

Item No.51.5 Address by the President of the IIPA.

Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Vice-President of India and President of the Institute thanked the members of the General Body of the Institute for inviting him to the meeting of the General Body. In his address, Shri Shekhawat remarked that the old systems of Governance have proved inadequate in the wake of world reducing to a global village in the era of fast changes on all fronts i.e. economic, technological, social and political. Amidst the rising expectations of vast majority of people in the 20th century, there is a need for a new paradigm of efficient system of governance.

He added that there is need for devising a system to cope and meet with the present and emerging needs and aspirations of people and take care of the problems of overcoming under-development for which constant change is necessary. He quoted the famous words of Albert Einstein as "The significant problems we face cannot be solved, at the same level of thinking we were at, when we created them" and emphasised the need for constant review and appropriate modification of the strategy, the process as well as the approach of action based on new thinking and ever-widening horizon of knowledge to be dynamic mode of 'change' which will constantly reform our system of governance, so that it is always forward-looking and

innovative, and is ever full of vitality and strength to successfully meet emerging challenges and problems.

He desired that administration has also to play a pro-active role in social engineering, with every public servant performing as leader of social change. Building the new social order will help in achieving the core objective of democracy, which means overcoming under-development, alleviation of poverty and promoting common man's welfare. So long as the deprived and neglected sections of society do not become part of the welfare state, and enjoy meaningful access to basic education, healthcare or shelter, the success of four pillars of democracy would remain incomplete. The poverty alleviation and overcoming under-development according to him as the key fifth pillar of democracy needs to be strengthened with utmost seriousness otherwise there is grave risk of collapse of the very edifice of democracy.

Appreciating the efforts made by successive governments, he stated that over the years they have come out with a vast array of development programmes with focused objectives and higher allocation of resources for ensuring the well being of the poor and the deprived sections of the society. Even then our efforts towards poverty reduction have not met with desired success. He emphasised the need for becoming aware of critical gaps in development strategy, programme formulation, implementation and delivery system to evolve the right solutions. In this regard, Indian Institute of Public Administration, as an administrative think-tank, ought to come out with suggestions for corrective and remedial measures to plug the loopholes.

To bring about social change and transformation and promote human happiness and welfare a system has to be evolved. Recalling his long experience in public life he stated that good governance in democracy is nothing but being sensitive to the needs of common man, taking care of his problems with sympathy and compassion, managing public programmes and projects with honesty, integrity and efficiency and undertaking programmes and projects for growth and development in the larger interest of the society as a whole.

To achieve this objective, he believed that there is need to bring about a qualitative change in the content, as also in the direction of administration. A system that promotes growth and development with equity, a growth that is not 'jobless' but that which creates jobs; a development that promotes people's welfare and happiness is the need of the hour. Economic growth along with social development, the development that promotes social harmony and bridges the 'gap' and the

'divide' between the poor, between the 'have' – nots', development which is sustainable; that which upgrades environment; a development that has rich content of human development, a system of governance that shall build a knowledge society – a society not with just a few knowledge-islands, but where every village of the country becomes a knowledge center will be an ideal situation.

He added, the objective of speedy growth and promoting people's welfare will be achieved only through efficient delivery of goods and services to the common man. Therefore, quality of governance that is efficient as well as corruption-free is today the most important determinant of performance, transparency and accountability which are necessary ingredients of good governance. The Right to Information Act is effective instrument of improving the efficiency of delivery system of all our public welfare programmes, such as Public Distribution System, schemes for employment generation and various rural development works through widest possible dissemination and sharing of information on progress of their implementation.

He opined that while reforms in administrative system are essential for delivery of the desired results, it will require attempts to reform and rejuvenate the administrative system alongwith simultaneous reforms in the body politics.

He remarked that the task of improving governance is going to be stupendous as well as formidable. There is need to implement wide-ranging, comprehensive and holistic reforms. Realising the need for it, the Union Government has recently set up an Administrative Reforms Commission; its valuable recommendations will firm up the reform agenda. In this context, he anticipated that the IIPA can play a significant role by giving useful suggestions to the commission. He also hoped that IIPA will perform the role of a permanent think-tank on reforms; being always alert to the emerging challenges and evolving new initiatives and innovations that would keep the system of administration in a dynamic and ever-rejuvenating mode.

Highlighting the role of work ethos, he stated that the task of improving governance will not be accomplished without imbibing a new work ethos. A regime of good governance in isolation can not be conceived of. He invited all to endeavor and make sincere and earnest efforts to build an environment, which is conducive to good governance. The seed of good governance will grow only if the social ethos and ethics of our conduct are governed by eternal values of dharma. Indeed, such a value system would need to be integral part of culture and ethos of good governance.

One can never over stress the need, as also the urgency, of improving public governance. Today, our people are impatient to have a governance that delivers and promotes their welfare and ensures fast and all round development. We cannot be on fast growth trajectory without good governance, which is efficient as well as hassle-free and corruption-free. The 50 core plus youth of India are anxiously looking forward to the vision of a fully developed and prosperous India before the year 2020. We have an obligation, as also the responsibility, to keep our promises and give our youth a better tomorrow.

He hoped that, with the keen interest of the members of IIPA in the subject of public governance and administration, members would give serious consideration to the issues and challenges confronting us today. He assured that in the mission of improving public administration, IIPA would continue to deserve all support and help from the Government. He expected the Institute playing even a more pro-active role in the years to come.