

Item 4: Address by the President of the IIPA, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma

Shri S.B. Chavan, Chairman of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Dr. B. Venkatappiah, Prof. M.V. Mathur, Shri L.P. Singh, Shri G.C.L. Joneja, Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Shri P.K. Umashankar, distinguished members of the faculty, distinguished administrators and distinguished members of the Indian Institute of Public Administration!

Really speaking, whenever I come to your Institute, I have always a feeling while addressing you, that I am trying to address those who are experts in the field, who have devoted their time to the cause of developing administrative skills and keeping administration up-to-date and especially those who have distinguished in academic fields and who are distinguished administrators. So, naturally, I have to talk in really what should be termed as homilies, and I hope you will pardon me and bear with me, if you feel that I am indulging in homilies. This has become natural at this age, especially when you do not have anything otherwise worthwhile to talk about.

Anyway, the distinguished Director referred to the circumstances in which we are meeting. Of course, you have been very busy and I should not impose much, especially when you have carried on your meeting for more than six hours in the morning, and you are going to sit up again. But I was thinking, should we not, the combination of people who are here reflect on this state of affairs, and we, what as administrators, can do to improve, and see that this type of condition does not recur, where the Director has to say that we are meeting in this sorry state of affairs. This is a long-term goal, but we have got to think about it. This again

shows, to my mind, a number of challenges. Because you have been called the civil service, often called the steelframe of the administration; and it should be so; those who administer things which come their way, they should not influence the administration as such.

Just now I was shown a book on the French Administrative System. It is often being said that in the Continent the governments come and go, they change, but the work goes on. And that is very important. In our country also, I often tell people--I hope Chavan Saheb will pardon me--I sometimes say that that is a presumption on the part of Ministers to think that they run the government; but the real government is run by the civil service, run in the sense they decide how it moves, in which direction it moves. It is a presumption on the part of the Minister that he runs the government. The actuality is that it moves in the direction, in the way the civil service decides. This is my considered opinion with quite a bit of experience--of course, very old now--as an administrator, as a Minister; not much as an administrator but as a Minister. That is why, when I talk to legislators and others, I always tell them, it all depends upon the equation the Minister is able to develop with the administrator that he will be able to get things done. Of course, at times I have seen the possibilities, when the administrator or administrators do not like something, it just does not happen. That is why I tell them that they have to study hard before they make any proposal.

That apart, I will specially mention it to show the importance of administration in the modern day. It is natural that in an administration so many developments are taking place. In those developments, the administrator must be up-to-date. It is not possible for any politician to be up-to-date. Further, the administration in the 1990s cannot be run, as it was run in 1947 when Panditji took over, or on his guidance in the forties. Compared with the administration in the forties or even in the fifties, the methods, the instruments at their disposal, they have all changed in the nineties. Naturally, in order that the administration is carried on efficiently, we have to see that the latest methodology, the latest approach, the latest gadgets available to make work of administration easier, they are all properly utilized. I need not go into the details.

Here I may mention that, according to me, the responsibility

for whatever is taking place in my country, if I may use the term 'major responsibility' even in a democracy squarely lies on the so-called bureaucracy or the administrators. You have got to be up-to-date, because a great deal depends upon the attitude adopted.

In 1947, the country took over the British system. For the administrative personnel in the early stage, the personality of the Ministers and their sacrifices proved to be the moving spirit which led the administrators to move on. But no country can be so lucky as to have people of that calibre, that sacrifice and that commitment for all times. Consequently, the burden of working out the administration, in accordance with the wishes of the farmers of the Constitution, lies on the administrative service. Here I am repeating it with a purpose, because it will not do for you to think of passing the buck, passing the responsibility, on the elected representatives; because, as it is jocularly said, they are a 'temporary service' while you are the 'permanent service'. Something has got to be done here.

You will have to remember always the objectives of our Constitution. There was a lot of discussion about the commitment of the civil service, a lot was written in the press. Fifteen years back everybody was talking about it. I say that commitment is most important, but it should be commitment normally related to human welfare. In that sense, every member of the civil service, everybody has to be committed to the objectives of our Constitution.

I think, after these 43 years, the time has come when we must, in an academic institution like this, think how far we have achieved the objectives set before us by the Constitution; after the framing of our Constitution, in the last 40 years how much we have achieved. I am not talking about the objectives for which the freedom struggle was fought, but the objectives which are enshrined in the Constitution. If we have failed, why have we failed? I think that is what should be thought about.

I will give you an example, which is very much in my mind, an example which always strikes me very much for the last one year. After independence, for these 43 years, we have before us the objectives in education, free and compulsory education. Everybody knows that we have not achieved it. But the fact is, the total number of illiterates in my country in 1990 is higher than what it was in 1947; in percentage terms it has come down, but

the total number has increased. We have got the invidious distinction of India having the largest illiterate population in any country in the world. We have to ponder about it.

I am mentioning it with a purpose, how an administrator can do it. In Kerala it has been achieved. I hope there are some friends from Kerala here. The people of Kottayam, the educationists and the administrators, decided that Kottayam city should be totally literate and Kottayam city became literate. Then in Ernakulam district the collector—I think it is collector in Kerala; I may be wrong; don't catch me on that—the Administrative Officer in-charge of the district decided that illiteracy should be a thing of the past, so far as Ernakulam district is concerned, and it has been achieved. Now Kerala is talking of eradicating illiteracy from the entire State of Kerala altogether. I am specially mentioning it, because this is an achievement of the administrators, if I may use the term which is talked about more often, the much maligned administrators; because, whenever anything goes wrong, we put it on the bureaucracy. But here is an achievement.

Of course, when I have talked to people, they have always said, it was easy in Kerala because Kerala had a large percentage of literacy earlier; so, they could achieve it. But, is it that alone, or there is something more in it? Could we do it? I do not know whether it come within your purview. To my mind, this strikes me as something where a study can be made of the methods adopted, a critical study of the methods adopted in Kerala, how far they can be adopted in other States also. I think some such study has to be done, because we have got to tackle this problem.

I told you, there must be commitment to the ideals of the Indian Constitution, because we are all wedded to it, because we have all adopted it. As administrators, you may not take oath to uphold the Constitution, but you are supposed to uphold the Constitution. We must see how we can do it. That is why I thought this is one subject which you can consider.

There is the problem of drinking water or the number of persons suffering from leprosy and other problems. I do not know whether it comes within your purview, but you have to take specific problems before you; not a general theme but a specific problem; it is necessary. Academically it is possible to distinguish them, but ultimately they merge into each other.

So, I was thinking of our commitment to the Constitution, the commitment to the values in fact. Pandit Nehru started your institution with great hopes. We have got to fulfil them. Our Constitution is committed to democracy, secularism and socialism. How far have we succeeded in all the three--democratisation, socialism and secularism? Our meaning of socialism is different from the meaning that is adopted by the people in general. Our socialism did not stand for public taking over of every activity. That is why we find that socialism has failed, as I am often told, in the first socialist state in the world. But that has not been, has never been, our objective. Our objective is something different, social justice.

You will be interested to know that yesterday I was presiding over a function very near to you, Gandhi Darshan, where there was a lecture by a Professor from USA, Prof. Page, a Professor of Political Science. He had been at Harvard and other universities and he is one of the very respected Political Science Professors of USA. I was very happy when he used the word Sarvodaya. If I may put it, our socialism is nearer to Sarvodaya. He has explained it as the development of everybody. That is what we stand for; that is what Bapu stood for. He was talking of Bapu, but he talked about Sarvodaya as being a method. He has taken it in the wider range of non-violence, sarvodaya being possible only when poverty and hunger are eliminated from the world as a whole. Of course, they have been the ideals which Panditji propounded, which he put it in his trust with destiny. Before that also, he often said it.

Anyway, how far are we from social justice? Development with social justice was the pet term used by Pandit Nehru. I would like to know, whether it comes in the normal course or not, if something is done to see where we are failing in achieving the objective of development with social justice. It is very vital, to my mind, because many of the ills today are because of development not being development with social justice. Nobody can deny that India has developed in these years. I have heard it from experts, from everybody, and there are those criteria. It could be faster, those questions are there, but how much our planning process should have done?

I have been wondering--the experts should examine it--whether the troubles that we are having at present, are they not because of the absence of social justice? I may be wrong--it is an aca-

democratic body and I think I can speak out—the regional problems that are coming up, the divisive forces that are raising their ugly heads in different parts of India, is it not a fact that there is a great deal in the statement that the development of the country as a whole has been lop-sided. Of course, these things are whipped up, no doubt, and that is the job of politicians. I am more of a politician and so I can say it. That is the job of the politician. But there must be something to be whipped up. The feeling of regional injustice gives rise to various problems.

We always insist on unity in diversity. But unity in diversity is possible only if the administration does full justice to the diverse elements. The question is, whether we are doing it, may be, in the north, south, east and west, so far as States are concerned, areas are concerned. The result you have seen in the sense, academically speaking, the number of States is going up. Why? Because the people felt that certain areas were growing, while others were not. That is why they demand for a Development Board in the State. There must be something behind such demands.

I was wondering if some such case studies could be taken up on the Bodo problem. Then, why the problem in Darjeeling, why the Naxalite problem in some states and why the demand for separate states? You can talk about the failure of the political leadership, but I want you to study the problem methodically. As I have said in the beginning, you cannot pass on the buck. By blaming the political leadership, you cannot escape, just as the political leadership cannot escape by putting it on bureaucracy, claiming bureaucratic delay and so on and so forth.

I wish you could consider today why we are having this divide. Academically, you have got to analyse it; you are the people who can do it, not the politicians. Why are we having this divide today, divide on different grounds, communal divide, divide on the ground of urban and rural? There must be a study. Are we able to stop the movement to the urban area from the rural area? Why is it that the population of Bombay City and Delhi city goes on increasing, they are disintegrating? Who will look into it from that point of view? Because, it is excellent to think about generalisation. I was wondering if it comes within your scope to take up a specific problem and see what is the basis for it and how it can be changed.

In that context, there is Panditji's main theme that democracy should seep down to the lowest level, his commitment to demo-

cratic decentralisation. Or, do we go back to Bapu's concept of every village becoming a unit? Some of us, people educated in the western way, pooh-poohed the self-sufficient villages and so on and so forth, but today I find the world is looking towards it, at least in the developing world. Now, I was wondering, so far as democratic decentralisation is concerned, or panchayati raj which is our tradition, where has it failed? Is there something lacking in the structure, or is there something so far as administration is concerned? How far is its failure due to the feeling among the administrators, or their desire and natural tendency, of not giving up power? I want you to analyse it. I am not giving you any of my own opinion; I want you to think about it, how far is it because of people. What is the remedy?

To my mind, broadly speaking, it looks, as you say, less identification with the people of India, the people living in the villages. The people who are doing panchayat work, quote a large number of them who may be elected to the panchayats, are illiterate. But, is that enough for us to decide? Is it not a fact that we lack faith in the common man? Democracy depends upon faith in the common man. It was the faith in the common man of India that brought us freedom. Bapu said it, Panditji said it; I still remember, when the Constitution was being framed, the talk and discussion was whether the franchise should be limited only to literates. Many reasons can be given. Of course, you can argue, many of our ills may be because people are not so well educated that they can be misled. That argument is still possible. We have moved away from our faith in them. When the struggle was started who expected that we would succeed? But it was due to the commitment to the faith, I would say, faith in the country, faith in the people of the country, faith in the future of the country.

If it does not work in order to achieve it, some methods have got to be found. Now, what those methods can be, you have to consider concretely. I have given the general things, like identification with the common man. You can add to it. How can it be achieved? What are the methods that can be put down in the rules of administration?

Of course, the rules of administration alone will not help. Since Shri Chaturvedi is here, it reminds me, yesterday or the day before, there was a conference of Income-tax officers. I do not know whether there are any finance people here. This has been talked

about time and again, the simplification of the income-tax procedure. There is so much talk of the black money. How can we go about it? How can we work out the methods so that there is no black money generated? Generalisation? Old politicians like me may come out with suggestions which may look very good, but they may not serve the purpose. There have been suggestions from the politicians, but the black money has been growing, upsetting our economy. I have been told by great economists that this is one of the banes of our economy. How can we check it?

I talked about corruption last time. I think we will have to work out methods by which corruption can be eliminated by administrative procedures, not by homilies, lectures or rituals. People like me are very fond of delivering lectures, which I am more or less doing at this time today.

I was wondering, what methods we can adopt by which delays can be eliminated in administration. How can we work out methods by which files move? When I watch the TV sometimes, I see jokes about administrative delays. I know corruption comes because of administrative delays. So far as corruption is concerned, I cannot help repeating that we are in the ugly situation that one bridge which was built in Goa collapsed and a new one is being build. At that time, while delivering the Convocation Address of the Goa University, I said that the fault is not in the engineering skill of our engineers or our technicians--I am referring to the old bridge, not the new one--it is because of corruption, not using the amount of cement that is needed for having the proper mixture. We must consider how it brings down the nation's prestige over the world when it happens. I have seen it with my own eyes, to talk about our technological growth, the technological skill of our engineers and this thing happens. It has happened again. I wonder whether we can work out--you can work out, because you are capable of doing it; that is why I am repeating it to you--the methods by which this can be eliminated.

You have also got to see how the supervision of the supervisor, does it help or does it merely add more to the expenditure on administration, rather than in the work being correctly done; merely appointing an inspector over an inspector, whatever correct administrative terminology you use, whether it helps or some other method can be worked out.

I still remember, when Appleby came here, he talked about a

number of stages through which the files passed and he analysed the delays involved. We often discuss it. Our Shri L.P. Singh had long discussions with Appleby. One of the things he referred to was how the stages in administrative decision-making takes away the initiative and responsibility from one person and vests it in another. What methods can we adopt so that responsibility is fixed and there is more devolution of authority?

Now mere generalisation is no good. How can it be done in different stages? I have talked about it to a Professor from USA. Prof. M.V. Mathur is an alumni from Harvard School of Public Administration. Recently, many of the Professors have felt that in India there is not that much devolution of authority and responsibility. Both of them go together.

So far as politicians are concerned--I am not taking them wilfully--there again, when I was just starting, in life, one of the things Panditji said was: "Put responsibility on a person; do not interfere; let him deliver the goods; if he does not, take action". The same thing was repeated in the first lecture by Panditji to youngsters like me, when I took over in the Government in 1952. I tried to do it in my own way.

You may consider whether we need all these stages in administration, whether there can be a method of doing away with delays and helping in doing away with corruption. Then, how far this corruption can be done away with panchayati raj and democratic decentralisation? The hope that Panditji felt was, if we involve the people who are the beneficiaries, things will move faster and better, and you may be able to fulfil their wishes.

Lastly, before I end, I want to talk about the capacity to identify, to work out a method by which the common man feels that it is his decision, not an imposed decision. Human nature being what it is, you may have given the best decision, but the decision should be felt by the beneficiary, that it is not only for his benefit, but he is a participant in that decision making, which is ultimately for his benefit.

Then I am posing before you the word 'socialism', democratic socialism. So far as socialism is concerned, there is a lot of talk about socialism having failed in the first country where it was practised. I have got analysis from different sources of its failure in the USSR. Today we have been talking about public sector

passing on to private hands. In India also we are talking about it. It is a sort of decision on the competence of the administrators. Why should enterprises run better when it is run by untrained administrators, in comparison to enterprises run by trained administrators? Should we not talk about it?

Coming back to our country--this is one question I am putting to you--in India also we have decided that we will permit the private sector--not only nationally but in other countries also they are permitting it--to take unlimited profits back. It is a very significant thing. Why has it taken place? I discussed it with people. I was told that it failed in the USSR because of three factors: (1) too much of bureaucratisation, too much of power passing into the hierarchy of the Communist Party; (2) corruption; and (3) very important, an attempt by the political leadership and others to run done what has been achieved.

India's achievement in the last 43 years, to my mind, if I can use a superlative, is phenomenal. But are we telling it? I was told one failure in the USSR has been that they have not been telling it. Whenever a regime changes, the latter regime puts the blame on the earlier regime. As a result, the achievements are not brought out. So far as India is concerned, we are at times comparing it with other countries. But how far are we putting before the public what we have achieved? This is important. The faith of the public in the future is also necessary. Your faith in the people and the people's faith in the future, both together will give us the result. Are we telling them what we have achieved in this period? Is it being brought out? --the stages from which India started and the stage which we have reached? It will not do for the politicians to say we have done so much--we were not able to make a needle, today we are manufacturing planes and so on and so forth. It does not work. I want the whole thing to be put in a proper form. We should remember that it never pays in a country to run down what has been achieved. I apply it in another context. It is not proper for the administrator to put the blame in this area on others. I have seen it many a time. Whenever a new administrator comes, be it a Secretary or a Director, it is the human tendency to put the blame on his predecessor for anything not happening, or for having done something or not having done something. So, I was wondering whether we should not have a case study, a critical study, of the achievements of India in the 40 years after the coming into

force of the Constitution, what India has achieved. So, these are some of the aspects.

Lastly, so far as the present conditions in the socialist world are concerned, one of the reasons given is, being away from the people, neglecting the consumer and the common man. Many people think that is the major reason, neglecting the common man, neglecting the population. I have crudely put it in my own way. Whatever has happened there is the result of that. We must also see that we do not do that. I have been feeling, I have been telling for the last 3-4 years, after the trouble in Poland started, that the answer lies in Bapu. It is the easy way to attribute it to consumerism. The academicians are here. I have also been in the academic world. It is easy to say consumerism and also quote Bapu. Bapu always stood up against consumerism. But, to my mind, you cannot eliminate the consumers, the felt needs of the people. Panditji was very fond of saying that you must realise and try to fulfil the felt needs of the people. How can you do it, what is the method, what are the ways to activate or quantify the felt needs? In which direction to adjust, so far as planning is concerned? That was another thing which was very dear to Panditji, so much so that he was the Chairman of the first Planning Committee established by the Congress during the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose. A country like India cannot progress without planning. So, the fault is not in the plan.

On Panditji's commitment to plan, I can explain it by just giving an example. He was committed to plan to the extent that --at that time it was such a surprise for me, but now I realise it--I saw him 37 years back addressing meeting after meeting of the rural people; he was talking about other things also, but talking about the plan in his own way; the plan, the *Yojana*, he used to say. I will tell you one way in which he was able to win the hearts of the villagers. It struck me that the administrators can take a leaf out of it, because it is still fresh in my mind. When he tried to explain the plan, he used to say *Ye yojana desh ki janmapatri hai*. It tells us two things. *Janmapatri* means the future of India. *Janmapatri* usually tells us the horoscope. Generally, the rural people look at their horoscope to know about their future. So, this reference to *Janmapatri* shows his belief in the future, his faith in planning and his desire to take the people along; not thinking that planning is something which is beyond the thinking

capacity of the unlettered crowd of villages. This Institute was founded with great hopes by Pandit Nehru, so that they have this faith in the common man, they have willingness to identify with them and work on those lines and see that we have social justice, we have democracy in the sense, not because Panditji said or Gandhiji said, but because we believe that is the only hope for the future of India.

When you go for social justice, employment is a necessary corollary, because you cannot have social justice without employment. There again, when people objected to having big plants and the cottage industries at the same time, he put it again in his typical way, but not to the villagers, but I certainly remember he told me that a country like India has to live with the aeroplane and the bullock cart together, at least in this century. Now this century is ending. His emphasis was on employment also. It shows how our strategy can be worked out that their is employment and, at the same time, development. This is the way it has to work.

One definition of law and administration has been given that it will work in a way that there is the least of friction and the least of waste. How we can work it out? I have put before you how a layman feels at the present moment. You have got to see that next time when we meet, there is not that atmosphere.

I will not go into the question of secularism which is the basic tenet of my country, which must be a part of our thinking, understanding the full meaning of secularism. We have adopted the english word 'secularism', in the sense in which it is given in the Oxford Dictionary. But that is not the meaning which the founding fathers of our Constitution had in mind. Why are we failing? Secularism in its real sense should be adopted and should permeate everywhere; it must permeate in administration also.

I have put before you some stray thoughts. I have kept you for a very long time, in spite of the fact that you were so busy and must be very tired. I wanted to be short, but somehow I was carried away, because I felt that these are the people who can deliver the goods, the institution which has the duty to deliver the goods. So, I spoke whatever the common man thinks on this issue.

Thank you very much for giving me this hearing.
(Loud Cheers)