



PERSONALITY TEST PROGRAMME 2019

(Current Affairs Interview Issues)

CIVIL SERVICES REFORMS

Introduction

Though the term “bureaucracy” is an eighteenth-century innovation, bureaucracy-like organisational structure had existed even in the ancient period and since then have been existing, though in varying form, to perform the functions of the state. In India, modern bureaucracy had **evolved during the British Raj** and it worked to promote and preserve the interests of the British till 1947. After Independence, Indian bureaucracy had been entrusted with the key **responsibility of nation-building**. After India’s independence, the bureaucracy had worked satisfactorily to uplift the nation until it started wilting gradually. Particularly with the advent of LPG model, bureaucracy attracted greater criticism due to its underperformance. This necessitates the civil services to brace up with the tempers of the changing times and meet the requirements of the citizens. The contemporary developmental challenges and those of public service delivery necessitate new delivery models, delivering value for money and making policies better designed for implementation.

Observations regarding the functioning of Civil Services in India

It is widely recognised that the civil services have contributed to stability in terms of maintenance of peace, the conduct of fair elections, managing disasters and the preservation of the unity of the nation, providing stability and maintaining order in a vast country prone to various conflicts – ethnic, communal, regional etc. Nonetheless there are certain concerns about the performance of the civil service in the context of realizing a results-oriented governance. In this light, several efforts have been made to both recognize the challenges facing the Indian Civil Services as well as identify their solutions. One of the most pertinent of such efforts has been that of the **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission**, that makes the following observations regarding civil services in India:

- Civil Service in India is **more concerned with the internal processes** than with results.
- The systemic **rigidities**, needless **complexities** and **over-centralization** in the policy and management structures within which the civil service functions are too complex and often too constraining.
- The structures are based on **hierarchies** and there are a large number of veto points to be negotiated for a decision to eventually emerge.
- The size and the number of ministries and departments have both **overloaded the decision-making system** and diminished the capacities of the individual civil servants to fulfil their operational responsibilities.
- **Rapid and fundamental changes** are taking place in the country in terms of rapid economic growth, urbanization, environmental degradation, technological change and increased local awareness and identity. The response time to adapt to these changes is much shorter than it used to be. On the other hand, the perception is that they **resist change** as they are wedded to their privileges and prospects and thereby have become ends in themselves.
- With the passage of time, the role of civil society organisations and private sector in governance and delivery of public services has increased. Consequently, civil servants should view civil society organisations and the private sector as partners in the process of the country’s governance.
- There is need to shift from **pre-eminence of governance to effective governance** with a focus on decentralization and citizen-centricity.

The aforementioned observations point at the fault lines in the effective functioning of Indian Civil Services. This has also instigated a debate in the public discourse over the relationship between Civil Services and Democracy.

There are differing voices over the suitability and relevance of civil services to the modern-day democracies as shall be covered in the following subhead.

Relationship between Civil Services and Democracy

- Democracy is the process whereby the government is elected by the people whereas Bureaucracy is the system in which elected government employs competent state officials to run state matter. They are selected by government through merit-based process.
- The relationship between bureaucracy and democracy is both **paradoxical and complementary**. On one hand, democratic governance institutions are assumed to be responsive to the wishes of the public, and to be attempting to map those preferences of the public into positive outcomes for their citizens. Here, **effective democracy may require an effective and well-functioning bureaucracy**.
- On the other hand, bureaucracies are typically conceptualized as being legalistic and largely **indifferent to the wishes and demands of individual citizens**. Bureaucracies also tend to be associated with **hierarchical and even authoritarian forms of governing**.
- This, despite the fact that the very **reason for institutionalizing the bureaucratic form of governing** was to ensure equal treatment of citizens, and to provide clients with records and justifications for the decisions being made about them within the public sector.
- However, the experience in the LPG era, and coming of market in public service delivery underlines the extent to which the **values of formalized bureaucracy may be important for the effective functioning of a democracy**. It can be argued that rigidity associated with bureaucracy may, in fact, be the result of a well-functioning bureaucracy that emphasizes equality, and attempts to ensure that all members of society receive the same treatment according to law, even if that style of delivery appears to be inefficient.
- Similarly, formal civil services were partly adopted **to minimize the arbitrary and capricious actions** in which governments might otherwise be tempted to engage and in which markets may find it very appropriate to engage in order to maximize efficiency.
- Bureaucracy & Democracy may appear to be antithetical but they are both necessary for providing effective and responsive governing. They provide complementary benefits for society. The **responsiveness of democratic governing** must be balanced with the **predictability and impartiality** assumed to reside within bureaucratic institutions. Likewise, the democratic process is important to confer legitimacy on the governing process.

Reforms required in the Indian Civil Services

Some of the issues concerning civil services include, the generalist nature of Indian Administrative Services; frequent postings resulting in an average of less than 16 months spent on a particular job, dearth of merit based postings (only 24% of postings are viewed as "merit-based" by bureaucrats themselves), political patronization, issues with recruitment, autonomy and accountability etc. Consequently, there is a need to reform the Civil Services as they exist in their present form. Some of these reforms broadly include:

- **Flexibility** to ensure development work needs some flexibility from a strict observance of rigid rules and regulations.
- **Reforms in the field of recruitment** of civil servants to find people who can ensure smooth functioning of democracy.
- **Training** of civil servants should be able to bring about behavioural and attitudinal changes.
- Minimization of red-tapism through **simplification of administrative procedures**, rules and regulations; **decentralization** of authority and collegiate decision making; de-emphasis of hierarchy in the administrative structure
- Adoption of **modern management techniques**; elimination of corruption, impartial and efficient administration; creation of new work culture and encouraging creativity.

The ground work for reforming Civil Services in India has been laid by several notable panels and committees starting with the 1947 Secretariat Reorganization Committee. Below is a brief account of recommendations made by these eminent panels and committees.

Summary of Recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission

- **Stage of Entry:**
 - A **National Institute of Public Administration** to run Bachelor's Degree courses in public administration/governance/management. Selected Central and other Universities should also be assisted to offer

graduate level programmes in these courses.

- Graduates in other disciplines would also be eligible to appear in the Civil Services Examination provided they complete a '**Bridge Course**' in the core subjects mentioned above.
- Other Modes of Induction: The induction of officers of the State Civil Services into the IAS should be done by the UPSC on the basis of a common examination.
- **Disciplinary Proceedings:** In the case of disciplinary proceedings, consultation with the UPSC should be mandatory only in cases involving likely dismissal or removal of a government servant.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Every government servant should undergo a mandatory training at the induction stage and also periodically during his/her career. Successful completion of these trainings should be a minimum necessary condition for confirmation in service and subsequent promotions.
 - The objective of mid-career training should be to develop domain knowledge and competence required.
 - Public servants should be encouraged to obtain higher academic qualifications and to write papers for reputed and authoritative journals.
- **Placement at Middle & Senior Management:**
 - At the middle level, domains should be assigned by a **Central Civil Services Authority**.
 - A **Central Civil Services Authority** should deal with matters of assignment of domains to officers, fixing tenures for senior posts, deciding posts to be advertised for lateral entry etc.
 - There is need to introduce competition for senior positions in government by opening these positions in Government to all Services.
 - At higher levels in government, it is necessary to ensure that the tasks assigned to a public servant match his/her domain competence as well as aptitude and potential.
- **Performance Management System:** Making appraisal more consultative and transparent, Performance appraisal formats to be made job specific and scope of the present performance appraisal system of its employees be expanded to a comprehensive performance management system (PMS).
- **Motivating Civil Servants:** There is need to recognise the outstanding work of serving civil servants including through National awards. Awards for recognizing good performance should also be instituted at the State and district levels.

Recommendations of some other committees

A number of Committees and Commissions were set up to make recommendations on various aspects of civil services. Few of the relevant recommendations of these committees are given below:

- **Recruitment**
 - The Civil Services Examination Review Committee, 2001 (chaired by Professor **Yoginder K. Alagh**) favored testing the candidates in a common subject rather than on optional subjects.
 - The Committee on Civil Service Reforms (**Hota Committee Report**, 2004) recommended that aptitude and leadership tests may be introduced for selection, and that probationers may be allowed one month's time after commencement of training to exercise their option for Services.
 - The **Basawan Committee (2016)** recommended a meaningful assessment to be done about requirement of IAS officers every year to send a realistic requirement of Direct Recruits to Government each year, and to monitor the vacancies under the promotion ceiling.
- **Training:** Yugandhar Committee, 2003 recommended the need for three mid-career training programmes in the 12th, 20th and 28th years of service. Trainings at these 3 stages was suggested as there is a "major shift" in the nature of work of the officer, at these stages of their career.
- **Domain Expertise**
 - The **Surinder Nath Committee**, 2003 suggested 11 domains, Agriculture and Rural Development; Social Sectors, Culture and Information; etc. The Committee suggested that officers may be assigned to a maximum of three domains out of the eleven listed.
 - **The Hota Committee** on Civil Services Reforms, 2004, had recommended that domain assignment should be introduced for civil servants to encourage acquisition of skills, professional excellence and career planning.
- **Efficiency:**
 - **Hota Committee**, 2004 emphasised the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to transform Government by making it more accessible, effective and accountable.
- **Accountability**
 - The Committee on Prevention of Corruption (**Santhanam Committee**) made a range of recommendations

to fight the menace of corruption. It recommended the constitution of the Central Vigilance Commission. Changes were also suggested in Article 311 of the Constitution of India for conducting disciplinary proceedings against government servants. It was also recommended that offering of bribes should be made a substantive offence.

- The **first ARC** recommended that the departments and organizations which were in direct charge of development programmes should introduce **performance budgeting**. The ARC also recommended the establishment of two special institutions, **the Lok Pal** to deal with complaints against the administrative acts of Ministers and Secretaries to the government at the Centre and the **Lok Ayuktas** to deal with such complaints in States.
- The **Hota Committee** recommended that Sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure may be amended to **protect honest civil servants** from malicious prosecution and harassment. It also recommended that a **Code of Ethics** should be drawn up for civil servants incorporating the core values of integrity, merit and excellence in public service.
 - ✓ It also recommended that a **Model Code of Governance** should be drawn up benchmarking the standards of governance to be made available to the citizens.
- **Performance Appraisal:**
 - **Surinder Nath Committee, 2003** recommended that - performance appraisal should be primarily used for the overall development of an officer and for his/her placement in an area where his/her abilities and potential can be best used.
 - **The Hota Committee** recommended a system of performance assessment in which greater emphasis is placed on objective assessment against agreed work plans.

Lateral Entry into Civil Services

Lateral entry means recruiting new entrants into a system from a pool of candidates who are outsiders to the system. In context of bureaucracy, **Lateral Entry** refers to the direct induction of **domain experts** at the middle or senior levels of administrative hierarchy, rather than only appointing regular recruits through promotion. The idea of lateral entry into civil services is seen by many as a panacea to the inertia that has crept in because of which it failed to respond to the need of the times.

The idea of lateral entry is not new to the Indian experience. Domain experts have been brought in from outside to head various committees. Some of the names include heavyweights like Dr. Manmohan Singh, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Arvind Virmani, Raghuram Rajan, Vijay Kelkar among others. **1st ARC** talked about **need for specialization** as early as in 1965. The **2nd ARC** also recommended an **institutionalised transparent process** for lateral entry at both central and state levels. The **Surinder Nath Committee and Hota committee** in 2003 and 2004 made similar recommendations favouring lateral entry into the civil services. **YK Alagh (2001) Committee** also had recommended lateral entry into middle and senior levels of the government.

In this context, the Central Government has taken a leap into the idea of inducting specialists to middle and senior level positions in the Indian Administrative hierarchy. After asking the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) to prepare a proposition on lateral entry into Civil Services, **nine professionals** were selected to work in the capacity of **joint secretaries** in the Government of India.

Arguments that favour Lateral Entry into Civil Services:

- **Shortage of Officers:** According to a report by Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions there is a **shortage of nearly 1,500 IAS officers** in the country. The **Basawan Committee (2016)** had pointed out that the bigger states like Bihar, MP and Rajasthan have a deficit of over 75 to 100 officers. Lateral induction is, therefore, being seen as a small step towards essential housekeeping in central government staffing.
- **Changes in contours of policy making and need for specialisation:**
 - Shift from uniformity of centrally planned economic policy to diverse demands of **competitive federalism** requires specialized skills and knowledge for informed policy making.
 - Policymaking is also becoming complex due to emergence of new issues like globalisation, digitalisation of governance, cybercrime, climate-change etc. This warrant having people with specialized skills and domain expertise in important positions.
 - Various think-tanks have also explained how the IAS is hamstrung by political interference, out-dated personal procedures and a mixed record on policy implementation.

- The IAS officers see the government only from within, lateral entry would enable government to understand the impact of its policies on stakeholders — the private sector, the non-government sector and the larger public.
- **Increase in efficiency and governance**
 - Career progression in the IAS is almost automatic which could put officers in comfort zone. Lateral entrants could also **induce competition** within the system.
 - Niti Aayog, in its **Three-Year Action Agenda** for 2017-2020 had said that sector specialists be inducted into the system through lateral entry as that would “bring competition to the established career bureaucracy”.
- **Entry and retention of talent in Government:** Justice BN Srikrishna-headed **Sixth Central Pay Commission report (2006)** said lateral entry could “ensure entry and retention of talent in the government even for those jobs that have a high demand and premium in the open market”.
- **Widen the talent pool for appointment:** The existing system makes it difficult to test potential administrative and judgement capabilities. Mid-career lateral entrants with proven capabilities will help bridge this deficiency.
- **Experience from our past and other countries:**
 - Lateral Entry has been **successful in RBI** and the erstwhile Planning Commission, as well as its successor, the Niti Aayog.
 - **Ministry of finance** has institutionalised the practice of **appointing advisors** to the government from the world of academia and the corporate sector.
 - This concept is already being followed by countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Belgium, New Zealand etc.

Arguments that go against Lateral Entry

- **Difficult to ensure responsibility and accountability:** Given the short tenures of 3-5 years of lateral recruits, it will be difficult to ensure responsibility and accountability for the decisions taken by them. While, the advantage with the current civil service is that policy makers have **long-term interests** in government.
- **Transparency in Recruitment:** Political interference in the selection process may occur and it may promote **Nepotism and Spoils System** (an arrangement that employed and promoted civil servants who were friends and supporters of the political group in power).
- **Lack of field experience:** Officers who will join might score on domain knowledge, but they may fall short on the experience of working in the “fields”.
- **Deters existing talent:**
 - Lateral entry gives a message that experienced civil servants are less efficient and expert than private professionals, which is a not necessarily true.
 - The best talent can be attracted only if there is reasonable assurance of reaching top level managerial positions.
 - By suggesting a contract-based system for positions of joint secretary and above, the signal would be sent out that only mid-career positions would be within reach in about 15-18 years of service and there would be considerable **uncertainty about career progression** thereafter.
- **Earlier experiences:** The past experience of inducting private-sector managers to run public-sector enterprises has not been particularly satisfactory. For e.g. Air India, Indian Airlines etc.
- **Issue of Reservation:** It is unclear whether there would be reservation for recruitment through lateral Entry or not.
- **Scope of utility:** Much of how far the government can leverage the expertise of entrants will depend on how far the political executive is willing to facilitate the functioning of these external experts and whether an enabling environment is created for utilizing their full potential.
- **May face resistance from the Bureaucracy:** Existing officials might resist functioning with **outsiders** and inevitable tensions between **generalists and specialists** may surface.
- **Difficulty in adjusting to the bureaucratic work culture:** Including manners of addressing each other, speed of working, knowledge of rules, punctuality among others.

Way Forward

- The manner and **philosophy of training bureaucrats** remains a neglected dimension and lateral entry will not remedy this. The focus should also be on a new approach to training administrators, which is the success factor for public administrative reform.
- The task of recruitment must always be entrusted to a body supervised by UPSC to ensure merit based, politically neutral civil service.
- Inductions through the competitive examinations must also expand incrementally in keeping with the country's needs.
- The government must move towards ensuring **longer tenures of lateral entrants** to allow them sufficient time to settle, learn and implement their approach, blueprint for work.
- Other reforms apart from institutionalised lateral entry are the need of the moment such as:
 - **Deputation to Private Sector:** A Parliamentary panel has recommended deputation of IAS and IPS officers in private sector to bring in domain expertise and competition.
 - **Institutionalize goal setting and tracking for each department:** Each Ministry and government agency should set outcome-based goals with a clear timeline.
 - **Appraisal mechanisms:** Such as government's new **"360 degree" performance appraisal mechanism** for senior bureaucrats, whereby officers are graded based on comprehensive feedback from their superiors, juniors and external stakeholders.
 - Incentives for bureaucrats that are linked to their district's annual development indicators can also be offered.

Summary

- In India, modern bureaucracy had **evolved during the British Raj** to promote and preserve the interests of the British. However, after Independence, Indian bureaucracy had been entrusted with the key **responsibility of nation-building**.
- Current status: 2nd ARC made following observations regarding civil services in India
 - **More concerned with the internal processes** than with results.
 - Plagued with systemic **rigidities**, needless **complexities** and **over-centralization**
 - Structures based on **hierarchies**
 - **Overloaded decision-making system** and **resistance to change**
 - Need to shift from **pre-eminence of governance to effective governance**
- **Relationship between Civil Services and Democracy:** It is both paradoxical and complementary.
 - Effective democracy may require an effective and well-functioning bureaucracy. Yet, it might become indifferent to the wishes and demands of individual citizens.
 - However, it brings **predictability** and **impartiality** to democratic governing.
- **Reforms required: 2nd ARC recommendations:**
 - **Stage of entry**
 - ✓ **National Institute of Public Administration** to run Bachelor's Degree courses in public administration
 - ✓ Bridge course to other graduates
 - ✓ Induction of officers of the State Civil Services into the IAS
 - **Training and Capacity Building:** Mandatory training at the induction stage and also periodically.
 - ✓ Public servants should be encouraged to obtain higher academic qualifications and to write papers for reputed and authoritative journals.
 - **Placement at Middle & Senior Management:** Role to **Central Civil Services Authority**.
 - ✓ Need to match domain competence, aptitude and potential at higher levels.
 - Deputation to Organizations outside Government
 - **Performance Management System** to be more consultative, transparent and job specific.
 - **Motivating Civil Servants** through National awards for good performance
- **Recommendations of other committees:**
 - **Recruitment**
 - ✓ Y.K Alagh committee: Test in common subject rather than on optional subjects
 - ✓ Hota committee: Introduce aptitude and leadership tests
 - **Training:** Yugandhar Committee, 2003 recommended the **three mid-career training programmes** in the 12th, 20th and 28th years of service.
 - **Efficiency:**
 - ✓ **Hota Committee** emphasized the use of ICT to transform Government by making it more accessible, effective and accountable.
 - **Accountability:** 1st ARC suggested **performance budget** Hota Committee recommended a **Code of Ethics** for civil servants and **Model Code of Governance**.
 - **Performance Appraisal:** Surinder Nath Committee recommended that performance appraisal should be primarily used for the overall development of an officer.
- **Lateral entry** is direct induction of domain experts at the middle or senior levels of administrative hierarchy.
- **Arguments in favour**
 - **Shortage of Officers:** Basawan Committee had pointed out that the bigger states like Bihar, MP and Rajasthan have a deficit of over 75 to 100 officers.
 - **Need for Specialization** due to globalisation, digitalisation of governance, financial frauds, cybercrime, organized crime, terrorism, climate-change, competitive federalism etc.
 - **To increase efficiency:** Niti Aayog's Three-Year Action Agenda- 2017-2020 talked about sector specialists
 - To ensure **entry and retention of talent in Government**
 - **Past experience** of being successful in RBI, the Planning Commission, and Niti Aayog.
- **Arguments against:**
 - **Difficult to ensure responsibility and accountability** due to short tenures
 - May lack **transparency in recruitment** leading to Nepotism and Spoils System
 - Lack of field experience
 - Deters existing talent
 - Issue of Reservation

- May face resistance from the Bureaucracy
- Earlier experiences of Air India, Indian Airlines are not satisfactory
- **Way forward**
 - Task of recruitment to supervised by UPSC
 - Ensure **longer tenures** of lateral entrants
 - **"360 degree"** performance appraisal mechanism
 - **Deputation to Private Sector** of IAS and IPS officers

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