relates to the Civil Services.

- The lack of a proper administrative configuration. While the Generalist vs. Specialist debate is sterile, it needs to be appreciated that in today's complex world, certain skill- sets are essential for ensuring professionalism in the job. For this, a proper administrative frame-work is essential.
- The lack of a comprehensive Performance Appraisal System: The process of performance appraisal appears frozen in the British mould. It has been tinkered with at the margins, but comprehensive reform, which captures the competency profile of an officer, is yet to take place. It must be recognized that all the steps detailed above are co-dependent, which is to say, that they work in tandem. Undertaking any one of them, in isolation, is meaningless. However, in conjunction, they would inject much needed professionalism in the I.A.S.

A comprehensive overhaul of the HR framework of the I.A.S., on the lines indicated above, is urgently called for. The first component of this re-design would be the development of a **Competency Framework**.

Competency frameworks developed from the work of the eminent American scholar, Prof. David McClelland, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University, who analysed the performance factors relating to the U.S. Public Services in his seminal work 'Testing for Competence rather than Intelligence' in 1973. The McClelland School defined competency as 'any measureable characteristic of a person that differentiates levels of performance in a given job, role organization or culture'. As applied to the Civil Services, the aspect of 'measureability' was given up, as evidenced by the following definitions:

- 'A competence can be defined as a skill, knowledge and behavior required to perform effectively in a given job, role or situation'. (Govt. of U.K.).
- 'Competencies mean the necessary behaviours and attributes as well as
- knowledge and skills required to do our jobs well in a way in which we realize our potential and provide the highest quality service to our customers'. (Govt. of Ireland).
- 'These are the knowledge, skills, behavior and personal

attributes necessary to produce effective performance in a certain role or task.’ (Govt. of Kenya).

Competency frameworks were applied, from 1979, to the U.S Senior Executive Service. Thereafter, they gained widespread acceptance in countries such as the U.K., New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Japan. The table below lists their components in various countries.

Competencies in Public Service - Examples across nations

I - Competencies for different levels (Canada Public Service Commission, 2006)

Competency	Descriptor
Values and Ethics	Serving with Integrity and Respect
Strategic Thinking	Innovation through Analysis and Ideas
Engagement	Mobilizing people, organizations and partners
Management Excellence	Delivering through action management, people and financial management

II - Centre for Public Leadership (Harvard Kennedy School of Government)

Competency	Discussion
Personal (<i>Who Am I</i>)	Being Self Aware, that is, able to reflect on one's own thinking, feeling, and behaviour .
Organizational (<i>What is the best way of organizing this work and the people doing it</i>)	Planning, Organizing, Coordinating and Executing collective action.
Leadership Theory (<i>What have the great thinkers and theorists, past and present, said about leadership?</i>)	Understanding the fundamental leadership concepts constructs and research findings.
Interpersonal (<i>How do I need to interact with others in order to help this group function effectively?</i>)	Modulating one's behaviour in order to interact effectively in a variety of settings.

Contextual (<i>Where Am I</i>)	Knowing the intellectual, cultural, institutional and policy context in which one operates.
Catalytic (<i>What are the key challenges facing this group now and how can I mobilize the group to address them?</i>)	Identifying, analysing and judging complex collective challenges and opportunities; mobilizing others for solving those challenges.
Social Systems (What's collectively happening here?)	Reading and analysing, dynamic, social and political systems.

III - Leadership Competencies New Zealand (State Service Commission, 1999, New Zealand)

Competency	Descriptor
Strategic leadership	Forward communicating relevant direction for agency
Effective communication	Able to explain, persuade, convince, and influence others
Managing in the political and cultural context	Awareness of the environment and ability to position the agency cultural context accordingly
Building and sustaining relationships	Establishing and sustaining good working relationships with all stakeholders
Honesty and integrity	Modelling the highest standards of personal and professional behaviour, including being incorruptible and politically impartial
Commitment to achievement	Personal commitment to excellence and a goal orientation
Management of people	Concerned with maximizing the quality and contributions of staff members
Managerial expertise	Concerned with effective application of best management practice
Intellectual capability	Concerned with applying intellectual processes; understanding work situations.

IV- UK Civil Service Competence Framework (UK Cabinet Office, 2000)

Competency	Key Attributes
Giving Purpose and Direction	Creating and communicating a vision for the future
Making a Personal Impact	Showing the way forward; Leading by Example
Getting the Best from People	Inspiring people to give their best
Learning and Improving	Drawing on experiences and new ideas to improve results
Thinking Strategically	Harnessing ideas
Focusing on Delivery/ Outcomes	Achieving value for money and results

V- Executive Leadership Capability Framework, Australia (Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, 1999)

Competency	Descriptors
Shaping strategic thinking	Inspiring a sense of purpose and direction; focusing strategically; harnessing opportunities; showing judgment, intelligence, and common sense.
Achieving results	Building organizational capability and responsiveness, marshalling professional expertise, steering and implementing change and dealing with uncertainty, and ensuring closure and delivering intended results.
Cultivating productive working relationships	Nurturing internal and external relationships facilitating cooperation and partnerships; valuing individual differences and diversity; and guiding, mentoring, and developing people.
Exemplifying personal drive and integrity	Demonstrating public service professionalism and probity, engaging risk and showing personal courage, committing to action, displaying resilience, and demonstrating self-awareness and a commitment to personal development.
Communicating with influence	Communicating clearly, listening, understanding and adapting to audience and negotiating persuasively.

VI - Competencies For Senior Managers (The Netherlands, Office of the Senior Public Service, 2000)

Cluster	Competencies
Coherent governance	Vision of the future, target orientation, networking skills, leadership.
Problem solving	Information analysis, judgment, conceptual flexibility, resoluteness of purpose.
Interpersonal behaviour	Listening skills, inter-personal sensitivity, flexible behaviour, collaborative skills.
Operational effectiveness	Initiative, control, delegation, fast interplay.
Impact	Oral communication, self-confidence, convincing power, tenacity.
Resilience	Energy, stress resistance, performance motivation, learning capacity.
Governance sensitivity	Environmental awareness, governance affinity, integrity, dedication

Chart : Courtesy, Ms. Pallavi Awasthi, Sr. Researcher, N.I.A.R

When it comes to the I.A.S., however, the challenge becomes much greater. This is because this Service straddles an incredible variety of assignments, across the Central and State governments, across areas as diverse as urban affairs, rural development, education, health, sports --- indeed, across the entire spectrum of Government. A suitable approach, therefore, is to look at generic competencies, required across the board, and competencies needed at different levels of seniority. This could be tied in with Mid-Career training programmes that address the problem of providing competency-oriented inputs. The matrix proposed is as follows:

Competency	Descriptors
Generic (Across the board) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity. • Work ethic. • Decision making Capacity. • Responsiveness. • Transparency and accountability. 	

Lower Management (Year 1-Year 8/10)	Middle Management (Year 8/10-Year 16/18)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving skills. • Domain knowledge. • Ability to take a stand. • Quick responses to emergencies. • Empathy towards vulnerable sections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-building focus. • Supervisory ability. • Co-ordination capability. • Implementational drive.
Upper Management (Year 16/18 - Year 26-28)	Senior Management (Year 26-28 till Retirement)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill at conflict-resolution. • Negotiating ability. • Institution building capacity. • Change-management skills. • Innovation promotion perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical capacity. • Strategic thinking ability. • Futuristic agenda setting. • Visionary perspective. • Leading from the front.

The structure may be seen as a cascading one, i.e. the competencies needed at the lower management level are carried over to the next level, and so on.

A competency framework as delineated above contains a mix of measureable elements (e.g. domain knowledge) and intangibles (e.g. integrity). The next challenge is to develop a set of tools that combines competency mapping with aids to leadership development. It is heartening to note that India has taken the first steps down this road. Two Ministries, viz. the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, have been chosen to develop a Competency Framework, based on detailed job descriptions. However, the use of such frameworks, for the purposes of recruitment, training, placement, promotions and career development, is still a long way off.

The second area that needs to be addressed is the administrative configuration of the Indian Administrative Service. Currently, there is a complete lack of matching of requisite skill-sets with job requirements. The result is that an officer with a Science specialization gets posted as Secretary Culture, while one who has specialized in the Liberal Arts gets a posting as Secretary, Power! In the latter capacity he has neither the interest, the inclination or the skills to do a thorough job, resulting in administrative disarray.

The simple remedy is to first identify the major job areas of Government activity and then categorise the nature and

qualifications of I.A.S. officers to man them. Broadly speaking, there are four main categories of Government activity:

- Infrastructure related.
- Financial/Managerial affairs.
- Developmental/Welfare oriented;
- Regulatory matters.

Using the above framework, categorization of Central Government Ministries would be as follows:

Grouping of Ministries.

I. Infrastructure related:

1. Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
2. Ministry of Civil Aviation.
3. Ministry of Coal.
4. Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.
5. Ministry of Earth Sciences.
6. Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.
7. Ministry of Mines.
8. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
9. Ministry of Petroleum and National Gas.
10. Ministry of Power.
11. Ministry Railways.
12. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
13. Ministry of Science and Technology.
14. Ministry of Shipping.
15. Ministry of Steel.
16. Ministry of Textiles.
17. Ministry of Water Resources.

II. Financial/Managerial affairs:

1. Ministry of Finance.
2. Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
3. Heads of PSUs.

III. Social Services/Development oriented

1. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
2. Ministry of Culture.
3. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.
4. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
5. Ministry of Human Resource Development.
6. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
7. Ministry of Labour and Employment.
8. Ministry of Minority Affairs.
9. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.
10. Ministry of Planning.
11. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
12. Ministry of Tourism.
13. Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
14. Ministry of Women and Child Development.
15. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
16. Ministry of Agriculture.
17. Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
18. Ministry of Environment and Forests.
19. Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
20. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.
21. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
22. Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
23. Ministry of Rural Development.
24. Ministry of Urban Development.

IV. Regulatory Matters

1. Ministry of Defence.
2. Ministry of External Affairs.
3. Ministry of Home Affairs.
4. Ministry of Law and Justice.
5. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
6. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

7. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

A similar exercise could be done, State-wise. The biggest advantage of such a categorization would be that I.A.S. officers would be seconded to the areas of their expertise. The qualifications for the U.P.S.C. examination for the I.A.S. could be fine-tuned accordingly. Obviously, there would be certain assignments of a supervisory/co-ordinating nature, such as Sub-divisional Magistrate, District Magistrate, Chief Secretary, Cabinet Secretary, etc. Selection for such posts could be from the entire pool of officers, based on merit.

The capstone of the entire structure would be a **360 degree feedback system** for I.A.S. officers. The current Performance Appraisal procedure suffers from the following defects:

- The process is highly circumscribed, since it captures the responses only of the Reporting, Reviewing and Accepting Authorities.
- It is totally subjective, since what is assessed as 'Very Good' by an officer may be considered as 'Good' by another and 'Outstanding' by a third.
- It relies on a Work Plan submitted at the start of the year, which may be subject to modifications over the course of time.
- It orients the officer's responses to be in alignment with his superior's, irrespective of the merit of the case.
- It actually rewards the manipulative behavior of those who carry out their superior's behest, right or wrong.
- Large segments of the affected population do not get an opportunity to register their opinion of the qualities of the officer, based on their interaction with him/her.
- Very often, failure to carry out the non-legitimate demands of superiors results in a low rating, thus demoralizing and demotivating the officer.

A much more suitable system would be to fashion a construct which takes into account the views of the following stakeholders:

- Superiors.
- Peers.
- Subordinates.

- NGOs.
- Journalists.
- Industry representatives.

The above list is illustrative. Since each job carries its unique sub-set of stakeholders, the same should be carefully identified before the exercise is conducted.

The system could be further refined by introducing three categories of responses, namely:

1. Based on personal interaction.
2. Based on media/2nd party information; and
3. Based on inputs from social networks.

Weightage could be attached to the responses, with the percentages being 100, 66 and 33 respectively, so that a balanced picture is presented.

Certain pre-requisites would be required to make the exercise a success. The assessment should be handed over to a third party, preferably a Survey agency with a wide network and a reputation for integrity. Confidentiality guarantees should be incorporated to obviate the fear of reprisal. The sampling should be on a randomized basis, with the size being adequate to accommodate a variety of respondents.

The Second Administrative Commission had recommended the use of a 360 degree feedback for the Civil Service. The Report suggested that 'if done well it (a 360 degree performance appraisal) is very powerful tool of management and very good way of helping people to improve their own performance.' The Report goes on to say "it is suggested that Government may consider sensitizing officers at all levels about the importance of this feedback mechanism and its possible use in understanding their behaviour and their ability to relate to others" Such a system is in use in Korea, in Scandinavian countries and in the B.I.A.M. Institute in Bangladesh, among others.

In a pioneering initiative, the National Institute of Administrative Research in conjunction with the Planning Commission has taken up a study of a 360 degree feedback of I.A.S. officers in 14 States. It is hoped that the results of this Study would be of help in designing better Performance Appraisal systems, and judge the extent to which I.A.S.

officers are responsive, efficient, ethical and sensitive to the needs of the vulnerable sections of society.

To sum up, the urgent need for re-vamping the HR systems for the administrative elite of the country viz., the I.A.S., cannot be denied. The Service is stuck in a time-warp, governed by archaic rules, rigid procedures and out dated HR practices. These do not recognize talent, give no rewards for efficiency and are patently out of alignment with a fast changing world. The sooner they are replaced with cutting edge practices as detailed above, the sooner will India progress towards fashioning a world class Civil Service, one which will make the country proud!

M G Devasahayam

Civil Servants –Towards a New Dawn?

Faced with total mismanagement of civil services and resultant steep fall in governance standards both in the centre and the states former Cabinet Secretary TSR Subramanian and 82 others went to the Supreme Court in a PIL petition seeking writs of mandamus for:

- (a) Creation of an independent Civil Service Board or Commission, both at the Centre and the State;
- (b) fixing tenure for civil servants ensuring stability based on recommendations;
- (c) mandating that every civil servant formally record all such instructions/directions/orders/suggestions which he/she receives, not only from his/her administrative superiors but also from political authorities, legislators, commercial and business interests and other persons/quarters having interest, wielding influence or purporting to represent those in authority.

The very fact that a former Cabinet Secretary, who is the head of the Civil Services, has to go to the Supreme Court along with several eminent retired civil servants and others with these prayers invoking Article 32 of the Constitution of India speaks volumes for the degradation and decay of governance in the country. Supreme Court itself rubbed it in when it said in the judgment that the PIL highlighted “the necessity of various reforms for preservation of integrity, fearlessness and independence of civil servants at the Centre and State levels in the country”.

In the event, Supreme Court has given series of directions to insulate the bureaucracy from political interference and to put an end to frequent transfers of civil servants by

political bosses. These include setting up of Civil Services Board (CSB) in the Centre and the States with the Cabinet Secretary and Chief Secretary respectively to guide and advise the State government on all service matters, especially on transfers, postings and disciplinary action. Board's views could be overruled by the political executive, but only by recording reasons. According to Supreme Court this step would ensure good governance, transparency and accountability in governmental functions.

Court also asked Parliament to enact a Civil Services Act under Article 309 of the Constitution setting up a CSB and directed the Centre, State governments and the Union Territories to constitute such Boards "within three months, if not already constituted, till the Parliament brings in a proper Legislation in setting up CSB."

As for acting on oral instructions of political bosses, it has been made mandatory for the officer superior to confirm the same in writing. "The civil servant, who has received such information, in turn, is required to seek confirmation of the directions in writing as early as possible and it is the duty of the superior officer to confirm the direction in writing," directed the court.

This has obviously renewed expectations among the public who feel that that this judgment has raised the bar for good governance in this country by providing a framework to insulate bureaucrats from the pressures of a clutch of vested interests which act through the political system. Public confidence in governance is bound to rise as a result of this 'landmark' verdict." While doing so Supreme Court has not overstepped its ambit by directing the constitution of a mechanism to regulate postings and transfers and has acted so because of the failure of the executive to frame a legislative framework to address these key concerns despite voluminous reports from various committees and commissions and 'draft Bills being in circulation on such reforms'.

Circulation of 'draft Bills' started with Public Service Bill, 2007 that inter alia contained certain Values of Public Services: (a) patriotism and upholding national pride; (b) allegiance to the Constitution and the law of the nation; (c) objectivity, impartiality, honesty, diligence, courtesy and

transparency; (d) maintaining absolute integrity. This Bill was tucked in a far corner of the Department of Personnel website, outside public view and died quietly.

Shortly after UPA II took office, Civil Services Bill, 2009, believed to be an improved version of the Public Service Bill 2007 started its journey. This Bill was meant to bring in a public service code that will lay down a strict performance evaluation regime for promotions and postings of civil servants. It incorporated various suggestions of the second Administrative Reforms Commission and envisaged the setting up of a new Central Public Service Authority (CPSA) which will not only professionally manage the civil services but also serve the interests of civil servants and citizens alike through checks and balances. Under this Bill all bureaucrats would get a minimum fixed tenure of three years.

In states, the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police will be selected out of a panel of suitable candidates by a committee comprising the chief minister, leader of opposition and home minister. The appointment of the Cabinet Secretary at the Centre will also be decided in a similar manner. If governments deviated from these norms Parliament/State Legislatures are to be informed about the reasons for doing so.

The public service code in the Bill was to facilitate the civil servants 'in discharging official duties with competence and accountability; care and diligence; responsibility, honesty, objectivity and impartiality; without discrimination and in accordance with the law'. CPSA would be the custodian of this code and would aid and advise the central government in all matters concerning the organisation, control, operation and management of public services and public servants. In short, the 2009 Bill, despite some flaws, would have worked wonders for the civil services and by extension honest and competent governance in the country.

But that was not to be. To understand why, we should go back to the genesis of post-Independence All India Services (AIS), almost single-handedly brought about by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. In April 1948 he wrote to Prime Minister

Nehru strongly advocating the formation of independent civil service in the functioning of which “political considerations, either in its recruitment or in its discipline and control, are reduced to the minimum, if not eliminated altogether.” This was strongly opposed by the Chief Ministers of the states and many members of the Constituent Assembly. Retorting, the Sardar in his speech to this Assembly in October 1949, said: “The Indian Union will go. You will not have a united India if you do not have a good All India Services which has independence to speak out its advice-if you do not adopt this course, then do not follow the present system, substitute something else.”

Sardar Patel had his way and AIS (IAS & IPS) was established to “give a fair and just administration to the country and manage it on an even keel”. To ensure this and safeguard the civil servants from the “vicissitudes of political convulsions”, these services were covenanted in the constitution.

Set up under such challenges, AIS were meant to implement the national agenda of delivering decentralized and honest governance to all citizens and uplift the poor and the downtrodden. Such governance would pursue an equitable, small-is-beautiful, need-based, human-scale, balanced development while conserving nature and livelihoods. But the ‘Reform era’ of the past over two decades has turned this upside down. Most of today’s civil servants are touting the MNC agenda of turning the country into a 300-million rich/middle-class market through FDI-funded big-ticket projects by mortgaging the resources of the nation, leaving the 900 million ‘laggards’ in the lurch!

In the event, civil servants have been dragged into the “vicissitudes of convulsive politics, scams and scandals” against which they were supposed to be a bulwark. They have become accessories to the colossal corruption and its cover-up! Due to the collective failure of civil servants in living up to the covenant of the Constitution, India’s democracy has diminished, and democratic governance decayed!

The wounds of the civil services that the Supreme Court is trying to heal are self-inflicted. The fact is that despite

constitutional protection, most civil servants have abdicated their independence and political neutrality and have become willing pawns in the hands of ruling politicians and resource-rich vested interests. Serving corrupt carpetbaggers has become their *mantra*, let the *aam aadmi* be damned. This is a crisis situation for the civil services.

Do the Supreme Court directions bring any hope for remedying this dismal situation? Left to themselves the political class will drag these directions to the extreme as they have done with police and electoral reforms. But with the armour provided by the Supreme Court, conscientious and honest civil servants can assert themselves by reverting back to the constitutional scheme of things from which they have drifted and reinvent themselves to become a fearless, independent, honest and efficient entity bound by an *esprit de corps* which is appallingly absent now.

But this new dawn will not happen unless civil servants develop some spine and realise that their masters are the 'People of India' and not the 'politicians of the day'!

Raghu Dayal

India's Civil Servant: Time for a Sincere Soul-Search

Deficient delivery: an Achilles' heel

In the spring of 1964, Jawaharlal Nehru, when asked by some friends what he considered to be his greatest failure as India's first Prime Minister, replied, "I could not change the administration, it is still a colonial administration."

In the mid 1980s, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was to speak on the contemporary administrative culture, the iron-frame of the system, and deliver a scathing indictment: "There can be no protection if the fence starts eating the crop. This is what has happened. The fence has started eating the crop. We have government servants who do not serve but oppress the poor and the helpless. We do not uphold the law but connive with those who cheat the state and the whole legions whose only concern is their private welfare at the cost of the society. They have no work ethic, no feeling for the public cause, no involvement in the future of the nation, no comprehension of national goals, no commitment to the values of modern India. They have only a grasping mercenary outlook, devoid of competence, integrity and commitment."

Much the same way, albeit for different reasons, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would candidly reflect on his striking failure at streamlining and reforming country's governance structure and culture. The UPA I-set up Second Administrative Reforms Commission acknowledged, reinforcing the pervasive public perception, that governance is "admittedly the weak link in our quest for prosperity and equity". Soon after assuming the reins of the country in 2004, Prime Minister announced his first and primary aim was to substantially improve the service delivery system. No doubt, to govern a subcontinent the size of Europe, containing about one-fifth of world's population, uniquely diverse and pluralistic, is no easy

job. A whole decade has gone by; there is no improvement. If anything, things have worsened much - people have turned cynical and despaired.

So often has the overwhelming need for wide ranging reforms and restructuring of the country's civil service been analysed and deliberated.

As many as 600 commissions and committees have so far been set up; nothing of major consequence has emerged out of them, only "the vices of proliferation and bureaucratic imperialism increased and the ethos of negativity and superficiality became more pronounced" (Jagmohan).

Still a colonial administration, and worse

Alienated and feudalistic: What is the general popular perception of bureaucracy that endures? - the civil servants perceived to be arrogant, corrupt, unhelpful, self-centred, inaccessible. They remain procedure-focused rather than performance-oriented. Laws and rules for them form a complex and intricate web as their numbers sprout and multiply. One may reason why the bureaucracy is held in low esteem by the public is the distance that bureaucrats have maintained from aam aadmi, and the secrecy in the administrative system they have evolved.

Public servants – servants of the people?

The East India Company (1600-1858) called its employees 'servants'. The servants who were working on the civil side, in contrast to those employed for military, were called "civil servants". The P.S. Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations (1983-87) showed its preference for the term "public servants" to "civil servants" inasmuch as the former expression emphasises that they are servants of the people. The so-called public servants have instead behaved as the *mai baap sarkar* for the people who remain resigned to feel they are supplicants. Far from the basic attributes of a democracy India claims to be, the gulf between the rulers and the ruled is indeed wide, and keeps increasing. Not only the neta yearns to flaunt his/her trappings and insignias, the babu too is ever zealous to be at a pedestal – high above the level the common man commands. P.N.Haksar describes how, in 1971, while accompanying Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and travelling with Lord Williams in

his car to British Prime Minister Edward Heath's country home, he asked why they didn't use a helicopter instead of going by car. Lord Williams said, "Mr Haksar, we have helicopters; but our people will not like it if we use helicopters" Our netas and babus have no such compunction; they vie to out-do one another in securing artefacts and symbols of authority and awe at great public expense, be it Raj Bhawans, Sachivalayas, or other establishments. They splurge with impunity.

Worst in Asia:

Lower functionaries like the patwari, police constable, a bank clerk, a peon, a lower division clerk in a government office, or an excise and sales tax inspector has smothered the common man. Officers are a law unto themselves, high and mighty. Like the political leadership, they are far removed from the life and concerns of aam aadmi, flaunting their superiority in the shape of car beacon/siren or in the pomposity of their strutting and posturing. One message that has emanated loud and clear from the foreign investors is that of the great roadblock which the bureaucracy is in the country, at the Central as well as the State levels. With a 9.21 (out of 10) rating, Indian bureaucracy is termed worst in Asia according to the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. World Bank's *Doing Business*, 2013 ranks India around 150th, almost at the bottom of the list.

Sardar's faith belied:

India's first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel believed that the All-India Services had a vital role to play in building up a strong and united India. At a conference of provincial premiers in the Interim Government called on 21 October 1946 to consider the question of replacing the ICS and the Indian Police, in spite of the United Provinces Premier Pandit Pant first firmly opposing the proposal, and, joined by Bengal and Sind, Sir Khizar Hayat Khan, Premier of Punjab, maintaining, "Punjab is one of those provinces which would prefer to have a superior service of their own instead of an all-India administrative service under contemplation", Patel forged a consensus in favour of creating two successor all-India services - the IAS and IPS.

Again, at a Cabinet meeting on 30 April 1948, at which special protection for the all-India services in the Constitution was on the agenda, Patel as the main proponent adroitly steered the proposal through. As a climax in 1949, in the Constituent Assembly debate on the ICS, he rose to defend the ICS: “I have worked with them during this difficult period..; they are patriotic, loyal, sincere, able..; remove them”, Patel thundered, “and I see nothing but a picture of chaos all over the country.” The Constituent Assembly, through Articles 308-14 in the Constitution, guaranteed security and safeguards in services, also Central government protection for all-India civil servants serving in States.

The IAS, a virtual clone of the ICS that had been hailed as the steel-frame of administration had its structural infirmities in the context of a vibrant democracy that India became. Lloyd George held, “I can see no period when they (the Indians) can dispense with the guidance and the assistance of this small nucleus of the British Civil Service, of British officials in India...they are the steel-frame of the whole structure ...if you take the steel-frame out, the fabric will collapse”. As A.D. Pandit (ICS, UP) pointed out, “most Indian ICS had an urban background and had probably not seen a village before they entered service”. An ICS Indian was a ‘Brown Sahib’, who “spoke English at home, dreamt in it, scolded his children in it, made love in it”; he had “tastes that are carefully cultivated, his values conformed to the British public school tradition” (Vittachi, T., *The Brown Sahib*, 1962).

An aristocratic work ethos

ICS Indians came from comfortable, professional, and service-class family ethos. There was an extraordinary ‘distance’ between such men and their subordinates. As late as in 1963-4, an ICS Secretary in New Delhi received Rs. 3,500 per month; a peon got Rs. 55 per month. The pay differential here was 64/1; in comparison, in the USA it was 7/1. Senior officers also occupied sprawling government bungalows, were driven by chauffeurs, and saluted by armed guards as they entered secretariat buildings. A country of poor multitudes, India has an aristocratic work ethos. Government employees have some 185 holidays in a year with gazetted holidays, restricted holidays, earned leave, half pay leave, casual leave. On top, they also have the luxury of a 5-day week.

Gulliver tied hand and foot

The civil service in the country suffers from over-staffing, wastefulness, corruption, politicization, leadership-deficit from within, and excessive generalism.

Civil Service today is a leviathan with immense power, circumscribing the whole panoply of the State, engendering a popular portrait of the spectacle of a Gulliver tied hand and foot by his Lilliputian captors. "I don't rule Russia", said Tsar Nicholas, in a moment of frustration, "ten thousand clerks do."

As defined by Webster, bureaucracy would imply "a body of non-elective government officials", the whole governmental machinery, including all subordinate cadres not only directly employed under Central and State governments, but also the quasi-governmental and regulatory personnel, also those public service sectors such as banking and other undertakings. Bureaucracy in India is a gargantuan apparatus. In 1988, it was estimated to consist of around 19 million officials – around four million engaged in the central government, seven million under the state governments, six million under quasi-government activities, and about two million under local self government bodies, encompassing around 70% of employment under the organized sector in the country. With a sanctioned strength of about 3.7 million regular civilian employees on 1 March 2011, the Central government expenditure on their pay and allowances in 2010-11 amounted to Rs 88,651 crore, 9.5% of Government's revenue receipts.

An unbridled expansion of the civil service began with the socialistic pattern of government and the urge to occupy "commanding heights". The Chinese call this the dilemma of too many popos – mothers-in-law droves of bureaucrats at all levels of government, each wing with a large vertical hierarchy of its own, generating a vast, flabby structure. The Nehru era (1946-64) saw the proliferation of economic and social legislation that expanded discretionary powers in administration. The Indira Gandhi period (1966-77 and 1981-84) witnessed great expansion of discretionary powers. Administration was told unambiguously to obey political orders, even to the point of bordering on illegality. As referred earlier, Rajiv Gandhi severely castigated the civil service in general, his ire directed more particularly at the IAS.

An obese and flabby structure

Set up in 1886, the Public Service Commission under the chairmanship of Sir C.U. Aitchison recommended a three-tiered civil service: (i) at the apex, the covenanted - Imperial Civil Service of India, (ii) the Provincial Civil Service; and (iii) the service comprising lower administrative appointments, which might be called the Subordinate Civil Service. By the 1920s, the civil services were broadly categorized as All India Services, Central Civil Services, Provincial Services, Subordinate Services. The all-India services which existed on the eve of the Government of India Act, 1919 included the Indian Civil Service, Indian Police Service, Indian Forest Service, among others, such as Educational, Agricultural, Civil Veterinary, Forest Engineering, Medical (Civil), Engineers. The central services were 30 in 1971, which increased to 49 in 1984; in 2003, their number rose to 66.

Wasteful and ineffective:

The over-manned establishment implies not merely a huge drain on the country's resources; it also adds to the disguised employment of parasites. The bloated bureaucracy, wasteful and ineffective, clogs the channels of communication, leads to delays and diffusion of responsibility. Rules and administrative structures pile up like so much sediment at the mouth of a river, slowing the current. Around 70% of all government civil employees are parasitical support staff, e.g., peons, daftaries, drivers, clerks, while key public services such as education, healthcare are starved of people.

That is why B.G. Deshmukh was prompted to suggest that at least 40% of the staff in the ministries of finance, commerce and industry be shifted to other areas like education, health, social welfare.

The British had ruled the country for a hundred years with three grades of clerks and an equal number of levels of superior officers in the central secretariat. By the time of the Emergency, not only a huge expansion had taken place in numbers but also inflation in grades – at least five for clerks and eight levels of officers. There were 1,032 ICS men in British India (excluding Burma) in 1919, again, just 1,029 in 1938. The 1931 census counted just about one million of all employees on rolls of the colonial state, in a population of 353 million. At the Central

Government, there were 11 Secretaries, 10 of whom from ICS. Outside the secretariat, there were 30 main departments, of which five were headed by ICS men: President of the Board of Examiners, Comptroller and Auditor General, Director General of Posts and Telegraphs, Director General of Commercial Intelligence, Director of Criminal Intelligence. In Bihar, in 1938, there were 18 ICS men in the province: two in Government House – the Governor and his Principal Secretary; nine ran the secretariat – Chief Secretary, four Secretaries, two Deputy Secretaries, and the two Under Secretaries; three headed the Land Revenue and General Administration Department, besides four others (David C. Potter). Departments have proliferated. Within the departments, divisions have grown in numbers. The IAS expanded from 1,232 at the time of initial constitution of the service to 6,154 by 2012. The police service kept pace with the expansion of the central para-military forces. The self-aggrandisement by the higher civil services would, no doubt, discount any restraint on others. “Hierarchies have increased. Responsibility is at a discount. Accountability is neglected with the growing menace of permissive politics” (Kamala Prasad).

Ceaseless proliferation

Countless subterfuges on the part of senior Civil Service have led to a steady growth in the number of ex-cadre positions. Hundreds of attached offices and agencies have been created. In the early years after independence, the entire Government of India was accommodated in the South Block and the North Block. Ever short of office accommodation, the Civil Service is now nestled in an array of sprawling Bhavans. According to the combined Civil List of GoI for 1946, the total strength of the ICS at the Centre and in the British Provinces was 1,094. As a result of partition, the total came down to 642 in 1948, which included ICS officers seconded to the judicial and political services. The number of secretariat departments at the Centre was 18 in 1947. In 1951, there were 25 Secretaries to Government of India, one Special Secretary, one Additional Secretary, 35 Joint Secretaries and 74 Deputy Secretaries. Today, the Secretary level incumbents exceed 120, besides Additional Secretaries and equivalent more than 100. During the last two decades, the number of JS-level and above posts in Central Government has risen from less than 250 to 1,000

or more. For example, in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, there are far more super-time scale IAS officers than needed. In a single department, where there was only one Secretary, there are, in addition, now Principal Secretaries, Special Secretaries and Joint Secretaries (Jagmohan).

The situation in the states is no better. In almost all the states the traditional pyramidal structure got reversed. In UP, as an instance, which had the largest number of IAS in the country, levels of administrative hierarchy increased from six to eight; the number of principal secretaries/secretaries/special secretaries rose from 21 in 1965 to 157 in 1994; the number of divisional commissioners from 11 to 15, and of district collectors from 48 to 70. Against two sanctioned posts of chief secretary, eight adorned the Sachivalaya in that scale; against 17 posts of principal secretaries, 52 were promoted; and against 75 super-time scale posts, 189 had been appointed. At the end of 1990, there were 29 IPS officers in U.P., who had been appointed Additional Directors-General of Police, though the posts they held had neither work nor the level of responsibility befitting their status and seniority.

In the second largest cadre in the country, the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh, the enlargement of the senior posts proceeded in geometric progression: the growth in the ten years from 1957, the date of formation of the new state, was 52%. Many new posts of departmental heads were created; some of the positions of heads of technical and semi-technical departments were en-cadred, depriving departmental officers of the opportunity to rise to the top (Sanjoy Bagchi). When the dictates of administrative reforms demanded reduction in the number of levels for expeditious decision-making, an extra level of secretary had been introduced between the principal secretary and deputy secretary.

At one time in Bihar, there were 8-10 IAS officers drawing pay of a Chief Secretary only because their juniors were appointed Chief Secretaries at one time or the other. In Madhya Pradesh, there were 5-6 officers drawing the salary of Director General of Police; every change of Government saw a change of DGP. As Bagchi explains, what began as the fallacious concept that cadre expansion must move in tandem with the growth in Plan expenditure generated its own momentum, which was difficult to resist. The pressure from the services to mitigate stagnation gathered strength in the 1980s, particularly

from the enormously large batches recruited in the 1960s. A number of insignificant posts were arbitrarily upgraded to provide high level berths to the clamouring mob. This period also coincided with the coming into vogue of large-sized Cabinets both at the Centre and in the States. The interests of the top bureaucracy and the political hierarchy thus converged in wasteful expenditure and structural imbalance (Sanjoy Bagchi).

**TO ESTABLISH NEW DEPARTMENTS FOR EVER
AND EVER**

Humphrey', Jim Hacker said, "we simply have to slim down the Civil Service. How many people are there in this Department?"

...Humphrey seemed evasive, "Oh well, we're very small".

"How small?" Hacker asked ..."two thousand? ..three thousand?"

"About twenty-three thousand, I think, Minister".

Hacker was staggered. "Twenty three thousand people? In the Department of Administrative Affairs? Twenty-three thousand administrators, all to administer other administrators? ..."

"We'll have to do an O&M, "Hacker said ...

"We did one of these last year", said Humphrey blandly, "and we discovered we needed another five thousand people ...".

"Are you seriously trying to tell me," Hacker asked, "that there is nothing we can cut down on?" Humphrey shrugged. "Well, I suppose we could lose one or two of the tea-ladies."

This extract from the British Academy award winner for the Best Comic series, the BBC TV serial *Yes Minister* adumbrates the way a government functions. It is also relevant in the context of pious resolutions intermittently made to slim the Indian bureaucracy replete with many a Humphrey.

The highest in the Government randomly pronounced their intentions to drastically reduce the flab but, instead, perhaps unwittingly, added on to the numbers. Government imposed a 10% cut across the board in the number of sanctioned posts as on 1 January 1992. The Expenditure Reforms Commission covered 36 ministries and departments and submitted 10 reports. They recommended a further 10% cut in the sanctioned strength of staff as on 1 January 2000 to be carried out for each ministry/department by the year 2004-05, the staff rendered surplus to be kept in a pool to be redeployed in arising vacancies. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao assured substantial reduction in senior level bureaucracy; in effect, the crafty bureaucratic coterie around him succeeded, instead, in creating anew a number of new departments and Secretary level posts. One spontaneously recalls what Gwilyn Gibbon, himself a distinguished civil servant in Britain, aptly said: “Oh Lord! grant that this day we may come to no decision, neither run into any kind of responsibilities, but that all our doings may be ordered to establish new departments, forever and ever. Amen.”

Many IAS officers are accepting a diminished role for themselves by becoming agents of exploitation in a state structure which now resembles more like the one in the medieval period – authoritarian, directionless, and callous to the needs of the poor. The primacy of the IAS, in particular, is under challenge. Others, more so the IPS, prefer to sail alone since India’s internal security concern sees vast expansion of the machinery of the state. It is also seen to take advantage of its proximity to political masters. Law and order has become a critical management problem as, simultaneously, it has an unavoidable link with development with expanding ramifications of “inclusive growth”, and all that - tribal politics, “dalit” politics, gender politics, *et al.* The need for an optimal structure and organization poses a challenge to the ingenuity and sagacity of policymakers as much as civil servants.

There is a constant chatter that flabby bureaucracy needs trimming. The ever proliferating number of ministries and departments cry out for the pruning secateurs. Proposals to start pruning process from the vast base of the pyramid immediately get scuttled by politicians and the unions who see their empires threatened. If the start is made with, say, 25%

load-shedding (for, we are top heavy, make no mistake) at the level of joint secretaries and above, all the way through ministers, one can offer some hope of success to shave off 30% of the workforce at the bottom of the pyramid (for, we are even more bottom-heavy than we are top-heavy).

Categorical imperative of drastic reduction/restructuring: Government itself needs to be restructured by closing down departments, and amalgamating many of them, transferring subjects and institutions to the state government and Panchayati raj bodies. Now when IT infrastructure has itself promoted in almost all offices and activities, citizens in a community could deal with just one office locally regarding all tax matters and payments to utilities like electricity and water. The citizen, the trading or industrial community, should be relieved of the need to throng the citadel of clumsy power, impeding their growth. Let the body administration be really sleek and slim, the multi-tier officialdom giving way to multi-skill personnel doing useful work.

The government office needs to be reinvented. Civil servants themselves have to relentlessly follow up. Large, unwieldy sections have to give way to small, business-like desks; the vast army of ministerial staff be replaced by executive assistants. The fifth pay body advocated a multi-pronged strategy to cut down numbers: abolition of the central government backlog of 350,000 vacant posts; a freeze on further employment of junior staff; a downsizing of numbers by 30% in a 10-year period by normal attrition, assisted by a greater number of retirements under the voluntary retirement scheme with golden handshake and compulsory retirement of those who are found to be incompetent or corrupt.

Neglect of grass-roots administration No appetite for moving about villages

It is to the credit of Lord Linlithgow who stressed the structural and institutional component of administration. It was said that the ICS administered the districts more from the saddle rather than an office chair. The district was, for him, the most enduring institution that ensured the effectiveness of British rule. Ramsay Macdonald, the British Prime Minister compared the district officer with the tortoise

on whose back stood the elephant of the Government of India. The colonial administrative system had revenue work as the anchor with district as the core of the architecture. During the heyday of the British administration in India, nothing that happened in his district – even a sparrow's flutter – could escape the notice of the Collector, primarily because of his commitment to touring, camping at sites and inspection of work-diaries of subordinates (Jagmohan). The Indian IAS did not have the same appetite for moving about the villages; he spent more time at his headquarter. Unlike the ICS, the young IAS did not show the same preference for district jobs. Members prefer the sanctuary of the Secretariat where there are other rewards. The service at the State level came to be dominated in the initial decades by the SCS that constituted nearly 40% of the cadre. The SCS ignored the need for touring the district

It was widely regarded as mandatory for good Collectors “to get out of the office”. As E.H.H. Edye (ICS, UP) remarked, “a Collector's value is in inverse ratio to the wear on the seat of his trousers”. Fully equipped, fully empowered and fully accountable field agencies and lean, sprightly and focused secretariats are the two strong and stable planks for the institutional set-up of governance in India (Jagmohan). A structured and effective inspection system with instant deterrence for defaults was mandatory for all supervisors and senior officials. The old plague city of Surat showed the way: every senior official in Surat under Commissioner S.R. Rao had to spend five hours in the field, of which half the time had to be in the slums, working in the same heat and dust, grime and filth. Surat stood transformed. Today, inspectors do not inspect, they only extort. Naturally, citizens bear the trauma of Uphaars.

Politicisation poison

The concept of loyalty and branding of officials entered the central level from the decade of the 1970s. The period 1971-1977 inflicted great damage on the system. Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 saw blatant interference in the internal working of bureaucracy, followed by the emergence of the institution of Prime Minister's House (PMH). The levers of political power moved full steam to maul and demoralize the higher civil service. Special assistants and private secretaries

to ministers and those in the Prime Minister's secretariat threw their weight around, to the detriment of smooth and orderly functioning of administrative machinery. The politicization of the higher Civil Services has resulted in officers with a proven track record of honesty and political neutrality being shunted to innocuous positions. Shrilal Shukla's *Raag Darbari* serves as a sardonic reflection of the murky machinations of the felonious triumvirate of netas, babus and goons in a fictional eastern UP village. It could well be an apt allusion to the recent humiliation that the young 2009-batch IAS officer in UP, Durga Shakti Nagpal had to endure. As Panikkar reveals, ICS men in the early 1950s were not clear in their minds "where their authority ended and that of the ministers began": they expected that "ministers would be satisfied with the functions that Members of the Executive Council used to exercise in the past". A Chief Minister put it more bluntly when he informed an ICS Secretary where the ultimate authority now lay, "You may think you are doing your duty, but if I think you are going beyond it, remember I am the judge". Banerjee (ICS, UP) rued in the early 1950s at "the conversion of the administration into a playground for political parties" and the apparent ease with which so many of his service colleagues fitted "snugly into the altered administrative ethic". To survive the rough and tumble required political skill. "From the first day of independence, the administration was indeed in politics", observed Mangat Rai (ICS, Punjab). Services at all levels were exposed to a new style politics of official position that was disruptive of hierarchical discipline and fair use of delegated authority. A new breed of public servants mushroomed which did not have attachment to service ethics, but to political personality who played the patron.

Politics in the country since independence has developed as a full-time job, an earning profession. The army of unemployed recruits to the political fold rose as cheerleaders, booth-managers, local fund-raisers, meeting organizers and a host of others clinging as parasites. Sanjay Gandhi's Youth Congress brigade, ubiquitous and brusque, made its presence acknowledged. The dyarchy under the reforms of 1919 and the provincial autonomy under the Act of 1935 had in a way created conditions of conflict between the elected representatives and the permanent civil services.

Politicisation made a strong entry during the Emergency. The edifice that Sardar Patel helped build was finally crumbling. By the time Rajiv Gandhi assumed charge as the Prime Minister, he could not but acknowledge its consequences. In his first address to the nation on November 12 1984, he announced that he would give no quarter to the “corrupt, the lazy, and the inefficient” and ensure full protection from outside pressures and interference to those who worked with integrity and dedication”. In the end, however, nothing changed. What Sardar Patel had in mind as the true character of the new Service were: neutrality, impartiality, anonymity and meritocracy. The higher civil service of the land has now abandoned the classical traits of neutrality, anonymity, and objectivity and become politicized. Three categories are now visible: (i) truly Weberian, motivated by public interest, observing a high standard of ethics in their behavior, those who would neither wilt nor tilt, perceptibly a diminishing species; (ii) weather-report readers, observing the current trends and swimming with the current, conducting themselves pragmatically, capable of easily swaying either way; and (iii) incorrigibles (S.R.Maheshwari).

The Gopalaswamy Ayyanagar Committee on Reorganization of government machinery (1948) had commented, “No less a danger is the Secretary who says ‘yes’ to everything that falls from the lips of the Minister.

“Today my Secretary can write a note opposite to my views. I have given that freedom to all the Secretaries. I have told them that if you do not give your honest opinion for the fear that it will displease your Minister, please then you had better go. I will bring another Secretary. I will never be displeased over a frank expression of opinion” - Sardar Patel in the Constituent Assembly.

The All India Services have shown a declining will to withstand political pressures. A large part of the bureaucratic machinery slowly succumbed to this vicious exercise of power by politicians by way of promotions, postings and transfers, which has had the effect of eroding the professional boundary between the politician and the civil servant. A culture of mutual accommodation was seen to emerge around this time - a civil servant sought a particular post which the politician minister alone could confer. Some officers have even reveled in it. Some

among the senior bureaucrats could well provide a lesson or two even to the political adept.

As Potter describes, attractiveness of certain jobs and postings has always been there: every province had its plum jobs, a principal object of striving and craving. Mason (ICS, UP) recounts lobbying in the mid-1930s for the plum job in Garhwal. The Commissionership of Rawalpindi in Punjab was considered 'the best ICS job in North India', while, for the more junior men, Kulu Subdivision in Kangra District was a 'prize posting', according to Muhammad Azim Husain (ICS, Punjab). Being Collector of Bombay was a plum job in that province; it was in the city and had excellent amenities, including the sprawling official residence on Malabar Hill, facetiously referred to as 'Buckingham Palace'. There is a classification of 'wet' and 'dry' posts in government and the political class has interfered to ensure that its protégés are larger beneficiaries of the 'wet' posts (Kamala Prasad). Wet posts in the civil service multiplied consequent upon the assumption of new functions by public administration under the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61). Many civil servants found such posts alluring.

Perils of politicking

L.K. Jha in a paper, *The Role of Bureaucracy in a Developing Democracy*, in 1983, analysed the factors contributing to the "declining standards of administrative performance": "There then begin to emerge within the civil service persons who 'curry favour' with ministers, anticipate their views, and make recommendations to please them. Newly elected ministers usually want to do certain things - possibly in fulfillment of electoral promises given generously rather than wisely". IAS officers forged alliances with politicians to brighten their own careers. "This is now a mutually reinforcing system with each aiding and abetting in getting the maximum out of the spoils system" (Madhav Godbole).

All blame cannot be heaped on politicians. Civil servants strive and succeed in feathering their nest, duly securing their interests even under grave circumstances. The specially privileged among them, involved in policy-making and politician-influencing, IAS command and corner the lion's share of power, perks, and prestige. Weathering hard and exacting working and living conditions, 24X7 alert, armed forces in

general and a large autonomous entity like Indian Railways, until the other day, have served the country far better.

Grown to be experts in “ battles of attrition”, adroit in playing games and managing the system, many a Humphrey of *Yes Minister* genre revel going in circles with “passive aggression”. Hasn’t the IAS acquired a new trait – bureaucratic imperialism? The IAS lobby has developed into a potent, elite trade union, perpetuating itself, serving the clan, to the zealous exclusion of other services. Shouldn’t the IAS be viewed as a mere *primus inter pares*, vis-à-vis the other Services? Aren’t many good opportunities of fruitful co-operation with other professionals lost on account of a conscious or unconscious show of aggressive superiority and an arrogant attitude? Not that there is no cut-throat competition within the service, to grab important slots, jockeying for plum jobs, denigrating their competitors. Retired Chief Secretary, also Union Cabinet Secretary, TSR Subramanian recalls what UP’s Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav said at a state level IAS officers’ conclave in 1990, “Why do you come and touch my feet? Why do you come and lick my shoes? Why do you come to me for personal favours? When you do so, I will do as you desire and then extract my price from you.

“If gold shall rust, what will iron do? The steel-frame now a creaking bamboo-frame

The steel frame steadily became malleable, and is now but a creaking bamboo frame. Tendering mature and honest advice to political masters is now a forgotten role. Taking a stand for a junior colleague, who may be unduly pilloried by political leadership, is conspicuous by its absence. The bureaucrat not only indulges the politicians’ whims and practices, he often does so also in order to have his own peccadilloes condoned. The higher the seniority level, the more the vulnerability and timidity observed among the bureaucracy. The echelons provide no example, nor leadership. As Chaucer said centuries ago, “if gold shall rust, what will iron do?

“Esprit de corps conspicuous by its absence

Credibility of the top men is a clear pre-requisite for credibility of the system. The Chief Secretary in a State or Cabinet Secretary at the Centre is not only the head of the

civil service but also the chief advisor to government, coordinating actions of various departments, providing leadership to the whole governmental machinery. What one yearns is the replication of the celebrated credo at the Indian Military Academy, where Field Marshall Chatwood's inspirational code is engraved: The Safety, Honour and Welfare of your country comes first, always and every time. The Honour, Welfare and Comfort of the men you command come next. Your own Ease, Comfort and Safety come last, always and every time. It is doubtful if such an *esprit de corps* can be developed in the IAS with its notorious lack of homogeneity its career pattern and deeply flawed character built over the last few decades.

Having gradually become imbecile, spineless, susceptible to pulls and pressures, higher level bureaucrats have often been bending backwards. The Shah Commission, which was constituted to examine the Emergency excesses, concluded that "some members of the Service, who were asked to bend, actually crawled". Long ago, on 20 November 1996, the Cabinet Secretary lamented at the Chief Secretaries' conference that some senior IAS officers had not only become partisan, but were working in close tandem with the ministers to plunder the state and the people. Disgraceful phenomenon, witnessed, of late, of lobbying even for the post of Cabinet Secretary at the Centre and of Chairman, Railway Board, for example, must be a matter of disquieting concern to many.

Post-retirement sinecures – an overwhelming lure

Persons holding constitutional posts, including judges, are keen on jobs after retirement. Ministers hope to head corporations, or after losing office, get into jobs with ministerial perks. Civil servants are in the queue for getting post-retirement sinecures. Several senior members of the service luminaries, in order to secure extension after superannuating or to get other lucrative appointment, after retirement were only too ready to carry out the behests of the ministers, even when they found such requests to be contrary to the dictates of their conscience. In fact, today, no senior officer seems to retire; they all simply move into numerous quasi-governmental organizations under the Central or state governments. There are a number of commissions, regulatory bodies and tribunals at the Centre and in the states as also other slots as ambassadors

and governors, where they continue with the same perks and trappings that they enjoyed prior to superannuation, and sometimes much more power and prestige. Why must not the Government well vow to grant no extension of service to anyone, or any assignment to any superannuated officer at least within two years of his/her retirement?

Amateurish dilettantism

A characterization of the spirit of Indian bureaucracy that endures is that of top-heavy, over-codified, and monopolized by generalists at the top. *The Economist* (19 March 1994) wrote about the British Civil Service, “The system was staffed by clever generalists convinced that they, and often only they, knew where the national interest lay. The public service was notoriously ponderous and customer-unfriendly”. Inequality, casteism, and amateurish dilettantism were three of many charges levelled increasingly from the 1960s against the ICS tradition of generalist administrators on top. ICS had contained some outstanding individuals. With the increasing complexity of functions and the technical nature of many of the problems the country faces, the continuance of this tradition inevitably impedes the conduct of our attempts at planned development

To rise above the generalist credo

Independent India inherited the legacy of the generalist credo, now symbolized by the IAS, the successor-service to the ICS. The whole structure of the raj celebrated generalist control and continuity, not specialist expertise and innovation. The IAS views itself as an administrative class of the Home Civil Service in Great Britain or the incarnation of the French *Grands Corps* that participate in the governance at the top levels. Macaulay’s conception of the generalist administrator with a classical education in liberal arts has been the dominant discourse. While the trend in the progressive countries was to inject new blood and let fresh air blow in the fixed cadres, the tendency amongst the IAS cadre was even to encroach upon the areas which legitimately belonged to the technocrats, educationists and other groups (Jagmohan).

The new economic policy would require civil servants to be experts in their concerned fields. A system will, therefore, need to be evolved under which, after a preliminary period of, say, 12-15 years, a properly structured assessment of performance

and potential of an officer is made. He/she is then allotted a certain area of activity where he/she is continued on a more or less permanent basis. In 1957, the Central Administrative Pool was announced with the ostensible aim of building up a reserve of officers with special training and experience for the purpose of economic administration and for maintaining continuity of knowledge and experience in the field of general administration, with little disturbance inherent in the tenure system of staffing. The central government set up an Administrative Reforms Commission in November 1965. By 1970, ARC had submitted 19 reports with 581 re-commendations. Considerably influenced by the Fulton committee in Britain, the Commission recommendations included that the pre-eminent position of IAS generalists in the central secretariat be reconsidered; all competent Class I officers from all services should have access to middle and senior management posts in the secretariat.

Opening the window to let fresh air in

Another important recommendation made with the great foresight by ARC was for lateral entry into the various layers of administration. Induction of people from outside at senior levels on contract basis would invigorate the civil service. An essential concomitant of the system would be to depute civil servants to work in non-government organizations and in private industry. Britain introduced some important innovations in civil service, e.g., executive agencies for specific services like prisons, coast guards, passport offices, which function as corporate business entities under a CEO responsible to the Minister. Several CEOs have been inducted from the private sector. For India, the IAS community has torpedoed the recommendations and blocked all such reforms. The Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms has continued to be dominated by the clique.

Virtue of restraint – some small steps go a long way

The ministers and the senior officers in the controlling ministries misused their authority in demanding creature comforts for themselves at the expense of the state enterprises. They obtained vehicles and other equipment for personal use from the corporations, withdrew manpower for their domestic needs and often used the funds of the enterprises for their

private and public hospitality. Ram Manohar Lohia dubbed it “cosmopolitanism”, implying a greed for lifestyles of the Western elite in the midst of stark poverty of the Indian masses whom they were expected to serve. They extracted commissions and bribes from the contracts for the purchase of goods and services for the corporations. Many ministers had no hesitation in inflating the labour force of the enterprises by appointing people of their own constituencies, irrespective of their qualifications or suitability, or the very justification for these posts. Some IAS secretaries used the government hotels as extension of their personal kitchens (Sanjoy Bagchi). How has this habit co-existed with the dictum for civil servants not to be seen accepting any favour of hospitality or generosity from a businessman or an industrialist?

Pressures on individual cases of appointment, promotion, disciplinary action tend to consume a large part of management time. This is what has made transfers and postings into an “industry”, breeding corruption and insubordination. MPs or MLAs or anyone else in authority deem it a natural right to lobby and demand favours for anyone. It was country’s first Prime Minister who clearly directed that public representatives must not take up issues such as government servants’ cases in HR domain. There is a clear need to address the malady that debilitates our system today. The structure of command in the public sector assumes leadership and the political system has to respect that. As Sardar Patel wrote to the Chief Minister of Bihar in 1947, “ministers should not give orders to any subordinate officers and they must deal with them through their superior”. This advice became irrelevant long ago.

Tyranny of seniority

The Service provides automatic promotion. Each direct recruit is guaranteed to reach the top irrespective of the availability of posts. Each one, irrespective of his level of competence, manages to climb to the top of the ladder with singular ingenuity aided by exceptional cupidity. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had directed that “the tyranny of seniority” be done away with and selectivity in filling senior posts be restored. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi believed the empanelment committees needed to be more selective and strict. He suggested that, in a batch, joint secretaries empanelled should not be more than 75%; the additional

secretary and secretary level panels should not be more than 25%. The top civil servants pursuing the group interest made sure to scuttle it (Sanjoy Bagchi).

The new system of performance appraisal should be used not only to reward performance but also to weed out the inefficient and the undesirables. Weeding out of the deadwood has become an urgent necessity. Peter's Principle works in every organization. For ages it has been practiced in the armed forces, where around the age of 50, the fitness and capacity of the officers to rise above the level of formation commanders was tested and assessed. Departmental enquiry rules and regulations need to be simplified and the procedure shortened and compressed. The unintended immunity that a government employee has in effect acquired through Article 311 of the Constitution needs to be redefined. Unless this is done, it will be difficult to weed out civil servants who are unfit, corrupt, inefficient or obstructive.

It is acknowledged that an officer must have an uninterrupted defined tenure of at least two years on a post. As of 1 January 1992, 56% of the IAS as a whole had held their post for less than one year, with variations for that year all the way from 35% for the Bihar cadre to 69% for the UP cadre. the average tenure of an IAS officer in UP in last few years was just four months! Rapid transfers are "the slipping clutch" of efforts to promote rural development because they incapacitate field organizations of government. Mobility rates in India are indeed too rapid for effective administrative performance, and that this single phenomenon contributes significantly to noteworthy pathologies in India's administration. As tenures shorten, both efficiency and accountability suffer. (Chambers, R, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, 1983).

Invoking Article 32 of the Constitution, a recent writ petition by a large number of retired civil servants in the Supreme Court succeeded in securing some significant support. The apex court directed for an Act to be passed by Parliament laying down the duties and responsibilities of bureaucracy; a minimum period of posting in each post; a civil services board to be appointed; and orders issued to bureaucrats to be duly recorded. In order to build the spinal chord of the bureaucracy, the Fifth Pay Commission advocated the constitution of a high-powered civil services board both at the Centre and the states, to address the vexed questions of postings and transfers, and minimum tenures. These safeguards will need to be pursued with determination and perseverance.

Reaching out to the aam aadmi

Officers, in turn, must reach out to the people to understand and resolve the genuine grievances they harbour. There was a time, within living memory, when an hour or so was kept available for people to meet all echelons of power. Where is that open time for airing of grievances and seeking redressal? Officers have built around themselves ivory towers of a retinue of personal staff to insulate themselves from *aam aadmi*. Likewise, effective regular personal supervision and inspection of all field works/projects/installations is indeed a great help. The white sahibs introduced and rigorously followed these simple and effective interaction mechanisms, while, regretful it is, their brown successors have chosen to build around themselves Chinese walls to insulate themselves from the people in India's vibrant democracy.

The VIP syndrome – a scourge

The whole VIP/VVIP culture is antithetical of an egalitarian democracy, a polity which proclaims from the housetop that equity and inclusiveness are its policy bedrocks but nothing is done to arrest, curb, and eliminate the virus symbolised by ever rising incidence of red and blue beacons flashed by all and sundry, security becoming a well cultivated paranoia to commandeer commandos. The ingrained feudal traits among the political leaders as much as public servants are greatly re-inforced in terms of vestiges and practices from the colonial era. Why shouldn't these be demolished systematically?

Shedding the feudal baggage

Why should Government saddle itself, except in highly selected cases, with the job of building and allotting residential accommodation, arranging transport and telephone facilities, etc.? Privileges and perks to legislators and government employees so arranged by it are in many cases far in excess of salary. Isn't there a case for doing away with vestiges of feudalism like huge residential bungalows, servant quarters, retinue of personal staff, bungalow peons? Why shouldn't Government at the Centre and in States pay composite remuneration to public servants, legislators, and others on their rolls as it is done in most of the countries as well as in

global business and industry, in the United Nations and other similar world bodies?

Wanted a government that works better, on less money. Some examples to emulate

The task, no doubt, is daunting and difficult, but not impossible. Several countries have addressed it; to cut the monster to size Jefferson articulated a vision of a smaller, less centralised government, a government that worked better and cost less, one that taxed lightly. Margaret Thatcher in 1979 brought in the then Chairman of Marks & Spencer, Derek Rayner, as an efficiency adviser to undertake a scrutiny programme by posing three basic questions: can it be done better, cheaper, and need it be done at all. By 1987, 300 scrutinies were conducted and an over a billion pounds in spending saved. The U. K. government laid down a drill to be followed before filling in vacancy in the Senior Civil Service departments: is it necessary to fill the vacancy at all, or at this level? If so, what is the nature of the job now and in the future? What qualifications, qualities, skills, and experience and achievement record will a future job holder require? What are the requirements of the top team in which the individual needs to fit? Is there a sufficient field of candidates already with the department, or is it necessary to extend the search to the wider civil service or to fill by open competition?

The world today deliberates the Henry David Thoreau dictum, "That government is best that governs least". Together with that of Tom Paine, a major voice of the American Revolution, that "Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its mixed state, an intolerable one". Emerson, some years later said, "The less government we have, the better". We do not need more or less governance. We need better government. We need better governance. The job of government is to steer, not row the boat. Government is not good at the rowing. Peter Drucker argued that we needed more governance, not less. In *The Age of Discontinuity*, he maintains: "we do not face a withering away of the State - but we do face a choice between big but impotent government and a government that is strong because it confines itself to decision and direction and leaves the doing to others".

On 3 March 1993, President Clinton appointed a special team – The National Performance Review Team – under the

chairmanship of Vice President Al Gore. While announcing the appointment of the team, Clinton said: “Americans...want better schools and health care and better roads and more jobs, but they want us to do it all with a government that works better on less money, and that is more responsive”. Premier Zhu Rongji in China axed two million government jobs as a measure of administration reforms in China. A Presidential Review Commission appointed by President Mandela found inherited bureaucracy “fundamentally flawed” and recommended far-reaching proposals for reconfiguration and abolition of a number of ministries in South Africa. As late as 1960, the Korean civil service was widely viewed as a corrupt and inept institution. General Park Chung Hee reorganised the civil service and replaced the spoils system by a merit-based system. By the late 1970s, the Korean bureaucrats became reputable in the developing world.

All is not bad

It will be incorrect to leave an impression that the country’s civil service is wholly decrepit. Some of the ablest young men and women constitute the echelons. The most coveted career in India is the civil service, for entry into it means life term employment, security of job, time-bound promotion, and an assured comfortable existence. Individually intelligent and devoted, they somehow atrophy and vegetate, and swell the stymied system. Government owes it to the few strong and upright among them to be provided a viable safeguard against the excesses of pliant seniors as much as revengeful political masters. Britain provided for a mechanism for such relief, as also for induction of renowned public figures from outside Government for selection of senior civil service personnel like permanent secretaries.

Nirmal K. Mukherji, the last of the the Indian Civil Service, to retire as Cabinet Secretary, pleaded in his 5-point charter for a slim bureaucracy: (i) the federal component in the administrative arrangement should be multi-layered to correspond with the levels of representative structure and accountability and should be squarely vested at each level; (ii) the heavily over-centralised powers and functions be revised through massive devolution to state and local government levels and it should show up in slimmer central and state bureaucracies; (iii) deregulation and privatization under the

new economic regime are 'inescapable slimming diets' for bloated bureaucracies of the Centre and the States; (iv) bureaucracy of the future should be understanding and humane in the face of social churning underway in the country, more so the rise of "a new species of middle and upper middle classes characterized by yearning for lifestyles like those of affluent countries"; and (v) the present 'rigid and change-resistant' bureaucracy is inconsistent with the emerging information and communication revolution. It is clear that the case really is against a big and centralized bureaucracy.

A lesson from AAP

As revealed in the Census, 2011 and the latest employment survey, India confronts major transition, (i) of the less than half of some 500 million working Indians are now engaged in agriculture, notwithstanding nearly 70% of the population still living in rural areas, and (ii) urban India has added more people than rural India in the previous ten years. These transitions signify a new narrative to be devised for this new middle class constituency, articulate and aspirational, energetic and aggressive, requiring a new approach and new dialogue, a new charter of an agenda of action as revealed in the astounding AAP showing in recent elections for Delhi assembly – an obvious angst against dysfunctional government, rampant corruption, and arrogance of politicians as much as bureaucrats, so alienated from the citizenry.

"There are many impediments in this Constitution which will hamper us", said Patel, "but in spite of that, we have in our collective wisdom come to a decision that we shall have the model wherein the ring of service will be such that will keep the country under control." Civil servants have this noble goal to abide by.

Time for a sincere soul-search

A Service association as the conscience keeper can and should play an effective positive role in preserving the collective image of the Service. It is difficult to accept that political interference is the sole cause for the present mess. The bureaucrats themselves must do serious introspection. They need to have their own code of conduct and observe it faithfully and scrupulously. The responsibility is on the senior bureaucrats to follow this code of conduct. If they observe it, it will be easier

to enforce it down the line. Even the worst politician respects a straightforward officer. The union government, as the custodian of the AIS, hardly asserts itself.

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B P Mathur

Government's Policy of Privatization- Victim of Crony Capitalism

Public Enterprise was the edifice on which India's development and industrial strategy was built in the initial years of planning. Pt Nehru called them temples of modern India, and they were supposed to occupy commanding heights of the economy. However, with the launch of New Economic Policy in 1991, public enterprises are under retreat and attempts are underway to dismantle them. The global economic crisis of 2008, which seriously impacted USA and West European countries, the aftermath of which they have still to recover, has shown the importance of State as a direct player in the economy. But our policy makers refuse to learn the lessons and continue to follow an industrial strategy with blind faith in market economy and private sector, even in key sectors of the economy, jeopardizing national interest.

There was powerful philosophy behind setting up of State-owned-enterprises. They were considered key institutional instrument of socialism, an ideal which caught the imagination of welfare states of 20th century. Karl Marx had radically transformed the thinking regarding ownership of property, viewed it as source of evil afflicting industrialized countries, and suggested that all industries should be taken over by State. When Lenin took over power in Soviet Union, he abolished all private property by one stroke, through a decree issued in 1917 and took over all the means of production and distribution. But Karl Marx's radical method had few takers in Britain, which had a strong socialist movement under the intellectual influence of Fabians who believed in 'inevitability of gradualism'. The British Labor party had enshrined socialist philosophy in its charter. Clement Atlee¹, who later became Prime Minister had said, 'The dominant issue of twentieth century is socialism...The evils that capitalism brings differs in intensity in different countries... The cause is private

ownership of the means of life; the remedy is public ownership'. The Labour fought elections in 1945, on the manifesto of public ownership of key industries, and when it came in power, nationalized all major industries such as power, coal, steel, heavy industries etc. Inspired by similar ideology, large scale State ownership of industries was done by France, Italy and other industrialized countries of Europe.

When India launched its Five Year Plans in 1950s, it was greatly influenced by Soviet model, which had transformed a peasant economy into a mighty industrial power within two decades, as well as British experience of 'gradualism'. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, which continued to be the bedrock of policy till 1990, envisaged State assuming responsibility for all basic and strategic industries such as iron and steel, mining, power, petroleum, aviation, transport and heavy industries. Thus in first forty years of planning, State took the main responsibility for industrial development of the country. There was serious flaw with this policy as private sector was not given its rightful place in industrialization process. Over years the implementation of the policy became faulty, rigid and bureaucratic. A large number of sick and loss making private industries were taken over by government, of which there was no economic rationale. Operating in a protected market and insulated from competition, many enterprises became, inefficient and operated at low productivity levels, incurred losses and were a severe drain on the economy. A realization of this fact was made in New Economic Policy of 1991, which envisaged deregulation and liberalization of the economy, in line with the then prevailing global economic trend. The policy envisaged privatization and disinvestment of portfolios of industries which have low technology base and operate in inefficient or unproductive areas. The policy also envisaged that no new public sector will be set up, except in core sector of the economy. The new policy no doubt helped in bringing an element of dynamism and vigour in the management of public enterprises. By placing them under the discipline of the market, the enterprises became accountable and efficient and were able to withstand domestic and international competition.

The Indian policy was greatly influenced by the ruling neo liberal economic ideology of the time. This ideology, emphasized deregulation, liberalization, privatization and globalization-

the State exercising minimal interference in economic activities, derived its inspiration from Chicago school, whose chief protagonist has been Milton Friedman and powerfully advocated by World Bank, IMF and WTO. It was given practical shape by Ronald Regan in USA and Margaret Thatcher in UK, when they came to head their respective governments. The global economic meltdown of 2008, has exposed the hollowness of the philosophy of unfettered capitalism with its belief in free and unregulated markets. There has been a return to Keynesianism with State pouring billion of dollars in the economy to stimulate demand. In USA, the General Motors and the housing finance giants Fannie Mae and Freddie May were practically nationalized to save them from collapse. The deregulation of banking sector lead to financial engineering, with big banks trading worthless securities, under all kinds of innovative products, making huge profits and their executives cornering astronomical salaries and bonuses, until the bubble burst, and banks such as Lehman Brothers collapsed. Nobel prize winning economist Paul Krugman² blamed the profession of economists for being blind to the possibility of catastrophic failures in a market economy and said, 'spectacularly useless at best, and positively harmful at worst'.

While the Western countries in practical policy, have abandoned blind faith in market economy and are giving high priority to protection of domestic industry and generation of employment (though outwardly paying lip service to free-trade doctrine), the Indian policy makers continue to be prisoners of a defunct economic ideology, and have opened the country to unbridled imports from abroad, which Indian industries are in no position to face, eroding the industrial base of the country, built assiduously over years. A specter of de-industrialization is haunting the nation today. The policy of privatization and disinvestment of public enterprises is one sub-set of this policy where faith is put in market forces and private sector to usher in industrialization and development of the economy.

Disinvestment and Privatization – An Overview

The privatisation and disinvestment of public sector undertakings (PSUs) in India has a chequered and controversial past, and can be divided into three phases: **First Phase- 1991-91- 1999-2000:** The first round of disinvestment commenced

at the time of NarshimaRao government in 1991-92- the authors of New Economic Policy. The principle adopted was to off load only 20 % of equity to mutual funds and financial institutions. Shares of around 30 PSUs were disinvested in the form of bundles, adopting a complex pricing formula. In the next round of disinvestment in 1992-93, an open tendering system with minimum bid amount and reserve price was adopted. There was severe criticism of the manner in which disinvestment took place by the public as well as experts bodies such as Public Accounts , which passed severe strictures against the government. This made the Government very cautious and slowed the process of disinvestment. The Janta Dal government which came in power in 1996 had very ambivalent attitude and no disinvestment took place during first two years in office. However, during 1998-99 and 1999-2000 some enterprises were disinvested mostly through cross-purchases by PSUs themselves or by public sector financial institutions, but the majority share-holding remained with the government.

Second Phase- January 2000-May 2004: The privatization of PSUs, in real sense, can be said to have commenced from 2000 onwards, when majority control of large number of enterprises such as Modern Foods(MFIL), BALCO, CMC, HTL, VSNL, PPL, ITDC, HCI, HZL, IPCL was passed on to private players. This was a major policy shift, with NDA headed by AtalBehari Vajpayee coming to power and creating a new Ministry for Disinvestment with ArunShourie as Minster. The methodology adopted by NDA government for privatization was severally flawed. Privatization was done through strategic sale route, which allowed management control to pass through private placement, enabling monopoly industrial houses to acquire control over valuable national assets. Thus Sterlite Group acquired BALCO and HZL; Tatas acquired VSNL and CMC (via TCS) and Reliance acquired IPCL, commanding 80 percent share over the country's petro-chemical market. Hotel Corporation of India's Centaur Hotel was sold to a party, who within six months of purchase, re-sold it to another party, making huge windfall profits. The Government did not make a provision of a 'golden-share' to block the transaction, an internationally accepted practice in case of State enterprises, to prevent violation of the terms of the sale-agreement. Hardly any of the loss making enterprises, which were drain on the

economy were privatized. Selling of profitable PSUs without any policy frame-work brought great deal of uncertainty in the functioning of PSUs across the board and demoralized their management.

Third Phase, UPA Government - 2004- Onwards

The UPA I which came to power in 2004, reversed NDA's policy of privatization and declared that 'profit making companies will not be privatised'. This brought a degree of stability in the working of PSUs and restored the morale of management, but this euphoria was short lived. It soon resumed a policy of divesting portfolios of profit making companies- a policy initiated in first round of disinvestment, while keeping majority control of the government and retaining their legal status as government company. Under the policy currently in place, profit making companies are required to be listed in stock exchange and at least 10 % equity should be offered for sale, either by sale of existing equity or issue of fresh share capital by government or a combination of both. In pursuance of this policy shares of large number of *nav-ratna* and *mini-navratna* companies have been disinvested over the years.

Non-transparency in Sale

While it is a good idea to list the PSUs in stock exchange and offer a portion of share to public, so that they are brought under the 'vigil of a body of share-holders' and follow discipline of the market, Government is disinvesting, without any policy frame-work. Present method of disinvestment is totally opaque. Most often large chunk of shares are offered through auction to bulk buyers/ institutional investors. The standard method of selling shares of a company is through a fixed price offer, open to public through stock-exchange after going through a book building process. (There may be some difficulty in offering shares of PSUs not listed in stock-exchange which are coming first time for public offering. But this problem can be resolved by offering a small trench of shares and allow the market to set prices and go for bigger offerings spread over two-three years). A fixed price offer through stock-exchange allows general public to acquire PSU shares and helps in garnering maximum revenue. This is evident from sale of shares of Maruti Udyog

(where government had a minority holding) in July 2003, through public offering. More than 3 lakhs investors responded and shares were subscribed ten times over fetching handsome money for the national kitty.

In UK major industries such as British telecom, British Airways, British Gas, British Steel, the water company, electricity undertakings were all privatized by public offerings of shares with listing in the London Stock Exchange. Privatization helped promoting wide share-ownership and some 7 million people out of a population of 57 million became holders of shares by early nineties. Margaret Thatcher the British Prime Minister, who was credited with the policy of privatization, claimed that she has introduced real industrial democracy in Britain, as people are now real owner of privatized industries.

The policy of strategic sale of PSU shares or offering bulk shares to a preferred party, has adverse ramification for the economy, as it enables monopoly business houses to acquire control or substantial share-holding of privatized/ disinvested companies. The corporate sector in India, barring few exceptions, is controlled by *marwari-lala* nexus, and believes in dynastic succession. *By not following the standard route of disinvesting shares through public offering, government has denied the people, wide dispersal of share-holding, industrial democracy and professionalization of corporate management.*

Government is holding substantial shares of industries which were privatized during NDA regime and whose management control was passed on to private business. Sterlite (Vedanta Group) was handed over control of BALCO and HZL during NDA regime, through acquisition of shareholding of 51% and 65% respectively. In these companies Government is still holding 49 % and 29.5 % shares. Government has nominated three Joint Secretary level Officers on BALCO Board and 2 on HZL Board. Government is thus having a strong say in executive decision-making of the company, but is not accountable to Parliament, nor subject to CAG audit. The Chairman of Vedanta group, Anil Agarwal³ has made a statement that he would like to acquire remaining shares of BALCO and HZL. Should a private business house be allowed to have total control over a company? Why is not government selling all its shares to general public through stock-exchange route and bring some dispersal of share-holding and improved

corporate governance? One suspects that there is a government-business nexus, in holding on to shares even a decade after companies were privatised. Government has some explanation to do for its decision 'not to decide'.

Selling Family Silver to Pay for Grocers Bill

Disinvesting, simply to garner revenue to meet budgetary deficit, with no regard to market conditions, can be counter-productive. In March 2012, towards the end of financial year, Government offered ONGC's share through an auction route, but there were no buyers. LIC was forced to step in and bailed out government by purchasing shares worth Rs 12,000cr. Such disinvestment where one public sector acquires share of another, serves no purpose, except that it facilitated Government to seize LIC's resources 'legally', which could have been productively invested elsewhere. The employees of Coal India (CIL) have threatened strike (September 2013), at the prospect of Government disinvesting another 10 % share of the company⁴. They suspect that by gradually reducing its shareholding, eventually it may be handed over to private sector, seriously compromising their interest.

Table I below gives the amount of money government has received as disinvestment proceeds during the tenure of UPA II

Table I Disinvestment Receipts During UPA II

Year	Disinvestment Receipts Rs Cr	PSUs Disinvested
2009-10	23553	NHPC,OIL, NTPC,REC,NMDC
2010-11	22144	SJVN,EIL, Coal India, CR, PGCIL,MOIL,SCI
2011-12	13894	PFC, ONGC
2012-13	24000	NBCC,HCL,BHEL,RINL,SAI L,NALCO,NMDC,OIL,MMTC HAL,NTPC

Source: Public Enterprise Survey & Receipt Budget, Government of India

The money received from disinvestment should have been spent on capital expansion of PSUs, setting up new green field projects and in frontiers technological areas such as computer

chip manufacturing and solar and wind energy projects, which have potential for solving future energy needs of the country. Instead, all the proceeds of disinvestment are being used for normal revenue expenditure of the government. Government had announced in 2005 that it will set up a National Investment Fund outside Consolidated Fund of India and the proceeds will be invested in social sector projects or capital projects of PSUs. But the money raised through disinvestment has been used to meet unproductive expenditure, year after year. In 2012-13 the fiscal deficit of Union government was 5.2% of GDP- the total expenditure was Rs 14.30 lac cr and revenue Rs 8.71 lac cr, the short fall being met by borrowings of 5.20 lac cr- borrowing constituting 36 % of overall expenditure. ***Disinvestment in PSU is a typical cases of selling family silver to pay for grocers bill. To use proceeds from sale of valuable national assets to meet government's unproductive expenditure is a fraud on the people of India.***

Killing the Golden Goose

There are about 260 PSUs of Central government. Their performance is a mixed bag. While around 60 enterprises are loss making, most enterprises in core sector of the economy are making profit and functioning efficiently. They are also making substantial contribution to national kitty by way of dividend and surplus. Table II below gives an idea.

Table II - Contribution of Commercial Enterprises to Exchequer (Rs crores)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 Budgeted
Dividend from PSUs and other Investments	24060	28490	29996	29870
Dividend/surplus of RBI, Nationalized Banks and FIsTotal	2393247992	2211850608	2544755443	4399673866

Source: Receipts Budget, Government of India

Most PSUs in core sector of the economy such as ONGC, NTPC, SAIL, GAIL, NMDC, NALCO, BHEL, are functionally efficient and making substantial contribution to the exchequer. If substantial share-holding of government is disinvested in them, it will lose getting dividend income. ***The current disinvestment policy of government, is virtually a case of killing the goose which lays the golden egg.***

Sick Industries

There are large number of sick and chronically loss making enterprises but there is no coherent policy to deal with them. With the introduction of new economic policy in 1991, sick industries were brought under the purview of SICA (Sick Industrial Company act). From 2004, there has been a further shift in policy and they have been referred to Board of Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) for their revival or restructuring. Presently 63 enterprises, whose combined losses were Rs 27,600 crs in 2011-12, are registered with BRPSE. A large number of these industries such as Bharat Gold Mines, Richardson & Cruddas , Braithwaite, Tyre Corporation, textile mills are taken over units from private sector and incapable of revival. Similarly a large number of industries such as HEC, Hindustan Photo Films, Hindustan Organic chemicals, Hindustan Insecticides suffer from technological obsolescence, cannot compete and suffer from several other infirmities and it is difficult to nurse them back to health. ***Sick industries should be the first candidates for privatization and if there are no takers they should be liquidated after taking care of workers interest.***

Squeezing PSUs

With the commencement of liberalized economic policy and more particularly from the time UPA came to power, a policy environment has been created under which PSUs are squeezed, their assets stripped and they are being slowly bled to death. A few illustrative cases clarify this.

ONGC – Enron-Reliance Production Sharing Agreement: Following new policy to invite domestic and international private sector companies to participate in development of oil fields, a Production Sharing Agreement, by way of unincorporated Joint Venture (JV) was entered in 1994,

between ONGC and Enron- Reliance consortium for development of Panna/Mukta, and Mid & South Tapti oil fields, with private partners participating interest at 30 % each and ONGCs at 40 % (Enron interests were subsequently taken over by British Gas Exploration). This agreement which was for 25 years, is heavily loaded in favour of private consortium. It did not provide for past cost reimbursement of Rs 676 crs to ONGC. The JV was to get international price for crude oil, its royalty and cess charges were frozen at the then prevailing rate, and it could import duty free equipment from abroad. On the other hand, no such concessions were available to ONGC. The computation of bonus/profit sharing, based on a complex formula, was so designed that ONGC could hardly get its legitimate share of revenue. The price paid to JV for the gas produced was higher than the price it was sold to consumers (via GAIL), and ONGC was asked to absorb huge losses (Rs 4265 crs ,by March 2004). CAG⁵ has conducted three detailed reviews in 1996, 2004 and 2011 and passed severe strictures against government for failing to protect its own / ONGCs interests. It is amply clear that the Reliance lead consortium is violating in letter and spirit the terms of production sharing agreement, taking Government / ONGC for a ride, and the main beneficiaries of the deal are the private players.

Air India: Certain policy decisions taken by Government, from 2004 onwards, when Prafull Patel was Civil Aviation Minister has permanently crippled the airlines. There was ill conceived merger of Air India, a loss making international airlines, with Indian Airlines a profit making airlines operating mostly in domestic sector. A decision was forced to purchase 68 aircrafts for which there was no operational requirement, against earlier assessed requirement of 28 aircraft, at a whopping cost of Rs 33000 crs, to be wholly financed by debt. As the company was in no position to pay this huge liability, it has been pushed into bankruptcy. To add to the woes of the airlines, the Ministry of Civil Aviation entered bilateral agreements with foreign carriers such as Emirates and Dubai, which denied level playing field to Air India. In addition Air India was forced to withdraw, against its wish, from large number of profitable routes (32) where it was operating at 80 to 100 % occupancy. This was ostensibly done to benefit Jet Airways, Kingfisher and Middle East Airlines. Fortnightly Journal, *Governance Now* commented that these decisions were

meant to 'hasten the death of the Maharaja' and a former executive Director of Air India Jitender Bhargava observed that senior management of the airlines joined the Minister, 'in the annihilation of the airline, which was once the nation's pride'⁶.

Public Private Partnership at IGI: A joint venture company Delhi International Airports Ltd (DIAL) , has been formed for development and operation of Indira Gandhi Airport, in which government undertaking- Airport Authority of India (AAI) has 26 % stake and GMR Group has 74 % stake. Out of capital expenditure of Rs 12857 crs, the promoter GMR has put in a capital of Rs 1813 cr only by way of equity, the balance was financed through loan; security deposit and collection from passengers as development fee. Thus by putting less than 20 % of capital investment, the GMR group was able to acquire complete control on the operation of the Airport, with AAI having practically no say. A CAG Report⁷ notes that that huge favours were given to DIAL. Under the original agreement the DIAL was to arrange full financing of the project, but a post contract benefit was provided by permitting it to levy development fee from passengers. The company has collected Rs 3415 cr on this account , which has imposed additional burden on passengers. The DIAL has been permitted use of 5 % of 4799 acre of land with AAI, for commercial exploitation which works out to 240 acre, almost for free. The current value of land available to DIAL for commercial exploitation is estimated at Rs 24,000 crs and has a projected earning capacity of Rs 1,63,557 cr during the contract period. The DIAL has been given sole right to operate for 60 years with no provision for review of the terms. The Ministry of Civil Aviation went overboard to grant huge concessions and favours to GMR Group , ignoring the interest of AAI and the Government.

Allocation of Coal Blocks: The allocation of coal –blocks to private players, which has become a national scandal, and is being investigated by CBI and a corruption case is being heard by the Supreme Court, shows the step-motherly treatment given to public sector Coal India (CIL). 48 coal blocks were dereserved from Coal India for captive allocation to private parties. Some blocks such as Rajhara and Moira Modhujore North Block, were dereserved despite protest from CIL, as work was already initiated in them. CIL is required to increase production, but will have to do it, from unexplored

blocks which will take longer to develop. CIL has demanded additional blocks in August 2008, but the Ministry of Coal hasn't taken a decision yet (April 2012), which will further delay additional production of coal.⁸

An Audit Report of CAG⁹ on Ultra Mega Power Project shows how a private party Reliance Power Ltd derived extraordinary benefits through discretionary allotment of coal blocs. Out of four contracts for Ultra Mega Power Projects, three have been bagged by RPL including Sasan, each with 3960 MW capacity. Two coal mines were allocated for Sasan, and a fixed tariff for 20 years period was negotiated. Subsequently, a third coal block Chatrasal, which was not included in original bid proposal, was also allocated to Sasan, after de-allocating it from NTPC, and a special dispensation given that surplus coal could be used for Chitrangi projects. As the tariff fixed for the Chitrangi plant, one in MP and another in UP, was fixed at higher rate, due to the fact that they have to source coal from the market, RPL will get benefit of using 9 million tonne of coal annually from the captive mines of Sasan plant, which would help in substantially reducing the cost of production of electricity. Audit has calculated that, due to this beneficent allocation of coal, the electricity when sold will yield financial gain to Reliance to the tune of Rs 29,000 cr, over the 20 years life of the contract (its present net value Rs 11852 cr).

For the last few years the present UPA government is caught in numerous scandals such as Commonwealth Games, 2 G spectrum allocation, Coalgate, KG Basin Gas pricing, forcible acquisition of farmers land for real estate builders and big industry via SEZ. The public attention is largely focused on corruption and malfeasance of public functionaries. *The few illustrative cases mentioned above, go beyond and raise a fundamental issue of policy regarding role of private and public sector in country's development. Surely no government, would like to reduce the role of ONGC, Coal India, NTPC and other public enterprises in areas such as oil exploration, coal mining, and electricity generation in view of countries vast infrastructural needs. While there is enough scope, for both private sector as well as public sector to meet country's huge unfulfilled demand in infrastructure and other industrial sectors of the economy, it cannot be done by chipping public assets and gifting them to private sector, denying them a level playing field and giving*

public enterprises discriminatory treatment. In ground reality, India has today become a basket case of crony capitalism.

Economist Prabhat Patnaik¹⁰ says that government is practicing neo-liberal policies, where the State no longer stands above classes but becomes exclusively concerned with Big Capital and defends it and promotes it. *Today, the situation that has emerged on the ground is a typical case of, ‘privatization of profit and nationalization of loss’, to quote economist J K Gailbraith’s epigram.*

International Scenario and the Chinese SOEs

The history of industrialization world over shows that it is only through power of the State, that countries developed their industrial prowess. Germany in 1870s, Japan in 1950s and South Korea subsequently became global industrial power through State’s active participation. The role of State enterprises depends on economic ideology as well as stage of a country’s development. For three decades after the second world war, nationalized industries dominated the industrial horizon of UK, France and Italy. It was only from 1980s that privatization became a ruling ideology, following the lead for free market ideology given by USA and UK. Even today many large companies are State owned by developed countries. France owns 80 % of EDF an energy company, Japan 50 % of Japan Tobacco and Germany 30 % of Deutsche Telekom. Today China dominates the world in industrial production, through its State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs). 13 biggest oil companies which between them control three-fourth’s of the world’s oil reserves are all State owned. Some of the emerging world’s most successful companies are State owned, such as Russia’s Gazprom (natural gas), China Mobile, Saudi Basic industries Corporation (chemical), Dubai Ports, Emirates Airlines. State companies make up for the 80 % stock market in China, 62 % in Russia and 38 % in Brazil.¹¹

China began a policy of reforming State enterprises in 1998, with the reform of sick enterprises moving top of the agenda. The policy programme officially sanctioned was, ‘grasping the large and letting go the small’¹². Small enterprises accounted for majority of the losses of the State sector. Thousands of small enterprises were privatized. This meant

displacement of large number of workers, thereby maximizing social costs but it minimized the economic costs. The large firms whose ownership was retained by government were given special treatment such as tax and debt relief, import licenses, greater access to domestic and international listing facilities and their operating powers were substantially increased. The economic sectors covered by these firms encompassed the entire economy. *For China the SOE reforms is not about reducing State's control over the economy but to make the control more effective. The reform is not about maximization of profit. The objective is to make them efficient and big enough to have international presence.*

Today in emerging economies such as China, Russia, Brazil, the biggest and most successful companies are State owned. A survey by *The Economist* notes that emerging markets State-owned enterprises becoming important players, constitutes one of the biggest changes in the world economy in recent years. It notes that *State capitalism is successful in producing national champions that can compete globally.*

Conclusion

We should understand the reality of current international economic scenario and appreciate that only a strong and vibrant public sector can meet India's vast infrastructure and capital intensive high-tech industry needs and withstand competition with foreign multinationals in a highly competitive globalized world. Private sector, no doubt has an important role to play in nation's industrialization process and the two sectors must work as partners, to meet nation's huge development needs. It must be realized that there is nothing like a 'capitalist' or 'socialist' path of development. Our economic ideology should follow the Middle Path, a healthy and judicious mix of free market and socialist ideology, the market and the State working in harmony and tandem. Distinguished economist J K Gailbraith¹³ had said, 'Privatization therefore is not any better guide for public action than is socialism. In a good society there is in these matters one basic rule, decision must be made on the social and economic merits of a particular case. This is not any age of doctrine, it is the age of practical judgement.' The Club of Rome¹⁴ commissioned a study by eminent experts, regarding experience of more than two decades of privatization and has come to the following conclusion.

Privatization is not an end in itself. Privatization should be treated as a means of increasing efficiency and not as a way of reducing or undermining the role of the state. Privatization may be the best option in some cases; but reforming the public sector, instead, may be a better choice in other cases. We advocate a healthy awareness of the limits of privatization, rather than unconditional approval or rejection. To achieve the best of both worlds, we need strong private enterprise and capable public agencies working together.

Our policy makers should learn from our own, as well as international experience, and follow a pragmatic policy regarding public enterprises and should not become victims of a doctrinaire ideology while chartering out nation's industrial and development strategy.

Footnotes:

¹ B P Mathur, *Public Enterprises Management*, New Delhi: Macmillan, 1999, p 4; also see pp 1-8 for evolution of public enterprise philosophy.

² The state of economics, *the Economist*, July 24th-29th 2009, pp 58-60; Paul Krugman, How Did the Economist Get It so wrong, *New York Times*, September 2, 2009

³ *The Hindu*, September 26, 2013

⁴ Newsitem, *The Hindu*, September 19, 2013

⁵ Comptroller & Auditor General, Union Government No 5 of 1996, *Participation of Private parties with ONGC in Production of Oil and Natural Gas*; Union Government Commercial- Petroleum Sector for the year ending 2004, *ONGC*, pp 52-72; Union Government Civil, Report No 19 of 2011-12, *Performance Audit of Hydrocarbon Production Sharing Contracts*.

⁶ *Murder of a Maharaja* and Jitender Bhargava, *Big Thinking for quick sinking*, in *Governance Now*, May 16-31, 2011

⁷ Comptroller & Auditor General, Report No 5 of 2012-13, *On Implementation of Public Private Partnership Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi*

⁸ Report of the Comptroller & Auditor General, No 7 of 2012-13, *Allocation of coal Blocks and Augmentation of Coal Production*.

⁹ Report of the Comptroller & Auditor General, No 6 of 2012-13, *Ultra Mega Power projects under Special Purpose Vehicles*

¹⁰ Prabhat Patnaik, In the Service of Capital, *Frontline*, October 5, 2012, pp 6-13

¹¹ The Rise of State Capitalism- The Emerging World's New Model,

The Economist, January 21st-27th, 2012

¹²Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp 168-171; Behind the Mask, A Survey of Business in China, *The Economist*, March 20th, 2004

¹³J K Gailbraith, *The Good Society*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996, p 20

¹⁴Ernst Ulrich von Weizsacker, Oran R Young, Matthias Finger (ed), *Limits to Privatization*, London Earthscan, 2005 p 360

Yogendra Narain

Relationship Between Political Executive and Permanent Civil Service in a Democracy

In a democracy, the people govern themselves through their elected representatives. In the small cities of ancient Greece it was possible to govern directly. However when city states became nation states the question of direct governance ceased and the elected representatives in a democratic state began to govern through selected representatives. Moreover when elected governments expand, the level of competence within the elected representatives, varies. It is not always the most competent people that get elected, unlike in the city states and it becomes necessary to supplement their competency by an external agency which is specialized in the affairs of the state. This thought contains within itself the seeds for the evolution of bureaucracy and the role it was expected to play.

During various phases of history nations began to expand territorially also. Mustering large armies and with the development of military technology, big nations began to nibble away the territories of the smaller kingdoms and independent states. Further with the development of sea power, colonialism started. Whether it be the Spanish or the Dutch, the Portugese or the English, empires began to have outposts in far flung areas. This again required men to administer these territories. The demand and need for trained manpower increased. These men had to be responsible people who represented the colonial power and were expected to not only administer the territories captured but also to lay the foundations for orderly development of governing institutions with long term goals. However none of these men functioned independently. They were given specific Charters by their Governments and were responsible to their Kings and Prime Ministers.

In India, the Government of Great Britain took over the reins of administration from the East India Company in 1858 after the Sepoy mutiny. Earlier the East India company administered their possessions through the Governor Generals. The latter were responsible to their Company and not to the British Crown. However when the Viceroy's replaced them, the latter were directly responsible to the British crown through the democratically elected British Government. A secretary of State for India was appointed to look into the entire affairs of India. The Viceroys were appointed and replaced by the party in power in the British Government. Though technically it was the Crown which appointed them, but under the principle of democratic accountability. It was the Government of the day which actually selected them. The Viceroy would communicate through the Secretary of State for India and execute the orders given to him.

In 1861 the British Government also passed the Indian Civil Services Act which then began regulating the recruitment and service conditions of the so called, Imperial and superior services which were the precursor to the ICS. This Act gave powers to the Secretary of State to make rules for the services. The Secretary of State, being a political appointment, was ultimately responsible to the legislature and answered all queries about them in the British Parliament. The British Government immediately stopped the practice of nominating men to this service based on nepotism and money(as in the time of the East India Company) and introduced the method of selection on merit by a public service commission examination.. The service derived its intrinsic strength from the guarantee of total and unquestioned support from the Governor/Viceroy/Secretary of State for India. At that time there were no elected Ministers in India and the civil servants reported only to their immediate bureaucratic bosses, who reported to the Viceroy who in turn reported to the elected Government in Britain. There was no political intervention and the field officers went about doing their work unhindered. They were known as "mai baap" precisely because they meted out justice impartially. There were no political biases except that their aim was to perpetuate and strengthen the British rule.

The bureaucracy performed both the policy making and implementation roles until the introduction of diarchy under the Government of India Act 1919. When diarchy was implemented from 1921 in all the provinces, policy making in a limited sphere of the provincial Government was transferred to the elected politician. The process of transfer was extended and adopted in the Central Government under the Government of India Act 1935, which however could not be fully implemented because of the outbreak of the the Second World War.

Even while diarchy was introduced in the provinces, the protection for the members of the civil services who were inducted earlier, continued under the Governors and the Viceroy. The Government of India Act 1919 stated in Section 96 B,

“Subject to the provisions of this Act, and of rules made thereunder, every person in the Civil service of the Crown in India holds office during his Majesty’s pleasure, and may be employed in any manner required by a proper authority within the scope of his duty———”

This same provision continued in the 1935 Act also except that the Provincial governments were also allowed to recruit their officers and these officers were also given similar protection. In the Government of India Independence Act 1947 all officers recruited by the Secretary of State were given protection as far as their salaries and pension were concerned. These provisions were also incorporated in the Constitution adopted by our founding fathers.

When the elected Governments were formed during the period of diarchy ,the contours of the relationships between the political executive and the civil servants were not clear. Often strong opinions on either side led to clashes with the Ministers threatening to resign. Many issues in which there was difference of opinion, were referred to the Governors for decision. The civil service was used to it’s independence and were not swayed by political opinion. Bowing to elected authority was a new experience for the civil servant

However with the declaration of the Second World War, the Congress Ministries resigned and the Governors once again took control of the administration. The civil servants regained their authority. This continued till the Interim Government was formed at the center. The head of the Interim Government

was Pandit Jawahrlal Nehru. Once again the civil service was put under the elected leaders. During the Partition, the civil services looked after the refugees, making provision for their rations as well as refugee camps.. The Indian civil servants as well as the Civil servants who opted for Pakistan worked hard under their respective political masters to control the situation. It is in this period of stress that leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel began to appreciate the civil servants and found that the civil servants who were once loyal to the British could now be loyal to the Indian government. Also, the closest advisers to the political masters were these very civil servants. A new faith developed and Sardar Patel fought hard with the heads of the Provincial Governments and got their consent to the continuation of the steel frame though with a different name i.e. the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service. The constitution makers were persuaded to give protection in the Constitution itself to the members of the existing Indian Civil Service as well as the new All India Services.

With the adoption of the Constitution of India, the first general elections were held in 1952 The Congress party came to power in most of the States as well as the Centre. The civil services were looked at with respect both by the people as well as the political executive. The Allocation of Business rules as well as the Transaction of Business Rules were enacted in the various States as well as the Centre. Under these Rules the Ministers were the final authority in each department and he delegated powers under the Rules to the Secretaries, Joint Secretaries etc. The Minister became politically responsible for his department. If an issue was brought before the State legislatures or Parliament, it was the Minister who answered the queries on the basis of the reply drafted by his Ministry/ Secretary. The British systems and conventions became the models for the working of the Governments. The civil servants were supposed to work anonymously under the Ministers.

With the civil servants was the detailed knowledge of the Department and its functioning.. It was no surprise therefore that in the Centre as well in the States, in the initial years after Independence, the Ministers had grown increasingly dependent on the civil servants and their “word had become a prime mover of Government policy.” However the conventional civil servant, which were in abundance in the ICS , hesitated

to take on this role. Sri R.P. Noronha ICS, in his book “A Tale Told by an Idiot” states that in one Cabinet meeting he told his Chief Minister (Sri Govind Narain Singh) that it “was no part of my functions to suggest policies. There are two things I can do, and one thing I am not competent to do. I can tell you if a policy is workable, according to service standards. I can tell you the co sequences of a policy. But I am not competent to tell you what policy to follow, because it is you, and not I who have to answer to the people. It would be unfair to influence your policy decisions from the safety of my own position”

Later on, it became different. Some civil servants began to identify themselves with the Ministers, which as Sri Noronha states, led to loss of objectivity. The civil servants, according to him, began to overestimate themselves. For the ICS the first fruits of Independence were distrust, doubt and dislike as it was the ICS officers who had prosecuted them during the Independence movement. However slowly after quite some time, this distrust changed to faith in the usefulness of the service. When the IAS officers were recruited it was dinned into them to be democratic, public spirited and patriotic. Earlier when the ICS officers were recruited they mainly came from elitist and rich families who could afford higher education abroad. But the new IAS officers mostly came from middle class urban and rural families. The Ministers and politicians found it easier to talk to them and discuss various issues without confronting the stiff upper lips of the erstwhile ICS.

In the initial years, post independence, the Ministers preserved the separation between political work and official matters. When the party people came, the officers were asked to move out. This carried on in UP at least till the eighties, when I had the opportunity to work with two Chief Ministers, Sri Sripat Mishra and Sri Narain Dutt Tiwari. In the late eighties we began hearing stories about how officers at all levels were being used to raise money for party funds. The decline had started. The Ministers began to indulge in postings and transfers on considerations other than merit. Some officers resisted and were given inconsequential postings. Others survived by going along with the tide making some gains themselves, on the side.

In subsequent years another factor crept in. Officers were deemed loyal to one party or the other. So whenever regimes changed the previous officers were removed and important

posts were given to the officers loyal to the ruling dispensation. How different it was when as Secretary to the Chief Minister, I went to the Chief Secretary (Sri Girish Mehra) after the change of government and asked him where I was to be posted. Prompt came the reply. “Your post is not a political post,” he said. “You stick to the new Chief Minister.” And I did.

In this context, it is relevant to remember what Dr. Ambedkar had stated in the Constituent Assembly

“Wherever democratic institutions exist, experience has shown that it is essential to protect the public service as far as possible from political or personal influence and to give it that position of stability and security which is vital to its successful working as an impartial and efficient instrument by which Government of whatever complexion- may give effect to their policies. It is imperative that whichever Government comes into power, the permanent time civil services must carry out the policy laid down by the Government for the time being in office... In countries where this principle has been neglected, and where the spoils system has taken its place, inefficient and disorganized Civil Service has been the inevitable result and corruption has become rampant with all its attendant consequences.” He further goes on to say “Otherwise I am afraid that the Civil Services will apprehend that amenability to Ministerial pressure and a correct attitude towards questions in which a little coterie or the group for the time being in power, is interested, will secure them promotions rather than merit or efficiency. I have often known that a Secretary to a Minister if he volunteers an opinion which is not palatable to the Minister in office, the Minister puts him on the blacklist and he is not considered favourably for future promotions. Of course once a policy is laid down, the public servants have to carry them out. But I know of instances where Ministers have looked upon with disfavour Secretaries or other servants, whose opinion was invited criticizing their policies: this is a very undesirable state of affairs and I am sure that sort of thing should not be encouraged. Therefore I hold that where there is any apprehension on the part of Civil Servants that, if they are amenable to Ministerial pressure, they are likely to be promoted, and that merit and efficiency count less, if that mentality seizes public servants, there is likely to be demoralization throughout the ranks of the service”

The recent decision of the Supreme Court on a PIL filed by a former Cabinet Secretary and several other senior officers, has directed that the State Governments and the Central Governments must give a fixed tenure to all the officers, set up Civil Services Boards which would recommend transfers and posting of senior officers to the Chief Minister and has further directed that this should be done within three months. It has further directed that no Minister should pass oral orders and if he does then it should be reduced in writing and got confirmed on file from the Minister concerned. On a similar PIL filed by police officers the Supreme Court had issued similar orders some years back but this is yet to be implemented by most of the State Governments. This raises the question whether the relations between the political executive and the permanent civil services can be governed by judicial diktat. If a civil servant finds that the order is not being implemented in a state, will he have the courage to file a contempt position before the Supreme Court everytime? The State Government can trouble him in so many ways.

It can keep him posted in difficult areas to which the civil servant can have no appeal!

Under the Constitution of India, both the Central Government and the State Governments, have promulgated the Allocation of Business Rules and the Transaction of Business Rules which govern the relations between the Minister and his Secretary. In these Rules it is very clearly laid down that the Minister is the final authority for the Ministry and the Secretary only has to see that the Transaction of Business Rules are complied with. If the Secretary finds that the Minister is passing illegal orders he can only bring it to the notice of his Minister and request for a review. But in the Centre there is no provision for the Secretary to send the file to the Prime Minister. However in some of the States there is such a provision

It is not a very well known fact that John Stuart Mill had also developed his own theory of Bureaucracy within representative Government. According to Mill, the antagonistic influences of competence and participation are necessary for good government "Freedom cannot produce its best effects, and often breaks down altogether, unless means can be found of combining it with trained and skilled administration", he said.. Mill explains that the pursuit of one without the other ends in

the decay and loss of both. Mill urges strict limits to the representative body's interference in bureaucracy. He warns that representative bodies tend to interfere in administrative details that they are unfit to decide. The result can be dangerous corruption. Representatives rarely lose their job over administrative actions.. Notwithstanding this view, Mill emphasizes that experts should ultimately be responsible to the governed through the representatives.

In India the conventions of non interference by the political executive in the working of the civil servants has tragically not developed, as in UK. Take the cases of Khairnar, Khemka, Durga Shakti Nagpal and so many hundreds of unnamed officers, not so well known, who have suffered at the hands of the political executive because they did not toe the line.. Several government servants have gone to jail because of the misdemeanours of their Ministers. In a democracy the political executive is expected to take the responsibility for the action of their departments and the officers working under them. But this principle has not been followed in India where the political executive, itself unsure of its political strength, tends to sacrifice the civil servant on the requests of its political constituents.

The recent Supreme Court judgement offers a beacon of hope. But it is still not clear whether the political executive will accept the judicial pronouncement willingly both in spirit and form or only in form. There are still devious ways of getting around the judgement by those governments, who want to. It is however hoped that our political executive will understand that implementation of the judgement will lead to what every citizen in India wants-good governance- and thus pave the way for a productive relationship between the civil servants and the political executive for a better India.

New Public Management to Energize Indian Governance

When one looks at the Indian state, one is struck by two contrasting indicators. On the performance front, compared to the time of Indian Independence, there have been striking improvements in growth rate, literacy, longevity, per capita output of agriculture and industry etc. These improvements beget optimism. However, that is dampened somewhat when the comparison is made with China, which has bested India on most of these indicators. Still, the performance seems commendable in relation to many other large Third World states, and is largely attributable to the policies and pro-activity of the Indian state. When it comes to the functioning of the state, there is cause for pessimism (Khandwalla, 2010, Chapter 2). India is rated as one of the most corrupt states. There is sustained negative variance in achieving Plan targets. Law and order remains precarious in many parts of India. The justice system is extremely tardy in delivering justice. Legislatures seem to be infested with criminals. There is widespread perception that bureaucracy is inertial. Many attempts have been made to streamline administration (Khandwalla, 2010), mostly centered on improving bureaucracy. But the results have not been very encouraging (Khandwalla, 2010, Chapter 10).

A relatively new and evolving paradigm of administration called New Public Management (NPM), a phrase coined by Christopher Hood (1991) offers much hope. New Public Management (NPM) began as a doctrine in the 1980s. It is now more a movement than a rigidly held doctrine with a fixed set of tools and techniques. It is primarily a movement for much better governance and for enhancing governance capacity for dealing with complex tasks. This paper reviews briefly the evolution of this paradigm, its present tenets, and its feasibility in the Indian context.

The roots of NPM probably go back to the 1960s when Robert McNamara, a former president of Ford Motor Company was invited by John Kennedy to become the U.S.'s Defense Secretary. He integrated the silos of army, navy and air force by identifying missions for the defense forces that cut across the services. He also brought in various operations research techniques like critical path analysis. However, NPM as a doctrine of governance gathered strength in the 1980s and 1990s in response to acute public dissatisfaction with the way the government worked in the U.S., UK and elsewhere in the West. The sources of this dissatisfaction were high taxation to fund the welfare state, increased demand for public services and high military expenditures to counter the Soviet threat. As much as 40% to 50% of the GDP of some of these countries was expended on government, and the public did not feel that it was getting good value for money. Indeed, this dissatisfaction spilled over into political campaigns. Reagan in the U.S. and Thatcher in Britain swept to power for their calls for getting the state off the back of the people, rolling back the state and making public administration more efficient and accountable.

Initially, NPM amounted mainly to drawing on private sector management expertise because of its supposed greater efficiency. Mrs. Thatcher utilized the services of a corporate manager to cut waste in the public sector, and Reagan appointed the Gray Commission for the same purpose. Other elements of NPM were downsizing of the government through retrenchment, de-regulation, privatization, decentralization, and the extensive use of MoUs, performance contracts etc. to increase efficiency and enhance performance accountability in the government. In the U.S. re-inventing government became the rage during the Clinton years in response to an influential book by Osborne and Gaebler (1992). The path to good governance, according to them, was thought to be through the government catalyzing rather than undertaking itself various social and economic activities (steering rather than rowing), empowerment of local communities, competition in the delivery of public services, a mission rather than rules orientation, emphasis on outcomes of government spending rather than just inputs, customer orientation, the government becoming more business-like in pricing its services, emphasis more on prevention than cure, decentralization and participative

management, emphasis on incentives and markets, etc. These elements constituted their blueprint for an entrepreneurial state. In Britain, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, an ambitious programme was initiated of agencification, that is, of dismembering bureaucratic departments into semi-autonomous, highly focused executing agencies with professional heads on contract appointments and performance incentives. This attempt was to bring into government professional management via agencification on an unprecedented scale. E-governance and telecom technologies opened up further frontiers of innovation for providing speedy and corrupti on-free services to the public.

The movement to improve governance has become global, and many governance innovations of developed as well as developing countries have become components of NPM. These include the social development index developed in Hong Kong, Singapore's body for independently probing corruption in government at the highest levels, total quality management tried out widely in the Malaysian government, the deliberation councils of Japan, corporatization of policy advice in New Zealand, agencification of thousands of local bodies in Thailand, identification of change agents and their training and institution of innovation units in departments of Andhra Pradesh, mindset set change exercise of Gujarat covering pretty much the entire staff of the government (Khandwalla, 2010), and the merging of customs and income tax departments in several African countries and the corporatization of the merged entity (Polidano, 1999). NPM resembles a new river gathering the waters of tributaries as it meanders towards the sea.

By now, NPM has become an international response by governments to the dysfunctions of excessively politically and bureaucratically managed state. Many of the earlier tools and techniques of NPM have become more nuanced, such as deregulation in some circumstances and increasing regulations in others, downsizing in some situations and beefing up the employee strength in others, etc. Also, many options have been identified for utilizing each of the tenets of NPM, such as different forms of regulation (e.g. bureaucratic deregulation, professionalized deregulation, self-regulation, etc.). NPM is not aimed at replacing democracy and bureaucracy but at correcting their flaws, professionalizing administration, including developmental administration, and making

governance more effectively participative and responsive to the needs of citizens.

There has been some criticism of NPM, such as by Wolfgang Dreschler (2005), especially its supposed premise that the less government the better, leading to ‘mindless’ deregulation, retrenchment, and devaluation of the advice of experienced bureaucrats. This criticism may hold water for a doctrinaire execution of the initial form of NPM. In the context of the Third World, doubts have been expressed by Charles Polidano about the practicability of NPM in the face of extensive corruption, political interference and low governance capacity (Polidano, 1999). Nevertheless, NPM had spread, at least partially, to around 50 First World as well as Third World countries by the end of the 20th Century (Kamarck, 2005). There is at least some empirical evidence that NPM, when sensibly implemented, may augment the growth rate of the country (Khandwalla, 2010). For instance, Britain lagged behind its major European rivals (France, Germany, Italy) in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1990s, when NPM had been stabilized in Britain, and not institutionalized in France, Germany or Italy, its growth was substantially higher than that of these rivals. In Ghana, the growth rate was 3% per annum before NPM, and it rose to 5% per annum after NPM was institutionalized.

Principal Elements of New Public Management

There have been several lists of the elements of NPM (Sarker, 2006; Siddiquee, 2006). But these may get outdated if we think of NPM as an evolving paradigm of good governance. As I see it, as of now, the principal elements of New Public Management are:

1. Bureaucracy must be made much more accountable for performance. Some of the tools for this to happen are diagnostic efficiency audits of departments, decentralization with performance accountability through performance contracts with heads of departments/agencies and an MIS-based performance management system (PMS), and performance-based incentives and disincentives.
2. Professionals and domain experts must supplement bureaucrats for effective execution of policies and projects. For this, agencification is the preferred tool. Agencification is a process by which parts of departments are turned into

semi-autonomous bodies with clear mandates. Their management is entrusted to competitively selected professional managers with domain expertise and managerial experience. These agencies are government bodies and are supervised by a stakeholders' board. They operate subject to a mandate document that lays down the mission of each agency, the policy structure within which it is to operate, its level of operating autonomy, and its accountability for performance through a performance-related contract. The CEOs of these agencies hold office for a fixed tenure, and have performance-based incentives. Agencification obviates many of the structural problems of bureaucratic management, namely, uncertain tenure, management by generalists who may have no domain expertise, fuzzy goals and poor performance accountability, excessively procedural orientation, lack of participation by stakeholders, apathy towards 'customers' etc. A comprehensive review of 127 British executive agencies concluded: "...executive agencies... brought about revolutionary changes in the culture, processes and accountabilities of those services delivered directly by central government" (Alexander and others, 2002, p.5).

3. Governance must be much more stakeholders-friendly. For this some useful tools are boards of government bodies with the representation of major stakeholders to supervise these bodies, citizens' charters with grievance redress mechanisms, stakeholders' satisfaction surveys, and single window clearance mechanisms.
4. Operational policies, that is, policies as operationalized for execution purposes must be made through an interactive, consensual process and by harnessing expertise. The deliberation council, a Japanese innovation, is a useful tool for consensus-based and expert policy advice to the government vis-à-vis industries (such as the telecom industry), economic sectors (such as the agricultural sector), and key issues (such as pollution control in urban areas). Decision support system is another tool for making complex policy choices by developing alternative scenarios of consequences for each choice and periodically modifying the chosen policy based on feedback on how it is faring.
5. Policies and regulations must have inputs from a variety of experts, and need to be periodically re-visited for their

contemporary relevance. For this, a centre for governance studies as an advanced conceptualizing and empirical research body for developing policy options is a useful tool. So are policy analysis to examine policy options and their costs-benefits implications, regulatory impact assessment to assess the impact of regulations, self-regulation in which guidelines are issued to help people and organizations to comply with regulations on their own, and professionalized regulation involving the setting up of regulatory bodies such as SEBI or TRAI and operated by domain experts.

6. People's voice mechanisms must be strengthened. For this, 'customer panels' for providing feedback to government bodies for services provided by these bodies, citizens' charters to spell out what sort of service citizen-customers are entitled to from government bodies, 'citizens' surveys to assess their level of satisfaction with the services offered by government bodies, and focus groups of citizens and officials to discuss issues are useful tools.
7. Government bodies must become innovationist. For this, benchmarking with relevant excellently performing domestic or foreign government bodies to adopt and adapt best practices, training of change agents, forming of innovation-sponsoring units in government bodies, quality circles and kaizen, awards for innovation, and a website for listing governance innovations are useful tools.
8. Government bodies need to be much more effective in the use of resources. For this, public-private partnerships and competitive bidding for outsourcing government services are useful tools.
9. Government bodies need to be freed of corruption. For this some useful tools are an empowered anti-corruption body that can investigate any highly placed politician or bureaucrat without anybody's permission, surveys of the users of government services, especially the disadvantaged sections of the population, for estimating the level of corruption and plugging the holes revealed by the surveys, and automation in the supply of government services through such devices as smart cards.
10. Government bodies must focus not only on efficiency but also quality of service provided, and desirable social impact. Useful tools are a social development index involving a

large number of indicators to assess deprivation of disadvantaged communities to pinpoint deficiencies to rectify, total quality management, representation of the disadvantaged on the boards of relevant government programs, and an MIS for measuring the social impact as well as efficiency and quality of government programs.

11. Government needs to use e-governance and communications technologies such as video-conferencing and teleconferencing extensively. This can respectively facilitate corruption-free and delay-free services, and foster two-way communication between government functionaries, and government functionaries and citizens.
12. Government needs to use judiciously both competition and cooperation. Monopolistic provision of public services can be replaced by competitive provision through public sector-private sector competition, competitive outsourcing of government functions, best value for money audits for deciding on what to outsource and what not to outsource, etc. Cooperation can be furthered by groups of ministers/secretaries/agency heads, by public-private partnerships, and through deliberation councils.
13. Skill building at all levels is needed through training and other human resource development tools like job rotation, job enrichment, management by objectives, and mindset change exercises that aim at changing the attitudes of government staff from apathy and cynicism to commitment to providing the best possible service to the public.

These elements of NPM indicate that the key values that power NPM are accountability for performance, efficiency, quality, social impact, transparency, citizen-centrism, empowerment of stakeholders, participative functioning, professionalism and reliance on expertise, innovation, empowerment of the staff and so forth.

Can NPM Work in India?

Can NPM work in what is widely perceived to be a highly corrupt polity? Would politicians and bureaucrats allow it to function effectively? Some scholars have indeed raised doubts about the efficacy of NPM in the Third World (Polidano, 1999). However, many of the tenets of NPM were utilized reasonably successfully in Andhra Pradesh during the term of the Chief

Minister, Dr. Chandrababu Naidu (Mohanty, 2003; Naidu, 2003). Let us briefly review what was accomplished in AP.

Governance Innovations of Andhra Pradesh

AP began re-inventing governance in the late 1990s. One of the strategic initiatives of the CM, Dr. Naidu, an economist, for improving governance was the setting up of a think tank called Centre for Good Governance. The latter was formed to provide analytical, research, and training backup to the governance reform effort broadly along New Public Management (NPM) lines. A number of steps were taken:

1. An attempt was made to make Government budgeting transparent, by disclosing well before the formal presentation of the budget in the state assembly the state's financial position and performance budget. Also provided were key fiscal trends. Also, every department was required to publicize its own performance review for the previous year.
2. A governance-related performance management system (PMS) was instituted. The information provided was on physical as well as financial indicators, outcome indicators for social justice and other qualitative goals, the performance of various ministries and departments against Plan allocations, budgets and so forth, comparisons for the previous quarter, the previous year, etc. The attempt was to turn the operating culture of the AP Government from one of adherence to rules, regulations, and procedures to one of getting results.
3. Government departments were classified into eight functional groups: economic development (primary sector); economic development (secondary and tertiary sectors); human development; welfare; local and urban bodies; infrastructure development; revenue generation; and governance (general administration, regulation, land records, law and order). A performance management system was adopted to monitor the progress of the eight types of government bodies. For this purpose nearly 1000 performance indicators were developed for some 200 departments. A performance grading system was developed to grade functionaries and departments every month. The performance measured was in terms of outputs, and also

processes like file disposal and days toured. An online performance tracking system was implemented to produce reports for action by decision makers.

4. A change management program was instituted titled 'Governing for Results'. For this, workshops were conducted for various departments that involved a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) exercise for each department, and the development of action plans to improve functioning. Change agents were identified in each department and given training to take the reform agenda forward. Implementation of change agendas was monitored periodically by experts. Innovation units were set up in such key departments as education, health, welfare, agriculture, irrigation, industry, local self-government departments, and police to support the development of innovations by the department.
5. Citizen's Charter along the British pattern was announced by about 90 departments with a large public interface, and a system was devised to monitor the implementation of these charters.
6. Many initiatives were implemented in e-governance, E-Seva offered 42 services to citizens under one roof, such as the payment of utility bills, issue of certificates and licenses, rail reservations etc. E-cops connected up police stations. For the countryside, an online system was set up to connect 16 government departments to rural citizens, to provide such services as information on land records and transactions. The Police Department also instituted a performance tracking system involving nearly a dozen indicators of performance of senior police functionaries. A system was being installed to automate various functions of government such as providing energy, higher education, finance, transport etc. To reduce corruption and delays, the government set up e-procurement and a system for issuing driving licenses. During 1994 to 2002, some 100000 teachers were recruited through the use of information and communication technology, and not a single complaint or grievance was received.
7. Through satellite communications and wide area networks, the Government harnessed communications technologies to facilitate video conferencing between the Chief Minister

and district administrators, enable people to converse with the CM on a designated day, undertake extension services for agriculturists, provide training programs for disadvantaged groups, and facilitate tele-conferencing between top level officials, etc.

8. Nearly a third of the civic services provided by the municipalities were outsourced to foster public-private partnerships. These included garbage disposal, de-silting of drains, street lighting, maintenance of parks, finalization of accounts, and collection of advertisement tax. Voluntary tax compliance was fostered. A scheme for self-assessment of property taxes payable to the municipality was introduced in Hyderabad under which the city was divided up into valuation districts (valuation per square meter of construction). The rates were computerized and made accessible to the people, so that they could compute the tax due on their property and pay without bills being issued to them. Despite a steep reduction in the tax rate, the collections tripled between 1997-8 and 2002-3.
9. Reform in the management of public enterprises was attempted. The loss making state electricity board was unbundled into power generating and power transmitting corporations. The transmission and distribution losses came down from 37% in 1999 to 26% in 2002. Metered sales went up from 38% in 1999 to 44% in 2002, and this cut down power theft. The performance of the state-owned enterprise sector was sought to be improved through restructuring, outsourcing to cut costs, closures, and privatization. Between 1999 and 2002, ten companies were privatized; eleven were restructured through voluntary retirement schemes; 22 loss making companies were shut down; and in 4 the Government divested its stake.
10. A single window clearance scheme was launched in 2002 to process and provide various permissions required to set up an industrial unit. By August 2003, over 80% of the approvals were issued within the prescribed time limits, and a further 3% or so were deemed approvals because no rejection was made by the Government before the prescribed time limits. A single window cell was also set up to provide tourism-related permissions and clearances.

If so many elements of NPM could be introduced in AP, then in principle they could be introduced all over India, after keeping in mind local circumstances.

India has already taken some significant steps towards instituting NPM. Several of the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, especially those contained in the Thirteenth Report titled 'Organisational Structure of Government of India' are along NPM lines, and have been accepted by the Government of India. An elaborate Performance Management System, (PMS) a core element of NPM is already in place in the Central Government's senior bureaucracy in 80 departments and over 800 responsibility centers; sixteen states have shown interest in instituting a similar PMS; around 60 departments have issued citizens charters; and some 550 bodies identified by various departments of the Central Government (mostly attached and subordinate bodies) are being readied for agencification, another key element of NPM*. Many states have gone in for e-governance. The Central Government owned public enterprises have been operating along agencification lines for many years (professional CMD and whole-time directors, MOU with parent ministry, PMS, considerable operating autonomy, etc.), and their performance has been far superior to that of the public enterprises owned by the Indian states (Khandwalla, 2010; Planning Commission, 2002). A plus point, in times of hung legislatures is that NPM does not, by and large, require any legislative sanction.

Finally, NPM is beneficial not only to the citizens of India, but also to its politicians and bureaucrats. There is clamour in the country for efficient, corruption-free, citizen-centric governance. That is exactly what NPM offers. NPM offers far better governance than at present, and therefore it can win votes for the party in power. Bureaucrats, especially senior bureaucrats often carry daunting and manifold responsibilities (Khandwalla, 2010). NPM, especially agencification, can greatly reduce their involvement in many relatively routine or highly technical activities, thus freeing time for such important

*According to information provided by Dr. Prajapati Trivedi, Secretary, Performance Management Division, Cabinet Secretariat, at the Symposium on New Public Management held on October 4th 2013 organized by the Performance Management Division of the Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India jointly with the Institute of Public Enterprises.

tasks as framing sound operational policies for legislation passed by the legislature or ministerial directives, coordination for meeting such challenges as cyclones, earthquakes, militancy, external threats, clearing speedily large project proposals, constructive oversight of responsibility centers, etc. Thus the chances are bright that NPM as a whole but suited to our needs could be institutionalized in our country.

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B K Taimni

From Governance to Public Service

*“ To use fellow NOT as MEANS but END
To Save them stalwartly in THOUGHT , WORD and DEED
Never to mutter a word of hatred or of Shame,
To cast away all Selfishness and Pride,
To speak no Evil of others,
To have a mind at Peace”.*

Mahatma Gandhi

The word Governance comes from Greek word ‘kubernan’, which means to ‘stir’. In English language, which largely owes its origin to Latin, in the latter, ‘Governance’ suggests the notion of ‘Steering’. One can contrast this sense of ‘Steering’ a group or Society with the traditional “Top-down” approach of Governments “driving” society, distinguish between Governance’s “power to” and Governments “power over”.

Perhaps the most moral or natural purpose of Governance consists of assuring, on behalf of those governed, a worthy pattern of good , while avoiding an undesirable pattern of bad. The ideal purpose, obviously, would assure a perfect pattern of good with no bad. A Government comprises a set of inter-related positions that govern and that use power , particularly coercive power.

A good Government, following this line of thought, could consist of a set of inter-related positions exercising coercive power that assures, on behalf of those governed, a worthwhile pattern of good results while avoiding an undesirable pattern of bad circumstances, by making decisions that define expectations, grant power, and verify ‘performance’. ‘Fair Governance’ implies that mechanisms function in a way that allows the ‘Executive’ (the ‘agents’) to respect the rights and interests of the “Stakeholders”(the principals), in a spirit of Democracy. The latter , universally is defined to mean ‘Government **of** the People, **for** the People and **by** the People’.

The European Commission established its own concept of Governance in the 'White Paper on European Governance', wherein it stated that Governance "refers to the rules, processes and behaviour the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards, openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. These five principles reinforce those of subsidiary and proportionality. Prominently, it addresses the whole question of the way in which the Union uses the powers given to it by the citizens.

Public Service has a long and chequered History and it all began with Civil Services, whose History, according to Prof. Arnold Toynbee, can be traced to Achaemenian Empire's professional 'Civil Service', represented by Imperial Secretaries, who were resident at the headquarters of the Imperial Governors, who were independent of the Satraps and reported directly to the Central Government. The need for a Central authority to gather together, hold and manipulate these widely ramifying threads of administrative control seems to have been met in the organization of the Imperial court by the evolution of Imperial Bodyguard into an Imperial Chancellor, or Minister of State, supported by a Skilled and numerous Administrative and Clerical staff. Yet the credit for creating a Civil Service, which was not only efficient and professional, rigorously segregated, austere and disciplined, but was also a secular equivalent to the Religious Order then prevailing, to meet the corresponding Administrative needs of the Government, goes to Ottoman Empire.

While attempts to organize and give some shape to the '**Civil- Service**', was made by several Empires in ancient world, the credit for creating a lasting Professional and Civil Service goes to Han dynasty of China, which lasted from 3rd Century B.C to A.D 1911. The Service was merit-based, and the King decided that the merit required of Candidates should be proficiency in reproducing the style of the classical literature of the Confucian philosophy. It needs to be appreciated that the philosophy of Confucius emphasized personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationship, justice and sincerity. It needs to be noted that while the first Han Emperor was not highly educated but he knew that, he will require 'qualified' officials to run the Empire. He started the Civil Service with a small group of scholars, who recruited more and

more officials. Emperor Wu. Di (140 –87B.C) thought of the first Civil Service examination. He founded a special University, where candidates could study the writings of Confucius, which they had to learn by heart in order to pass their exams. In other parts of the world at this time, Civil Service was generally associated with organization and managing commercial activities of the Colonial Master, Indian sub-continent, being one of the examples.

A 'BUREAUCRACY' is a "body of non-elective government officials", and/or 'an administrative policy-making group'. Historically, Bureaucracy is referred to Government Administration, which is managed by departments, staffed with non-elected officials. In modern parlance, bureaucracy refers to the administrative system governing any large institution. The word 'Bureaucracy' is French in origin and combines the French word 'bureau'-desk or office-with the Greek word *kratos*-rule or political power, coined sometime in 1700's by a French Economist, largely in a pejorative sense.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, in some of the newly found States, the words Public- Administration appear. For the first time Public Administration is centrally concerned with the organization of Government policies and programmes, as well as the behaviour of officials, (usually non –elected) formally responsible for their conduct. The whole idea was that Civil Services/ Public Administration, should not be seen as 'steering' the boat, as seen in the definition of 'Governance' above, rather, they should be seen as 'rowing' the boat.

A variant of public administration has developed in the form of Public Management, sparked by President Clinton of U.S.A and his Vice President Gore's initiative "to make Government work better and cost less". This became a part of their 'National Performance Review'.

Thus, departing from the issue of 'steering' /rowing', an 'alternative-mode' is attempted to be created to make the administrators to be entrepreneurs of a new, leaner and increasingly privatized government. This has resulted in the public administration abandoning the idea of 'rowing' and has accepted the responsibility of 'steering'.

It will be germane here to mention that those who 'steer', the boat have far more power over its destination than those who 'row' it. In our rush to steer, we are forgetting, who owns

this boat? It needs no emphasis that the government belongs to the citizens. Accordingly, public administration should focus on their responsibility to serve and empower the citizens, as they manage public organizations and implement Public Policy. The common theme in the application of these ideas, has been the use of market mechanisms and terminology, in which the relationships between Public Agencies and their customers is understood to be based on self-interest, involving transactions similar to those occurring in the market place.

Max Weber said a long time back that after a certain point ongoing institutions become sufficiently dysfunctional in terms of achieving their own goals, that some partial deinstitutionalization becomes necessary. Officers come to have a vested interest in maintaining 'status-quo'.

Public Service, could be said to mean/convey;--

- Employment within a government system, especially within the civil service; -
- A service performed for the benefit of the public, especially by a non-profit organization;-
- The business of supplying an essential 'commodity', such as water or power, or a 'Service', such as, communication or transportation, to the public.

Power is a reality. It cannot be banished. But it can and must be used for the common good. A change-over' from Public Administration to 'Public Service', necessarily involves, ALTERING the MASTER-SERVANT relationship. Professional civil servants assumed themselves to be 'masters' and their 'clients' ie the citizens at large, as their 'servants, but democratization reverses the relationship and enthrones the 'clients' as 'masters', while they become servants. Any traces of past authoritarianism have to be eliminated or eclipsed. The State's subjects are now citizens with guaranteed rights and freedom, enforced by public service professionals.

It is in this context and background that Prof. Denhardt of University of Arizona U.S.A, developed a new 'concept', what he calls 'New Public Service', the salient features, of which are reproduced below.

Serve, rather than steer. An increasingly important role of Public Servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests, rather than attempt to control or steer society

in new directions.

In the process, the role of the Government is transformed from one of controlling, to one of Agenda setting, bringing proper players to the table and facilitating, negotiating, or brokering solutions to the problems faced by the public. The attempt is to develop a public service, which says 'let us work together to figure out what we are going to do and let it happen'. In a world of active citizenship, public officials will increasingly play more than a service delivery role – they will play a conciliating, a mediating or an adjudicating role for brokering, negotiating and conflict-resolution of the issue in hand, relating to welfare of the citizen –at- large.

The Public interest is the aim not the by-product. Public administrators must contribute to building a collective, shared notion of Public Interest. The goal is not to find quick solutions driven by individual choices; rather it is the creation of shared interest and shared responsibility. Public servant will take an active role in creating arenas, in which Citizens, through discourse, can articulate shared values and develop a collective sense of the Public interest. Rather than simply responding to disparate voices by forming compromise, Public Administrators will engage citizens with one another, so that they come to understand each other's interests and adopt a longer range and broader sense of Community and societal interests.

Serve Citizens, not Customers. The public interest results from dialogue about shared values, rather than the aggregation of self-interests. Therefore public servants do not merely respond to the demands of 'customers', but focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens. Consideration of fairness and equity must play an important role in 'Service-delivery'. Despite the obvious importance of constantly improving the 'public-Service delivery', the new Public Service suggests that Government should not exclusively respond to the individual short term interests of the applicant seeking Service; instead it suggests, that people acting as Citizens must demonstrate their concern for the larger community, their commitment to matters that go beyond short-term interests, as also their willingness to assume personal responsibility for what happens in their neighborhood and the community. In turn, the government must respond to the needs and interest of the citizens. The New Public Service seeks to encourage more and more people

to fulfill their responsibilities as a citizens and for the governments to be especially sensitive to the voices of the citizens.

Accountability. 'Accountability', means 'answerability' to questions related to , not only what was done by them, but also 'why? Accountability also includes blameworthiness, liability and the expectation of account-giving, implying thereby that public servants should attend to statutory and Constitutional law, community values, political norms , professional standards and citizen'. Under the traditional Public Administration arrangement, public Administrators were simply and directly responsible to the Political masters. It is now well appreciated, that over time, Public Administrators have come to assume greater capacities for influencing the policy process. Under the changed circumstances, existing today, Public Administrators are and should be held accountable to the rules and standards relatable to 'public interest, statutory and Constitutional law, professional standards, community values and standards, democratic norms and of course the Citizens'. Despite the complexities of the responsibilities, related to discharge of functions and duties on the part of the servant, it is accepted and recognized that he is obliged to work for the welfare of the citizen.

The public servants are to be responsible to the public, both for what they do and for what they should have done, but failed to do. Public servants cannot sit idly by and watch the public being willfully harmed and the law ignored. They are obliged to pursue Public-interest and enforce the law irrespective of the difficulties encountered and the harm that may befall them. They not only act on their behalf but on behalf of the public.

Public servants are to function with the objective that public service and the public servant are there to provide 'services' for the betterment of the public-at -large, that foster socio-economic development. They ought to recognize that they are required to discharge the functions with due regard to diversity of the Indian nation/community and religion but without discrimination of caste, gender or class and duly protecting the interest of the poor, underprivileged and the weaker sections of the society.

When we talk of public service, there is an explicit recognition that public administrators are not the owners of government, it's agencies and programmes . Government is owned by the citizens. In the changed scenario public servants have accepted the responsibility to serve citizens by acting as 'stewards' of public resources.

This change in the public administrator's role has profound implications for the challenges and responsibilities faced by public servants. They must know and manage more than the requirements and resources of their programmes. This narrow view is not very helpful to the Citizen. The problems which the citizens face are often, if not usually, multifaceted, fluid and dynamic-they do not often fall within the confines of a particular Office. To Serve Citizens, Public Servants, not only must know and manage their own agency's resources, they must also be aware and connected to other sources of support and assistance, engaging citizens and community in the process.

'Public service' was also high on the agenda of the 'Colloquium, held in Brasilia in 1997 on "Ethics in Public Service". It came out with certain 'values' in public service. These are:-

Providing public benefits.

Meeting an identifiable social-need doing good for furthering Public-interest and advancing Universal human-values

Improving the Quality of life

Avoiding harm and being accessible / allowing access

Public Servants should not act out of malice or spite. They should not exploit their position to hurt others. It is not enough for professional public servants to promise to deliver key public goods and services; they actually have to deliver, not merely go through the motions.

Observing Official propriety and pursuing Justice and Fairness

Public servants cannot commit their governments to any course of action without any delegation of authority. Public servants need to apply the Law , treating all at par, without reservation. Slipshod application, half-hearted implementation, and worse still, neglect or selective enforcement leads to unfair

discrimination and corruption, as Government decisions lose their authority and universality.

Since all are subject to the same law, all need to be treated with the same respect, when being judged. Everyone from the highest to the lowest, should be informed of all relevant information, provided with equal protection and dealt with according to fair and non-discriminatory procedures, in the interest of common citizen.

Being brothers-keepers Being in the very heart of the Government, the professional Public Servants, are in the best position to act as protectors of public interest and guardians and stewards of their welfare. They are expected to act as if they are dealing with their own personal affairs and affected personally, Public Servants are to become increasingly responsible for everyone and everything.

Being open, transparent, informed and on record. There is no disputing the fact that 'openness' on the part of Public servant, ensures that wrongdoing will eventually be exposed, even at a later stage, when it cannot be reversed, corrected or compensated. Openness, deters simply because public servants, become conscious that someone is looking over their shoulder, and they are getting to know, all that is knowable. Professional Public Servants are obliged to fully inform themselves about Government's intentions and anything else relevant to Public —. Being knowledgeable is a key indicator of professionalism.

The great virtue of professional Civil service is that it rarely forgets; yet it needs to be ensured by them that whatever they do, is kept on record, which can act as a justification or otherwise of the action taken. This could be the best defence or otherwise, for/against a Public Servant. The Public Servants not only obtain information, they also release it too, to inform, explain, educate and guide the public at large. Providing public benefits. No professional public organization works entirely for its own benefit. There has to be much wider redeeming social, global and global purpose. A professional Public Service organization endeavours to do no harm and to advance human values.

Meeting an identifiable social-need. The activities pursued by a Public Servant must be grounded in perceived 'public-need'. They must add value to the society. They must advance

certain ‘Objective standards of public welfare and public well-being.

Being honest and responsive

Public has a right to be informed about the intent , details and justification about any Programme/Scheme being launched , which must be done in all honesty. It is incumbent on professional Public Servants to ensure that this is done in an unambiguous and transparent manner.

The recipients have definite views on what they want, how they wish to be treated and what they consider satisfactory service, yet, often they are made to take , what is offered without having any say at all . This will amount to their finding the public service unresponsive and non friendly, thus at times ,defeating the very purpose of the Scheme . This needs to be addressed by openly hearing their views and address them, to the extent, it is possible to do so

Being human, humane, and a continuous effort to improve professional performance, as also combating bureau-pathologies.

Professional Public Servants present the human –face, of a distant government and anonymous bureaucracy. Understanding and compassion does translate into being human and humane in conducting public business. Knowing the weaknesses of others is not sufficient, it is also incumbent on the Public Servants to recognize fallibility in one’s profession and oneself and to accept mistakes and errors like anybody else. Although they profess to know better, when it comes to the practice of the government, professional public servants would be well advised to know that there are areas, where their expertise is weak and they should temper any air of superiority with a good dose of humility.

All large organizations suffer from deficiencies and shortcomings, which if left untreated get out of hand and eventually result in severe obstacles in improving their performance. Public Service professionals ought to realize that these BUREAU PATHOLOGIES need to be admitted, diagnosed quickly and tackled promptly with the best available remedies.

Professional public servants are given much leeway in self-government, because they enforce some minimum standards of performance to push their members to achieve higher standards. Public Service professionals, because of their politically subordinate nature may have less autonomy and independence, but because of their idealism, training and public-spiritedness, they could be seen to be restless in improving professional performance. Their vision has been widened to include smooth running of the machinery of the government, improving the relations between government and other social institutions, improving delivery of quality and quantity of goods and services, generally improving the effectiveness of the government in their effort to improve human condition.

Setting an example and being idealistic, virtuous and correct. Public Servants are always in the public eye. Their conduct often sets a standard and provides an example to society. It is by now clearly appreciated, that if the Government wants to change people's behaviour, it must set the example by practicing what it preaches, and refrains from doing what it wants nobody to do. Public Servants professionals have to be committed to the ideals of altruistically serving the people, being a do-gooder, advancing the compensation or reward. In short, one has to really believe in what one is doing, fired by inner flame for doing good, seriously committed to one's mission of serving Interest of the citizens, to be dedicated and conscientious and irreproachable in making a lasting impact on the human condition.

Prof Arnold Toynbee the famous Historian once stated "The divine spark of creative power is instinct in ourselves; and if we have the grace to kindle it into flame, than the 'stars in their courses' cannot defeat our efforts to attain the goal of human endeavour".

One of the things that people complain about, is the factum, that Public Service professionals always seem to have an answer for everything gone wrong. Public has a right to know the correct position, as also the corrective measures required to deal with a situation gone wrong. Public Servants need to make this a part of their habit, to come out with correct position of a given situation, so that reality appears in a correct perspective.

In a democratic society, a concern for democratic values should be paramount in the way we think about rendering service to the Citizen. Values such as efficiency and productivity should not be lost sight of, but should be placed in a larger context of democracy, community and public-interest. It needs to be appreciated that Public Service is not another job or occupation. It is a challenging calling, involving a commitment to serving the public, advancing Public –interest and avoiding temptations to put oneself first, before one's public duties, obligations and responsibilities. It entails that one's actions and behaviour are open at all times to public scrutiny and one is subject to public-judgment over one's failure to act.

Adoption of a Constitution could be said to be the starting point for a democratic country. After due discussion and debate, India's Constitution was adopted providing for, besides other things, 'JUSTICE-social, economic and political;'. An important instrument for ensuring the same was public service.

In this regard Article 309 is important and relevant in the context of subject –at –issue'. This Article reads:- "Subject to provisions of this Constitution, Acts of the appropriate Legislature may regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to *Public services and posts* in connection with the affairs of the Union or of any State." (*emphasis supplied*).

It is also important to note that the Constitution also provides for recruitment to be made, in civil services, through Union *Public Service* Commission, and by State Public Service Commissions in respect of each State/UT. Down the line and time, the words public service, seem to have been lost. It is high time that the concept of Public- Service, in letter and spirit is restored, keeping the values already enumerated earlier.

While on the one hand, passing of Right to Information Act has helped in bringing transparency, on the other hand, adoption of, and passing of Public Services Act by certain States/ Union Territories can be said to be, an important instrument/ initiative in introducing accountability on the part of public servants. Follow-up on passing of Public Services Bill 2007, The Right of Citizens for Time-Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Governance Bill 2011 and Lokpal Bill could and would go a long way to realize

the dream of Citizens, to make Public Servants, at all levels, citizen- friendly and in all cases, 'accountable'. The Need of the hour is also to see and ensure implementation of the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, especially the fourth and tenth reports, dealing with public services.

In pursuance of the various values required to be instilled in public servants, what is required to be done is, to bring about a complete metamorphosis in their approach and attitude, while dealing with citizens, which can be attempted to be done by exposing the public at large, from the earliest school days, in values and morals, related to ethics in Public life, for the simple reason that public servants would ultimately be coming from this genre. This 'value-regime', of course, would need to be reiterated/supplemented, while imparting professional training, at all levels of Public service, at the entry and mid-service levels as well, a *sin-qua-non* for improving professional performance under the new regime ie of being a public servant. The performance of the Public Servants/Service Motto has to be:-

A decentralized-administration, could go a long way to help meet the expectation and requirements enumerated earlier for reasons well known, especially in a developing country like ours, where infrastructure, both, human as well as physical, is not so well-developed, hence the need for taking Service-Delivery, nearer the user and empowering them in this regard. A time has perhaps come to implement in letter and spirit the Constitution's provisions, emanating after Seventy- third and Seventy- fourth amendment to the Constitution, especially, keeping in view the Subjects allotted to the Local Bodies-both urban and rural, falling under the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Democracy cannot be built on rotten foundations and many forms of corruption, which imperil both, the basics and operations of democratic public administration. Public service has not only to be intolerant of deeds/acts of corruption, but they have to rise to be models of honesty, integrity in Public Service. An independent, self-confident and self-reliant, body has to be in place to ensure a corruption free public Service. Adoption and practicing the values and practice, enumerated above can go a long way in ensuring the same.

Is government overstaffed

It is a common belief that the bureaucracy is forever engaged in expanding its role and more and more persons are joining the force. To the question whether Indian government is overstaffed, the answer to the man in the street will be invariably “yes”. The ordinary citizen has to deal with members of bureaucracy daily for multiple reasons from routine jobs to unforeseen disasters. He sees them everywhere. He realizes that without a large force working for his welfare, he would be leading a very insecure life, yet he wants to have as little bureaucracy as is feasible.

To underline the antipathy of the public towards bureaucracy, we give below a typical comment regarding them. It says “There is a general impression that the bureaucracy is overgrown beyond what is functionally needed. It is also felt that their numbers are increasing at a rapid pace. with scant regard for the work-load. People also speak of the bureaucracy being top-heavy. Not only are public servants perceived to be too many in number, it is also believed that they do not contribute to the gross domestic product. Public servants are alleged to invariably come late to office, spend a large part of the day in sipping tea, smoking and indulging in gossip. and leave office early. Consequently, productivity is said to be abysmally low, estimates of their actual working hours ranging from one to two and a half hours in a day”¹.

Obviously this is a completely one sided picture but a similar view is held by retired senior officers also. Shri N C Saxena, Former Secretary Planning Commission, opines that “it is generally agreed by all concerned that the new policies of economic reforms and liberalization would still require massive presence of government in livelihood sectors, such as health, primary education, and poverty alleviation. Unfortunately little thought has been given to the capacity building of government functionaries with a view to improve

their performance. On the other hand, there is evidence to show that their output of late has declined considerably. Many problems of government are, however, quite old and well known. Obsession with rules rather than concern for output, promotions based on seniority rather than merit, delays, and mediocrity at all levels are some of the factors inhibiting output in government”.

Bureaucracy in India is perceived to have the following characteristics:-

- too large and slow.
- extremely rigid and mechanical.
- consequently not flexible and adaptive to cope with change.
- not innovative and enterprising.
- low motivation and low morale.
- accountability is low.
- not democratic.
- lack of expertise.”

“This view about bureaucracy being too large for comfort is shared by the planners. Ever since the country launched on its journey to economic prosperity through planned development, it has been the dominant theme. The budget both at the union level and the state level was divided into two water tight compartments viz. Plan and Non Plan. The Plan side was supposed to take care of the rapid development of the country by making it a great industrial power. It would also, through improved agricultural practices, become self sufficient in the agricultural production. In contrast the Non Plan side was to take care of the routine job of maintaining law and order, education, health, maintenance of completed schemes such as irrigation and power projects and others. A special provision was made that a project funded by the Plan funds will cease to be a plan scheme on its completion and would be maintained in the non plan sector. The liabilities created on account of employment of personnel would stand transferred to non plan budget. This continues to be the rule though there are notable exceptions.

The question which arises is whether India, as a country is overstaffed. We have given one point of view at the beginning of this essay. But there is another shade of opinion. Eminent economist V.K. Ramachandran says: “One of the most important

lessons of the economic history of modern nations is that the most crucial requirements of social transformation can only be delivered by the public authority. A government that does not pay for skilled personnel to deliver education, health and land reform is one that condemns its people to under-development.”

In one study, it has been said that “People keep complaining the government is too big,” Ajai Sahni, director of the New Delhi-based Institute of Conflict Management (ICM), adds that “but the figures show that it is in fact too anemic to govern the country.” The ICM, which spent over a year assembling the data, discovered that only some states even had centralized records on their employees — and there were no published estimates of staff members needed to realize new development objectives.

In another study, it is said “Long reviled for being bloated, India’s Central and State governments in fact have just a fifth as many public servants as the United States, relative to population. The figures raise doubts, ahead of a Union budget that is likely to slash social-sector spending, on whether the country has the personnel it needs to improve governance and ensure universal access to services like education and health”.

According to the Data compiled by another study team from multiple sources, including a 2008 official survey, Right to Information applications, media reports and the 2011 census show, India has 1,622.8 government servants for every 100,000 residents. In stark contrast, the U.S. has 7,681. The Central government, with 3.1 million employees, has 257 serving every 100,000 population, against the U.S. federal government’s 840

This figure dips further if the 1,394,418 people working for the Railways, accounting for 44.81 per cent of the entire Central government workforce, are removed. Then, there are only about 125 central employees serving every 100,000 people. Information technology and communications services account for another 7.25 per cent of the Central government’s staff”

But all is not well even if the numbers suggest we can afford a higher number of government servants. The Central government’s figures also show that 59.69 per cent of public servants belonged to Group C and another 29.37 per cent to

Group D — the two lowest paid categories. Though these workers are important, the numbers suggest there are system-wide shortages of skilled staff and administrators. What India perhaps needs is not reduction in the number of government servants but a reorientation of the work force. There is a need for re-engineering of the Governmental set up to make it functional, efficient, productive, cost-effective and service-oriented. Though standards of performance have been published by individual organizations they should be adhered to strictly. Greater transparency has to be imparted to the functioning of Government departments. Government employees to be held accountable for their actions. and various methods of reward and punishment related to their performance devised. There is need for greater emphasis on productivity, quality, courtesy and customer satisfaction.

The Fifth Pay Commission has stressed the need of civil service reforms which have been identified as a critical concern in the quest for rapid economic progress, both in developed and developing countries. The reform process has sought to define and concentrate on the core duties of Government and to ensure that non-core functions be offloaded on to the non-governmental sector this has involved right-sizing of the Government and reduction in its flab many functions have consequently been privatized fully or partially, corporatized or ,given out on contract.

The Pay Commission has recommended action on the following lines –

- (i) Some Ministries and Departments may have to be abolished altogether or amalgamated with other Ministries and Departments.
- (ii) The Size of a Ministry or Department may have to be reduced drastically in order to fit it for the revised role that it has to perform.

The Fifth Pay Commission has also recommended downsizing the workforce and has suggested that some of the work can be outsourced. Let us try to understand the implications of this approach. Outsourcing is the [contracting](#) out of some services to a third-party. The “outsourcing” has become popular in the recent years. Outsourcing usually involves reduction in the number of employees but not always since the surplus staff can be absorbed in expansion of business

or retrained for other duties. Nevertheless the prime objective of outsourcing is savings. Outsourcing is also used to describe the practice of handing over control of public services to for-profit corporations. Examples are not hard to find. In the latter category we have the BOT schemes (build, operate, transfer). The private party is given the responsibility of providing the service and reciprocally given the authority to collect fee for the same for a specified period. The cost of the project is shared by the state and the private party. At the end of the specified period the assets have to be handed over to the government which undertakes to maintain them afterwards. To cite an example, in Delhi, the distribution of electric energy and collection of electricity dues has been handed over to private companies on a 51: 49 basis. The company supplies power over a geographical area of more than 500 sq km. It has instituted several customer-centric initiatives such as online bill payment, automated bill payment kiosks and complaint management systems. On the other hand the electricity charges have more than trebled since the discoms – electricity distribution companies – have taken over.

Does outsourcing really lead to economies? It will be observed that UK also had the same trend of outsourcing. But it led to complaints of another nature. These concerned undue higher payments for services rendered.

India has similar problems. The private BOT operator is in for making as much profit as he can. The repeated delays at the Delhi Gurgaon Road Toll gates present a case study in which the High Court had to intervene to ensure avoidable delays in crossing the toll gate. The complaint about overcharging by the Delhi electricity distribution private holders, pointed out above, were vociferous and the rates had to be revised, at least partially. On the positive side, the revenue has gone up in the recent years not only because of higher rates of electricity consumed but also due to detection and prevention of energy theft.

Several labour unions have protested against such outsourcing. Their stand is that this is affecting the new recruitment as well as the existing employees who are denied the chances of promotion. The activists point out that most of the private employers, from whom the work is outsourced, are exploiting the workers. With rampant non employment and under-employment, the labour wages are falling in real terms.

The workers are left without any means of sustenance when they are sick or not able to work up to the expectations. The Government is indulging in false economies in that at a later stage, these employees in the private agencies would join the numbers depending on state doles.

The benefits of outsourcing are thus not beyond doubt. Even as a measure of economy, perhaps its utility is suspect except in some of the smaller offices. There may be isolated offices where this can be practiced with some advantage. It is felt that redeployment of staff may serve the intended purpose.

With the advent of free economy (as opposed to state run economy) another aspect of government function needs attention from the administration point of view. The introduction of private players in various fields has led to creation of regulatory bodies like Electricity Regulatory Authority, Insurance Regulatory Body etc. They are charged with the responsibility of intervening between the service provider and the customer to ensure that the customers are not being overcharged or otherwise harassed. The mechanism is new and as yet its efficacy is still under observation. As pointed out above, the exploitative nature of electricity dues in Delhi was after approval by the Regulatory Authority and the very basis had to be changed later. Nevertheless, the regulatory commissions are here to stay and their role is bound to grow.

What should the model government size be is difficult to determine though attempts have been made at times to do so. It also depends upon the prevailing economic conditions. Following the great depression John Maynard Keynes and John Kenneth Galbraith argued that an economy needs to be continually fine-tuned by an activist government to operate efficiently. As an economy grows, a growing government is also necessary to correct private-sector inefficiencies. On the theoretical level, there are many theories which try to analyze the impact of government expenditure on economic growth. These generally fall in two categories viz. demand driven and supply oriented.

The demand driven theories (also called the citizen-over-state theories) of government size and growth begin with the premise that government growth occurs because citizen demand for government programs has increased over time. Voters decide which goods the government will provide and

which negative externalities the government will correct. The supply driven theories (also known as citizen-over-state theories) of government surmise that government serves as redistributors of income and wealth. All government programs are seen as mechanisms for redistribution. This envisages constant expansion of the Government size.

On the other hand, a theory holds that government bureaucrats maximize the size of their agencies' budgets in accordance with their own preferences and are able to do so because of the unique monopoly position of the bureaucrat. Because the bureaucrat provides output in response to his or her own personal preferences (e.g., the desire for salary, prestige, power), it is possible that the size of the bureaucrat's budget will be greater than the budget required to meet the demands of the citizenry.

Unlike private sector production, the public sector does not produce a specific number of units, but rather supplies a level of activity. As a result, this creates a monitoring problem for oversight agencies: It is difficult, if not impossible, for monitors to accurately judge the efficiency of production when no tangible or countable unit of output is available. Second, the monopoly nature of most bureaus shields them from competitive pressures necessary for efficiency and also denies funding agencies (the parliament) comparable information on which to judge the efficiency of the bureaucrats. Third, only the bureau knows its true cost schedule because bureau funding is provided by agents external to the bureau. This provides an opportunity for bureaucrats to overstate their costs in order to receive a larger budget. Finally, the bureaucrat can make take-it-or-leave-it budget proposals to the minister and the parliament.

Still another theory - the fiscal illusion theory - assumes that government, specifically legislators and the executive branch, can deceive voters as to the true size of government. It further states that collection method of some direct taxes may hide citizens' tax bills better than indirect taxes. According to Meltzer and Richard, groups of individuals that were freshly given the right to vote were typically from the lower end of the income distribution and demanded greater government services. This leads to devising and implementing of new schemes meant to reach them. Ultimately this leads to increase in the government size.

Some information about the government expenditure as percentage of GDP for year 2007 is as follows - France 56.1; Sweden 52.5; Denmark 58.0; Italy 48.83; UK 42.3; Germany 43.7; Canada 39.7; Ghana 42.4; Zambia 24.6; Israel 42.8; Vietnam 28.8; South Africa 22.4; Iran 28.3; Sri Lanka 22.6; Pakistan 19.3; Mexico 26.7; Nigeria 30.0; Thailand 17.7; Russia 34.1; India 27.2; US 38.9; Brazil 17.3; Singapore 16.0. It will be seen that in centralized government like Japan, China, Singapore, and Taiwan have more expenditure relative to their respective total economies. One obvious reason, though, are the lack of governmental welfare systems in these countries (with pensions, medical coverage, etc mostly provided by employers) compared to the expansive systems of Western Europe. In India, the welfare schemes like NREGA, mid day meals, poverty alleviation subsidies account for a large percentage of expenditure leading to higher percentage of GDP being spent on administration.

Despite the comparable outlay for the services in India, the general impression is that the government servants in India are a pampered lot. A large outlay is not only available for the duration of their service and for payment of pay and allowances but also for a host of other facilities. The payments are continued beyond retirement also and cost the nation a huge lot. It is conceded that this is true not only for India but many newly emerging economies. During the 1970s and 1980s, many governments' wage bills had ballooned as developing country governments rapidly expanded, thus multiplying ministries, departments and state owned enterprises. Newly independent nations, with little private sector capacity, attempted to build their social and economic infrastructures. In delivering education and health to much larger numbers than before, government workforces grew. Political philosophies also allocated activities of the public or private sector. Several countries found little left over for government's investment programs after paying the public employees' wage bill. Resources had been spread so thinly that service delivery by the public sector was poor. As countries approached multilateral lending institutions, they were under pressure to reduce the public wage bill, while simultaneously improving services and developing capacity to formulate policy. The issue of civil service pay and, more generally, the incentives for performance, remained high on the civil service reform agenda since that time.

There is a view that quality of government is more important than the size of the government. It is important to note that quality of government does not equal democracy. Democracy, which concerns the access to government power, is a necessary but insufficient criterion of quality of government. Rothstein and Teorell, link the term “quality of government to the concept of impartial government institutions – that is, when public officials who implement policies do not take anything about the citizen case into consideration that is not beforehand stipulated in the policy or the law. Without limits to elected officials, democracies can end up imploding from within or with levels of governance as bad as tyrannies.

Even within the democracies there is wide variation in quality of government. Thus there seems to be a group of countries, such as Germany, Sweden or the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark or Finland, which exhibits steadily high levels of QoG irrespective of the particular index used to capture good governance. They present low corruption levels, high government effectiveness and bureaucratic quality and, at the same time, the rule of law is perceived to be very high. In the second place, there are other EU countries, such as France, Italy, Spain, Portugal or Greece, that tend to present significantly lower levels of quality of government. If any, during the late ten to 15 years, these countries have been diverging even more from the best performers in terms of quality of government.

In India the general opinion is that there is a lot more to be desired from the government officialdom before it can be considered to score better in terms of quality of government. The three characteristics of quality in government are low corruption levels, high government effectiveness and, high perception of prevalence of the rule of law. This last implies absence of red tapism which is the hall mark of present day governance. In a way this has to do with the procedures that have been in operation for a long time. The genesis of the system lays in the frequent transfers of the officers. The English officer, coming in from a different land, stayed at particular posts for short periods. He was generally unaware of the local conditions, customs and personnel. Of necessity, a system was devised to preserve the institutional memory in the office. The office was expected to provide the necessary support by keeping the records, putting up the case and citing precedents about

the issue at hand so that the officer could take a decision. This tradition has hardened over time and has become part of the governance. The Englishman was also wary of being misled by the local personnel and, therefore, provided a large dose of checks and balances. This further delayed the decision making process. Since the contentious issues arose infrequently, the government being mostly concerned with regulatory measures, the delay was not felt by the populace to be oppressive. With the development measure increasingly occupying centre stage, the delays ensuing from this system began taking its toll and thwarting the intended outcomes of the welfare measures thought out in isolation from the prevailing administrative system. This has led to deterioration in the quality of governance since the independence. Frequent transfers have, if anything, increased over the past few decades.

It is not that the effect of red tapism was not felt and attended to. Some measures to correct the imbalance were initiated but not followed up with as much sincerity as needed. One such measure was the introduction of desk officer system in the Central Secretariat. Efforts to convert the central secretariat into a desk officer system began in 1973 and led to the abolition of sections and unnecessary supporting staff, a reduction of the number of levels by at least two, a reduced accent on noting and increased stress on oral communication. The effort helped to foster greater participation and commitment to organizational goals among officers.

Under the desk officer system, each desk was given a defined area and placed under an undersecretary or section officer who was helped by an assistant and section libraries of files. There are 1816 sections and 427 desks in the central secretariat. It is now realized that the desk officer system is more suited to certain functions than others. New departments such as information technology have adopted officer oriented systems from the start. the officer oriented system have been accompanied by steps to create a multi skilled position of executive assistant to replace the posts of clerks and assistants. The long term goal is that the desk officer system supported by a computerized environment, an institutional memory and a revised management system will be extended to all areas of administration.

A feature of the British system of administration in India was the large auxiliary force with the officers which was

intended to assert supremacy vis a vis the local population. A large retinue was considered to be essential since the native was used to pomp and show exhibited by the local ruler. This was adopted by the British masters even though in England itself, there was no such institution. The number of peons, orderlies and other attendants were apportioned to the officer in keeping with the dignity and power which his office was expected to demonstrate. Dignity of labour has never been a hallmark of our existence since the medieval ages. We have continued this show of status which we inherited from the British. In fact, we have augmented it by providing for security cover ranging from provision of one constable to Z and Z+ security. This has led to deployment of a large segment of government servants whose productivity is always suspect.

Before we consider further action about reduction in government workforce or its reorientation, we should examine what is required of the government. What are the expectations from the government? In the US, for example, Yes, they need to ensure that there is law and order, that the people are protected both internally through law enforcement and externally by the armed forces, but outside that the constitution does not allow for anymore than that.” to “feed, clothe, provide housing, provide stable long lasting jobs, provide health care, and stop them from doing unsafe things, free education for life, freedom from greedy businesses that rip people off, you know that kinda stuff”. Of course, in between, there are various shades of opinion. Building support public infrastructure such as high way roads and a few other things is amongst them.

In India, we would tend to agree with the latter comments i.e. the government is not there just to protect the citizens. Theirs is responsibility for a large number of duties. Chanakya, in 300 BC, listed some of these tasks as

1. Protect forests and natural resources.
2. Houses should have proper fire protection.
3. protect cultivation, irrigation and properties of citizens
4. The state should take an active role in price determination of various goods.
5. Interest rates are to be rigidly fixed by the state.
6. Land is to be distributed for various uses like agriculture,

pastures, factories, forests, water reservoirs and irrigation networks, habitations etc.

7. The state should have monopoly power over most of the natural animal-products and plant-products.

In addition to the above, the modern Indian state has also taken up various social welfare schemes like education, health, eradication of poverty, improvement of slums, city transport and many others. It would not be acceptable to drop any of these schemes since we have become so used to their presence. It would be more realistic to list out the jobs which the citizens expect the state to continue to do. These can be divided into two main groups viz. (1) regulatory jobs and (2) development jobs.

We have listed the general expectations from the government and we have divided their duties in two segments viz. regulatory and development. It would be in order to elaborate on this aspect. Some of the regulatory functions can be listed as

1. Maintenance of law and order i.e. policing for crowd control and riots
2. Keeping the crime under control i.e. policing for prevention and investigation
3. Prosecution of the criminals i.e. maintenance of judicial courts
4. Settling disputes between parties i.e. maintenance of civil courts
5. Enforcing regulations for vehicles, shops and establishments, markets etc.
6. Consumer protection from exploitation, adulteration etc.
7. Maintenance of industrial peace and prevention of exploitation

Naturally this list is not exhaustive. It is merely indicative since the regulations are varied and wide ranging.

Similarly development functions can only be indicated by saying that they pertain to education, health, general welfare of the citizens. Some of these services are, by tradition, provided by the Government and some of them are merely regulated, But many of them embrace both aspects. For example in education, it is incumbent upon government (at least now after

the adoption of Right to Education Act) to provide elementary education to all children while regulating that this is done properly by the private organizations running different schools. To the extent that education is provided directly, a large work force is necessary. According to DISE (District Information System for Education) report cards, there were, in year 2010-11, there were 41,97,447 teachers in government schools and 64,03,234 overall meaning about 22 lakhs teachers in privately owned schools. The Government should not only maintain the Government schools but also ensure that education provided in private schools is up to mark. Similar is the situation for health services which are provided both by the government and private institutions. The preventive aspect of public health is more important and, presently, almost exclusively provided by the public sector.

In addition to these functions,, a new category is growing up fast. With the induction of private sector in the field of insurance, banking, telecom, electricity etc. the protection of the consumers becomes an important function of the government. A number of regulatory bodies have been constituted to regulate the price mechanism as well to monitor the quality of services.

The foregoing arguments show that compared to many advanced nations, the per capita strength of the work force in India is not excessive though there is quite a big scope for remodeling the force. We have, obviously, to begin with what may be a painful exercise for the officers. Their retinue must disappear or, at least, be reduced to minimum. As has been pointed out above, this should begin with the higher levels. The symbol of power masquerading as need for security should be given up voluntarily. It is not the argument that security is not necessary but that it need not be for show off. Indeed it appears to be excessive when two black cats are standing behind the Prime Minister when he is addressing the Chief Ministers of states in the Parliament Annexe, a highly sterilized area.

Another effective method is to go in for genuine decentralization. Hitherto, we have often talked about decentralization but more often than not worked in the reverse direction. Whether it is the question of Goods and Sales Tax (a high power committee is working on the draft) or the educational curriculum (NCERT has drafted National

Curriculum Framework), we work for centralization. Uniformity appears to be the watchword. Food Security Act is the latest manifestation of this trend where the states are expected to determine the number of personnel eligible for assistance on norms laid down by the centre and give food grains at the price determined by the central government. Such an arrangement obliges a duplicate set of government personnel, one to implement the decisions taken and other to monitor the implementation. given that ultimately, in democracy, the people are the final arbiters, this duplication can be avoided thus removing the necessity of employing extra personnel.

The other reform needed is in the way the institutional memory is to be preserved. As has been argued by the Ministry of Personnel in the case of desk officers system, the officer oriented system should be accompanied by steps to create a multi skilled position of executive assistant to replace the posts of clerks and assistants. Simultaneously an atmosphere of mutual trust should replace the feeling of distrust. The inspections and audit should not be carried out with a view to find the mistakes but to apply correctives where necessary before it is too late..The witch hunting which starts years after the action has been taken should be forbidden. The same applies to the investigating personnel and the judicial personnel who should be trained to differentiate between mistake and misdemeanor, between genuine activity and malicious doings, between honest decision and criminal conspiracy. The government personnel must be assured of due protection not only during his tenure but also after he has left. As has been remarked earlier, the 'thinking' level should be strengthened and feeding level should be reduced. This would result in better quality of governance while keeping the expenditure within limits.

Ultimately the strength of the government personnel will be determined by the expectations from them. The citizens will be the final arbiters of what they should be getting from the Government. The policy of laissez faire has long ceased to be valid and welfare governance is here to stay. The old adage of minimum governance is not going to be in vogue. Keeping all this in mind, the strength of government personnel will find its own level but, in any case, no artificial or pre determined caps should be prescribed. We can work towards increasing productivity of the individual government servant to keep their number at optimum level.

INITIATIVES OF CHANGE

SARATHI : Connecting Citizen with City Administration

Introduction

It is important to meet the information needs of the citizens by strengthening the communication channels between citizens and administration. The past decade has witnessed a dramatic change in society's expectations of information to be made available to citizens. Citizens have high expectations from the administration regarding accountability, transparency and efficiency. At the same time new tools of Information Technology provide an opportunity to the administration to fulfill many of these expectations.

The city of Pimpri-Chinchwad is situated to the north of Pune and is 142 km from Mumbai. Pimpri-Chinchwad is predominantly an industrial area, and has seen a high rate of population growth and development in the recent past. The city has an area of 177 sq. km, while the population as per census 2011 is 17.30 lakhs. Due to its proximity to Pune and its significance as an industrial and information technology hub, the city is expected to continue its rapid growth in the future too. Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), established in 1982, has six administrative wards and 15 zonal offices with 32 departments providing nearly 116 different services to the residents of the city.

With the increase in the population, the demand for various kinds of information is also on the rise. Without timely and relevant information presented in the forms that can be understood, it becomes difficult for the citizens to access basic services.

The main issues with regards to provision of information to citizens considered were:

Difficulties faced by the Citizens

When people visit government offices to seek information they have to spend a lot of time trying to get to and through

public officials. Citizens have to pay repeated visits to the offices as well as have to face the problems of long queues/waiting periods, lack of uniformity in responses obtained, referrals from one office to another leading to frustration amongst the citizens. Often it is found that the information given is incomplete with variation in information with regards to time, place and person which results in delays, confusion and corruption.

Mandate of Law

Government of India enacted the 'Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005' to ensure citizen's access to public information. The section 4 of RTI Act deals with proactive disclosure of information by the Govt. offices, Govt undertakings and local bodies to the citizens. The mandate is that every public authority should provide as much information *suo motu* to the public through various means of communications so that the public take minimum resort to the use of the Act to obtain information. These offices have also been directed by the Government to prepare a Citizens Charter which involves disclosing all the necessary information about a service as well as the processes involved, the concerned officers, time involved etc.

Difficulties faced by the Administration

The administration too has to cope with the overload of demand for information and grievance redressal. The existing method of providing information and registering complaints is not streamlined and systematic, making the process testing for both the citizens and the administration. The officers have to spend a lot of time in giving basic information to the citizens about the services of Municipal Corporation.

It was realized that there is a need of a mechanism which would satisfy the information needs of the community related to services and facilities provided by Municipal Corporation and at the same time save the precious time of the administration spent in answering queries. It was decided to start an initiative with the objective of overcoming communication barriers and providing information expeditiously to the citizens. The entire initiative was given the name 'SARATHI' which in Marathi means '*one who guides towards the right path or one who drives you through adversities to find the destination*'. SARATHI in English has been aptly given an acronym i.e.

System of Assisting Residents And Tourists through Helpline Information.

Implementation

Core Committee: In order to work out the details of the initiative a core committee was formed consisting of the heads of all departments, representatives of the civil society such as IT professionals & representatives of NGOs. This committee was led by the Municipal Commissioner. Weekly meetings of all the stakeholders were held on every Saturday for six months to discuss and finalize the details of the initiative.

Format of information: Instead of providing the descriptive information of the departments in the official language, it was decided to design the content in the format of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Content: The first phase was launched with information related to 28 departments of Municipal Corporation. After analyzing the pattern of questions asked by the citizens on the call center, the Corporation decided to include FAQs on four more subjects i.e. Marriage registration, Voter registration, Aadhaar (U.I.D.) registration and on various schemes of the Department of Women and Child Development. The information of these 4 departments along with the information of 12 various offices of Central and State Govt were made available on SARATHI in the second phase. A total of 743 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were finalized for 44 departments.

Information pertaining to the following points was included:

- Procedure for submitting an application for a service or a certificate: Questions pertaining to availability of prescribed form; documents required to be submitted; place where the application is to be submitted; fees required; normal time taken for the service etc.
- Services and amenities provided by a department.
- Sources for additional information.
- Responsibility of grievance redressal.

FAQs pertaining to the following departments were included:

Sr. No.	Department	No. of Questions
	First Phase (rolled out on 15th Aug 2013)	
1	Property Tax	24
2	Water Supply	12
3	Sewerage	22
4	Building Permission	18
5	Town Planning & Development	50
6	Unauthorized Constructions	15
7	Health	10
8	Garden	17
9	Electrical	07
10	Civil	18
11	Local Body Tax	24
12	Traffic	12
13	Sky signs	15
14	Medical	24
15	Primary Education	30
16	Secondary Education	21
17	Environment	12
18	Sports	24
19	Slum Rehabilitation & Housing Scheme	22
20	Licenses	13
21	Animal Husbandry	21
22	E – Governance	07
23	Citizen Facilitation Center	08
24	Tourism	15
25	Science Park	08
26	Bus Rapid Transit	14
27	Fire	13

28	Disaster Management	16
	Total	492
	Second Phase (rolled out on 31st Oct 2013)	
29	Women & Child Development	23
30	Marriage Registration	23
31	Electoral Registration	26
32	Registration for U.I.D. Offices of Central & State Govt. -	13
33	Certificates issued by Collector Office	09
34	Ration Card	09
35	LPG Connection	14
36	Electricity Connection	11
37	Driving License	13
38	Passport	09
39	Food License	13
40	Pimpri Chinchwad New Town Development Authority	15
41	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation	24
42	Registration Department	17
43	Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Bus Service	15
44	Right to Information	17
	Total	743

Language: The information on all 743 FAQs was prepared in Marathi language and SARATHI was launched in Marathi on the occasion of 66th Independence Day i.e. 15th August 2013. Taking into account the needs of cosmopolitan population of the rapidly growing city, the English version of SARATHI was launched on 26th January 2014. The Municipal Corporation is planning to roll out Hindi version of SARATHI on 20th February 2014.

Tools: It was decided to utilize the tools of Information and Communication technology to provide direct and independent access to information. In order to address the needs of different

groups of citizens a multi pronged approach of delivery viz. through a Book, Website, Mobile application, e – Book, pdf Book and Helpline (Call Center) was designed. The SARATHI initiative in the form of a Book, Website and Helpline was launched on 15th August 2013.

Book: A total of 3000 books in Marathi titled SARATHI (*System of Assisting Residents And Tourists through Helpline Information*) were published, in which the FAQs were categorized according to the departments. The books have been distributed to the Corporators, Officers and Supervisors of the Corporation, NGOs, Media persons etc.

Website: A department-wise list of all FAQs has also been displayed on the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) website. The citizens can access the information at a click of a button. Although the information of SARATHI is provided on the official website i.e. www.pcmcindia.gov.in, a special in house website i.e. www.pcmchelpine.in was developed to avoid traffic congestion on the official website. A conscious attempt is being made to popularize the new domain www.pcmchelpine.in during the publicity campaigns.

Helpline (Call Center) - A full-fledged Call Center (Phone no. 8888006666) has been opened to function as a helpline from 7 am to 10 pm. When the call operators answer the calls they refer to the same FAQs which are available on their computers with easy search facility. This ensures consistency in the information provided to the citizens.

In second phase, SARATHI was launched through three more modalities, from 11th Oct 2013:

App for Mobile / Tablet / I-pad – A special application of SARATHI has been developed for mobile phone with separate version for android, apple, windows as well as blackberry phone. App has also been developed for tablet and I-pad. This can be downloaded freely from the website www.pcmchelpine.in.

E Book – In order to cater to young, IT savvy population, the Corporation has also developed e-Book of SARATHI which can be downloaded, free of cost, from www.pcmchelpine.in.

Pdf Book – As SARATHI book became very popular and its demand increased, the book was converted into pdf and

made available on *www.pcmcindia.gov.in* as well as on *www.pcmchelpine.in* in both colour as well as black and white version.

Dissemination:

Huge advertisement hoardings displayed at major public places in the city and regular media briefings helped in wide dissemination of information of this innovative activity. Besides, bulk sms (short message service) were also sent. The display boards of SARATHI have been put up in all offices of Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation as well as in all the banks and public hospitals in the city.

Facility for lodging complaints and grievance redressal:

The platform of call center was primarily started to provide information on the FAQs to the citizens. As it was an interactive channel, it was decided to also use it to receive grievances of citizens and resolve them in a time bound manner. The SARATHI system has been integrated with the existing grievance redressal system. The complaints registered at the Call Center (on phone no. 8888006666) are recorded by the call operator. Subsequently the audio files are forwarded to the backend office where they are segregated, transcribed and sent to the field officers of respective departments by e-mail as well as SMS. A token number is automatically generated which is sent to the citizen via a SMS. Using this token number the citizen is able to track the process of resolution of the complaint online or can dial the helpline to check its current status.

A color coding system has been developed to monitor the grievance redressal mechanism. In this, the complaints are monitored, coded and assigned negative points depending on the duration of pendency viz. pendency of more than 30 days (red code; 10 negative points); beyond 21 days (yellow code, 5 negative points) and pendency beyond 14 days (green code, 2 negative points). In the weekly meeting the total negative points earned by each department are calculated and action is taken in the form of a memo for more than 50 points, show cause notice for more than 75 points and departmental enquiry for more than 100 points.

Monitoring and Supervision:

A special cell consisting of the Assistant Commissioner (General Administration), Computer Officer and Wireless

Officer has been formed to monitor and supervise the functioning of the helpline.

Resources for Implementation

- **Infrastructure:** All the methods of dissemination except the call center did not require any new special infrastructure. While the books were printed through a private agency, the activities of developing website, mobile application, e book and pdf book were taken up by the e Governance department of Municipal Corporation.

Separate space has been earmarked in the PCMC building for the Call center (helpline). A separate telephone line with ten hunting lines was sought so that calls from ten people can be attended simultaneously on one telephone number. Special software has been procured to provide special facilities like recording of calls, call log facility and caller number identification etc. Instead of going for an automated voice response system, a call center was developed to provide an interactive, comfortable platform for the citizens seeking information. Backend operator system was established for directing and monitoring complaints.

- **Funds:** The total expenditure incurred on this initiative was Rs. 26 lakhs and the provision for the same was made from the budget of the Municipal Corporation. The expenditure for printing 3000 books was Rs 7.85 lakhs while the expenditure incurred in development of mobile application and e book was Rs. 4.55 lakhs. The total expenditure on call center has been Rs. 13.60 lakhs. The development of special website and pdf book did not involve any costs.

The expenditure incurred for setting up the call center included costs of Rs. 10.45 lakhs incurred on procuring hardware and server, Rs. 2.80 lakhs for procurement of the software and Rs. 35,000 on special telephone number etc. This is all one time capital expenditure. The recurring expenditure is about Rs. 1,30,000 per month which includes the honorarium for twelve call operators at the rate of Rs 10000/person/ month and Rs 10000 for other expenses.

- **Manpower:** The development of website, mobile application, pdf book and e book was done by the technical experts of e Governance Dept. For call center, twelve professional call operators with minimum two years experience

were recruited on contractual basis through open competitive recruitment and posted in two shifts of six each. Three computer operators from the Corporation were appointed at the backend with the responsibility of tracking complaints and monitoring its resolution. One week training of all these personnel included the theoretical aspects; interaction with and guidance from the departmental heads; exposure visits to major projects like water treatment plant, gardens, schools, Science Park etc and finally hands on training in the call center.

Outcome

A total of 1,08,536 citizens have accessed information through the SARATHI initiative in 160 days period from the launch on 15th August 2013. On an average 678 citizens are being benefitted from SARATHI every day. Of these, an average of 354 citizens are drawing the information from website, an average of 159 citizens are getting the information from the call center while the remaining 165 citizens are using the mode of book, mobile app, pdf book & e book. Of the total 25,499 calls received, a total of 16,956 (66%) calls were for seeking information while a total of 8,586 (34%) calls were for grievance redressal. Of these, a total of 8011 (93%) complaints have been successfully resolved by the municipal administration. The helpline is receiving complaints related to water supply, electricity, health, civil works, drainage etc.

Table 1: Citizens benefitted

Sr. No.	Mode of access	Citizens benefitted
1.	Website & Web link	56,665
2.	Call Center (Helpline)	25,499
3.	PDF Book	9,538
4.	E – Book	7,892
5.	Mobile App	6,158
6.	Book	2,784
	TOTAL	1,08,536

Table 2: Analysis of Web hits & Calls received

S r . No.	Period	Web hits	Calls at helpline	Total Citizens benefitted
1.	15 Aug – 31 Aug 2013	10,036	3,000	13,036
2.	Sept. 2013	10,454	4,318	14,772
3.	Oct. 2013	9,826	4,782	14,608
4.	Nov. 2013	8,692	4,281	12,973
5.	Dec. 2013	9,950	5,139	15,089
6.	1 Jan – 21 Jan 2014	7,707	3,979	11,686
	Total for 160 days	56,656	25,499	82,164

Table 3: Grievance Redressal through Call Center

Sr. No.	Department	Complaints received	Complaints resolved	Resolution of Complaints (%)
1.	Water Supply	1751	1666	95.15
2.	Electrical	1451	1378	94.97
3.	Health	1350	1268	93.93
4.	Civil Works	1123	983	87.53
5.	Drainage (Sewerage)	999	961	96.20
6.	Veterinary	553	498	90.05
7.	Garden	397	376	94.71
8.	Encroachment	252	229	90.87
9.	Traffic	169	156	92.31
10.	Zonal Offices	153	139	90.85
11.	Other Depts (22)	388	357	92.01
12.	Total	8586	8011	93.30

Benefits**For the Citizens: Access to information**

α. **Easy to access:** Easy access to information saves time and

money as the hassles of travel, wage losses etc. are prevented.

- b. **Citizen friendly:** Citizens find the information easy to understand as the information is being delivered in the form of FAQs without the jargons of official language.
- c. **Empowerment:** Awareness about the functioning of the Municipal Corporation, rules and regulations, responsibilities of the officials of Municipal Corporation as well as that of Govt offices is empowering the citizens while taking decision and actions for their own welfare.
- d. **Uniform and Standard information:** The citizens are getting uniform, standard answers from official source which is avoiding confusion.
- e. **Preventing discrimination:** There are no registration or membership requirements for accessing information. Any person can access information at any time without having to identify him/her self or provide any justification for doing so thereby preventing discrimination.
- f. **Grievance redressal:** With SARATHI, now the citizens can get their grievances redressed with a simple call to the helpline.
- g. **Interactive platform:** With SARATHI, now the citizens have a channel of communication with the administration which gives the community a sense of remaining connected with the administration. The information can also be accessed through any of the various modes of communication irrespective of the time and place.

For the administration: Improved governance

Check corruption: By being open, clear and verifiable with regard to the application of rules, standards and procedures, the Municipal Corporation is ensuring transparency and thwarting the role of middlemen.

Feedback on Municipal Services: An analysis of the complaints indicates the departments which need to improve their performance as well as the areas/wards which have poor services.

In house development: The intensive exercise of developing the FAQs for a department, compilation of relevant

information, standardizing the information and preparing short but complete answers was all done with active participation of the respective heads of the departments. In addition the tasks of updating the information based on queries received at the call center and resolving the grievances has completely transformed the functioning of the departments. As all the departments were involved in the exercise right from the beginning and as it was an intensive team exercise, the confidence of the entire system has increased.

Lessons Learnt

Unmet demand: The response SARATHI is getting from the citizens indicates the huge amount of unmet demand for information in the society.

Team Work: One of the most important learning of the initiative is to have all the department officials i.e. right from HoD to the field level officers on board and at same level. Streamlined backend process for redressal of complaints is an essential factor which determines the success of the initiative.

Ensure confidentiality: It is being observed that now citizens complain without any fear when they call on the helpline. Considering the fact that citizens would lodge a variety of complaints, care is taken to ensure the confidentiality regarding the caller details.

Multiple channels of communication: The multi-pronged approach is important as it caters to the needs of different sections of the society. The website, pdf book and e-book would be of much use to the educated and computer savvy generation while the call center is intended to help the people without access to computers. The young population with the smart phones and i-pads in their hands can access SARATHI using the specially developed mobile application. In addition, if any problem arises in any of the tools, the other alternatives would act as a backup.

Updating the information: The information provided on the website, call center, mobile app, pdf book and e-book can be updated easily. The analysis of the calls received at the call center is helping the administration to update the FAQs as well as to add new FAQs. The result was the second phase of SARATHI which was launched on 31st Oct 2013 with information of 16 additional departments.

Capacity building: Providing information is necessary but certainly not sufficient to improve access to basic services and improve governance. The capacity to provide services needs to be strengthened too. For example along with the provision of a channel for lodging complaints, attempts were also made to improve the efficiency of the grievance redressal system.

Sustainability: With expertise in e governance, vast domain experience and adequate funds, the Municipal Corporation could independently design and implement the intervention successfully without any outsourcing. The internal technical expertise and capacity of the organization was utilized to design and implement the initiative. As a result, the corporation staff was more confident of running it independently and overcoming the problems confidently.

Replicability

In urban areas, awareness about the rights and expectation of good services is rising and with it the demand for information is also on the increase. At the same time, the modern methods of communication are available which help us rise to this challenge successfully. SARATHI is an initiative to meet the huge information demand using effective tools of information technology.

All Municipal Corporations in particular and Municipal Councils in general can think of replicating this initiative. At national level a replication of this initiative is possible because all Municipal Corporations, by and large, have similar authority as well as roles and responsibilities. The teams of officers from Pune Municipal Corporation and Kirkee Cantonment Board have already paid a visit to study the system. The Pune Municipal Corporation is considering to adopt a similar system. Apart from the urban local bodies, the officers of the Sales Tax Department of Govt of Maharashtra as well as the team from MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority) have studied the SARATHI initiative and expressed desire to start similar systems in their departments.

Shrikar Pardeshi

BOOK REVIEW

Governance and Administrative Reforms

A P Saxena

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Books on governance are rare and while practitioners of governance, the bureaucrats have written quite often, most have confined to their memoirs and have not touched the subject of governance *per se*. A P Saxena's book fills that gap in books on governance and covers a big canvas in time. The book provides a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and practices which must be examined before administrative reforms are considered in the direction towards better governance.

Saxena brings out clearly that reforms involve innovation, which itself, involves a change which is new to the organization and goes on to say that all mistakes are learning experiences in the management of change. The motive behind any reform effort is to upgrade the existing system, enhance its capacity to undertake, and perform complex functions as they emerge and devotes a full chapter to this factor in his book. Coordination does not have an audit function and is not a coercive device. Coordination is often between widely dispersed activities with the purpose of accomplishing tasks and as an intervention in the achievement of plans, programmes or projects.

He identifies the role of the reform agent in the garb of an innovator and states that the reform agent must have high pragmatic imagination, an ability to trust others and to earn the trust of the concerned levels and individuals. He argues further that wise innovations are necessary and important. The bane of large organizations(huge multifunctional, multi departmental) is their resistance to innovation and change.

The Appleby Report finds a place of prominence in the book. The author has given a full historical perspective to the report while profusely quoting Jawaharlal Nehru's comments, views and desire to implement that Report. While the author has given a lot of space to Appleby report, unfortunately the Second Administrative Reforms Commission's report finds a place only as an annexure dealing with the main recommendations of the twelfth Report. One would have wished the author had done an analytical review of this report in this book.

Saxena has dealt with "Governance the way ahead" as the last chapter and says many things could be and should be done and that inspite of an inherited embargo of varying degrees of equity or inequality governance should aspire for a transfer from a static "not so good" situation to a static "good".

The author rightly states in the preface that governance is considered as the way state power is used in managing economic and social resources for accelerated development. Being a continuous process the case for an accelerated administrative reform process in the orbit of governance, has to probably become a movement.

Divided in nine chapters and in 214 pages it is a very well brought out publication. It has useful annexures that cover the main reports of Administrative reforms Commission and a separate annexure on Ethics in Governance. The book is very readable and should be read by all concerned, academics as well as policy personnel in government.

Mahesh Kapoor

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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M.G. DEVASAHAYAM, post-graduate in Economics, has diverse experience of serving in the Indian Army, Government (IAS), Corporate Sector, partaking in democratic process, and pursuing advocacy of environmental and public causes in the voluntary sector. Recipient of Samar Seva (War Service) Star and General Service Medals, his professional expertise is in the areas of energy management, road transport and Urban Development. Books written are India's Second Freedom - An Untold Saga JP in Jail-An Uncensored Account and 'JP Movement, Emergency and India's Second Freedom'

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YOGENDRA NARAIN joined the IAS in 1965 and worked in the area of Finance, Industry, Agriculture and Transport before becoming the Chief Secretary. Acquired a deep understanding of the governance structure. Has done a Ph. D in Public Administration. Was Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha and is currently member Secretary of Indian national Trust for Art and Cultural heritage (INTACH)

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A P SAXENA formerly UNDP chief Technical Advisor, Indonesia; Senior Development Consultant, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur. Visiting Experts and UNDP Mission Director to several Asian Countries. Awarded Paul Affinity Award by IIPA (1907) for outstanding contribution to discipline of Public Administration and Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Award by University of Jaipur 2011.

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