

Civil Service Reforms in India

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Structure

- Civil Service - Importance
- Major Components of Civil Service Reform
- Second ARC Recommendations
- Challenges



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru - inauguration of the
Indian Institute of Public Administration, New
Delhi on 29 March 1954

- "Administration is meant to achieve something and not to exist in some kind of an ivory tower following certain rules of procedure and Narcissus-like looking on itself with complete satisfaction. The test after all, is the human being and their welfare."

Civil Service



- Body of government officials – permanent executive - employed in civil occupations that are neither political nor judicial.
- Backbone of administrative machinery - an integral part of administration.
- A well-functioning civil service fosters good policymaking, effective service delivery, accountability and responsibility in utilizing public resources.

Expectations.....



- “It needs hardly to be emphasized that an **efficient, discipline and contended** civil service assured of its prospects as a result of **diligent and honest work**, is a sine-quantum of sound administration under democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule.....

.....The service must be above party and we should ensure that political considerations, either in its recruitment or in its discipline and control, are reduced to the minimum if not eliminated altogether.”

- Sardar Vallabhai Patel



**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel -Encapsulated the vision of a Civil
Service for independent India
(Addressing the First Batch of IAS officers)**

- “Your predecessors were brought up in traditions which kept them aloof from the common run of the people. It will be your bounden duty to treat the common man as your own.”
- Referred to civil servants as the ‘**steel frame**’ of India



Sardar Patel on Role of Civil Servant

- “Today, my Secretary can write a note opposed to my views. I have given that freedom to all my Secretaries. I have told them, ‘If you do not give your honest opinion for fear that it will displease your Minister, please then you had better go. I will bring another Secretary!’ I will never be displeased over a frank expression of opinion...”



Design of the Civil Service at Independence

- An open-entry system based on academic achievements
- Elaborate training arrangements, permanency of tenure
- Important posts at Union, State and District levels reserved for the Civil Service
- A regular graduated scale of pay with pension and other benefits and a system of promotions and transfers based predominantly on seniority



Functioning of Parliamentary System

- Political executive (responsible to the legislature) - determines policies and programmes of Government.
- Implementation and administration of policies and programmes - responsibility of the large body of civil servants - by virtue of training and professional experience, are well-versed in the actual functioning of Government.



Guiding Principles - Bedrock of Civil Services

- Empathy
- Efficiency
- Impartiality
- Incorruptibility.

April 21 - Civil Services Day



Importance of Civil Service to Governance

- Service presence throughout the country and its strong binding character
- Administrative and managerial capacity of the services - pivotal role in designing and activating policies
- Effective coordination between institutions of governance
- Provide Leadership at different levels of administration.
- Ensure service delivery at the cutting edge level
- Provide ‘continuity and change’ to the administration.



Why Civil Service Reform??

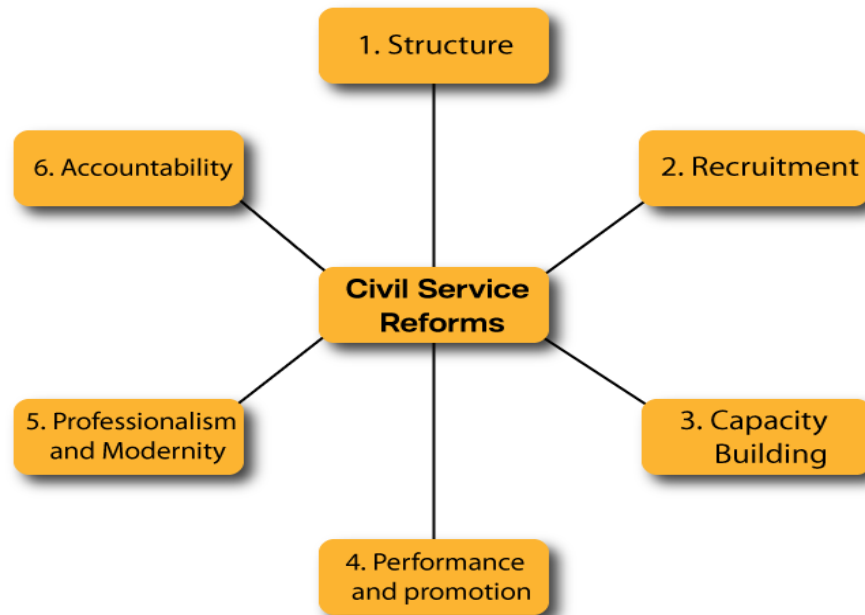
- Reorient the Civil Services into a **dynamic, efficient and accountable apparatus** for **public service delivery** built on the ethos and values of integrity, impartiality and neutrality.
- Raise **the quality of public services** delivered to the citizens and enhance the capacity to carry out core government functions.



Ailments afflicting Indian Civil Services (World Bank, 1994)

- Lack of professionalism and poor capacity building
- 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
- 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 values and ethics
- Patrimonialism - power is formally arbitrary and under the direct control of the ruler

Components of Civil Service Reform



- Size and Structure of Government- Rightsizing civil services
- Recruitment - Need for Specialists - A case for Lateral Entry
- Capacity Building and Human Resources Development - strengthening meritocracy in promotion
- Performance and Promotion - reforming the annual confidential report process, civil services performance systems
- Professionalism and Modernity
- Civil Service Accountability - streamlining reporting mechanisms, linking performance with incentives



Civil Service Reform - Commissions and Committees

- In 1949, the Gopalaswami Ayyangar Committee – suggested that a Department should be identified with a Secretary's charge and a Ministry should be identified with a Minister's charge
- A.D. Gorwala, in his two reports to the Planning Commission in 1951, recommended that there should be greater understanding between Ministers and civil servants.
- Santhanam Committee, 1964 - recommended the constitution of the Central Vigilance Commission, and administrative vigilance divisions in all Departments

Contd...

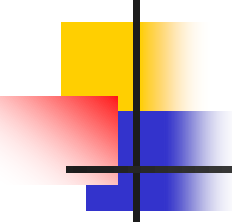
First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966) emphasized the importance of proper personnel planning and cadre management

- Fifth Central Pay Commission advocated the constitution of a high-powered Civil Services Board both at the Centre and the States.
- Surinder Nath Committee Report, 2003 - to review the system of performance appraisal, promotion, empanelment and placement for the All India Services and other Group 'A' Services
- Committee on Civil Service Reforms - Hota Committee Report, 2004 – recommended domain assignment for civil servants
- Fifth Central Pay Commission advocated the constitution of a high-powered Civil Services Board both at the Centre and the States.



Second ARC's Approach to the Key Principles of Civil Services Reform

- Setting right the asymmetry of power
- Insulating civil servants from undue political interference
- Professionalisation with stability of tenure and competition
- Citizen-centric administration
- Accountability
- Outcome orientation
- Promoting public service values and ethics



PIL filed by 83 retired bureaucrats including T S R Subramanian – (insulate) bureaucracy from political interference

- Supreme Court in 2013 directed the Centre and the States to set up a Civil Services Board to decide on transfers of officers of all India services-Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service(IFoS)
- “Fixed tenure of bureaucrats will promote professionalism, efficiency and good governance
- “Much of the deterioration in the functioning of bureaucracy is due to political interference,” - SC.



Attributes of a Good Administrator

(Source: *Public Administration for a Welfare State* -Paul H Appleby, 1961)

- Willingness to assume responsibility.
- A steadily enlarging ability to deal with more problems.
- A strong bent toward action.
- A good listener.
- Effective with people.
- Capacity to build his own strength by building the competence of his organization.
- Capacity to use his institutional resources.
- Avoiding using power or authority for their own sake.
- Welcoming reports of troublesome things.
- A good team-worker.
- A good initiator.



Challenges to Civil Service Reform

- Political support and will
- Management capacity to implement reforms
- Nurturing support from civil servants themselves
- ‘Safety nets’ must be in place for people adversely affected
- Reforms must reflect the political and institutional environment of a country
- Developing communication between all the stakeholders.



Reform Efforts???

- Neither enhanced the efficiency nor the accountability of the civil service in any meaningful manner.
- India's efforts at reform have amounted to 'correction slips to the inherited administrative system' -

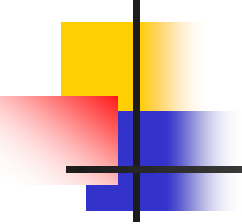
S.R.Maheshwari

- Indian civil service reform efforts were not even correction slips – they were more in the nature of endorsement slips.



PM Modi's Mantra: Reform, Perform, Transform

- With changing times, a need may arise that we may have to change our working style. From regulator, we need to be an enabling entity.
- With quantum jump in work must also come a qualitative change.
- Push for reform comes from political leadership but the perform angle is determined by officers.
- A spirit of ownership is essential.

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- Civil servants need to engage with people and look at new ways of achieving objectives in the interest of people to become “**Agents of Change**”.



Quiz...

- (1) Which Committee recommended the constitution of Central Vigilance Commission?
- (a) A.D. Gorwala
 - (b) Santhanam
 - (c) Mudaliar
 - (d) Gopalaswami Ayyangar



(2) When was the First Administrative Reforms Commission set up?

(a) 1966

(b) 1956

(c) 1976

(d) 1986



(3) Which of the following was recommended for review by Surendra Nath Committee Report ?

(a) Performance Appraisal

(b) Recruitment

(c) In - Service training

(d) Domain Assignment



References

- (1) Tenth Report, Refurbishing of Personnel Administration Scaling New Heights, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, November, 2008
https://darp.gov.in/sites/default/files/personnel_administration10.pdf
- (2) M.Satish,Civil Service Reforms, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad
<https://cgg.gov.in/core/uploads/2017/07/CivilServicesReform.pdf>
- (3) Saxena, Naresh Chandra,(2019) What Ails the IAS and Why It Fails to Deliver –An Insider’s View, Sage,New Delhi



Video Links

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxPkNAQuC34>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YG4dR5tLEB0>
(Hindi)



THANK YOU