



TRANSFORMING BUREAUCRACY: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CIVIL SERVICES CAPACITY BUILDING (MISSION KARMAYOGI)

The bureaucracy in India is often criticised, and not wrongly so, for its insular and inflexible outlook. The other prominent groups in society including politicians, professionals and businessmen have conveniently used this criticism to deflect the blame on to the bureaucracy for any sub-optimality in our efforts for development and progress while masking their own failings in the process. Admittedly, society is an organic entity and all its constituent groups, classes and individuals must perform their duties diligently while making claims on its resources to sustain a healthy collective life. Such an effort requires re-evaluation and recalibration on the part of power holders, whether groups or individuals, from time to time so as to align their actions in the pursuit of nation building. 'Bureaucracy' is only one powerful group in the spectrum and by no means an omnipotent one. Being part of the system of public administration, its performance takes shape in response to the events and happenings in the wider political environment. Nevertheless, it too requires soul searching as to what has gone wrong and how the situation can be improved. In this context, the recent launch of National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) with an aim to professionalise the bureaucracy to meet our developmental needs in future brings a wave of fresh air.

The government through the successful implementation of this programme intends to transform bureaucracy from its traditional avatar as an instrument of command and control to a responsive agency that upholds the diverse values permeating the realm of public service. The NPCSCB (Mission Karmayogi) aims at a multi-pronged strategy to achieve this objective that includes, inter-alia, a comprehensive training framework for civil servants with an active participation from eminent institutions of learning in both public and private sector. The foundation of this multi-pronged strategy for change will be laid through the Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRAC). Through this framework each individual position in government, whether at national, state or local level, will be given a pre-defined role or a set of roles, a task not undertaken with proficiency till date and emergently required for the rejuvenation of public organisations in India. This comprehensive role definition, apart from clarifying the premises for decision in complex administrative situations, will also provide a much needed direction to the career of civil servants through its linkages with performance management, training and promotions.

In this article, I will deliberate upon the fact of sociological bearings of the administrative system and its consequences in a developing country context, the various phases witnessed in the evolution of public administration across the globe to throw possible light on the future direction of public administration in India, the centrality of role definition in any workable design of a public organisation with insights from the field of organisation theory and psychology, the existing state of affairs with reference to role delineation in public sector organisations, the related problems and the need for change to reach the next step in the evolution of public administration as a discipline and how this change would be in consonance with our socio-cultural and philosophical traditions. The focus would be on throwing light as to how the multi-dimensional effort conceived through NPCSCB, especially through the FRAC strategy which is foundational to the proposed reform, can bridge the gap between the epistemology of public administration and the ontological ultimacies of human nature immanent in people executing administration without losing the values of social harmony and control.

The Sociology of Administration

Suppose a family is watching television at home. The daughter makes a request for purchasing a smart TV which has recently arrived in market and offers a host of functionalities. The responsibility to decide on the request and to surf market for an appropriate brand is spontaneously taken by the father as the male head of the family. However, if the son makes a demand for a different variety of dish over dinner, the mother as the female head takes the request forward. Within the family, all members take their roles - of father, of mother, of children, of sibling - without much conflict. Even though such sociological conceptions of roles are unwritten, but we stick to them most of the times having inherited them through the processes of socialisation. Admittedly, there do occur conflicts as societies adopt more modern forms of economic structures (for example, a working woman may refuse to cook for the family because of her priority for profession), but on the whole, the business within the family proceeds without much conflict because of the habits of thought lying in memory. This phenomenon can be explained using Cooley's terminology of primary and secondary

groups and how they modulate individual behaviour. Primary groups are status based and operate in a functionally diffused manner. Family constitutes the most prominent primary group. (The other examples of primary groups are caste and religion.) The psychological environment of choice within primary groups doesn't produce cognitive dissonance of the sort seen in many other social situations. In contrast to primary groups, the individual behaviour changes considerably in secondary groups which are contract based and functionally specific. Professional organisation which an individual joins for employment is the most common example of a secondary group. Successful continuation of its membership requires cultivation of an organisational personality distinct from individual personality. Often, the interest of the individual strongly attached to the primary groups fails to give way to the organisational interest thereby creating value conflicts in mind. This sort of cognitive dissonance is more in developing countries like India, more so in public sector organisations in comparison to the private sector. As government jobs are desired here more for power, prestige and social status instead of a mode of self-expression through selfless service, there always occurs a wide scope of deviation of behaviour from the ideal conceived in the theory of welfare state.

Another important consideration to be kept in mind while considering administrative behaviour is about how the group influences the individuals in an organisational context as all administrative activities are undertaken inside a group. Man's inherent nature is social and his motivation for action is immanently tied up with the group he belongs to even in professional work atmosphere. Thus, any reorganisation of work processes without considering the socio-psychological context may yield counter-productive results as revealed in Hawthorne experiments.

In view of the above discussion, how do we traverse the distance between the social sphere and the administrative sphere becomes an important concern of any successful administrative theory. And traversing of this distance requires understanding not only of the outer environment in which an organisation is situated but also about its inner environment which shapes according to existing administrative structures of control, cooperation, coordination and communication. The increasing politicisation of public institutions is often deliberated and discussed about in India passionately. But there is a lack of fruitful discussion regarding the administrative structures that mould their inner environment despite the fact that the lack of responsiveness often assigned to bureaucracy might actually owe its origin in the obsolete administrative structures moulding administrative behaviour. A peep into how these administrative structures have evolved across the globe offers a valuable guide for action in this regard if only the proposed action could be formulated in consonance with the socio-cultural traditions of the society.

The Epistemology of Public Administration

For most of the history, the systems of public administration across the globe have been patrimonial-bureaucratic with no differentiation between the political and the administrative sphere. The politico-administrative dichotomy started taking concrete shape from 19th century onwards through an active advocacy in its favour by political stalwarts like Woodrow Wilson who insisted on evolving a separate science of administration isolated from the political turbulence of the day for optimum results. The next stage in its evolution came with the incorporation of principles of management to efficiently handle the work of implementing policies. The third stage happened when the results of Hawthorne experiments brought to the fore the importance of social and psychological factors at work place instead of raw notion of mechanical efficiency. The fourth stage discredited the omniscience of the classical management principles and instead laid stress on decision-making in a context. The works of Noble laureate Herbert Simon laid the foundations of this stage. The focus shifted to creating an appropriate environment of decision, that would influence administrative behaviour, to fetch the desired results. The inspiration for this approach came from the reign of behaviourism in psychology which theorised the human behaviour in terms of environmental influences. In the context of public organisations, a positive environment of decision would be possible only if every member of the organisation is clear about his function as well as the content of his work so as to make stable expectations of actions of each other. Only such a state of affairs would facilitate coordination among the members in pursuit of organisational goals. While specifying the functional task would mean clarifying individual's position in the hierarchy and the broader sphere of his work, specification of the content of work would mean laying down the actual coordinates of work that would include, inter-alia,

MISSION KARMAYOGI: RULES-BASED TO ROLES-BASED
National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)

- Shift from 'Rules-based' to a 'Roles-based' human resource management
- Emphasise role of "On-Site learning" in complementing "Off-Site learning"
- Linking training and development of competencies of civil servants
- Transforming training institutions into Centres of Excellence
- Ministries to directly invest and co-create a common learning ecosystem
- Focus on massive scale training on e-learning



the value and factual premises behind his day-to-day decisions. The activity of specifying function and content, taken together, constitutes framing of role of every member and is integral to any workable design of an organisation. This design conception is also reflected in the FRAC strategy adopted by the NPCSCB which considers the organisation as a pattern of inter-related roles and thus, well placed to take the public administration in India to its next logical phase. Therefore, it will be appropriate to elaborate upon the importance of such a design conception for increasing organisational effectiveness as explicated by Herbert Simon in his theory of administrative behaviour next.

Simon's Theory of Administrative Behaviour

The act of decision-making stays at the heart of administrative theory expounded by Herbert Simon. Simon draws the finer contours of his theory based on the logic and psychology that operates behind administrative decisions. To understand his theory of administrative behaviour, it is best to start with component parts of a decision. Every decision is constituted of two elements: value and fact. Values are the goals that provide direction to administrative decisions and activities. Administrative values are the instrumental values, that is, means to an end and not ends in themselves. The instrumental values behind administrative decisions exist in a hierarchy with each step in this hierarchy acting as realisation of goals above it. For example, a dealing assistant who helps an applicant to put all his documents in correct order while applying for a motor driving license works with the value of responsiveness to individual needs; the Motor Driving License Officer who supervises the applicant's driving test works for the value of driving proficiency and the Transport Commissioner who makes policies and procedures for the issuance of driving licence works for the value of safety and security; all of them working for the value of peace and order in the society. The realisation of any value in this hierarchy leads to realisation of the values above it. This is an integrated hierarchy and any difficulty in realising value at any level in it has got consequences for the whole value hierarchy. For example, any unresponsiveness on the part of a dealing assistant in disposing of his function would throw shock waves across the entire value hierarchy and would be a cause for the sub-optimality of outcomes. This conception of administrative work in term of values brings to the fore another important fact: it is a mistake to consider that the vast majority of employees below the top executive in an organisation execute decisions in a machine-like fashion. They too exercise value judgments while disposing of the functions assigned to them. Thus, the execution of decisions too involves decisions though at a level lower in the hierarchy of values, nonetheless, intricately integrated within this hierarchy. Therefore, the operational employees not only need training in procedures but also in decision-making. The operational bureaucracy attains its due in this conception of administrative behaviour; the top-down approach is reconciled with a bottoms-up view. By assigning instrumentality to these values, Simon brings them to the domain of day-to day administrative work. As an example, someone working in the Education department will measure his decisions in terms of learning outcomes, in the Transport department in terms of safe travel, in the Rural Development department in terms of creation of basic infrastructure etc. Thus, we are no longer talking in terms of intrinsic values of honesty, punctuality, peace, harmony etc., an empty talk about which has filled up the present landscape of administration without any concrete results.

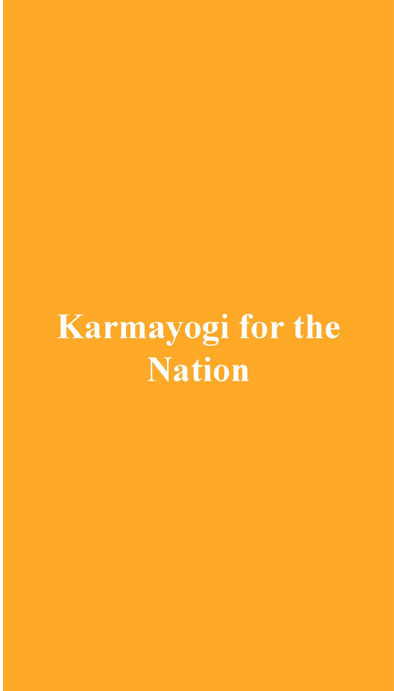
The Logic of Administrative Decisions

The issues of fact constitute the second element of decision. Simon explains that these are the objective criteria that involve the selection of an alternative from among those available for the realisation of pre-defined values. An understanding of the relationship between the factual and value questions constitutes the logic behind the decision. Suppose a Director of the State Education Department wants to work for improving the 'learning outcomes' in the state. He has got many alternatives for doing so. To achieve this goal, he can train his teachers in newer pedagogical techniques or may plan to spend the limited budget on improving physical infrastructure or he can go for recruiting more teachers (as studies have shown better learning outcomes by lowering the teacher-student ratio). He must choose the most effective and efficient alternative for realising the desired value of learning. The quality of the choice he makes would be a function of his domain knowledge as well as experience to get acquainted with ground level praxis. His understanding of the hierarchy of values and the relationship between the value questions and factual questions across this hierarchy constitutes his domain competency which enables him to produce the maximum outcome by using minimum of resources.

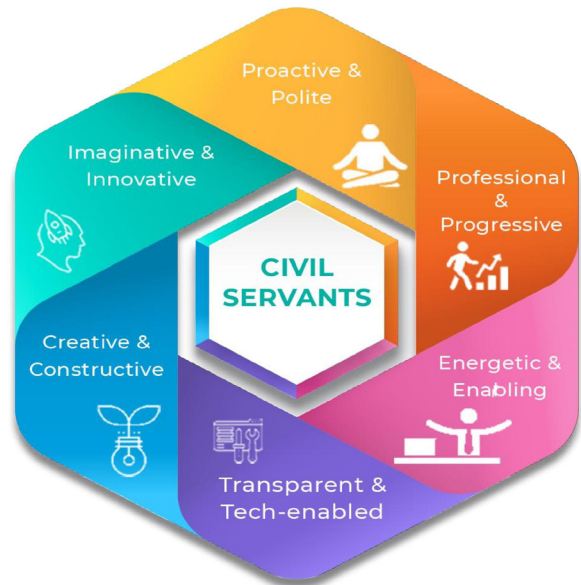
The Psychology of Administrative Decisions

The logical mind doesn't always come to the help of individual in complex administrative situations. The information regarding the available alternatives and their consequences is often sketchy and the time available to take a decision often so short that it is almost impossible to behave in an objectively rational manner. So, in a world of bounded rationality, administrators normally satisfice by choosing the good enough option instead of continuing searching for the best option. And this choice is often made as per the commands of the subconscious which take shape in response to ingrained values. Understanding these commands enables us to understand the psychology of administrative decisions. The cognitive structure of the human mind broadly comprises two levels: conscious and subconscious. More than

95% of the human behaviour happens in response to the commands of the subconscious where is stored all experience as memory and habits of thought. In a developing country, this subconscious is programmed as per the needs of the primary group, a fact elaborated above. When one joins a professional organisation, we require re-programming of the



Karmayogi for the Nation



psyche so as to bring it in consonance with the organisational objectives. Thus, the cognitive structure that evaluates the ever increasingly complex administrative situation and initiates decisions must be impregnated with the domain values of the field and the knowledge regarding the relationship between value questions and factual questions for producing optimal outcomes. We all know that thirty years ago, information was a scarce resource. In the modern era information is in plenty but attention has become a scarce resource. This change in environment necessitates that the scarce attention of civil servants is securely hinged on to their roles which are further hinged on to the values of the domain so as to utilise their potential fully. The domain values would provide right kind of stimuli for response and action. Any deviation from them will produce a sub-optimal result.

Behind the logic and psychology of administrative decisions lie the questions of identity and dignity of the people executing administration. These questions often drive motivation for action. Their locus is related to but not limited to the opportunities of career progression often discussed in terms of administrative categories of position, rank and office. The origins of this motivation, related to questions of identity, is traceable fundamentally to the man's relationship to society as manifested in the performance of his duties towards the collective. The Hindu epic Bhagavata Gita prescribes the highest kind of duty ethics when it commands that one should do one's duty with all diligence, howsoever imperfectly he may do it, instead of doing someone else's duty well on a path to self-realisation. That is how one attains to a dignified existence and fulfils his role in the society - becomes a true Karmayogi. This conception of duty, bereft of any religious fervour, presents the centrality of role and its efficient performance in assuring dignity and self-respect of any individual. (We will discuss more on this aspect of our traditions supporting a clear delineation of roles later in this article.)

Capturing the threads of discussion up till now we can surmise that a comprehensive role description will specify both value and factual premises for the incumbent. It would enable the government employees to cooperate towards the organisational purpose by making stable expectations about the behaviour of others in the organisation; the realisation of these expectations is necessary for coordination of activities and would facilitate effective communication in an organisation. Not only that, any scientifically designed role would go on to insulate the public organisation from extraneous political pressures by linking skill, knowledge and experience with the position held. The value and factual premises specified as part of role description will steer the minds of any new entrant in the organisation in a desired direction in tune with the mission of the organisation. The relationship between public administration and the individuals who execute it is summed up by Simon in following words:

The FRAC strategy adopted by NPCSCB recognises the importance of the scientific design of roles for effective administration though terminology used is different. The value and factual premises behind the decisions are presented in the shape of competencies required to perform a role. Three competencies have been defined in the FRAC framework: behavioural, functional and domain. These competencies would enable the government employee to perform the activities chalked out as part of his role effectively. These competencies indicate a thorough knowledge about the

value and factual premises behind the decision. We have clarified above that a role may contain many sub-roles; a point understood in the FRAC framework by attaching an organisational position with multiple roles.

The whole narrative within public organisations is thus geared for change through the delineation of roles. By conceiving comprehensive role descriptions for civil servants, the NPCSCB intends to take Indian public administration forward to the fourth stage of its evolution discussed above. A consideration of the domain values would set it apart from the world of private business management which mostly works for a profit motive; an issue well considered in the literature on New Public Administration which arose in 1970s in the US and laid stress on restoration of public service values and purposes in government. Thus, the NPCSCB reforms possess the potential to herald a new era in public administration practices in India with number of positive externalities.

Public Administration after Independence

So far as the above description derived from organisation theory appears elementary, a further question pops up as to why we waited for so long in conceiving the changes through NPCSCB. Why we didn't go for such an exercise of framing roles immediately after independence? Few reasons adduced veer around the instabilities and consequent insecurities of the partition era that necessitated the preference for the values of peace and order. But a careful analysis reveals more. When the development administration was taking off in India in 1950s, illiteracy was widespread. Even a matric pass would easily secure a government job. In such a situation, public administration in India had to opt for a top-down approach. The people at the top of administrative pyramid (IAS, PCS and Group 'A' Central and State Services) would be selected through extremely competitive examinations (UPSC at the Centre and PSCs at the state level). They were in a minuscule minority - less than 5% of the total civil service employment to have any significant impact on shaping organisational culture. It was expected that they would provide a charismatic leadership and steer the democratic ship in consonance with public service values. Unfortunately, the reigning social heterogeneity of India produced a politics of identity wherein all individuals and groups vied for a larger share of scarce resources without thinking about their responsibilities towards the collective. The top bureaucracy couldn't keep itself isolated from the political environment. The much-coveted administrative autonomy foundered on the hotbed of real politic. To complicate the situation further, the drastic compression in pay structure for higher civil servants presented an existential dilemma to civil servants which would often result in their deviation from officially mandated goals.

The situation at the middle and bottom of the administrative pyramid was no different. The majority of the government employees were taken in Group 'B', 'C' and 'D' (around 95%) who even lacked appropriate levels of education that could enable their psychic-normative structure to make a switch from the traditional notions of morality rooted in culture and religion to the modern notions of morality rooted in the idea of liberal welfare democratic state.

These influences - of tradition and of modernity - communicated with civil servants in different metaphors, idioms and phrases that made the gulf between them too large to be abridged. There was no conscious effort on the part of the

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MISSION KARMAYOGI: MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK OF NPCSCB

- Monitoring and evaluation** of all users on the basis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Users include the individual learner, the supervisor, the organisation, the peer group, the content provider, the content creator and the technology service providers**
- A Dashboard** and an Annual State of the Civil Services Report
- To capture KPIs** for all Departments and agencies of the Government for ensuring best learning outcomes

state to bridge this gap by deliberately creating a vocabulary in terms of public service values, common to both tradition and modernity, through legislation or otherwise. Training schedules of civil servants remained procedural and routinised without any visible effort aimed at inculcation of values across the hierarchy. The obvious consequence of such an environment was concentration of the power towards the top of administrative pyramid. This concentration was bound to lower effectiveness of public organisations apart from resulting in problems of corruption, graft and nepotism.

This centralised administrative umbrella worked in tandem with the socialistic tendencies of the nascent Indian state and produced very high transaction costs in the economy. It was terribly out of sync with the global developmental currents and produced sub-optimal results resulting in the economic crisis in 1990s. Though the situation was handled deftly by bringing reforms to open up the economy, but a similar effort inside administration wasn't taken up. In that context, the launch of NPCSCB fills the gap. The ground conditions are also ripe for the fruition of the progressive ideas within the realm of public administration. The government is getting highly educated people to man even Group 'C' and Group 'D' jobs. And this talent only needs to be groomed properly by taking up a bottoms-up view of administration; an effort well conceived in the multi-pronged strategy of administrative rejuvenation under NPCSCB. It has been rightly understood, much to the delight of Kantians of the enlightenment era, that men are ends in themselves and deserve the dignity of a well-defined role. They are to be treated as thinking human beings, a proposition which even the Indian socio-cultural traditions support emphatically.

Duty Ethics in Indian Tradition

Defining a role also means prescribing duties and obligations attached to a position along with the authority to execute them. We have based our conclusion about the centrality of roles in organisational design primarily on the discussion of the decision-making approach of Herbert Simon. A similar conclusion is reachable through a careful consideration of the duty ethics prescribed in our spiritual and philosophical traditions. The help of administrative theory of Herbert Simon has been taken to make the point easily understandable in the idiom we are comfortable after the British interlude on Indian soil. The following discussion will make this issue clear. Whether it is the monistic idealism of the Upanishadas or the theism of Bhagavat Gita, the Indian spiritual-philosophical tradition has always accorded divine potential to every individual irrespective of his birth. The Upanishadic aphorisms - Tat Tvam Asi (Thou that Art) and Aham Brahm Asmi (I am Brahman) - and our belief in them through the ages is a testimony to that effect. The recognition of this potential and not the denial of it laid the basis of the varna system. In its original conception, the varna system stressed on the intrinsic qualities in a person and assigned duties accordingly. (In somewhat similar manner, Plato also argued in favour of the functional division of society into three classes.) Through a dedicated performance of the allocated duties, an individual could scale up the social hierarchy. The varna system was open and flexible and afforded social mobility to people. However, with the passage of time, it decayed into rigid and inflexible caste. So far as the philosophical bearings of the varna system carried the universal norms of human nature, one can always draw upon it for rejuvenation of any system of human endeavour. In the context we are in, we may recall that the varna system provided a stable foundation to society by clarifying each individual's role.

If we venture further into the Indian tradition, we can spot many other instances of specifying a code of ethics. The Ash-tanga Yoga of Patanjali as well as the noble eightfold path enunciated by Buddha lay down a detailed moral code for the performance of one's professional role. This clarity in laying role and the dedication to perform it ensured dignity at work. This dignity and the consequent social stability made India one of the most flourishing economies - it produced around 25% of the world GDP in the 18th century when the industrial revolution in the West changed the paradigm of economic production.

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administration is not unlike play-acting. The task of the good actor is to know and play his role, although different roles may differ greatly in content. The effectiveness of the performance will depend upon the effectiveness of the play and the effectiveness with which it is played. The effectiveness of the administrative process will vary with the effectiveness of the organisation and the effectiveness with which its members play their parts

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DEPARTMENT OF
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MISSION KARMAYOGI: FUNCTIONS OF CAPACITY BUILDING COMMISSION (2/2)

New Paradigm of Capacity Building

Suggest policy intervention in areas of HR Reforms

Functional supervisory role over all central training institutions to harmonise training standards

To formulate **Mid-Career Training Programme (MCTP)** for all services and to set norms for the same

Create **shared learning resources** including shared faculty and resource hubs

To set norms for **horizontal & common mid career** training programs for all civil servants

HR

Another point much less understood about the principles of social organisation followed in ancient India is that they never engulfed the world of individual fully. Humaneness immanent in these principles recognised the value of individual initiative. If one dives deeper into the Indian philosophical tradition, it considers the human potential as ever expanding through the four stages of life (listed as part of varnashrama dharma in our scriptures). The third (vanaprastha) and the fourth stage (sannyasa) are indicative of an extreme in-

dividual enterprise where the individual sheds all his attachments to the material world and pursues the path of knowledge. Interestingly, when we consider the Individualism Index Values for 76 countries located across the globe, while USA (1st), Australia (2nd) and Great Britain (3rd) topped the chart and the Latin American countries - Panama (74th), Ecuador (75th) and Guatemala (76th) - appeared at the bottom, India is situated quite high on the 33rd position. Pakistan ranks a low 70. The deeper philosophical undercurrents of the Indian tradition that recognise a divine potential in every individual offer the most plausible explanation for this phenomenon. Thus, all individuals were considered capable of performing their assigned duties through an independent exercise of their minds.

The pursuit of knowledge laid down in the varnashrama system wasn't an isolated quest but the one that produced many moral anchors who worked incessantly for the collective life through the ages. This pursuit attains its highest perfection in the realm of governance as observed aptly in the famous treatise on statecraft, Mahabharata: 'In Governance is realised all the forms of renunciation; in Governance is united all the sacraments; in Governance is combined all knowledge; in Governance is centred all the worlds.' Thus, the civil servants are the most profitably situated category in the modern times to follow the highest duty ethics prescribed in our scriptures on the path of self-actualisation, if only that path can be brought closer to them in an easily understandable idiom; the beginnings of this effort apparently lie in design of their roles in a way that they draw dignity and self-respect through its effective performance.

Ironically, when the British conquered India, they could never understand these fine undercurrents of the Indian tradition. Blinded by their ethnocentric outlook acquired in the background of their selfish colonial interests, the British donned a civilising mission which needed natives as clerks working on precedents to sustain the Empire. The delineation of an individual role in any government position that could have enabled an incumbent to a life of dignity and self-respect through efficient task performance was alien to their thinking. This alien mindset got reflected in the administrative structures they erected. The native civil servants, considered inferior, were to be subsumed in a procedural administration bereft of any guidance regarding welfare values. They were to be commanded instead of given a chance to think independently. While voluminous conduct rules were made to control their world, there were hardly any positive descriptions of official roles. It was conveniently forgotten that a role in favour of every position in public organisations is in consonance with the long followed socio-cultural traditions in India.

Political Philosophy of Administrative Reforms

As we cannot separate value questions from factual questions, the much argued politico-administrative dichotomy and consequent administrative autonomy may not always be feasible. It is neither welcomed by those in power. But administrative reforms undertaken to realise it possess the promise of assuring smooth governance. Ironically, because of strong existential reasons, administrative reforms have never been on priority of action by governments anywhere in the world. The elected governments have always preferred to take actions related to raising of hard infrastructure like roads, bridges, dams and power stations in addition to populist measures by doling out quotas, subsidies and freebies. Such projects possess a shorter time span and generate a visible effect which can be encashed at the time of next elections. Their execution can be easily expedited through the techniques of project management, the knowledge

of which can be derived from the private business management practices of the day. However, the real work of any welfare government lies in changing the quality of billions of interactions between the citizens and the instruments of state to obtain public services. It requires stress on raising soft infrastructure which comprises the quality of education and health facilities along with creation of a robust social security net in favour of the poor. And improvement in these sectors is possible only through a paradigmatic shift in our efforts at administrative reforms; a shift that aims at a change in organisational culture in public sector especially in the context of developing countries where the administrative system hasn't been able to shed its patrimonial structure fully to attain an autonomous status. While, indeed, such a change has been conceived through NPCSCB, its successful implementation would remain a challenge that would require a sound strategy for the execution of reforms.

First, as the reforms proceed, the change generated may tend to insulate public organisations from the unnecessary political influence, a fact that can cause considerable discomfort and insecurity among the political class about the consequences of reforms. Therefore, after the initial push for reforms by the political executive, the assurance for their further continuation will have to come from within the bureaucracy. Second, while the public organisations at the Centre are well placed to implement the proposed reforms having attained a degree of professionalism during the course of their evolution, problems will occur while dealing with the administrative system in the states where the environment is comparatively more volatile politically. Ironically, the reforms in states are required on priority as the basic public services to citizens that are integral to any progressive notion of development are provided under the state umbrella. Third, the role framing in public sector organisations requires fundamental differences in approach from that of the private sector. While action in the latter is undertaken in terms of profit maximisation, the public sector organisations require a clarity regarding the instrumental values behind day-to-day decisions. In addition to lessons from the New Public Management era of the 1980s regarding downsizing government and incorporating managerial competencies in handling resources, the public service value ethic must pervade the action categories of any reform scheme. Such a course would require considerable amount of action research for understanding the relationship between the valuational and factual questions across diverse domains. Necessary competencies may be in short supply at present in this regard. The silver lining in surmounting these challenges, as in any other administrative reforms, is the presence of the all-India services common to both the Centre and the states with the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) at the apex. However, as these reforms, by granting the dignity of role to every individual, possess a strong and subtle decentralising content, the IAS will have to redefine its own role in the emerging scheme of things. Their role with priority assigned to the management of the political end of the hierarchy will change to one that balances the act of political management with management of the internal work processes inside organisations.

A positive start in surmounting these challenges has already taken off with the realisation of domain competencies in the careers of All India Service officers. The Department of Personnel and Training has issued guidelines mandating every officer to give his preference for the domains he would like to work in while submitting his annual work performance. The FRAC strategy will complement this reform by bringing the goal of nurturing domain competencies among the rest of government employees which are involved in ground level operations. By doing so, it would provide the much needed fillip to their careers. This will include not only the millions of staff employees who work without any detailed specification regarding roles, but also the line employees whose roles, though specified, but lack the finesse required. Needless to impress upon more that the most important institutional knowledge one requires on entering an organisation is the understanding of one's role relative to others. The incorporation of roles of all the organisational members will constitute the Blue Book for the organisation. It would provide a blueprint for all the activities to be undertaken for the attainment of the organisational objectives. This Blue Book for all public organisations of India will transform the system of public administration from a jumble of posts and unresponsive rule-based administration to an organised, reflective and responsive stream of role-based administration. The aims of NPCSCB (Mission Karmayogi), in this regard, are laudable indeed. ■

References

The report of the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission makes a scathing observation with reference to the functioning of bureaucracy in India in the following words: '...the functioning of the civil service is characterised by a great deal of negativity, lack of responsiveness to what the people want and the dictates of democracy...' (See tenth report of the 2nd ARC titled as Refurbishing of Personnel Administration. 2008. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Government of India. p. v.).

Lant Pritchett, a Harvard economist, in an insightful article, titled as Is India a Flailing State, captures the state of public administration in India in a disarray. He concludes by terming the Indian state as flailing (not failing in terms of the health of electoral



democracy), that is, a state that lacks control of its administrative apparatus to deliver basic services to its citizens. (See *Is India a Flailing State? - Detours on the Four Lane Highway to Modernisation*. HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. 2009.)

The details of NPCSCB are available at <https://doptrg.nic.in/igotmk/FRAC.html> (accessed on 26 January, 2022).

The primary consideration behind any training module is inculcation of the values of public service. Imparting of the knowledge necessary to execute policies comes next. While the latter aspect was taken care of, the former got a short shrift in the procedural administration adopted in India after independence. We will deliberate upon the fact as to how the launch of NPCSCB will go on to correct this most conspicuous anomaly of public administration in India.

Economic Survey for the year 2017-18 of India mentions the total public sector employment at 17.61 million that includes employees under the central government, state governments, quasi-governments and local bodies. (Economic Survey 2017-18. (2018). Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Vol. II, p. A65.) The number is inclusive of both staff and line employees with the former involved in standardising and supervising the work of the latter. At present, the millions of staff employees largely work based on precedent with no detailed roles specifying the content of their works. The line employees have got specified roles but these are written in a procedural way (for example, duties of a teacher would be to complete syllabus, submit timely reports etc.) that would often fail to extract their true potential in pursuit of our developmental goals, a situation that NPCSCB intends to alter.

Cooley, Charles H. 1933. *Introductory Sociology*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Cooley, Charles H.

An illuminating discussion of this divergence between practice and theory in developing countries is undertaken by Fred W. Riggs in his seminal work *Administration in Developing Countries*. 1964. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, USA.

Hawthorne studies were carried out by Mayo, Roethlisberger and Dickson in the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago in 1920s. Experimenters studied the change in output of a group of girls (who assembled telephone equipment) with a change in the working conditions that might comprise non-human elements like working hours per day, number and length of rest pauses, exposure to sunlight etc. After observing the effects of changes, experimenters concluded that productivity, quality of output and motivation to work depended on the social relations, often informal, workers were embedded in. See *Organisational Psychology* by Edgar H. Schein. 1970. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey. pp. 31-37

An exception to this rule had been China and few other south-east Asian countries which possess a long history of selecting civil servants through competitive examinations. Not the whims and fancies of the rulers or any ascriptive characteristics based on birth accorded the membership of the privileged bureaucracy but the performance in a competitive exam secured it. This quest for merit-based bureaucracy has been a significant step towards the separation of political and administrative spheres. See *Lost Modernities* by Alexander Woodside for details in this regard. Harvard University Press, England. 2006.

For a bird's eye view regarding the various stages in the evolution of public administration, see *New Horizons of Public Administration* by Mohit Bhattacharya. (2000). Jawahar Publishers, New Delhi. (2016 ed.), pp. 1-21.

This phase was largely influenced through the works of Frederick W. Taylor, Henri Fayol, Gulick and Urwick.

For a detailed analysis of decision-making processes in administrative organisations, see *Administrative Behavior* by Herbert A Simon. 1997 (Fourth Edition). The Free Press, New York.

The public organisations in India have defined the functions of its members clearly but no substantive work has been done in defining the content of the work.

Simon, Herbert A. *The Sciences of the Artificial*. 1996. (Third Edition). The MIT Press, USA. p. xii.

The situation has not changed much. The bureaucratic structure in India continues to be top-heavy. Bibek Debroy estimates the Group B, C and D employment as constituting 95% of the total government employment. See *Indian Bureaucracy - Dismantling Steel Frame* by Bibek Debroy. ISA S Insights, No. 44 dated 9 January 2009.

According to the Fifth Pay Commission report, the compression ratio between the maximum salary (pre-tax) and minimum salary at the time of independence was 54:1 which has come down to 8:1 in the year 1996. (Fifth Pay Commission Report (vol. I). 1997. Cited by K. P. Krishnan and T. V. Somanathan in *Civil Service: An Institutional Perspective in Public Institutions in India*. (2017). Edited by Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta. Oxford University Press, India. p. 300.)

There has been no specific mention of civil service values separately in the Constitution. Of late, the public organisations have been asked to draft their vision and mission statements along with citizen charters but these efforts are too remote from the day-to-day lives of civil servants and fail to produce the sought-after impact. The 2nd ARC had earlier realised this mistake and proposed a set of 'civil service values' and a 'code of ethics' as part of Civil Services Bill. However, the reform didn't take-off. For a detailed discussion on Civil Services Code that would specify Civil Service Values, see tenth report of the 2nd ARC titled as 'Refurbishing of Personnel Administration'. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Government of India. pp. 282-290.

Paul H Appleby, an expert on public administration, noticed in the context of the quality of administrative structures in India that as 'democracy within administration is prerequisite to any valid and effective democracy in citizen-government relationships' and because the spread of power within the administrative structures has not happened, there are bound to be concerns about the future adequacy of existing structural arrangements to tackle development problems. Appleby, Paul H. 1953. *Report of a Survey*. Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India. p. 9.

India ranked a poor 85 on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2021. (See <https://www.transparency.org/country/IND> (accessed on 26 January, 2022)).

Recently, in a recruitment drive, around 5000 graduates, 28000 post-graduates and 3700 PhD holders applied for the 62 posts of messengers for the Telecom wing of UP Police for which minimum eligibility is class V. (Times of India, 2 September 2018.)

Immanuel Kant is the foremost philosopher of the enlightenment era in the West. He traced the origins of morality in the human faculty of reason and not in the authority of tradition. Every individual is capable of possessing this faculty of reason and by performing his assigned duties, he attains to a moral life; a life with respect and dignity. For more on Kant's deontological ethics, see *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant. 2019 (5th Ed.) Edited by: Mary Gregor and Jens Timmerman. Cambridge University Press, New Delhi.

Any attempt to draw inspiration for administrative reforms based on Indian spiritual and socio-cultural traditions may appear far-fetched at the first glance. However, when we consider the discipline of public administration as part of political science which draws inspiration from political philosophy, the tenuous relationship between administrative theory and our spiritual-philosophical traditions becomes real and pragmatic. Hinduism as a way of life has always been a moral guide to the Indians coming from all walks of life and civil servants are no exception to this rule.

For an illuminating discussion on Indian spiritual traditions, see *Indian Philosophy* by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Volume 1 and 2. 2015 (Twelfth Impression). Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

The popular backlash one witnesses in modern India against the varna classification owes more to existential reasons than philosophic underpinnings of the varna system.

The varna system laid down a specific role for every individual based on his class. Brahmins, as men of knowledge and wisdom, would teach; Kshatriyas, as men of courage, would handle power and fight wars; Vaishayas, as men of science, would indulge in trade and commerce; and Shudras, as men of senses, would serve the society through manual labour. The reason was similar to that adduced by Plato in favour of the functional division of Greek society into classes of guardians (men of wisdom), soldiers (men of passion) and producers (men of appetite).

The Nanda dynasty and the Maurya dynasty that ruled in ancient India are conjectured to possess shudra and tribal origins by historians. Valmiki, who wrote the Hindu epic Ramayana, was a shudra by birth but accorded brahmin status because of his learning. There have been many more examples in literature depicting the relative openness of the varna system.

The Individualism Index has been calculated by surveying employees of IBM from 76 countries scattered across the globe. There is another index, relevant to the discussion we are in - Power Distance (PD) Index that measures the emotional distance between the superior and the subordinate. Most of the countries that rank high on Individualism Index are the developed ones and they rank quite low on PD Index as the development owes to the flourishing of individual initiative. However, it is not so in case of India. On PD Index, India is ranked unusually high. It shows that the relations within an organisation are still constricted in India and require equalisation for producing better outcomes. The guidance for such an action must be derived from the philosophical undercurrents of the Indian philosophy known for its advocacy of pursuit of knowledge that made India a proud contributor to the world heritage through its achievements in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, art and architecture and literature in ancient times. See *Cultures and Organizations* by Geert et al. 2010. McGraw Hill, USA. pp. 53-134.

Cited in *India After Gandhi* by Ramachandra Guha. 2007. Picador India (2017). p. 103.

The Manual of Office Procedure still defines roles of staff employees in terms of following precedent. Though it is geared for change after the implementation of Mission Karmayogi. Visit https://darp.gov.in/sites/default/files/CSMOP_0_0.pdf for details regarding the Manual of Office Procedure. pp. 6-7. (accessed on 18 March, 2022).

See Notification No. G.S.R. 519 (E) dated 23/07/2019 issued by the Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

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