

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICES AND THEIR CHANGING ROLE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION- A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The authority of Parliament or the State Legislature must be and is supreme, but it would be frustrating the aim of democracy to let the influence of political or social groups functioning in the legislature or outside to affect recruitment or promotion in the services. In emancipated India, it was the hope that politicians who were born in revolution and civil disobedience should soon learn to become administrators. But this process has been slow. Instead, at the other end, administrators are perhaps tending to become politicians, which is bad. What is essential at the top is the capacity to judge upon relevant advice and to decide promptly and rightly in executive matters. To decide in matters executive, quickly and correctly, is a gift of the gods. And this is it that makes a good administrator. India is a constitutional democracy and its functioning mainly depends upon four pillars-Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, and Free Press. Each one of these has been assigned its role in our democratic setup. First three of these are associated with the governance of the State. Effective and efficient institutions form the backbone of a successful development and governance process. In this context, the founding fathers had the foresight to create the necessary institutional framework for governance which has brought us thus so far. One of the basic elements of Indian governance architecture is the concept of an impartial, honest, efficient and fearless civil service which is the core of the Executive, be it the All India Services or the other Civil Services. They form the permanent structure and backbone of Indian Administration System. Much had been critically discussed and written about civil services' achievements in terms of expectations at the time of birth of Indian Republic and its fulfillments so far. So, in this paper, I need to think whether this framework is adequate for years to come; whether past modes of functioning will address the demands of the future in fast changing world; whether skills and capabilities that were relevant in the past have outlived their utility and there is a need to develop new ones? By answering these questions, I would discuss that whether there are changes in the role of Indian Civil Services and if it needs reorientation in this regard.

Keywords:

What is Civil Service?

Civil Service means a group of people who share in the exercise of the sovereign power of the state by discharging the various functions of the executive branch of government other than military responsibilities as a life career and paid from government treasury. Indian Civil Service is a legacy of the British administration in India. Started by Warren Hastings and later modified by Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Civil Service is the steel frame of the political system.

Why Civil Services?

- 1) Power and Prestige
- 2) Security of Service
- 3) Challenging Profession
- 4) Variety of Responsibilities
- 5) Opportunity to serve many
- 6) Opportunity to make remarkable contributors
- 7) Opportunity for higher placements
- 8) Opportunity for higher studies
- 9) Selection on Merit
- 10) Assured Promotions
- 11) Beneficial to the individual, family, locality and state
- 12) Attractive pay and perks.

Civil Services and Governance in Independent India:

The civil service system is the backbone of the administrative system which acts as most important tool for governance of our country. In post-independent India civil service was reorganised. There are three tiers of administration – Union/Central Government, State Government, and Local Government. At the central level, the civil services include the All India Services, namely the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Forest Service (IFS), and Indian Police Service (IPS). Apart from these there are various other Central Services like the Indian Income Tax Service, Indian Railways Service, etc. at central level. The State Governments have their own set of services – State Civil Service. Over the period the role of civil services has changed depending on the agenda of the governance of that particular period. During British period, enforcement of law and order and collection of revenue was the main concern of civil servants. In post independence India, when the Government has acquired the role of Welfare State, civil services act as an important tool for implementing national and state policies of welfare and planned development. The Indian civil services, with its national character, have been a strong binding force to the Union of States. The institution of civil service has rendered service to the overall socio-economic development of the country. It has been at the forefront of the development process right from the 'commanding heights regime' to the 'liberalization and de-regulation era'. It has acted as a force of unity among diversity. It has not only played a pivotal role in designing and activating policies, it has also ensured basic service delivery at the grass root level to the marginal section of our society.

Since civil services are considered as the most important element of Indian administrative system that has the responsibility to fulfil the development objectives of the welfare state, so, any failure or shortcomings in fulfilment of these objectives are attributed to the failure of civil services. It is said that India's massive bureaucracy is maintained at huge cost by the country's taxpayer whose average income is among the lowest in the world. The public perception about the members of the civil service, who function at cutting edge, higher coordination and policy making levels, is that they are 'burdensome low-performers' heading a highly bloated bureaucracy, which is, often, perceived to be corrupt and inefficient in governing the country. Some of the criticism of Indian civil services is:

- Lack of professionalism and poor capacity building
- Alienation from the public and lack of understanding of what people want
- Inefficient incentive systems that do not appreciate upright and outstanding civil servants but reward the corrupt and the incompetent
- Outmoded rules and procedures that restrict the civil servant from performing effectively
- Lack of performance culture and focus on outputs and outcomes –
- inappropriate performance appraisal
- Systemic inconsistencies in promotion and empanelment
- Lack of adequate transparency and accountability procedures - there is also no safety for whistle blowers
- Arbitrary and whimsical transfers – insecurity in tenures impedes institutionalization
- Political interference and administrative acquiescence
- A gradual erosion in public service values, ethics and morale

So, on the basis of experience so far and some other developments of the present era like globalisation, coalition nature of polity, etc., it is well recognized that reforming the civil service is not only necessary but also inevitable.

'Good Governance' and Civil Service Reform in Present Context:

In recent times, several new phenomena have emerged in the field of governance which have far reaching consequences. For 'Good Governance' which is one of the most important goals of the modern welfare State, civil services have to be responsive to these changes. But for this response, reforms and

reorientation of civil services are needed because with its present attitude and training civil services are not going to deliver good governance in the present complex world.

A well-functioning civil service helps to foster good policymaking, effective service delivery, accountability and responsibility in utilizing public resources which are the characteristics of good governance. 'Good Governance' is being used as an all-inclusive framework not only for administrative and civil service reform, but as a link between Civil Service Reform and an all-embracing framework for making policy decisions effective within viable systems of accountability and citizen participation. Administrative reform focuses on rationalizing structures and operations of government machinery. Governance reform tends to focus on facilitating the effective functioning of and interactions between the State, the market and the civil society. It refers to the improvement of legal, institutional and policy frameworks to create proper decision making and implementation environments for economic growth and distribution. It encompasses participatory systems for elements of civil society to become actively involved in formulation of policies and programmes and their implementation. It also includes effective and transparent systems and processes for accountability in government activities. Civil service reform cannot be seen in isolation and it has to be undertaken along with administrative and governance reforms for effective results.

Although comprehensive reform that involves governance, the civil service, administrative practices, and civil society is ideal, it requires sustained commitment from political and administrative leaders. It is also too complex to implement all at once. Few countries have undertaken comprehensive reforms and there are mixed results. The challenge lies in finding linkages among the governance, civil service and civil society components, determining which require priority attention. However, without going into this priority debate, this paper would discuss some of the important factors affecting governance in present era and a need to prepare civil services to face the situation arising out of these factors.

Most important development of our times which has substantially changed the concept of governance is – Globalisation. In recent times globalisation has permeated every nook and corner of our country and its people. Reason being active trade and commerce across board; governance of which comes under the purview of civil services; thereby requiring greater mingling of civil services with the phenomena globalisation. Hence first let us try to understand this phenomena and the need for this mingling, hidden in spread and extent of globalisation in our country.

Civil Services in the era of Globalisation:

So, having a detailed discussion on globalisation in this paper, now it can be said that globalisation has brought new challenges for the civil services. With present training and orientation, the civil services would not be able to deliver the desired results in the present context. Some of the important issues in the context of globalisation are –

- Fast pace of globalisation is mainly driven by the rapid advancement of communication technology. Due to this advancement of technology we are talking about 'global village'. So, at present, for effective and efficient administration use of technology is must. This would help in enhancing technical orientation of our civil services.
- In the era of globalisation, the role of the State has changed. Since economic liberalisation has led to – on one hand, the diminishing role of state and on the other hand, increasing role of private sector in the direct economic activities. This has resulted in the marginalisation of a section of society who is economically weak and can't take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by economic liberalisation. Civil services have to change their mindset from '**only government can do**' to '**government in partnership with the people can do**'. However, reservation for weaker section in the recruitment for civil services has made it more egalitarian in character and now we can hope that they would be more accountable and responsible towards the weaker section and the civil society.
- Globalisation has increased the importance of international organisations like UN, IMF, World Bank, WTO, etc. Now, we can't ignore these organizations otherwise we would be isolated in the new economic-political-social world order. Dealing with these organisations needs professionalism, tough negotiating skill, manipulation skill, etc. So, to avoid becoming a loser while dealing with these international organisations, we have to train and reorient our civil services with skills required for this.

- One of the negative aspect of this globalisation is the phenomenon of terror has become global. Now, terrorism is not confined to a particular geographical location or its propagator are related or confined to a particular location. Our country is one of the worst sufferers of global terrorism. The activities of global terrorist networks have revealed the inadequacy of conventional national security structures based on the modern nation-state system, thus forcing national governments to engage in new form of international cooperation. Use of information technology by these terror organisations and cyber crimes are other aspects in this regard which needs urgent attention. To tackle these dimensions of crime, our civil services need special training.

Conclusion:

Right from the ancient times, civil services has played an important role in the Indian governance system. Modern history of Indian Civil Services starts from the British rule in India. There role has changed over the time. Due to vast power vested in civil services, the success and failures which we have achieved so far are attributed to them. At present, the context in which all the civil services are functioning has been changing very fast. Rapid economic growth has led to a manifold increase in the quantum of work. Performance expectations have increased in terms of both speed and quality. The Government is no longer seen merely as a law enforcer or a controller of national resources. It is increasingly viewed as a provider - albeit an efficient provider - of basic services and public goods. People expect the Government to facilitate growth and development. Globalisation has added different dimensions to the concept of governance. In this context, civil servants have to be prepared to face the challenges arising out of globalisation; they will have to shift their orientation from being controllers to facilitators and from being providers to enablers. They need to equip themselves with the necessary skills and capabilities to meet these new challenges. They need to master new technologies and new styles of functioning.

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Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds.

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt