



## EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Alignment Competence
2. Context Competence
3. Content Competence
4. Language Competence
5. Introduction Competence
6. Structure - Presentation Competence
7. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

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## INDIAN CIVIL SERVICES - STEEL FRAME OR STEEL CAGE

"YOU WILL NOT HAVE A UNITED INDIA IF YOU HAVE NOT A GOOD ALL-INDIA SERVICE WHICH HAS THE INDEPENDENCE TO SPEAK OUT IT'S MIND." This was the statement made by Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, 'the Iron man of India', in the Constituent Assembly on October 1949.

The Assembly had been debating on whether or not to include the institution of Indian civil service - which was seen by many as a 'colonial relic' - into the constitution of a new and free India. It was then when Sardar Patel had very effectively highlighted the need of having a civil service in place to keep a newly liberated land with a multicultural, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious society together.

He had very aptly further said that the constitution was meant to be worked by a 'ring of service' which would keep the country intact. Renowned

Historian Ramachandra Guha builds on the same line of thought and credits the Indian Civil Service for being one of the few factors which had been able to keep the country united (others being free and fair elections, railways etc) as it went through thick and thin.

The idea of Indian Civil Service being a 'Steel frame' has to be seen under the head of three main functions it has been performing. One, bringing 'continuity in policy and administration'; two, 'keeping the country ~~one~~ together by adopting common methods and processes of administration'; and three, 'ensuring a harmonial balance between the Government of India and State governments'. In all these heads, the Indian Civil Service has truly been 'the steel frame of India', as was envisioned by Sardar Patel.

One very important factor behind deciding to have a permanent station of service was to maintain a continuity in policy and administration. The civil service ensured this continuity first while transfer of power was taking place

from the colonial government to the National governments, and has been continuing to do the same ever since. As India is a democracy, and elections are a regular affair and so is change in power/government at the executive level. Hence it becomes very important to have a solid standing structure which facilitates a smooth transfer of power as well as assists the government in framing policies and their implementation. It is here that the Indian Civil Service perfectly comes into the picture, acting like a steel frame. As a civil servant rightly said, "While the Government runs the country, we run the Government."

Secondly, as a proverb has it, "Every two miles the water changes, every four miles the speech", India truly is a land of diversity. Post independence due to this inherent diversity as regional tendencies emerged, ideal of separatism also took varied forms. However, it can be said that the Indian Civil Service with its common procedures and administrative tools

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gave the great people of India a common thread which in turn reinforced their sentiments of belonging to common and united entity.

Thirdly, as some services are common to both the central and state governments, this linkage offers a very unique and fine balance in our federal polity. Here the 'steel frame of India' acts as a channel for the different levels lending weight not only to federal harmony but also shared experiences.

Though these are only some broad outlines which are given a concrete shape by the Indian civil service, there are other areas equally important where contributions have been made by the same. For example, diplomacy and foreign relations - It is our well trained diplomats, part of the same service, who calculate risks, frame policies and guide the nation on the world platform, at the same time enabling a peaceful environment for national security. It is as a result of the immense work done by Indian Foreign officers that India

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today is a formidable regional power and a power to reckon with internationally. Also their efforts to realise the true principles of Article 51 have gained us international accolade, and friendship and respect of many countries.

Within our national walls as well when it comes to administration, there are a plethora of examples of tremendous work done by many public servants. Foremost among them come the name of P. N. Seshan, the 10<sup>th</sup> Election Commissioner of India and an IAS officer. He truly cleaned up elections in India with no violation of the code of conduct taking place. Newspapers back then reported that the elections held were the 'cleanest in living memory'. It is because of men and women like him whose efforts have helped maintain the sanctity of the most important secular festival of India - elections.

Over the years what we see is that the Indian civil service has done commendable work. It has also undergone a major transformation from the days of Lord Bentinck and British Raj

when civil servants were promoted a 'mai-baap' (parental figures) to <sup>that of</sup> true public servants with increasing tendency towards a 'rights-based approach'. However there is still a large space for reforms. For instance, it has been often complained that bureaucracy has become more of a 'steel cage' with its archaic laws, laudably in approach, inactivity and the worst being corruption. These are to an extent very true and there is an immediate requirement of legislative and administrative changes so that the system could work to its fullest potential. In fact, reforms are on going with several being already undertaken such as the enactment of Right to Information Act, Prevention of Corruption Act etc.

Moreover, the concept of ethical conduct has also been brought in with the adoption of principles such as accountability, transparency, objectivity, neutrality and anonymity. Very recently the red beacon from public vehicles has also been removed. Though a small reform, it has larger



underpinnings - ~~removed~~ bridging the  
symbolic gap between the people and  
the state.

Another issue that comes up is whether Indian Civil Service is still relevant given the fact that the State has been pulling away from the economy post liberalisation. The contention is that the ~~situation~~ interference of such an organisation only brings back the memory of the 'License Quota Raj' system.

Though it is indeed true that the State is giving more space to the private sector in an ever expanding economy, the role of State is also undergoing a transformation. It is adopting the role of a facilitator, a regulator and a redistributor. Here again in realising these roles the Indian Civil Service will prove to be very instrumental. As civil servants work right from the grassroots level to the highest echelons of policy making, they will have a very crucial role to perform in ensuring socio-economic justice.

This assumes a premier importance given the fact that 30 percent of our

population is still under poverty lines, there are glaring inequalities, crime is assuming newer shapes and forms and developments in International relations are posing a new challenge everyday.

The Indian Civil Service - ever evolving and improving on its legacy has the potential to cater to these challenges in an effective manner. And for that to happen the organisation will have to improve on its drawbacks and free itself away from all kinds of political interference.

With the best minds in the country selected for services every year, the sheer number of aspirants - young men and women who choose Indian Civil Service over lucrative jobs that private sector has to offer itself speaks of the respect Indian civil service commands, and its prevailing charm. But most importantly it speaks of the faith that gets the young generation has in the institution, faith which is based on the institution's past record and the role

of civil servants.

The Indian civil service, to conclude, has proved its worth and mettle over the years, and continues to have bright prospects for the future.

## CASHLESS ECONOMY : Prospects, Issues and Challenges.

'Cashless' is the new buzz word in our economic life as a nation. The government's post demonetisation has been on making India a cashless economy and put it towards the path of so called fourth industrial revolution. All advanced and developed economies have been reaping the benefits of this new digital age and India must catch up too. But what exactly is a cashless economy?

In simple terms, a cashless economy is one where economic transactions take place with the use of digital means rather than physical currency changing hands. In more apt terms it is essentially a 'less cash economy' with increasing space for digital transactions.

One may ask as to why do we need to be a cashless economy when Indian economy has done so well so far. Though a correct assessment, the need for going

Cashless occurs because of the underlying issues with the present system which has wide ranging implications not only for our economy but much beyond that. These issues are - concealment of the correct amount of financial earnings, resultant tax evasion, corrupting and hoarding of black money etc. All this culminates into the emergence of a parallel economy outside the government's reach, ultimately resulting costing the Indian exchequer billions every year.

Perhaps more serious concerns are the activities finding their route through this parallel economy. Money, many a times is routed to fund Maoists, Naxalites and other anti-social activities. Further, as physical currency is prone to counterfeiting and smuggling, terrorist activities get funded through such means. This has serious implications for our national security. The common thread running through all these anti-national and illegal activities is that of anonymity offered by transactions based on physical currency.

Moreover, since many activities such as real estate purchases, investments in gold

etc take place through this parallel economy only a partial picture of the production take place in the economy is available to the government. Many a times this has led to serious inflationary pressures, where the poor and marginalised emerge as the big losers.

Removal of such anomalies, corners and replacing them with a healthy and transparent system is perhaps the greatest prospect being offered by switching to a cashless economy. This would allow for the government to have a better assessment of the activities taking place in our economy. Another important prospect is the socio-economic development of the nation. This is so because of presence of a sharp divide between the rich and the poor which calls for an immediate need for redistribution of resources. This redistribution requires more resources to be first at the disposal of the government, and since the government depends on taxes it collects, there is a need for a robust system in place

which could seamlessly facilitate the same. This system could very well be the one based on a digital/cashless economy where every transaction gets recorded, providing the authorities with a transparent framework to raise resources. With fiscal capacity enlarged, transactions taking place under the vigil of the government spending on socio-economic development is bound to increase. This not only would lead to better GDP outcomes but also raise the standard of living.

Further, according to estimates, the government spends close to Rs 2,000 crore every year on providing currency related services (printing, minting, transportation). With transformation towards a cashless economy all these resources could instead be directed to the upliftment of the poor and marginalised.

If coupled with the JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhar, Mobile) Trinity, a cashless economy would bring in a new era of transparent transactions with value addition to the

economy and creation of social infash. Corruption would reduce, terrorist func cut off, the nation will progress towa greater heights collectively.

For such a transformation to happen we must address the issues that face the prospects of a cashless economy. The first issue is that of acceptability and changing attitudes. According to International Monetary Fund estimates, close to 96 percent of transactions in India take place with the use of physical currency. This indicates that people in India have a behavioural affinity to carry out transactions in currency. Though one reason could be the anonymity such methods offer, a closer look reveals 'lack of infrastructure' as a major hindrance. This is in terms of non availability of PoS (Point of sale) machines, lack of Internet connectivity, less numbers of smartphone users etc. These problems are most aggravated in rural, remote



and tribal areas where perhaps the availability of power itself is a luxury. Second is the issue of digital literacy specifically in a time when strength of our cyber security system has been brought to disrepute given the breaches taking place that have taken place. The recent SBI ATM card breaches, Aadhar breach etc point towards the same fact. Thirdly, certain laws are not conducive to cashless transactions; for instance, where there is no tax on currency based transactions, digital transactions collect fees and are taxed. This lack of an effective regulatory and crystal clear policy framework acts as a major impediment in our efforts to turn cashless.

Transformation of a \$ 2.2 trillion economy and 1.3 billion people towards a cashless economy brings new and exciting challenges. These include, facttracking the production and facilitation of the requisite infrastructure (Make in India

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has a role to play); legislating a complex cyber security policy making cyber security a reality; training manpower to guard our cyber walls (making use of Skill India) and bring in a behaviour change by increasing digital literacy (with effective use of Digital India) are challenges that are to be tackled head on.

As challenges are great so are opportunities. We have an opportunity to make our financial system transparent and that of empowering people in the process. Also a unique opportunity is that of making sure that nobody is left behind and every man and woman is an active participant in this new phase of nation building.

Recent government initiatives such as demonetisation, BHIM app, QR code, Aadhar Merchant Pay, Digi Dhan Mela clearly show a marked increase in digital transaction with the concept of 'thumb is my bank'. This indicates

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that people respond in a positive manner to a conducive and encouraging policy environment. Other recent initiatives such as PMJDISHA etc are only to add to these positive trends.

As the government is taking an increasingly proactive stance and has enlarged the scope of cashless economy by eliminating a limit to currency based transactions and to the matter of political funding, giving more role to electoral bonds, the long lasting success of the ~~more~~ initiative residence in making it a peoples' movement. This along with an active support of the private sector, an entrepreneurial class and a policy which charts out a gradual and graded transformation.

This would usher in a new era in the economic life of the world's fastest growing economy.