CHAPTER: 4
CIVIL SERVICE IN INDIA

4.1. Introduction

Chapter four provides a brief historical description of regime transitions and transformation of bureaucracy in Indian Federal state. It also analyse the Indian government perspective for understanding the Indian bureaucracy under different regimes and India Civil Service reforms as well as the role of the civil service to explain national development in India in the context of globalisation.

Historically, India had a great civilisation. The ancient Indian state was prosperous where philosophy, art and music greatly thrived. During the medieval period, the country belonged to the Mughals who introduced a number of administrative measures, including land revenue tax collection system, local manufacturing of industrial goods and exports of arts and crafts to other nation states. The decline of the Mughal era saw the rise of the East India Company in the 16th century who ruled the country for over 150 years. Subsequently, the British government took over the reigns of the country from the East India Company. During its 200 years of rule, the British introduced education system, laid down strong foundations in administrative and bureaucratic structure and interconnected various parts of its administration through a vast network of infrastructure such as road and rail transport.

In fact India is a multi-religious country. The Constitution adopted in 1950 declared the country as a secular state. The Constitution recognised the special rights of minorities. Some of the religious communities follow the system of castes and sub-castes. The country's Constitution recognises English as the link and Hindi as the national language and recognised more then 13 languages as official languages. India is a Union of 28 states and 7 union territories. The administrative systems in India have witnessed a veritable transformation in the last five decades. The ever widening areas of government responsibilities in the social and economic fields since independence
and then globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation during recent years have necessitated major changes in its institutional and methodological framework.

The Ninth Five-Year Plan stresses the concept of cooperative federalism, whereby the states would have the freedom not only to determine their own priorities, but also the modalities of public intervention and provision of goods and services. The political changes in the 1990s, variation in levels of growth and human development indices and huge fiscal deficits in the states have made the quality of states’ economic and social management and public administration a more important determinant of growth and pro-poor performance. Although the thrust for civil service reform in the states was sparked by the unsustainable increase in salary and pension cost and growth of personnel at all levels, a number of states developed a broader reform agenda.

The expression 'administrative reforms' goes beyond the reform of the civil service. Administrative reforms are mainly concerned with the systems, procedures, processes, methods and techniques of administration at the national, state and local levels to bring about administrative efficiency and improvements. The term is applied to improvements in executive machinery, ranging from fundamental realignments in the governmental structure to relatively minor changes in the methods of conducting ministerial or departmental working. The aim of such a reform is to make available to the citizens a clean, efficient and result oriented administrative set-up. Some of the modern advocates of reforms are of the opinion that administrative reforms are synonymous with the rationalising process that started with the bureaucratic revolution.

To understand these processes, it is important to unravel the specific ways in which the Indian Civil Service background and development first developed as that may have a significant effect on national development and civil service, meanings and practices.
4.2. Indian Civil Service: Background and Development

The Indian civil service system is one of the oldest administrative systems in the world. It had its origin in the Mauryan period during ancient India. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* lays down the principles of selection and promotion of the civil servants, the conditions of loyalty for appointment to the civil service, the methods of their performance evaluation and the code of conduct to be followed by them.¹ In medieval India, the Mughals set up their own civil service systems which centred on the management of land revenue, administration of government factories and establishment of the patrimonial state. There is no account of the organisation of the civil service pertaining to the ancient Indian state (200 BC - 1000 AD). However, in the Mauryan period (313 BC), Vishnugupta (also called Kautilya) authored the treatise known as Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Kautilya laid down the qualifications of the civil servants for appointment to the court. He described the views of various experts on this issue. In his view, loyalty and sincerity were to be the two main qualifications in a person to be appointed as a civil servant.

Kautilya also suggested some checks and balances on the appointment of civil servants. He prescribed a clearance by the vigilance department of the state for the appointment of civil servants. He recommended a continuous watch on the functioning of the civil service and a briefing to the king on the performance of the civil servants on a regular basis. Kautilya talked of the various heads of the different branches of the civil service. The superintendent of trade was to head the commercial service, including internal and external trade and in that capacity was expected to organise an array of functionaries engaged in such service. The superintendent of agriculture was the head of the department of agriculture, in which capacity he had to look after the state farms,

government lands, and regulation of the lands belonging to individuals.\(^2\) His primary job was to formulate agriculture policy and ensure its implementation. The superintendent of chariot was the head of the defence department. Besides ensuring the security of the people from foreign aggression and preserving the safety of the borders, he was responsible for the matters related to defence production, which invariably had to take place in the defence factories owned by the state. He had to deal with the matters relating to the army and appointments of the heads of the defence factories.

The superintendent of mines was head of the department of mines, dealing with the mining of various minerals such as gold, copper, iron, diamonds, etc. Among other things, he had to appoint efficient mining engineers on the basis of a test which would invariably help an examination of their knowledge about the inner and upper crusts of the earth. The superintendent of forests was head of the department of forestry. He had to ensure the protection and conservation of forests and be in charge of the formulation of policies concerning the growth of forests. The superintendent of weight was head of the weights and measures department. He was assisted by trained inspectors who were responsible for conducting surprise checks to ensure the correctness of the various weights and measures. He was also competent to prescribe punishments to errant not complying with the state provisions of transacting the business with specific kinds of weights and measures. The superintendent of textiles was responsible for formulating the textile policy of the state, running of the textile factories, and providing employment to socially discarded people and those living in abject poverty. The superintendent of audit was the chief of the audit. He had a cadre of officials supporting him in the task of auditing the state accounts and examining the state budgets. Kautilya laid down a code of conduct for the civil servants who prescribed swift promotions for efficient and effective officials, and severe punishment for those who were corrupt. The severest punishment suggested by Kautilya was beheading such corrupt civil servants. Kautilya

talked of the responsiveness of the civil servants since he believed in the view that the power of the state came from its subjects.\(^3\)

During the medieval period (1000-1600 AD), Akbar the Great founded and nurtured the civil service. During his period, he initiated land reforms (1457 AD), and established the land revenue system which later became a major constituent of the Indian taxation system. His civil service had welfare and a regulatory-orientation. The East India Company had a civil service responsible for carrying out commercial functions. They were far away from the common people, as they never tried to mix with and impress upon them that they had been there to bring about a transformation in the Indian society. The British civil service came on the Indian scene after the takeover of the East India Company in the 1860s.\(^4\) Initially the British civil service was a part of a police state, with the major task was that of carrying out law and order functions. It was separated as the different provinces had different civil services. There was no code of conduct developed by any of the British-India provinces. The functionaries of the different provinces were free to appoint people of their choice. Officials were handpicked both from the army and non-army fields. Their pay and allowances were subject to the discretion of the government, which was considered to be very high by the standards prevailing then. The term civil service is an Indian contribution to the discipline of public administration. To distinguish the government officials from the army officials, the term civil service was used by the British government in undivided Punjab in the later part of the 18th century.\(^5\)

The East India Company, which ruled India for about 150 years, did not set up any civil service as its mandate was limited to commerce. The British rule came to India in the 1850s. However, as the British had a long-term interest to stay in India, they consolidated their power and laid down the foundation for a unified India. This required the setting up of a strong civil service. They enacted a Civil Service Act and included the

\(^{3}\) Ibid.
\(^{5}\) Ibid.
civil servants on the Council of Administrators, which resulted in the accrual of both political and administrative powers to the civil servants in India. The British constituted the Indian civil service, with the membership of the service being confined only to the British initially, but over a period of time the membership was thrown open even to the Indians. Up to 1935 the British dominated the Indian civil service in terms of numbers. However, introduction of interim rule in 1935 led to a significant change of the domination of the Indians in the civil service.6

The British government set up the Indian civil service in 1911, primarily with the objective of strengthening the British administration in the UK. It was not successful; however it very useful to retain the idea for strengthening the administration of its colonial base in India. Initially the recruitment to the Indian civil service was confined only to the British. The minimum age of entry was kept at 19 years and the maximum age was prescribed as 21 years. The language of examination was English. The only centre for conducting the examination was London. However, due to pressures and demands raised by the Indian National Congress in 1921, Indians were allowed to take the examination. In 1922 one Indian passed the Indian Civil Service Examination. Later, on the basis of the recommendations of the Aitchison Committee, the minimum and maximum ages were increased from 19 and 21 years to 20 and 22 years respectively. The candidates were allowed to take the examination both in London and India. A ratio of 50:50 was decided for the British and the Indian people for intake in the Indian civil service. In 1935 the British government decided to establish interim rule in the various provinces of India, which resulted in an exodus of the British subjects as civil servants and as a result, the number of Indian subjects in the Indian civil service increased tremendously. Though initially the British government set up only the Indian civil service, later on they added a statutory civil service and central civil services. In the course of time the statutory civil service was weeded out and there remained on the scene only the remaining two services, namely, the Indian Civil Service and the central civil services.

At the time of independence, besides the Indian Civil Service there were nine central civil services in the country. The independence of the country posed new challenges to the civil servants. They were no more expected to perform the role of a police state. The welfare of the Indian subjects was viewed as the central task to be performed by the Indian state and hence they were to be an instrument to carry out welfare functions which, among other things, included the settlement of refugees and providing minimum conditions for their day-to-day living, safeguarding the national borders from external aggression and promoting conditions responsible for internal peace.

The Indian civil service was set apart from other imperial services for manning top civil posts under a rigid hierarchy of a bureaucratic system which Lloyd George termed as the “Steel Frame” of the British Raj. Notwithstanding the cliché that Indian civil service was neither Indian civil service nor the undeniable fact is that the civil administration of the country was totally dependent on the quality, authority and functional power of the premier service around which every thing else revolved - from the lowest level of the service derived its strength from the guarantee of total and unquestionable support from the Governor/Governor General, Viceroy and Secretary of State for India. Even though, in the initial stages, recruitment was made from ex-service men and even by nomination in certain cases, the majority constituted a meritocracy inducted into service through a strict competition in England and later within the country. As a conscious policy, those found inadequate on the executive side were screened and shifted to the Judiciary or the Political Service.

Since Independence, there have been covert and overt changes in administration. The need arose for administrative reforms as people become more aware and their aspirations increased. Also, there was an enormous increase in the scale of the governmental operations. There was a sudden shortage of top notch British officials and some Muslims opted to go to Pakistan. All these developments

After independence the Indian Civil Service was reorganised as a two-tier system. The central government controlled the All-India Services (AIS), namely, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the central services which were classified as Group A, B, C, and D services. The selections to the All India Services and Group A and B services are conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The incumbents to Group C and D services are selected by the Staff Selection Commission. The selection of the candidates for the various services to man the administrative machinery in the union territories is also done through the same arrangement. The provincial governments have their own State Public Service Commissions. The recruitments to the provincial civil services are done by these Commissions. The working of these Commissions is controlled by a separate Act. The Indian civil service system is rank-based and does not follow the tenets of the position-based civil services. This has led to the absence of a specialised civil service system in India. The basic philosophy of the Indian civil service system has contributed a lot to this phenomenon, as it puts heavy emphasis on the recruitment of generalists and not specialists. The incumbents of the Indian civil service enjoy very short tenures, usually less than one year. Based on this, one could conclude that this is no way of running the country. Interestingly, some provinces of India, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, have allowed longer tenures to their civil servants.

The members of the All-India civil service start as Deputy Secretaries and normally go up to the level of Joint Secretaries, beyond which promotion is granted only after selection. For every post beyond Joint Secretary Level, candidates are empanelled
and the selection is done by the Cabinet Committee on Appointments, receiving inputs from the Administrative Ministry and the Department of Personnel and Training. The Establishment Officer in this Department provides the policy inputs. There is no lateral entry in the All-India services. Only at the level of Secretary to the Government of India, specialists are taken as Secretaries. The Advisors to the various Ministries could also be non-Indian Administrative Service persons. Only 5 percent of the members of the All-India services reach the top position of Secretary to Government. The post of Cabinet Secretary to the Government of India, the highest in the Indian civil service, has remained the privilege only of the officers of the IAS.

All India services (AIS) are a 'will' from British India. Since India is administered by these services and there is a fear that the politicisation of recruitment to bureaucracy is neither advantageous nor desirable, there is a reluctance to change the system of recruitment or renewal. For the states, a centralised bureaucracy meant that Union remote controls its most important civil servants whom the Union has appointed and who are the backbone of the system. Yet, the system as it actually operates has become both political and unreliable in many material particulars. This was examined by the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in studies and reports (1966-1969), and from a federal point of view by the Sarkaria Commission (1988). But few changes have emanated from the proposed suggestions.

The All-India Services (AIS) are a unique feature of federal polity. It is the view of any constitutional experts that the Constitution though federal form is unitary in substance. Many of the legislative judicial, financial and administrative powers vested in the Centre leave little doubt that the Union has been assigned a more decisive and err-riding powers over the states. The AIS scheme is a part of this general plan of asking the Centre strong in the overall constitutional arrangements. The founding fathers of the Constitution had deep knowledge and understanding of Indian history, so were painfully aware that the country had time and again got divided and segmental whenever the central authority had become weak and lost control over ambitious provincial chieftains. On such occasion many of them had declared their
independence from the central power. This explains why India had more than 500 princely states of varying sizes at the time of independence in 1947. Nearly one-third of India was under their rule. Due to various political and administrative reasons the British had allowed these native rules to continue and rule their states but under Great Britain's sovereignty. The British directly ruled over the rest of the country under the country. The 500 and odd princely states were independent entities before they came under the British sovereign. Politically the whole of India thus become one country during the British period only. Even during the Maurya, Gupta and Mughal periods the entire country was not politically one nation state.

To sum up the above discussion, it is clear that in ancient India, the civil servants acted as personal servants of the rulers, in the medieval age, they became state servants as they were in the state employment and in British-India the civil servants acquired the complexion of public servants. During this period, the civil service also became a protected service, as in 1861 the first Indian Civil Service Act in India was passed which gave many privileges to the then civil servants, including their recruitment, promotion, termination, pension, payment of salaries, etc. The ethos of the civil service in independent-India changed from welfare-orientation in the late 1940s to development-orientation between the 1960s and 1980s, and finally to the facilitator's role in the 1990s, as dictated by the environmental challenges, collective choice mechanisms reflected in the manifestos issued by the various political parties during the 1996, 2000 and 2004 general elections, and the challenge of meeting the democratic needs of the teeming millions.

4.3. The Indian Public Administration System

The civil service system is the backbone of the administrative machinery of the Indian nation. India which is a union of states has a democratic system. The political system of the country is pluralistic, having three tiers of administration, namely, central, provincial, and local. The federal parliament has two Houses. The lower house known as the Lok Sabha, is constituted by the electorate members of parliament. The members of the upper house, known as the Rajya Sabha, are elected by the various
states on the basis of proportional representation. Together, the two houses plus the
President forms the parliament and the members of these houses are called Members
of Parliament.

Globalisation indicating a growing integration of economics and societies in India
is a complex process. This process has influences on individuals and institutions of the
countries. With the process of opening up and integration with outside world, the
domestic institutions responsible for development need lot of reorientation for meeting
with the challenges. India has embarked on the path of planned economic development
in the overall framework of mixed economy where both public and private sector have
freedom to operate side by side. There are advantages and problems associated with
both centralised and decentralised planning strategies. The central government should
be advisory in nature and much of the assistance it can render towards decentralised
planning has to be channelled through the state governments to reach the local
governments.

At the local level, the villages have Panchayats (council of villagers). Several
villages constitute a block and the block-level councils are headed by Pradhans (head
of village), known as chiefs of the blocks. These Pradhans constitute a district council
which is headed by a district chief. The elections are governed by the principle of
majority vote, which simply means that the elections are decided on the basis of the
highest votes polled by a person. It is a three tier system. The 73rd and 74th
amendments to the Indian Constitution have already initiated the process of
administrative decentralisation to the local institutions. With the passage of the 73rd and
74th amendments, a new era has dawned in the process of democratic decentralisation
and strengthening of the people’s institution at the grassroots. With this enactment, so-
far marginalised sections of the society, viz., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and
women got the opportunity to enter the public life through contesting elections to these
local bodies. The 73rd amendment made it obligatory to reserve not less than one-third
seats of Panchayats in favour of women including the number of seats reserved for
women of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. Article 243G of the
Constitution of India made the provision that the states may endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as self-government. For making the development plans people-centred, provisions were made in the Article 243G for the devolution of powers and responsibilities to the Panchayats at the appropriate tier by the states. This becomes necessary because the Panchayats are associated with the preparation of plan for economic development and social justice and the implementation of such schemes. Thus, in the federal set-up of the country the Panchayats become the third tier of governance below the state. For specifying the jurisdiction of the Panchayati Raj institutions, the Eleventh Schedule was added to the Constitution—this schedule contains the list of 29 subjects, which are very much concerned with the development of people and the economy.

For promoting and strengthening democracy the Centre is emphasising on decentralising the decision-making process so that the plans should have the reflections of the needs, aspirations and voices of the community at large. The Article 243A introduced through the 73rd Amendment Act makes the provision that there will be a gram sabha for each village or group of villages comprising all the adult members whose names are registered as voters in the relevant electoral roll of the area. The state governments are given the authority to define power and functions of the gram sabha. According to Article 243A, "a gram sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may by law provide". Thus the Constitution conceived gram sabha as the source of democratic power in a village. For making people's participation possible in the activities of the Panchayats and making them pro-poor, lot of expectation are placed on the Panchayats. A working Group of Planning Commission on Decentralised Planning and Panchayati Raj Institutions explained the importance of the gram sabha: "Gram Sabha consists of people themselves while Gram Panchayat consists of their elected representatives... Gram Sabha is an institution of participatory democracy while Gram Panchayat is an..."
institutions of representative democracy. Thus gram sabha becomes a forum for community participation in the activities of the Panchayats.

As a consequence of the Panchayati Raj Act, the number of local self-government institutions with directly elected representatives rose to around 500 bodies at district level, 5,000 at block level and 225,000 at village level. A district level Panchayat covers a population of approximately 1-2 million, an intermediate level Panchayat have a population of approximately 80-200,000 and a Gram Panchayat comprising a village or a group of villages, a population of approximately 1,500-8,000, varying from state to state.

The Act provides for a mandatory three-tier system of local self-government institutions for states with a population above 20 million. Small states are given the option not to have an intermediate level Panchayat. The Act provides for direct elections of Panchayat members at all levels. The chairpersons of Panchayats at intermediate and district level are to be indirectly elected by, and from amongst, the elected members thereof. As a result of the 73rd Amendment Act, almost all states in India have adopted the new institutional structure for citizen participation in development administration in rural India. The citizen participation, especially of women at the grass roots level has certainly increased after enactment of such statutes by the various states. At least people now become much more aware and conscious about the development efforts of the state due to the existence of a revamped Panchayati Raj system.

Panchayati Raj is essentially a project of enriching the practice of administration. Administration enriches the lives of citizens in three different ways. First, it widens the scope of social and political participation. Therefore it has an intrinsic value. Second, it has an instrumental role, because it enables people to express what they value and to demand that political attention be paid to it. Third, by guaranteeing discussion, debates and exchange of views in the public sphere, democracy plays a crucial role in the

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formation of values and determining social or economic priorities. Thus it has also a constructive role to play.⁹

Local administration can play a crucial role in enriching the practice of administration and governance. It makes the administrative system relatively accessible to the disadvantaged and thus expands the scope of social and political participation of common people. Political freedom is never safe in the hands of centralised government. The local government is the bulwark against centralisation of state power. Second, it makes government more responsive, transparent and accountable. It also ensures efficient and prompt service delivery especially, in the fields of elementary education, health care, local infrastructure, and environmental conservation and so on. Third, it gives an opportunity to the ordinary citizens to learn the art of collective decision-making and to influence through public discussion formation of values, fixing social priorities and determination of public policy. Thus by ensuring more democracy at the levels of village communities, Panchayati Raj can significantly contribute in ‘transforming the practice and quality of democracy.’¹⁰ Yet the states have not been uniform in showing enthusiasm for the Panchayati Raj institution. Again, within a single state, one regime may support the institution, while another may adopts an opposite policy. There are numerous instances all over India when Panchayats have flourished during certain regimes and lost their vitality or remained moribund during another.

The lessons of Panchayati Raj experiences definitely guide the policy planners in framing the designs of decentralised governance of development programmes and grassroots administration for other states of India in the days to come. But as far as providing real empowerment to the poor people is concerned, a lot remains to be accomplished. The new challenges of globalisation of agrarian economy pose not only new compulsions of making the growth process self-sustaining and recombination, but also new opportunities of decentralised decision-making by the participants of the

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¹⁰ Ibid.
growth process in different forms to help ameliorate the poverty of the underprivileged without the tyranny of the inefficient bureaucracy raj in the name of management of poverty alleviation programmes in Indian rural economy. A reorganisation of state power structure from village level onwards which institutionalises the political participation of the masses, their role in policy formulation, decision making, economic bargaining, political and economic management and which brings the dominant elite under the framework of community discipline is essential if the basic goals of development transformation of the outlook of the people, inculcation of the spirit of self reliance, generation of habit of cooperative action through popular bodies leading to enlightenment, strength and hope-are to be realised. In the most comprehensive sense of the term, participation implies the restoration of interaction, communication and dialogue between the forward looking section of the elite at the top or the people in authority and the people below, who are impatient for a new socio-economic order. The conflict between the state and emerging social actors and institution must give way to cooperative endeavour towards development and to long term equilibrium between state and society – equilibrium fundamental to the survival of democracy and human dignity and also for equality within society.

The India Development Report 1999-2000 analysing the means to bring an end to persisting poverty and social insecurity states, "There has been a lot of emphasis on decentralisation of governance and people's participation in India. Decentralising governance from capital cities to towns and villages can be best means of promoting participation and efficiency. Local officials and politicians can be much more open to public scrutiny than national governments and more accountable to the communities and individuals they are supposed to serve. The sustainability of the programmes in turn improves people's participation. They feel that they are not dependent on doles or charities". Direct participation increases coordination between people and the authorities and makes the process more transparent, effective, and flexible where modifications are necessitated and increased durability of the work done. Decentralised

planning can also bring an end to bureaucratic delays and red-tapism as well as corruption, nepotism and favouritism in the rural development process. Participation in the development process increases the social consciousness and sharpens the intellectual ability thereby imparting dynamism to it. It is a step to transparency in governmental functioning as people directly come to know the amount sanctioned for their area development and they also have a say in the developmental process. Prior to the Panchayati Raj Act every thing was controlled by the bureaucrats and local people had no say in it. People also had a sense of fear to raise their voice for their needs and requirements as it may lead to the wrath of the local bureaucrats.

The faith in the ability of the state to take up enormous tasks of development stemmed from the perceived strength and efficiency of the bureaucracy that the British colonial rulers had left behind. At a time when the other developing countries were struggling to establish a professional and career based civil service, the prestige and standing of the Indian Civil service was exceptional. It had served the colonial masters well and in the initial years of independence, provided tremendous support in quelling riots that followed partition of the country and in helping the integration of the country. The erstwhile masters had quickly taken over the role of upholding the law of new sovereign state. These civil servants together with their successors, the Indian Administrative Service, also became the great supporters of Nehruvian policy of state led development. The result was that the British legacy of administrative structure and behaviour has remained untouched in the past few decades when many questions of its suitability have been raised.12

The Indian experience provides an interesting case of passing through the state of development administration and now becoming the recipient of the various ideas assumed to have moved a predatory state into a developmental one. India sought to shape a developmental state through an ambitions strategy of economic planning.

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wherein the state was assigned a central role. An effort was made to give a certain amount of autonomy to economic decision-making by establishing a prestige-laden Planning Commission. The problem of development came to be perceived in technical terms and was largely seen as a problem of correct policy formulation and design. India has now reached after 50 years of Independence. If there is a lack of compatibility in the historical and socio-economic context, the nature and character of the bureaucracy is also different for the same reasons. The bureaucracy in India carried the heritage of colonial power and its concerns were to maintain its role in the political system. It resisted any reforms that tended to whittle away its power and prestige. Without effective political control and social accountability, the bureaucracy used its autonomy to support the predatory forces in society.¹³

The notion of strong states should not be limited to the institution of strong bureaucracy alone. A high degree of bureaucratic autonomy and capacity may not necessarily lead to a developmental state because the bureaucracy may not be able to raise its own interests. What is required is consent for policies pursued and legitimacy for mobilising resources needed for future investments. This can come only through the strengthening of the democratic processes where there is negotiation and contestation. Agreements arrived in this way strengthen the capacity of the state to take strong decisions. Even within the neo-liberal agenda, the state needs to intervene to facilitate development, but the instruments of this intervention need not be bureaucracy alone. A multiple institutional framework is needed and it must be recognised that there been a host of other factors that have led the developmental states to fulfil the national goals.

4.4. The Management of Civil Service in India

Knowing this unfortunate reality of India’s long history, the founding father of the Constitution decided in favour of a strong centre which could curb and divisive and

fissiparous tendencies. The Constituent Assembly's Union Powers Committee also unanimously recommended that "it would be injurious to the interests of the country to provide for a weak Central authority which could be incapable of ensuring peace of coordinating vital matters of common concern...and that the soundest framework of India Constitution is a federation with a strong centre. While the vastness of the country and the variety of its people with regional and economic differences did call for large distribution of power among smaller states, the demands of national unity, peace and tranquillity in the country as also economic cohesiveness required a strong central authority.

To ensure an effective role for the Central Government in the administration of the country, one of the factors considered necessary was to have some acceptable and durable link between the state and central administrations. After consultation with the states the scheme of AIS was accordingly made a part of the new Constitution. Centre's pre-dominant role was further ensured by providing for a common election commission and a common higher judiciary for the state and centre. The President also carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Some basic aspects of the AIS scheme considered essential for their efficient and purposeful functioning in promoting closer centre-state cooperation are:

1. Recruitment on an all-India Administration a basis by the Union Public Service Commission without any state quotas or reservation on territorial or population criteria.
2. Allocation of the selected candidates to different state cadres by the Centre Government.
3. Common training of the recruits organised by Central Government at the National Academy of Administration with emphasis on an all-India outlook.
4. All senior posts in the general administrations of the states included in the relevant IAS/IPS cadres for being manned by the IAS/IPS officers to make them effective instruments of governance.
5. Each state cadre provided with 40 percent additional strength as "Central Deputation Reserve" for manning senior administrative posts under the Government of
India on fixed tenure deputation basis for the IAS in the Central Secretariat and for the IPS in the Central Police Organisations.

The above arrangements visualised that there will be no separate Central cadre of AIS officers for Central posts but officers from every state cadre will be drawn upon by the Centre to man such posts under the Central Government on tenure/deputation basis. This unique system, highly appreciated world over, thus gave a sense of participation in Central administration (general as also police) to each state of the Union. It made the federal polity a truly 'cooperative federation' of the states and the Centre. The in-built "Central Deputation Reserve" ensured regular deputation of officers to the Centre from the states at intervals of three to five years. Thus the Central Government was able to get the knowledge of field situations in every state. Similarly the state government got the knowledge of the policies and methods of functioning of the Central Government from their own officers who reverted at periodical intervals to the state from Central deputations.

The AIS scheme also helped to develop a feeling of camaraderie among holders' level posts in the states and under the Central Government. This was of vital importance for the smooth transaction of day to day government business at the centre and in the state. Many issues of governance usually get amicably settled without assuming political dimensions or becoming matters of bitter disputes. The officials are usually able to arrive at pragmatic solution at their own levels within the politically approved policy frameworks. The system of common recruitment, common training and the feeling of belonging to the same service among the AIS officers does enhance their mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. They also show some kind of mutual respect for each other on grounds of reputation, seniority and standing in the common service. This also helps the states at times to get better deal from the Centre due to healthy personal equations between concerned senior level officers. Political prejudices of one kind or other do not come in the way of understanding the view points and legitimate interests of the states.
The AIS officers are also now becoming somewhat reluctant to be allotted or posted to any state of the country. The reasons for this decline in their spirit of service and outlook are many. The AIS which were visualised by Sardar Patel to be kept “above party and free from political considerations” are increasingly getting politicised. As a result, whenever there are changes of governments in the states, which are rather frequent these days, there are large-scale transfers of IAS and IPS officers particularly at higher levels. These obviously lower their morale and confidence. Many of these officers, rightly or wrongly, get identified as loyalists of one political party or the other and of one political leader or the other. Political neutrality of these services is no longer taken for granted. Corruption and abuse of offices are also becoming rampant. According to general perception, the officers of the AIS, no longer have any special claim for honesty, impartiality and fairness as they once had. The attitude of the Central Government, unfortunately, has become somewhat lukewarm in the general management of AIS. It appears to have left matters entirely to the state governments and consequently, officers have started cultivating local politicians to safeguard their service interests. Their all-India outlook is getting diminished for survival in the state administrations. Even for central postings, on tenure, deputation, officers allegedly have to lobby with various state and Central politicians and ‘arrange’ their own postings. The Central Civil Service Boards, it is alleged, only formalise such ‘arranged’ postings. These Boards therefore, are no longer as effective and decisive as they were meant to be to uphold the concept of AIS. They are unable to ensure justice being done to every AIS officer on the basis of their individual merits. Since the officers have been left to fend for themselves it is leading to demoralisation and fall in the quality of their performance.

Unfortunately, this rosy picture is fast changing. For of late, particularly during the last 10 to 15 years (i.e., after 1990) there has been a perceptible fall in the sound management of the IAS. Neither, the top political leaders nor senior administrators barring some exception have displayed genuine all-India vision and outlook to make the desired use of these services. Since every aspect of governance is now being viewed from narrow regional, race, caste, communal and political angles, the true role of the
AIS as visualised by Sardar Patel and other founding fathers of the Constitution is getting eroded. Such well conceived constitutional institution and administrative arrangement appear to be gradually falling apart. After all, these do not 'work' themselves but are 'worked' by human being. Since the persons holding top managerial offices at political and administrative levels are being guided more by self interest than public interest, many such institutions and instruments of governance are losing their original purpose and rationale.

The civil services in India are legal-rational, hierarchically organised, generalist and technically competent and are expected to remain politically neutral. The services are characterised by open entry based on academic achievement and elaborated training arrangements. There are responsible (generalist and specialist) posts at Central, State and district levels reserved for members of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) cadre alone. A regular, graduated scale of pay with pension and other benefits exists together with a system of promotion and rapid transfers based variously on seniority, merit and political considerations. The services are divided into three categories. First, the State services where each State has its own administrative service, normally headed by the Chief Secretary to the State government. At this level there are also various technical, secretariat and local government services. Second, there are the Central services, more than fifty in number, which include the Indian Foreign Service, the Central Secretarial Service, the Postal Service and the Indian Revenue Service. Finally, the important All-India services include the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service and the Indian Foreign Service. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is responsible for recruitment and service conditions of civil servants in India.

Out of more than 17 million government employees in India, the IAS comprises around five thousand officers. Recruitment takes places on the basis of all-India

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competitive examinations followed by interviews of short-listed candidates. IAS officers occupy the highest administrative positions at the policy-making level and serve as administrative heads of ministries and departments. A few are also appointed as chief executives of public sector enterprises and Chairs of Statutory Boards. At the sub-State level, they are the chief executive officers (Collectors / District Magistrates / Deputy Commissioners) of the districts. The IAS has been considered to be the only multifunctional government service, as an IAS officer is in charge of running virtually every sector in the country. The emoluments and terms of service for the IAS are the most attractive in comparison to other services, with perks and fringe benefits allowing for satisfactory service conditions.

The IAS is made up of State cadres and there is no Central cadre. Upon selection, IAS recruits are assigned to a particular State. They may be deputed by their States to work for the Central government from time to time but must return to the State at the end of their stint at the Centre. The rationale for such an all-India Service is that, give India's federal set up, joint action, co-operation and co-ordination between Central and State governments will facilitate effective governance. Further, officers with facilitate experience form the policy-making process.

India is administered by bureaucrats who are selected by a Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), a constitutional body insulated from political control in its day to day function (Articles 315-323). Through the UPSC, there is a selection process conducted every year to select officers for the Indian Foreign Services (IFS), India Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Services (IPS) and various other allied services including specialised services such as those concerned with the administration of tax or railways. This does not prevent the states from recruiting their own officers through State Public Service Commissions (SPSC) which are also constituted in the Constitution (Articles 315-323). Once selected in the State Services, a bureaucrat in those services may transit from the State in the State Services to the State Services to the Union Services either by way of temporary assignment or permanent absorption. A centralised bureaucracy owes its origins to the British period; 1857-1950. For imperial purposes, such a centralised control was absolutely necessary. It may well have led to
what a former Chief Justice of England; Lord Gordon Hewart has called "the new despotism." But, independent India continued centralised control system to ensure that plans were implemented through a reliable bureaucratic machine, as bureaucratic instrumentalism was seen as crucial to planned change.

In the context of globalisation the changing environment, the management of the civil service, therefore, does need to be reviewed. To make the services strong and effective, links between the centre and the states, their legitimate service interests ought to be protected. Cases of injustice and individual harassments on political considerations at the state and centre levels need to be speedily looked into and set right by the Central Government, which is their appointing authority. Central Government should similarly exercise greater disciplinary control over erring members of these services. The fact of the matter is that far too many senior members of the civil service have allegations of corruption against them. Many holding high offices appear to have amassed illegitimate wealth and yet are able to evade legal consequences due to political or other influences. As a result many of them are viewed to be not only corrupt but also callous and insensitive to their legitimate public duties. They have not proved themselves to be of superior character and calibre than others. Undoubtedly, there are still good many talented officers who are quite painstaking and show broad national outlook in the performance of their tasks. However, they get often overshadowed by the 'smarter' and 'clever' individuals in the services who enjoy political support or belong to political families. They allow themselves to be used as tools by unscrupulous politicians.\(^\text{15}\)

The 'Soft State' phenomenon which explains the absence of social discipline highlights the presence of characteristics in India citizens where the authority of the state is questioned. Expressions of such behaviour include flouting the law and the application of rules and regulations on particularistic criteria as against its universal

application.\textsuperscript{16} This phenomenon associated with dualism is apparent in India where the influence of Hinduism is dominant. 'India culture and philosophy, which abound in contradictions, ignore the canons of logic and the rules of cause and effect and label and categorise things without going on to seek analytical explanations'.\textsuperscript{17} The dualism arises when one's action assume an arbitrary nature when influenced by particularistic notions of caste or religion or follow precise rules of conduct and deference to superiors because one is assigned a duty to perform according to his/her dharma. In the context of caste and one's station in that hierarchy one performs his/her duty strictly according to prescriptions. In the modern context of secular organisation, relations between superiors and subordinates are based on unquestioned obedience where one expects rebuke rather than praise. In simple terms, the rules of conduct, obligations and customers are determined by one's dharma. The eternal law of dharma that governs one's life in the Hindu way of life is distinct from the rule of law that governs the modern Indian state.\textsuperscript{18} This, then, is the cause of the underlying dualism.

While accepting the fact that religious and cultural influence behaviour, it is difficult to establish if Hinduism acts as an obstacle to development. Historically it has had a significant influence over the bureaucratic state by developing elaborate structures, hierarchical gradations, regulations and formal procedures. The system that was created offered those working strictly within the laws of their dharma ample scope to frustrate the system and render the machinery ineffective for implementing policies. Lucian W. Pye comments, 'Indeed the Hindu personality seems to be most at ease with activities associated with visionary planning and grandiose designs'.\textsuperscript{19}

One of the crucial problems emerging out of the complex social structures and environmental factors has been the lack of proper coordination and control in the


\textsuperscript{18} Ibid. pp.138-139.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. pp.138-139
implementation of a number of decisions and policy at various levels of public administration. Due to the existence of a multiplicity of public agencies—judicial, state and local and of different character—some autonomous, semi-autonomous and departmentally controlled and simultaneously working in the same sector or area and/or the same clientele as target groups, these agencies have often worked at cross purposes. The net effect has been that not only the administrative efforts have been counter productive, but the citizen at large has suffered due to the utter confusion and the plurality of jurisdiction that overwhelms him in his dealings with the administration. Inadequate systems of "control and coordination" in the processes of policy formulation and implementation, a proper balance between the needs for a centralised uniform policy and decentralised implementation, an adequate system of rapid consultation and communication amongst the vertical hierarchies and horizontal authorities and the creation of an effective delivery system to the different social and target groups are the emerging administrative imperatives borne out of the compulsions of a heterogeneous complex social system. Despite the creation of a number of specialised agencies like the Department of Plan Implementation or Coordination at the Centre and State levels, this aspect of public administration has not visibly improved. There seems to be an impending necessity for new technological tools and administrative strategies, if the capability of the system in this respect is to be improved substantially.

One of several unfortunate characteristics of the new policies was that they rapidly created a set of strong vested interests in the perpetuation of the new model. Bureaucrats and politicians got access to the abundant sources of rent created by the web of discretionary controls. The educated classes were co-opted by recruitment to the Indian Administrative Service or as economic advisors, which offered them the opportunity to improve their social status while enabling them to believe that they were fulfilling their socialist ideals and nationalist aspiration. The engineers and scientists were won over by the creation of large research and development establishment and preference for domestic technology regardless of the cost pursued in furthering of self-reliance. These groups lacked political power as well as any knowledge of alternatives. Moreover, the losses are small for each individual consumer, so there is little incentive
for individuals to organise collective action where the government neglects that responsibility.\textsuperscript{20}

The preceding analysis of the inter-relationships between the socio-political structure and administrative system in India may appear to be highly critical about the negative impacts created by these factors, but it is neither intended to undermine achievements and performance of Indian administrative system nor to suggest that administrative performance and inefficiency are incompatible with a complex socio-political structure. A medium of balance between the conflicting demands, aspirations and influences of different classes, castes, religious and linguistic groups has sought to be achieved in India. Despite the tremendous increases in public employment, growth of public enterprises, proliferation of administrative agencies and the enormous burden of public expenditure as a result of the growing socio-economic demands made on the system, the process of administrative development in India has been a continuous one, while the administrative system has at times, shown signs of strains due to constant pressures, largely generated by the weight of its own structure and continuous policy changes, the system has certainly acquired some resilience to withstand and bear such pressures.

4.5. Recruitment and Selection in Indian Civil Service

In order to ensure that recruitment is fair and bureaucrats discharge their functions without fear or favour, special provisions have been made to protect them. The recruitment and conditions of service are laid down by Parliament or rules promulgated by the President so that there is no lack of clarity about the conditions of service attached to any office, including salary, emoluments, pensioner benefits, promotion and so on (Article 309). To protect bureaucrats from their own employers (namely the Union of India and the various government of the states), the Constitution

provides that although they hold office 'during the pleasure of the President' (a quaint phrase which can be traced back to the legal culture of the British rule: Article 310), they cannot be 'dismissed, removed or reduced in rank without due process' (Article 311). These provisions of the Constitution have given rise to so much litigation that there is a branch of law called 'service law' which is highly specialised and for which there is a special tribunal to adjudicate disputes between the government and its staff. What was originally designed to protect bureaucracy from their employers has caused disputes amongst the officers themselves over promotions and other incidences.

The cadre management of the All-India services (AIS) is done by the Establishment Officer, Government of India. This Officer has to transact the business in consultation with the Chief Secretary of the various provinces and the Secretaries of the central ministries. The Establishment Officer has to ensure that 40 percent of the officers of the All-India services are on deputation with the central government and the rest work with the concerned provincial governments/union territories. The strength of the cadre for each province is determined by this Officer in consultation with the Chief Secretary of the concerned province. He has to further ensure that 50 percent posts are manned by the promotes recommended by the various provinces, and only 50 percent are recruited through direct selection, 50 percent of the recruitees have to be selected from the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward castes, handicapped persons, and special migrants from some neighbouring states. The rest are selected purely on the basis of their merit. In the case of Group A, B, C, and D services, their entire management rests in the hands of the central management and the provinces have no say in the matter. In the case of the civil services of the various provincial governments, the rules of reservation vary from case to case.

The entry to the Indian civil service, both at the central and the provincial levels is done through a competitive examination system. For the All-India services of the central government and also for the rest of its services in Group A and B, the Union Public Service Commission conducts a preliminary examination of objective-type questions. Normally 150,000 candidates appear every year for this examination. Above ten percent
of the candidates are selected for the second tier of examination where they have to take a written examination. Here again, 10 percent of the candidates are declared successful, they are called for the final interview where about 50 percent of the candidates are selected and are assigned to the civil service in order of merit. This system of selection was suggested in 1979, as opposed to the earlier system where the candidates appearing for the All-India services had to take up two more papers. The Fifth Pay Commission has suggested a reversal to the old system.

The members of the Indian civil service undertake a foundation training of six months, which is a part of the overall pre-civil service entry training of two years' duration. In 1985 the Government of India introduced a very ambitious plan of training the civil servants, which made it mandatory for the members of the IAS to undergo a one-week vertical training every year. For officers of the different seniorities the Government suggested a wide-range of training programmes. However, this zeal suffered a setback in July 1991 with the new government taking over the reigns of power. The overall assessment of the training efforts points out that it has had a mixed bag of results and a lot more needs to be done to make it effective.

The Indian civil service system has discriminated in favour of males, some select universities, urbanites and candidates' who are well-versed in English. Though right from the inception of the Indian civil service reservations were made for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, these are found to have preponderance in selection only in the case of Group C and D services. The government's efforts of allocating 50 percent of seats to these classes may still take some more time to translate itself into a reality. The middle and upper middle income group people have had a greater representation in terms of profession. The wards of salaried people, especially those working in government have had a greater representation, followed by the wards of lawyers, doctors, engineers and teachers. The representation of the farming class, which was at
its peak during the British regime, has come down significantly. All these are now being taken care of, but it may take quite some time to remove these anomalies.\(^{21}\)

Public services are highly prized in India. They not only carry an important social status but they also have considerable power which can be put to useful as well as corrupt purposes. For the disadvantaged to want to join these services is unexceptional. But the question is in what measure and to what extent, bearing in mind that any policy of 'reservations' (as affirmative action schemes of this nature are called in India) must not undermine the efficiency of the administration (Article 335). The Janata Government of 1989 was determined to extend reservations to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Union Services, following the recommendations of the Mandal Commission of 1980. In the 1980 report of the Backward Classes Commission (also know the Mandal Commission), chaired by B.P. Mandal a former chief minister of Bihar and a member of a backward caste, recommended an even wider ranging compensatory discrimination program for 52 percent of the population, including Muslims, classified as "backward". The report's recommendation included that 27 percent of all posts under the central and state governments should be reserved for the 3,743 castes and sub castes identified as backward. This led to massive protest and the ultimate fall of that Government in 1990. The idea was to make reservations up to 50 percent of the intake. This was blessed by the Supreme Court in 1992 in the well known Mandal Case (1992). It unleashed political forces amongst the better off of the disadvantaged. Indeed, the then Prime Minister V. P Singh who was responsible for implementing 'Mandal Commission' was confident that he had altered the fate of Indian politics, including perforce federal politics for at least 50 years. What happened was that the beneficiaries of 'Mandal-politics' (if it may be called that) became an organised political force and began to dominate elections in the populous states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and various other areas. This led to 'Mandal' based governments in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and also affected the elections to the Lok Sabha. It needs to be made clear that the reservation system that is being resisted is not what has been conceded to the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. It is the expending base of reservations among the so called backward castes.

and other backward classes (OBC) that threatens to produce a backlash. The vested interest in backwardness that the system of reservation has created might further lead to a re-alignment of communities on lines that can only perpetuate the present division.

4.6. Transfers in Indian Civil Service

The Fifth Pay Commission noted the gravity of transfer problem and suggested detailed guidelines by each department as part of a comprehensive transfer policy. There should be the conception of a normal tenure of 3 to 5 years. Premature transfers need to be on sound grounds. Detailed reasons must be given and the officer should have the right to appeal against such decisions. Decisions on transfers without a change in incumbency of the Prime Minister (PM) or the Chief Minister (CM) should be taken after a thorough examination by the Civil Services Board.

The Civil Services Board at the Centre should comprise of a retired Judge of the Supreme Court or a High Court, a prominent person in public life and the Cabinet Secretary. At the state level, the first two positions need to be jointly decided by the CM and the Leader of the opposition, while the Cabinet Secretary's position in the Board could be replaced by the Chief Secretary. For each premature transfer, the Secretary Personnel will have to submit a detailed explanation to the Civil Services Board. If the Board does not accept this transfer request, it needs be tabled before the House in the next session.

The Conference of Chief Ministers of May 27, 1997 modified the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations, seeking to secure power to the political executive. The CM would appoint top positions like the Chief Secretary, the Director-General of

Police and the Chief Conservator of Forests. The Civil Services Board would recommend transfers of officers of the level of Joint Secretary or above and Heads or Additional Heads of Departments, Divisional Commissioners, Financial Commissioners, District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police. The Chief Secretary would be the Chairman of the Civil Services Board. The second member would be the Additional Chief Secretary, the Chairman of the Revenue Board or the senior most financial commissioner. The Member-Secretary would be Secretary Department of Personnel and Training.23

The difference between the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission and the Conference of Chief Ministers is stark. There was no mention of a normal tenure by the Chief Ministers. The top positions were sought to be made fully subservient to the political executive. No participation from the judiciary or civil society was suggested in the Civil Services Board, which was to be entirely constituted by the top bureaucracy. Civil servants of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) are subject to rapid and often arbitrary transfers from their posts throughout their careers. To rapid transfers of IAS officers is one important factor among others that demoralise these key civil servants and adversely affects corruption-free sustainable development.

The high rate of IAS mobility practised at the present time draws considerably from the one established during the British period as a means of centralising power and controlling corruption. The current scenario, however, provides ample evidence that the system has actually contributed to increasing corruption. The civil servant-politician relationship of mutual benefits continues to be of a temporary nature as a change of government and shifting loyalties could necessitate renewed transfers. Both politician and bureaucrats alike have contributed towards the institutionalisation routine on the one hand and political and financial manipulation on the other.

Several individuals, including a few former civil servants, have suggested concrete steps for securing a form of fixed tenure for key civil servants in the state administration. They argue that fixed tenures will safeguard the integrity of the honest.

However, such a proposal may result in officials developing vested interests and it would be unfair to the public if an incompetent and/or corrupt civil servant is posted in one place for a long period of time. As Zaffar Saifullah one former Cabinet Secretary put it, "If appointment are not made on merit, how they will enforce a better regime? Fixed tenures for the bureaucracy are like a fixed tenure for a government". De Zwart sums up the problem rather nicely when he writes, "Most people in Indian are convinced that without regular transfer, corruption and the abuse of power would become more or less universal. The existing regulations – which in fact make transfers possible at all time – derive a large measure of legitimacy from this conviction".24

4.7. Costs of the Indian Civil Service

The eight million civil servants in India constitute 50 percent of the organised employment in the country. The country spends about 3.5 percent of its GDP on the pay and perquisites of the civil servants. There is a feeling that the civil service has become oversized. It is said that the civil servants are underpaid; they underwork and underperform. At the high levels, the pay and perquisites may be lower as compared to the counterparts of the civil servants in the private sector. However, the members of Group C and D services are said to earn around twice more than their counterparts in the private sector. There is a general criticism that the Indian civil service has become top-heavy. This appears to be true. If pronouncements such as 10 percent reduction across the board of the posts of the rank of Joint Secretary and above, as suggested in 1991 and the recent recommendations of the recent Fifth Pay Commission to downsize the Indian civil service system at the centre to the tune of 33.33 percent, are given due credit, and the modernisation of the civil service through computerisation, introduction of networks, training, and outsourcing work, is done, it may go a long way in making the Indian civil service leaner and fitter.

The Fifth Pay Commission has been called "single largest adverse shock to India's strained public finances in the last decade" and an act of "fiscal profligacy" without parallel. The compensation paid to civil servants (here defined as salaries and dearness allowance) rose by around 40 percent between 1996/97 and 1997/98. Over the 1990s, the Government of India's wage bill rose by an average nominal rate of 14.3 percent a year, substantially higher than the 9.5 percent average increase in the consumer price index. The situation in the states is even more dire (Table 4.1). In a sample of states, a mixture of the richer southern states and poorer northern ones, the wage bill increased on average by nearly 1 percent of state GDP between 1996/97 and 1998/99. Orissa is extreme but not a typical. In the 1990s, its salary and pension obligations increased 4.7 times, while revenues increased approximately threefold. By 1999/2000 more than 180 percent of Orissa's own source revenues were going to cover salary and pension expenses.

Table 4.1: Ratio of civil service salary and dearness allowance to GDP Government of India and selected states, 1995/96-2000/01 (percent)

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<tr>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>N.A</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
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<td>Orissa</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<td>Rajasthan</td>
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<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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Note: Government of India data on salaries is based on salaries for sanctioned strength of central government employees.


The costs of civil service are raised further by burgeoning pension liabilities. At the centre, pension spending for civil servant increased dramatically in the 1990s, with average yearly growth surpassing 20 percent, to reach 1 percent of GDP. And in Uttar Pradesh the ratio of pension spending to state GDP increased from 0.4 percent to 1.2 percent in the 1990s. Pension expenditures for the centre and the states are likely to keep on growing at a fast pace, especially for states, where employment more than doubled over the past 30 years. Preliminary estimates conducted in 2001 using the World Bank Pension Reform Options Toolkit actuarial model suggest that the present value of central and state pension liabilities could amount to 25 percent of GDP.

In the light of rising pension liabilities, the Government announced in February 2003 a plan to establish a fully funded defined contribution scheme for new civil servants. Individuals will be able to choose from a limited number of pre-qualified private asset managers and one public asset manager. The system will be centrally administered to reduce costs. A new specialised pension regulatory agency will be created to supervise the new scheme. The shift to a fully funded defined contribution scheme will force the payment of pension liabilities as they accrue—more transparent and more financially viable.

The proposed defined contribution scheme for civil servants constitutes the first attempt to address the problems being setting the pension system in India. The reform faces the dual challenges of establishing a sound well-regulated funded pension system for new federal civil servants and, more importantly, motivating further and deeper reforms within the rest of India's pension system. The new scheme should serve as model for the states to reform their own pension plans. Some states (such as Tamil Nadu) are already contemplating similar changes for new entrants.
While the old success story may be found, the recent wage gains generally were not compensated by any quality of government services. Indeed, the mandate of India’s public service has been shrinking as governments withdraw from direct involvement in economic product and focus more on a regulatory and facilitative role for private sector growth. Qualitative improvements have often relied heavily on the application of information technology to streamline and re-engineer business process, such as the Bhoomi program (land program) for registering property records in Karnataka or the e-Seva (e-service) "one stop shops" for more than 40 government services in Andhra Pradesh. Even when information technology has made many functions redundant, civil servants and powerful unions have extracted pledges of "no job losses" as the price for allowing the innovations to go forward, thus limiting the economics and efficiency gains to be reaped. One southern Indian state for example, computerised part of its stamps and registration function. The result is faster client service and a reduction in turnaround times by nearly half. By same estimates, as many as 48 percent of the department’s staff of approximately 3,200 were made redundant by this decision, yet they are retained on the state payroll at an estimated cost of more than $3 million a year. Experience varies, but both the centre and the states have on average resisted pressure for new recruitment in much of the 1990s and beyond. But even the best performers have yet to embark on a significant program of staff reduction. As a result, many line departments find themselves in a more precarious position, with a growing proportion of their non-plan resources taken up by salaries, over which they have very limited control. Another fundamental problem haunting India’s civil service is the failure to use staff productively. The burden of weak administration falls particularly on the poor, who suffer from government spending unlimited access to services and employee indifference.26

4.8. The Role of Indian Civil Service

Since 1947 in Nehruvian era, India has been committed to development through democracy and decentralisation. The Nehruvian model of development called for centralised planning, a mixed economy and a burgeoning public sector. The nation had to address itself to the tasks of socioeconomic transformation of the people. Civil service had to serve as prime movers and energisers in the process of modernisation. To work with elected representatives as partners for a common cause meant that administration had to be action-oriented, people-oriented and result-oriented. This called for changes in ideas, attitudes and values, for civil service had to see themselves no longer as masters or the ruling class, but as civil servants who rule only to serve. What gradually unfolded was the inevitable tension in developing civil service to cope with the rigours of development administration. They had to be development-oriented and empathise with the people. In 1954, Nehru put it well when he said that the civil service "is meant to achieve something and not to exist in some kind of ivory tower, following certain rules of procedure and Narcissus-like, looking on itself, with complete satisfaction."27

After India got independence in 1947, the Indian civil service has more or less followed the British model. However in the context of globalisation, Indian civil service have the pressures, emanating from within and without are now forcing the Indian civil service to develop professionalism. With Independence, the objective of commonwealth came in consequence of the installation of a responsible government guided solely by the "welfare concept". Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his inimitable style had observed "the whole structure of government in India has changed from rather an autocratic structure to a democratic structure where the ultimate responsibility lay with the people of the country. The State has become a dynamic state not a static state in

which services had to adapt it to the changes, and adapt methods to the changed condition of work and the changed objectives of work".28

The onset of economic planning in India in 1951, with the launch of its First Five-Year Plan enjoined on the Indian civil service the role of development administration. In this new mould, they were expected to participate in the administration of public enterprises, regulation of the private sector, formulation of socio-economic and political policies, elimination of poverty, development of rural areas, combating inflation, effective monetary management, reduction of gender gap, elimination of social inequity, etc. in the process of national development. In the early 1980s the Indian state had its first experience with the severe resource crunch, which deepened by the end of the 1980s. This led to the emergence of a new economic policy in 1991, which saw a rollback of the state in economic activities both at the macro and micro levels, meaning thereby formulation of such macro-economic policies which spurred a favourable environment for private sector participation and reforms at the macro-level leading to the contraction of the public enterprise system and the existence of only healthy public sector units. In other words, the 1990s foresee for the state, a facilitator's role. Thus, the civil service in the 1990s and beyond would have to don this new role for itself, which means the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), as the three All-India services and 29 other central services in the country, will have to have a new orientation. The provincial civil services will have to follow suit.

The need for a responsive administration is immense in a country like India with development goals and with its long colonial background resting on stiff-necked bureaucracy. Attributes of responsive administration must thus permeate all levels and sector of public administration but the need for citizen-friendly administration is most pressing at the countless points where administration and citizens daily meet. At present, in most parts of the country, the contact points between citizens and

administration are virtually a hacking point: a point of apparently endless harassment for the people, especially those who are on the fringe of development.

This, among others calls for attitudinal change in the country’s bureaucracy and nowhere perhaps it is more necessary than in those constituting the field administration. The field level professionals are called upon to cultivate citizen-oriented attitudes. In addition, they must also possess and continually cultivate higher measures of administrative skills and subject matter capabilities. This calls for larger-scale changes in the public personnel practices and strengthening of the present tenure system. Policy making should show sensitiveness to citizen’s problems and must not be influenced by extra-national interests: Here, India must make a mention of the new economic policy underway since 1991 requiring cultivation of new skills, knowledge and orientations and new equilibrium between administration and the people.

The stability of national development would depend on the role of civil service. This means, inevitably, that whichever group comes to power would look to the administrative structures of government to evolve policies and plans that would ensure that they stay in power. This responsibility that the civil service have to take on means that they would have to be at once, should we say, flexible and understanding of the anxieties of the group in power, and also realise that they, and not the politicians, are the true repositories of power. If policies and projects do not work as they should, then the coalitions might well become shaky. Much, therefore, will depend on civil service to see that the government stays stable. They could do this only if they evolve and get approvals for policies and plans that are rational and practical. They then have to ensure that they work as they had the responsibilities to shoulder. They can make the difference between a stable and unstable government.

The administrative reform formally ended in the early nineties, heralding the present era of globalisation with its concomitant, the economic policy. In 1991, the finance minister announced what is known as the New Economic Policy, making a radical departure from the Nehruvian philosophy and heralding the era of globalisation,
liberalisation and free-market economy characteristic of the western nations. The role of the state inevitably changes from ‘rowing’ to ‘steering’ to use David Osborne and Ted Gaebler’s terms. The public administrator’s new role is thus of facilitator and stimulator, to see that the expanding private sector plays the game within the framework of the country’s law and regulations. The ‘license-permit-raj’ is to be dismantled and so is the ‘subsidy state’. The new economic policy led to replacement of the mixed economy by a market-friendly economy.

The period since 1950s to the present has witnessed a conceptual movement from government from governance-centric notions of public administration to a broader view of governance. This coincided with the recognition of the critical role of government and the effective state in important publication like the World Development Report of 1997. Governance is distinct from government and is in the process through which various stakeholders articulate their interests, exercise their rights and mediate their differences. This realisation coincided with the shift to ideals of new public management such as customer focus, quality services, performance orientation, flexible and autonomous management, decentralisation, deregulation, market testing, competition and alternative service delivery. This change reflects an ideological shift common to different donor agencies, but the exclusive focus of good governance on the principles of new public management is alleviated in developing countries by a belief in democracy, peace, rule of law and social justice. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advocates the principles of accountability, transparency, predictability, participation, decentralisation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency. Whatever the label, good governance is closely associated with public policy and national development as the Tenth Plan document is careful to emphasise.

Good governance relates to effective problem solving, decision making or efficient allocation and management of public resources. The concept ‘governance’ was for the first time highlighted by World Bank. Good governance was meant sound development management; improving governance which begins with emphasis on accountability, rule of law, openness, participation and transparency. A governance
approach based on capability, incorporate accountability, transparency and strong focus on into their governance approach. Governance is associated with efficient and effective administration that is committed to improvement in the quality of life of the people. It relates to the capacity of the central power of political and administrative system to cope up with the emerging challenges of the society. The World Bank has defined good governance as ....the one epitomised by predictable, open and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furthering public good, the rule of law, transparent process and a strong civil society participating in public affairs. Poor governance (on the other hand) is characterised by arbitrary policymaking, unaccountable bureaucracies, un-enforced or unjust legal system, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life and widespread corruption.

Good governance, thus, seems to be a synonym for effective government in the sense that the basis governance functions are performed with authority and capacity, the basic function of governments being, to recall the World Bank 1992 definition, “management of country’s economic and social resources for development” making ‘governance’ a development function whereas students of constitutional law, political science and public administration are fully aware that all governments carry out several more important extra-developmental function, e.g., defence of country’s frontiers, conduct of diplomacy and maintenance of domestic peace and public order. In any case, the Constitution of India casts a wide array of welfare and regulatory functions upon the union, state and union territory governments while the World Bank governance discourse focuses only upon narrow economist or techniques dimensions of governance keeping, in tune with, no doubt, its agenda of maintaining a supply of loans with assured pay-back prospects and for this laudable purposes, laying down appropriate conditions.

For nearly five decades the union and state governments in India have been formulating and implementing Five-Year Plans based on sophisticated input-output matrices precisely for “management of country’s economic and social resources for development”, yet ever since the Narasimha Rao government launched economic policy
reforms the agenda of good governance is being projected as an alternative to planning with dismantling of its regulatory mechanisms, disinvestments of its mammoth public sector enterprises and withdrawal of union and state governments from all business activities. In other words, the World Bank criteria for good governance seem to imply that India’s economy should be thrown open to market forces for competition according to well known principles of ‘capitalism’ rather than the “socialist pattern of society” which India had been striving for as symbolised by the insertion of the term ‘socialist’ in the Preamble to the Constitution of India by way of an amendment in 1976, i.e., only 15 years before the adoption of a market driven package of economic policies conveniently described as globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation reforms.

Hence, while learned Indian pundits may obfuscate the issue by quoting from the Vedas or the Gita or Kautilya’s Arthashashtra, in the specific case of India, good governance is nothing but an agenda for restructuring the ongoing state driven governance into market-friendly governance which may euphemistically, be disguised as people-friendly governance but which would, basically, open the floodgates for entry and paramount of corporate mammoths including multi-national corporations and transnational corporations as well as Indian’s own home-grown multi-country entities.

In the early fifties, Paul A. Appleby, a reputed American scholar of public administration, had adjudged, in two separate visits to India, the Indian administrative system to be one of the twelve best in the world, yet only one generation later academic and administrative analysts seem to vie with each other in highlighting its pathologies. Most proponents of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation policies would in fact, like to re-invent it in accordance with the World Bank agenda of good governance which one scholar has operationalised O.P Minocha as follows:

1. Political accountability, including the acceptability of political system by the people and regular elections to legitimise the exercise of political power.

2. Freedom of association and participation by various religious, social economic, cultural and professional groups in the process of governance.

3. An established legal framework based on the rule of law and independence of judiciary to protect human rights, secure social justice and guard against exploitation and abuse of power.

4. Bureaucratic accountability ensuring a system to monitor and control the performance of government offices and officials in relation to quality of service, inefficiency and abuse of discretionary power. The related determinants include openness and transparency in administration.

5. Freedom of information and expression needed for formulation of public policies, decision-making and evaluation of government performance. It also includes independent analysis of information by the professional bodies, including the universities and others needed for a civil society.

6. A sound administrative system leading to efficiency and effectiveness. This, in turn, means the value for money and cost effectiveness. The effectiveness includes the degree of global achievements as per the stated objectives and also the administrative system which is able to take secular and rational decision and the system which is self-propelling to take corrective measures.

7. Cooperation between the government and civil society organisations.

Governance needs to be citizen-oriented. In order to bring new national development in the system, it is much called for the governance system to include the required kind of changes, keeping in mind, the need of the day. India efforts to transform an impersonal and paternalistic bureaucracy into a citizen-focussed sensitised system of governance, catering to the needs of the public, have acquired due attention in India since 1990. Localisation has given a new identity to the local elected bodies and has introduced a number of measures towards empowering the governing
Referring to the concept of bureaucratisation in India, downsizing, delayering, splitting up internally into more autonomous units, decentralisation designed to enhance the importance of the lower levels of the organisational pyramid and empowerment of the cutting edge functionaries constitute some of the forms that de-bureaucratisation has taken place in India. There is a multi-faceted plan of action, involving a diverse range of initiatives impinging upon the responsiveness question. Broadly, such a plan action comprises of the following:-

- Accountability-fostering measures
- Measures for promoting transparency and openness
- Measures directed at civil service performance and integrity. Initiatives in this category include the following: - a) measures to curb corruption, b) efforts towards evolving a civil service code of ethics, c) contracting out of public services, and d) steps towards simplification of procedures.

In 1997, while the Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievances announced these initiatives under the "Effective and Responsive Administration" rubric, the Fifth Central Pay Commission, emerged with some radical proposals. These inter alia include recommendations for downsizing the bureaucracy; contractual appointment in civil service; incentive pays; multi-skill of Group-D staff; constitution of the civil service boards; and a renewed emphasis on performance appraisal, with a view to making it an ongoing, round the year exercise. These are recommendations with far reaching consequences on which the union government is, however, yet to take a view.

In a large and diverse country like India, which inherited traditions of administration and rigid, good governance would focus as much on the primary responsibilities of law and order, revenue and swift dispute resolution as on meeting the challenges of globalisation and liberalisation. The National Human Development Report of Planning Commission for the year 2001 provides an illuminating list of achievements

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and challenges in different fields of governance, economic, political and civic. The report points out that the determining factor for successful development outcomes and reducing poverty is not the availability of funds alone, but institutional capacity to formulate viable and need-based schemes with efficient and responsive delivery systems. The priority areas are identified as: devolution of powers and resources to elected local bodies; civil service reform; enforcing incentive and disincentive structures to ensure accountability; procedural reform in all areas of public interface; and empowerment of women and marginal groups.

There is growing realisation within government as well as major donor agencies, about the virtue of comprehensive intersectoral governance reform programs at the state level. Administration in India is seamless, not the least because of uniform civil service systems and common personnel regulations applicable to and enforced by the departments in charge of finance and personnel department. All the development sectors suffer from common problems of functional overlaps, centralisation, weak monitoring and coordination, overstaffing, skill gaps, corruption, poor budgetary management and unresponsive delivery systems. Administrative reform is thus a theme and tool that penetrates all the social and infrastructure sectors. The Approach Paper for the Tenth Plan reiterated the link between fiscal reform and improved governance in terms that resonate with statements by the World Bank and order donor agencies in their papers on country strategy and structural adjustment.

In August 2002, the UN Human Development Report rated India at 124. This ranking brought out the facts that: one fourth of India’s population lives below the poverty line, one third is illiterate, nine out of ten households in rural areas don’t have access to toilets, one out of six villages is yet to get electricity and two out of five don’t get drinking water. And this is despite the fact that India has the largest number of civil servants in the world today (1.9 crore). Two of every three workers in the organised sector work for the government and the total salary bill of government employees –
state, centre and public sector enterprises – is over Rupees 70,000 crore (1 crore = 1 million). 32

The civil service in India have played a significant, indeed a critical, role in maintaining the integrity of the country and in bringing about major developments in post-independent India. However, in recent times, the services have been facing a grave crisis of identity and role definition. People now believe that public services are meant to benefit government servants and politicians and not the 'public. 33 The emphasis here is on all public services, which subsume all technical, professional, law enforcement and administrative personnel. Though issues relating to efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative machinery have been discussed from time to time, the reforms initiated have only dealt with minor procedural changes, without really addressing the issue of improvement in the quality of services.

4.9. The Indian Administrative Service (IAS)

The Indian Administrative Service, commonly and conveniently known as the IAS, is a premier, prestigious and highly acclaimed service all over the world. Initially it had justified its creation by serving as a bulwark during, the churning and the crises that the country had encountered as a floundering democracy. Having done so, the question that has been surfacing in the minds of academicians and the laymen is whether it still serves any purpose in the present age of globalisation, liberalisation, specialisation, privatisation, and decentralisation. The IAS holds the relevance and importance to the Government of India today and the IAS officers are bound by the stipulations and conditions of a hide-bound bureaucracy.

The IAS heads the administrative structure at central, state and district levels giving it vantage control of the administration. They are involved in the crucial tasks of

policy formulation at the central and state secretariats and in policy implementation as heads of departments and as district officials. The role of the IAS is to: 1) provide top administrators for the Central Government as well as the states; 2) enable the Centre remain in constant touch with local realities; 3) facilitate liaison between centre and state; 4) create uniform standards of administration throughout the country; 5) ensure that the services are ‘free from communal or petty bias; and 6) provide administrative leadership for other services ensuring commitment and sense of security.

The expectations of the government from the IAS are efficiency (in executing orders, in prompt handling of unforeseen situations, in aiding government in formulation of policy) loyalty (to the constitution, etc.), integrity (honesty, sincerity, probity, no regard to private gain—even the personal life of an IAS officer should be sober and dignified), impartiality (decisions in accordance with law). The IAS expectations from the government are clear authority, security, support and justice (in promotions, transfers, prize postings, etc.); any violations of justice in these fields are sure to have harmful effects on the morale of IAS officers and thereby impair their efficiency.

The IAS enjoys constitutional sanctity and has been envisaged by the Constitution as an instrument of multi-purpose functions. They have constitutional sanction and the Articles 309, 310 and 311 of the Constitution deals with the public services. The three basic ideas in these articles are—first, a system of selection for civil services and promotion which is based on merit, that is how the UPSC and the SPSC come in. Second, the security of the service is guaranteed by the Constitution itself, namely, no penalty can be imposed on public services except by a constitutionally prescribed procedure and subject to judicial review. The conditions of service are to be regulated by the law which has constitutional validity and it is quite clear that framers of the Indian Constitution did not think of civil service as dependent public services, as if they could be ordered at will or played about by those in authority for the time being.

In five decades the IAS had increased five times with authorised strength of 5,068 of which 5,047 IAS officers were in position as in 1998. It is the planned
development model that brought about an increase in its size and number and scope of duties while decreasing its effectiveness. It became an in formidable task to accomplish the vast duties and responsibilities assigned to it. There is no other career in the world that offers the extent of power, money and scope for public service as the IAS. Added to this is the job security guaranteed by a statutory base that makes it a highly coveted position in the government. Thus it has become highly attractive to all those who are desirous of public service while earning a livelihood as well as those who aspire for power and authority.

The IAS served as a stabilising and consolidating force immediately after independence when the country encountered problems of unprecedented order, perhaps in the whole history of mankind. In all fairness nevertheless, it may be said that the Indian bureaucracy has given good account of itself during national crises and natural calamities, whether it was Indo-Pak war/Bangladesh war or devastating floods/tornado. It lent stability and solidity to the organisation by strict adherence to authority. Independent India could start its career afresh with an initial advantage of well developed administrative apparatus. This enabled the country to sort out other basic national issues and to consolidate on its independence.

The IAS served as a bulwark of democracy. It served as the steel frame, the skeleton that lent solidity to the country. It enabled the Constitution and the will of the people as reflected in the highest representative bodies to be enforced and implemented. The IAS has the cream of the talent and intelligence within the country. The high level of competition and the attractiveness of the career has helped build up a reservoir of the best talent available in the country. Merit being the only criteria, the quality of the service has been maintained at the highest levels.

It functioned as an impersonal and rational organisation with an aura of competence. It put in place a system of administration that acted impartially during the

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chaos and confusion that followed Independence. The IAS helped maintain a high level of efficiency in the higher echelons of administration across the length and breadth of the country. It enjoyed a high degree of freedom in internal management through legal provisions.

The weaknesses of the IAS are manifold. This structure has been the source of over conformity to rules at the expense of public interest. The fanatical observation of superior subordinate relationship for the mutual benefit of both led to the exclusion of clientele interest in the long run. The IAS is a microcosm of the society and manifests such negative distinctions drawn on the lines of politician's administrations and specialists with each group vying for the promotion and advancement of its own narrow goals. This unhealthy competition results in the important players in the government working at cross-purposes and wastage of precious resources.

The IAS is held guilty of an authoritarian style of functioning that partly reflects the feudal mindset inherited by us. Their subservience to the political elements for furtherance of their own vested interests and mutual gain has accentuated this style of functioning. The IAS had led to marginalisation of specialists in the government and pushed them into a peripheral role. This scenario was sustained by conscious efforts of the IAS. The lack of transparency in the functioning of the IAS allowing the IAS to escape with acts of omission and commission that could be totally antagonistic to the larger public interest has added to the complacency in the IAS. The IAS believes in shrouding themselves under the garb of mystery and secrecy. Their penchant for holding onto information and refusal to part with it reflects their sense of insecurity and unwillingness to open up to public scrutiny in policy making and implementation. This is a retrogressive trend in present age of democratization and decentralisation of administration and governance.35

Under the guise of formalism and adherence to rules the IAS has developed total inertia against innovation, initiative and reform. The pliability in the IAS to political influence in pursuit of career promotion has made the concepts of neutrality and anonymity, the very fulcrum of an objective administration the casualties. Administration in developing countries is characterised by centralisation: the central control of input usage. One can find centralised pre-control of expenditure decision; centralised assignment of civil service position; centralised pre-control of recruitment, promotion and dismissal; centralised prescription of salary scales; centralised approval of salary increments and incentives; and centralised specification of civil service performance evaluation. Finally, the government's entry in the economic universe has left extensive discretion with the politicians and the administrators causing aberrations in the system arising out of abrogation of rule of law and corruption of unprecedented order.

There are no well-laid norms of accountability that the IAS abides by. It is the discretion and the prerogative of the ministers to check or let off an erring officer as per his convenience. Loyalty to politicians in power and readiness to acquiesce in short-term populism of the political government is the minimum qualification for being considered for appointment to senior post. Transfers and promotion are affected more on extraneous grounds and less on account of caliber, experience and performance thus demoralising the IAS. "Indian administration is yet to evolve an effective pattern in this respect to reward the best and penalise the worst". This has arisen out of a lack of accountability in the IAS and poor performance appraisal efforts within the service. Neither is the performers patted on the back nor are the non-performers pulled for their lack of commitment.

4.10. Corruption in Indian Administrative

Corruption in India has become a social phenomenon. It is widespread and is found increasing at an alarming pace. There is hardly any area of activity that has

38 M. A. Muttalib, op. cit, p. 102.
remained wholly free from the impact of corruption. In fact, corruption has now been institutionalised and has become a commonly accepted way of life. In India, acceptance of bribes, commission, under the table payment and gifts, by the politicians or the bureaucrats are no longer frowned upon and even subtle ways have been discovered to legitimise them as a part of normal life activities. Such an ethos has been created in the society that corruption has ceased to be regarded as a crime any longer.

Thus the most invidious form of immoral behaviour on the part of bureaucracy in India is the phenomenon of corruption. The all-pervasive incidence of corruption in Indian administrative system presents a picture of corrupt officials wheeling and dealing in bribery, extortion, nepotism and misuse of official position. It has given rise to a public misperception that unless proven otherwise a civil servant in all probability is a corrupt official. It must be noted however, that bureaucratic corruption in the Third World tends to differ from that of the industrialised countries in its scope and intensity. Where goods and services provided by the public authorities are far below the great demand for them, as in India, it is not uncommon to see people paying a small sum to a minor official for reserving a seat in public transportation, for being admitted in a hospital, for getting a telephone connection or license, or for meeting any other administrative need. Here, scarcity of public resources and almost unlimited demand by the community give rise to such corrupt and unethical practices. As the craving for material goods and benefits continues to increase, prices for such goods and services rise. Civil servants who are in charge of the provision or regulation of such services will continue to face temptation and some may try to avail themselves of whatever opportunities their position provides them. Their actions, in turn, tend to conform the prevailing public view that officials are generally corrupt. And of course, nothing is so corrupting as a suspicion of corruption. 39

Other factors causing corruption and unethical conduct among civil servants are. job scarcity, insufficient salary and the ever-increasing power being given to them by the State to regulate its economy and social affairs. The evolution of civil societies was

marked by the regulation of human conduct and inter-personal and inter-institutional dealings within a framework of civil, criminal and other laws and the society at large was expected to conform to given value systems and codes of conduct. But the regulations and systems which were evolved to impart objectivity and fairness to the mechanisms of governance did not invariably achieve this objective. This increased regulatory authority creates various opportunities for money-making, as for instance in connection with development planning, permits, contracts for construction, granting import-export licenses, collecting customs and other duties and strict accounting for foreign exchange. Experience has shown that the exercise of regulatory authority has actually contributed to an increase in corruption in various spheres of administrative control and enforcement.\(^{40}\)

Administrative corruption in India has also been encouraged by the pervasive spread of the soft-state syndrome, a rigid bureaucracy, exclusivist process of decision-making in an over-centralised government, abysmally low pay of civil servants and lack of stringent and effective internal control mechanism. According to N. Vittal, the Central Vigilance Commission, Government of India, corruption flourishes in the system because of five basic reasons:–

1) scarcity of goods and services,
2) red tape and complicated rules and procedures,
3) lack of transparency in decision-making,
4) legal cushions of safety we have built for the corrupt people under the very healthy principle that everybody is innocent till proved guilty, and
5) tribalism among the corrupt who protect each other.\(^{41}\)

A consequence of a valueless polity governing the country has been the continuing erosion of the integrity of the civil service. To achieve their short-term objectives, the political executive has been deploying pliant functionaries, handpicked affiliations, to man key assignments. This has resulted in the judicial services, being

\(^{40}\) N. N. Vohra, "Corruption and the Indian Polity", Denouement, December, 1999, pp.7-10.

demoralised and their functioning adversely effected. There are no more any role
models- unknown persons of dubious distinction can get appointments to the highest
posts in the country.

There is a tendency to blame solely, the state-governed economy and permit-
license-inspector Raj, for all ills, including proliferation of corruption, to all levels. When
the concepts of State control of economic activity and the system of permits, quotas and
licenses were ushered in by the political rules, Indian bureaucracy enlarged its power by
creating a number of rules and regulations and thereby secured a stranglehold in the
entire administrative mechanism. Ostensibly, this was done to control the private sector
and to ensure honest administration. The actual result was totally different and indeed
devastating. The control mechanisms were used for unabashed corrupt practices by
politicians as well as by bureaucrats.

But more serious of all has been the adverse effect on the pace of economic
development. In order to avoid individual responsibility and accountability, the
bureaucracy has created ‘group’ or ‘committees’ for the consideration of significant
matters requiring government approval. These group or committees meet once in a
while. This has caused, over the years, serious delays in project implementation as well
as huge cost runs. The bureaucracy has ensured that there is no audit and
accountability for the billions lost due to inactions or delays in decision-making. If there
is gross inefficiency in the managements of the country’s affairs and if the benefits of
development have been denied to millions of India’s poor, the blame lies to a
considerable extent on the shoulders of bureaucrats. Rules and regulations, red tape,
forms and questionnaires, instead of facilitating and quickening the pace of
development, have hampered it insensitively. As Srivastava, says “do not blame the
politicians solely for all the ills of the country today the bureaucrats are equally
responsible for defiling India’s administration”.42 It was not only the political class which
started looking at public offices as a gateway to richness and luxury, but also the

mandarins headed by the ‘steel frame’ - the term to describe the civil service set up under the British, become the instrument of state intervention adopted to promote policies of development. As a generalist administrative service trained to maintain law and order under colonial administration, it extended that role into the area of development through a process of extensive controls for allocation and approvals of programs and projects. As a result, the pre-independence colonial service turned into a powerful bureaucratic state after independence.

Indian civil service, that gradually fell from the high pedestal of propriety, integrity and honesty. The decline is well-elaborated by a well known member of the erstwhile ICS who, later in his career reached high offices as an international civil servant. Prior to Independence, the ICS who built up a formidable reputation for integrity and efficiency and the expectation was that it would maintain the same qualities. Former members of the ICS who had opted to continue in the service of new government of India, occupied after Independence, all important administrative positions under the central government as well as in the provinces (as the States were then called). The cabinet secretary and almost all secretaries to the provincial governments were members of ICS. The standard of work, conduct and integrity of these officers, save a few rare exceptions, were of the highest order. These ICS officers and the newly recruited IAS officers became integral members of a common cadre with one such cadre for each State. All IAS probationers were, for their ‘on the job training, posted to districts under experienced district magistrates and collectors, who were also men of sterling qualities. The IAS officers thus got off with an excellent start.

The Tenth Plan document is the first one of its kind that highlights the importance of governance in the process of development. Earlier plans spoke mainly of implementing machineries, of delays and targets not being met. This is the first time the whole system is being pointed to as being a key to the entire development effort. And, inevitably, corruption has been highlighted as a major evil in the system. Corruption is the most endemic and entrenched manifestation of poor governance in Indian society, so much so that it has almost become an accepted reality and a way of life. The
underpinning of this social phenomenon, which afflicts most developed and developing societies including India, have been reduced into a formulation that equates corruption with monopoly power plus discretion without accountability and low government salaries. In other words, it suggests that when a relatively low paid government servant enters a situation where he/she enjoys both monopoly and discretionary power without any or limited accountability, he/she has an incentive to restrict his/her assigned functions and duties and in the process, seek and charge a monopoly for services rendered.\footnote{India's Tenth Five Years Plan, 2002-2007.}

The document goes on to list some very laudable steps that the Commission feels will make the civil service more effective, but in common with all Plan documents, fails to go specifics, to indicate just how such steps can be taken. Presumably that is something the Commission assumes the government will take up; but they know, or ought to know, that it never will now, merely because the Commission mentions it in the Plan document.

9.11. Indian Civil Service Reform in Political Environment

In December 2002, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee set up a committee on civil service reform, chaired by Surinder Nath, an ex-chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The committee examined three central services – the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the India Police Service and the Indian Foreign Service and recommended that the present system of annual confidential reports for staff should be replaced by open, computerised appraisals on a scale of one to ten. To make bureaucrats more flexible, it proposed that civil service functions should be divided into 11 domains, of which every civil servant would be assigned to at least three. Civil servants should be medically examined once every two years and a standing committee under the cabinet secretary should weed out inept and mentally unfit. An eminent person's group should judge the integrity and professional capability of staff. An
empanelment commission to be chaired by the chairman of the UPSC should choose candidates for administration post, a minister must choose from the panel.\footnote{The Economist, The Economist Country Profile: India Profile, (London: Intelligence Unit, 2003), pp.1-15.}

The question of the poor quality of government services, which did not figure in the National Common Minimum Programme or in the President's addressed, was highlighted by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his address to the nation, but strangely enough did not receive the attention it deserved. Dr. Manmohan Singh spoke at some length about the need to reform government at all levels so that public institutions can deliver services of better quality and with greater efficiency. For a decade now, the dominant paradigm has been to rubbish government services in all respects. That the Government has no role to play, be it in the creation of economic infrastructure (roads and electricity), provision of social services (education and health) or the supply of even essential services (water, sanitation and food for the vulnerable). There were the odd palliatives, like the National Social Assistance Programme, but they were just that- palliatives rather than central elements of government policy.

There are three sets of issues: 1) Gaps in programmes for delivery of social and economic services, 2) Funding of schemes, 3) Delivery of services. The three are interlinked but they are distinct as well. Much of the debate on what the Central and state Government are doing and should do has been centred on the first and second sets of issues. It has taken a Prime Minister's address to the nation to push the third and arguably the most important issue into the arena of public discourse, the defenders of the role of the government are just as restrictive in their approach. Their focus is on increased funding of existing activities or the creation of new programmes, like an employment guarantee scheme. While under-funding is an important concern and there is a strong case for beginning new programmes like a national cooked mid-day meal scheme or even an employment guarantee scheme, it does not help the citizen's cause that the debate focuses almost entirely on the resource question.
There is the proliferation of schemes that reduces their effectiveness and whose only purpose seems to be to give each government agency a finger in the pie. Generalisations do run the risk of over-simplification. Some programmes work better than others and there are regional differences in effectiveness. Thus, surveys have brought out that the mid-day meal scheme works better in the south than where it does exist in the north. Programmes where the beneficiaries select themselves, such as Antyodaya, are less vulnerable to abuse than the others. Such cases are by and large the exception rather than the rule. But they do hold out the hope that all government services are not doomed to disaster. In general, there is a deep dissatisfaction among the citizens about what can broadly be described as the quality of services provided by public institutions.

How does one make the delivery of all manner of services more efficient and the providing agencies more accountable to the citizens? The Prime Ministry’s call for reform of public institutions is easy to issue but enormously difficult to carry out. It has to be a long drawn out process that is implemented in different areas and at different states. There are broadly three sets of issues. The multitude of programmes has to be consolidated under specific areas such as primary education, public health care and rural employment. Unfortunately, an early attempt at consolidation is turning out to be a disaster. Dr. Manmohan Singh’s suggestion that Rs.17,000 crores of funds spent annually on various rural development schemes be pooled together is an eminently sensible suggestion. But the proposal, made at the conference of Chief Ministers earlier, that these resources should be given directly to the districts, violates the basic principle of federalism. Without the involvement of the State Governments, the agenda of reform will not go very far. Any overhaul necessarily has to include the States as well.

Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has urged all the Chief Minister the need for reforming the public institutions at the State and the Central levels. According to Dr. Singh, the reform of public systems involves energising institutions of governance and ensuring accountability in the provisions of public services, transparency in handling of
public funds and aligning incentives with desired outcomes. Dr. Singh is meant to revive a tradition set by the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who explained and exhorted the task of nation-building. The idea is also to build a national consensus on the fundamentals of governance, over and above the political parties’ mutual antagonism.⁴⁵

Dr. Singh said, "Maintenance of law and order is critical in providing an atmosphere conducive to economic development and social harmony." In this respect, he drew the attention to the Chief Ministers’ of exercising their favourite power of transferring officials. Frequent transfers of public servants have a debilitating impact not only on their performance and moral, but also on the whole process of governance. Development administration also involves learning to a large extent on the regularity of tenure. He agrees to ensure stability of tenure to officials in key positions in order to ensure effective administration and proper delivery of public services.

As a result of these conflicting interests and pressures, India is currently going through a searching reassessment. One of the core issues in this debate is the proper role of the state in advance development, regulating the economy and delivering important goods and services. The rhetoric is at times strident – a recent Communist Party India (Marxist) publication accused the Government of India of proceeding to ‘kill public services’ by ‘mercilessly throwing out a number of employees by way of the so-called “voluntary” retirement scheme, direct retrenchment, drastic reduction of retirement age, etc.’⁴⁶ Yet the combative tone of such debates, belies the fact that a consensus is beginning to emerge around the problem with India’s bureaucracy and the type of government that many Indians want.

Frustrated at the perceived inefficiency and lack of responsiveness, a recent India Today⁴⁷ cover story, ‘Bloated Babudom’, noted that the bureaucracy ‘is worse than a corpse, as it resists change, fails to deliver even elementary services and costs

⁴⁷ India daily news paper.
too much. Captured in both the popular press and in the formal reports of many pay and administrative reform commissions, the emerging vision is one of a state that needs to do both more or less. It should be more engaged in providing essential public goods and services such as health care, education, and basic infrastructure. It should be less involved in the direct provision of economic goods or in the stifling regulation of the private sector. It should be more accountable and responsive to its citizen. It should be cleaner, more transparent, more efficient and more effective.

9.12. Indian Administrative Re-Inventing

Administrative change is apt to meet resistance from the career bureaucracy, which in India is an institution of formidable strength. As any meaningful piece of administrative change is apt to reduce the authority and prestige of the bureaucracy, its resistance becomes all the more persistent and resolute. This calls for special efforts from the political leadership, which must also set out to mobilise citizens' support for reform. Administrative change is bound to remain incomplete without an adequate follow-up programme whose basic purpose is to ensure that the outcome corresponds with the originally visualised objects. There must be government-wide concern for administrative reform. Timing of administrative re-inventing is seen to be critical in determining its ultimate fate. The present moment in India is most propitious for this exercise. Economic liberalisation and Panchayati Raj have ushered in exciting era in India. The society, including bureaucracy is psychologically ready at such a time to accept and absorb reforms even of systemic nature.

Administrative re-inventing is necessarily a slow complex process. It requires firm follow-up and regular feedback. Several prerequisites are essential for its success. Briefly, top level political leadership must evince unquestioning support to change and


reform. This is vital, to enable those responsible for implementing reform to overcome resistance and ensure implementation. Political leadership must arouse and sustain public support for administrative change. The chief executive, under whom the exercise of administrative engineering is being carried out, must not only fully understand it but also extend all possible encouragement to the personnel concerned. What is more he/she must fully shoulder responsibility for the outcome. Administrative re-inventing is a continuous exercise and it is primarily the responsibility of the head of an organisation to ensure optimum efficiency and citizen friendly orientation. It must be made absolutely clear that administrative re-inventing is no substitute for the ordinary officer’s neglect of his/her duty.

The success of public administration eventually depends on the quality of the civil service and its accountability. The initial capacity of India’s civil service is among the highest anywhere, with meritorious recruitment, a very high level of competition in civil service examination (above 1 percent of applications qualified in recent years for the higher services) and a mix of technically and non-technically educated entrants. Technical capability and occupational are reasonably matched within the three all-India services and fifty functionally specialised central or state services given the existing training facilities. India’s civil service, the principal ‘face’ of the government to the public and responsible for implementing government programmes, must shoulder some of the responsibility for dissatisfaction with government performance in providing a sound business environment, curbing corruption and providing public services. The problem is not initial capability but wide ranging institutional deficiencies. Excessive secrecy, limited accountability and inadequate performance appraisal weaken the civil service effectiveness, as do the standard problem of political interference in specific situations and government’s widespread and intricate interventions that delay action and provide opportunities for corruption. Numerous government commissions have pointed out the particular problems of civil service and made recommendations to tackle them, but their recommendations have largely been ignored. The fifth Pay Commission has met with no better fate.
In particular the following recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission would substantially improve civil service and public administration:

• A multi-pronged approach to employment reduction in Government of India targeting a 30 percent reduction over a ten-year period. Contrary to this recommendation and despite the modest measure abolishing four secretary-level posts announced by the finance minister in his 1999 budget speech, central employment has instead grown resulting in a projected increase in staff expenditure of 10.5 percent over 1998-1999.

• Restructuring and 'rightsizing' Central Government services by decentralising functions to states and local government, by converting departmental undertakings such as the Indian Railways into public undertakings and by entrusting certain functions to NGOs, cooperatives, and autonomous bodies.

• Doing away with arbitrary and frequent transfers of bureaucrats, particularly those in all-India services at state level by laying down minimum tenures for posts and the need to clear all premature transfers through a civil service board, to be constituted for this purpose. The Annual Confidential Report (ACR), arbitrary transfers, and sale of posts are alleged by many observers to be the principal means of subverting or circumventing the civil service, leading to corruption.

• Restructuring performance appraisal to make the current ACR system more effective and open, coupled with a five-yearly high level review of higher civil service to decide whether its members should undergo compulsory premature retirement.

• Increased transparency by passing a right to information law and corresponding revision of the Official Secrets Act.

In addition, a closer link between performance and promotion, improved procedures to ensure individual accountability for lapses, and improved enforcement of sanctions are needed. More broadly, a simplification and liberalisation of excessive restrictions, along with privatisation, should reduce red tape and the scope for corruption. And it would permit a downsizing of the civil service and a focus on fewer, truly public activities, where better delivery could be demanded. All these measures
would be far more effective if they were conducted with in framework of a clearly defined and articulated vision for the reform of the country's administrative system.

The Tenth Finance Commission 1995 has rightly cautioned 'viable methods of reducing the strength of government employees must be explored, otherwise economic reform may lose its way in a new bureaucratic maze'. The future agenda is certainly much larger. Civil servants will have to acquire new skills and re-tune themselves to respond to the consequential changes in society. New urges would be articulated, new demands made, new groups would come into prominence. Empowerment of the community, defined in its broader sense, can no longer be delayed if Civil servants are to be called upon to cultivate habits of thought and action appropriate to the fast changing society.

9.13. Civil Service Reform in India

The central theme of administrative reforms has been improvement in governance. Over the decades, there have been attempts to stem the root in the 'steel frame'. However, all such initiatives have been met with resistance from politicians and bureaucrats. Things have only worsened. There has been resistance not only at the level of quantity but also quality. For example, the IAS has seven decision-making layers to deliver. Moreover, in today's context, India needs specialists and not generalists. The central theme of administrative reforms has to be improvements in governance. The basic problem of governance is incapacity of the major institutions – the executive (political and bureaucratic), legislature (parliament and State Legislatures) and the judiciary to manage the affairs of the State so as to provide a desired quality of life to India's citizens.

Improved governance is often equated with administrative reform. Administrative reform is also sometimes equated with civil service reform, since public delivery of goods and services does require civil service reform, including greater accountability.

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transparency and in a broader sense. The expression administrative reform has to be
defined, since it means more than reform of the civil service. On reforming civil service,
recommendations were made by the Pay Commission and there are other
recommendations in reports of the Expenditure Reforms Commission.

It is now just over fifty years since India gained its independence from Britain.
During this period India has seen many changes both in the politics, economic and
social spheres. In many ways, however, one can say that India's fundamental problems
have remained the same. It is still concerned principally with the alleviation of poverty
via the promotion of economic growth. The principle concerns of the Indian State have
not changed even in the context of globalisation. Since 1991, the Government of India
(GOI) has introduced a series of radical economic reform, including policies of
liberalisation, deregulation, disinvestment, privatisation and bureaucracy reform. The
underlying rationale of these reforms has been to move from a largely inward-looking
interventionist economy and administration to a more open economy that is more
responsive to market signals in order to achieve greater efficiency.

Civil service reforms have become a buzzword in the present day context. The
central and the provincial governments have started thinking in terms of reforms due to
internal and external pressures. Internally, the central and the provincial governments,
irrespective of the fact as to which party/parties are in power; want to present an image
of effective institutions. They want to become leaner and fitter organisations. They
intend to have quick reflexes, instead of bureaucratic-orientation they propose to have a
customer-orientation. In India civil service reforms have mostly come at the initiative of
the elected representatives forming the government of the day.

In the second stage of economic reforms, the provincial governments would also
be expected to arrest their financial deficits. Both the central and the provincial
governments attempted to introduce zero-based budgeting in the 1980s. Attempts have
been made to imbibe the concepts of programme-cum-performance and performance-
budgeting. Both the central and the provincial governments have stopped recruitments.
All these reforms have been affected under the dispensation of the new economic policy adopted by the central government in 1991.

A major cause of inefficiency of the public sector units was bureaucratisation and political interference in decision-making. Another factor contributing to inefficiency was deterioration in work ethics generated by the absolute security of service available to public sector employees.\(^5^1\) It is well recognised that corruption is epidemic in India. The ability to bribe in the international sphere comes primarily from the power to licence raj economic activity or politically to provide preferred status in tendering for government contracts.\(^5^2\) Globalisation and liberalisation removed some of the ability of bureaucrats to extract bribes by eliminating many of the licences relating to imports and tendering by foreign firms. However, this has meant simply that the point of rent extraction has been displaced. Hence, prior to the start of the reform process in 1991, the Indian public sector was a consistent under performer.

In 1996 the Administrative Reforms Commission submitted its report appraising the effectiveness and efficiency of the systems and procedures of the various parts of the central government. The different provincial governments have set up Administrative Reforms Departments and appointed Committees to look into their functioning. The whole effort has been to make the government efficient and effective by rationalising different laws, manuals, rules, and methods of functioning. What has lacked is the attempt to corporatist the government systems at the central and provincial levels. The business and professional-orientation has not been initiated nor the practice of questioning the value for the money. There is a general feeling that there is a need to overhaul the civil service system in India.

In August 1997, the Fifth Pay Commission agreed to hike salaries only if the government cut decision-making layers from seven to three, slashed staff by 30 percent.


across 10 years and abolished 350,000 vacant posts. The recommendations were ignored, but the babus (Civil Servant) got the biggest ever hike. In September 2001, the Expenditure Reforms Commission recommended the abolishing of vacant posts, rightsizing, introduction of technology and freezing of new recruitments. In contrast, in 2002-2003 the employee strength was expected to rise by 21,142 to 3,342,645 and costs from Rupees 30,055.61 crore to Rupees 31,589 crore (1 crore = 10 million).

The main reason behind this has been the resource crunch faced by the governments at the various levels and shift in the thinking of the political parties with regard to the state ownership. The idea of privatisation is gradually gaining ground and has become a driving force to classify the government activities as core and non-core. There is wide agreement about the fact that the non-core, non-essential activities of the government could be given up to private parties. For instance, some major municipalities in the country have privatised the cleaning of garbage, sewerage work and installation of electric poles and extension of electricity network. The public enterprises in the country are also being forced to categorise their activities as core and non-core and concentrate on the area of their business competence.

A number of local government institutions/public enterprises are approaching the capital markets for funding. Even the central and the provincial governments are approaching the national and international institutions for funding their deficits and infrastructure projects in place of depending on the support of the central bank which could collaborate with the governments in deficit financing. The most important budgetary and financial reform that has taken place at the centre is sticking to the fiscal deficit of not exceeding five percent.

Worldwide civil service reforms have become a matter of great concern. It was in 1966 that the Administrative Reforms Commission gave its report on the working of the civil service system of the central government and its functioning relating to various ministries. Since then, the Fourth Pay Commission in its report in 1986 and the Fifth Pay Commission in its report in January 1997 again went into this issue. The essence of
the discussion here has been the introduction of performance-related pay, contract employment and modernisation of the offices, people-orientation, professionalisation and appraisal of performance of the public servants. Sharing the concern for ensuring responsive accountable transparent, decentralised and people-friendly administration at all levels and with the objective of restoring faith of the people in the fairness and capacity for administration against the prevailing frustration and dissatisfaction, for as many services as possible by way of citizen’s entitlement to public services, collaboration of consumer organisations and citizen groups, the wide publicity to standards of performance quality, timeliness, cast, etc., for public services and promotion of periodic and independent scrutiny of performance of the agencies against the standards.

Ad hoc transfers are an easy way for the executive to intervene in the affairs of the administration without rhyme or reason. The problem was noted by Appleby in 1956 and received elaborate treatment in the Report of the Fifth Pay Commission in 1997. Yet, when the Chief Ministers sat down to recommend action in 1997, they watered down the proposal of the Fifth Pay Commission and did not push implementation. The need to move from procedural to result oriented accountability was noted by Appleby in 1956, by the Economic Administrative Reform Commission in 1983 and by the Fifth Pay Commission in 1997. Citizen’s charters and public grievance redressed mechanism are based on the need for better accountability where the citizen meets government. Much will depend on how far the different states take accountability to the citizen. The devolution of powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions and municipal bodies may promote accountability.

On an average, India civil service is not particularly over staffed when compared with other countries, Central government civilian employment is around 3.4 million, state.

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employment is around 6 million and another four million including teachers and health workers who work in government and grant-in-aid institutions. That puts India's civil service employment at around 1.4 percent of the population. Although international comparisons can be tricky, the average for Asia in the 1990s was around 2.6 percent and for OECD counties 7.7 percent. Even though India's civil service is not unduly large by global standards, there is a pronounced imbalance in the mix skill. Around 93 percent of the Civil service comprises Class III an IV employees for both the Government of India and various state governments. Class III encompasses frontline delivery workers, but it also includes a large number of office staff (clerks and typists) whose functions are rapidly being made redundant by advances in information technology. Class IV employees function entirely in a support role (peon, sweepers, messengers, watchmen) and most could be let go without any discernible impact on the functioning of the Government. This over abundance of support and logistical personnel often exists alongside chronic shortages of skills staff in rural schools and health clinics.

Changes in the mix skills need to be accompanied by measures to reduce administrative fragmentation within the Government and in many states; the number of ministers, ministries and departments has proliferated far beyond any rational assignment of functions. The Government of India has 31 cabinet ministers and another 45 ministers of state. Most Indian states have between 35-40 cabinet departments and some states such as Uttar Pradesh have more than 70.

Compounding the problem are relatively weak mechanisms for policy coordination in many states, since most departments report directly through their minister. Nor does fragmentation end with administrative structures. Budget heads are not always closely aligned with department. The civil service is divided into dozens of cadres, each with its own service, terms and conditions, with controlling authorities widely disbursed throughout the various departments. Rigid terms and conditions make it difficult to transfer staff/cadres where they could be better used. Institutional reforms are thus needed to reduce the administrative fragmentation and align the structure of the civil service more closely with modern day functions.
As a sequel, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Services in 1997 evolved an "Action Plan on Effective and Responsive Administration" based on the responses and reactions received from officials, experts voluntary agencies, citizen's groups media, etc. The three main areas of Action Plan that were discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministers on May 24, 1997 were: 1) making administration accountable and citizen friendly; 2) ensuring transparency and the right to information; and 3) taking measures to cleanse and motivate civil services. An implementation committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Committee to formulate ways and means to implement the above stated concerns of the Action Plan.55

The problems in Indian public administration are generally well known, what is less appreciated is the remarkable consistency in recommendations for addressing them. In numerous forms, ranging from national and state pay commission, to various administrative reform and expenditure review committees, to academic workshops and conferences, there is an emerging consensus regarding both the overall direction of reform and, although less well defined, promising concrete measures for getting there. Taken together, documents such as the Report of the Conference of Chief Minister (1997), the Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission (1997), the Second Report of the Expenditure Reforms Commission on Optimising Government Staff Strength, and the Draft Approach Paper to the Tenth Five Year Plan (2001) articulates a fairly integrated and coherent vision for change.

Taken together, such documents envision change along six general themes, which are related and mutually reinforcing. They include efforts to:

1. limit the size and scope, and orientation of government;
2. streamline organisational structures and decision-making processes;
3. reform human resource management and development practices;

4. improve transparency;
5. enhance responsiveness, accountability, and service delivery; and
6. promote integrity.

A large category covering is a number of major elements. A key theme is that of getting government out of direct participation in economic activity through privatisation and disinvestments of public enterprises. Another involves programme and functional reviews to eliminate activities where government intervention is no longer necessary, the contracting out of tertiary functions and the establishment of autonomous bodies. It involves efforts to contain the workforce and reign in government staffing, through the use of hiring freezes, surplus manpower cells, the abolition of vacant posts, and compulsory and voluntary retirement schemes. It also includes deregulation, legal simplification, the introduction of 'sunset' provisions, and elimination of the licence and inspection raj.

Another large area that includes efforts to rationalise administrative structures that are often fragmented and balkanised, including reduction in the number of ministries and departments and clarifying the division of responsibility between them as well as between the secretariat and field formations. It also includes efforts to decentralise, streamline file circulation and reduce the number of layers in decision-making. Finally, it includes efforts to 're-engineer' processes relating to service delivery and government operations, often through the use of information technology. This section covers a variety of efforts to halt dysfunctional practices and improve the quality of personnel administration. It includes the constitution of civil service boards, legislation, are freezes on premature or arbitrary transfers; improving the quality of the annual confidential report process; improving the posting of staff to make better use of available expertise; strengthening establishment control; developing accurate, real-time computerised HR databases; and improving training and staff development. It also includes efforts to contain pension expenses by moving to contributory schemes.
For the Government of India and most Indian states, the critical measure under consideration in this context is the legislation on the right to information. Other items include the reform of administrative practices, such as transparent procedures for beneficiary selection, as well as the increased use of e-governance in making information available on various government web sites. Enhancing Responsiveness, Accountability, and Service Delivery covers a broad range of initiatives. At the ministerial and departmental level, they include citizens’ charters or improving the redressal of public grievances. They also include improving performance monitoring and evaluation, either through upgrading internal audit and management information systems or by relying upon external agencies, such as NGOs, to conduct exit polls of client satisfaction and/or develop scorecards on the quality of government services. A major set of initiatives seeks to improve accountability by devolving and decentralising important responsibilities to panchayati raj institutions.

Approaches have been recommended for combating corruption that centre around strengthening its sanction and prosecution, improving prevention and broadening public awareness. They include strengthening the investigative machinery [such as Lok Ayukta (Ombudsman) vigilance commissions, departmental vigilance officers, etc.]; streamlining procedures for departmental inquiries and disciplinary proceedings; creating special anti-corruption courts; reducing the amount of discretion available to bureaucrats; and strengthening audit and the response to audit findings.

The experience has shown that the only effective control of abuse comes from social and political action that campaigns should also neutralise the effect of the inequities in the panchayats. This would also imply a kind of public-private partnership, which cannot be of the kind we understand conventionally, which has turned out to be little more than private appropriation of public resources. Public provision of social and economic services is now on the agenda. It is even able to bring about a small improvement in the quality and reliability of public services.
India more recently has undertaken major reform to bring about greater market orientation in the economy. Parallel to this trend is the global phenomenon of integrating markets and the rising flows of international trade and investments. No nation in today’s world can really afford to keep its economic borders relatively closed. Grappling with the compulsions for change in a country like India is never an easy task. The strength of government and political institutions are important factors along with the ways by which people in their own spheres of activity identify opportunities emanating from change and transform them into tangible distribution of economic gains. In the Human Development Index (HDI), India figures at 127 out of the 175 countries, this is marginally better than countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa. Planning pre-supposes proper pricing, subsidising the poor with proper targeting, monitoring and a rigorous discipline for implementation. All this has to be achieved in an administrative policy framework dominated by a bureaucratic system which was inherited from the colonial rulers.

As far as India is concerned, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) observed, “The Indian Civil Service is still characterised by confusion of objection, lack of accountability, inadequate adaptability to change, over-centralised control mechanism, multi-layered management, structures, excessive paper work burdens and dispersal of responsibility.” Admittedly, these have to be viewed in the backdrop of two sadly neglected major problems-population explosion and environmental degradation both of which have a bearing on all Indian policies and plans and therefore if left untracked could spell disaster. Further, by implication, achievement acceptance of self-evident corollaries that:

a. All institutions enshrined in the constitution are equally sacrosanct and they have to work in harmony and in full knowledge of their strength and limits;

b. Political executive sans stability, probity, political will and urge to create conditions for the delivery system to be accountable, effective and fair, is destined to failure. If politics defects from people, aims only to grab power by any means, work to

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stay in power by manipulating the bureaucracy, the end result is bound to be ruinous, if not suicidal.

C. Permanent executive, particularly higher services like the IAS sans loyalty to Constitution, dedication to national goals, public will and service values based on morality, is doomed to become irrelevant.

In India, an intellectual revolution has to take place which will question and demolish every superstition including the superstition of caste which is now becoming an important stumbling block to progress. Overall the civil service reform seems to be on the right track but the journey is still long and hazardous. Politicisation, accountability, corruption and over manning are the fundamental problems facing the administrative system. Many of the citizen’s concerns will automatically be addressed. The ingenuity of the government lies in its ability to self reflects and introspects into its problems and come up with good answers. The tragedy is that implementation has been lacking. Critically important are the reformation to improve the transparency, accountability and independence of the civil service. Several states are already implementing innovative reforms in delivering public services, often with the aid of information technology. The challenge is to broaden these initiatives and apply them across the country, including the poor states where the governance is weak.


To impart a more concrete shape to responsive administration, the Government of India announced the following action plan on effective and responsive administration:

1. The conference of Chief Ministers held on 24 May 1997 discussed an Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government at the central and state levels. The Prime Minister presided over the deliberations. The conference was also attended by the home minister, finance minister, law minister, minister of state for personnel, public grievances and pensions, cabinet secretary, chief secretaries of the states and union territories and senior officials in the Government of India.
2. The conference represented the culmination of a national debate on effective and responsive administration which was initiated at a conference of chief secretaries on 20 November 1996. It was agreed that immediate corrective steps must be taken to restore the faith of the people in the fairness, integrity and responsiveness of the administration.

3. Inaugurating the conference, Prime Minister drew the attention for an urgent need to come up with ideas and strategies for responsive and effective administration, which could rebuild the credibility of the government. He referred to Jawaharlal Nehru's statement that 'belief in fair play and integrity' was the basis of a good administration. The prevailing unrest and tension in some areas of the country is an expression of the people's frustration with the administration. Some government had set good examples of taking administration to the people which could be emulated by others. He stressed the importance of a systematic and continuous review of outdated laws and procedures. Moreover, the rules framed under the laws need to be reviewed so that they do not go the very purpose for which the laws were enacted. He favoured that the people should have a right to information to combat undue secrecy in the government. The Prime Minister said that the issue of corruption needs to be addressed firmly but there should be no witch-hunting. Quiet and diligent action by investigating agencies would give them more credibility. He opined that the action plan document has provided a good diagnosis and that it has to be followed up by a credible and implementable therapy.

4. The Chief Ministers and central ministers attending the conference strongly endorsed the need for ensuring responsive, accountable, transparent and people-friendly administration at all levels and agreed that necessary corrective steps must be taken to arrest the present drift in the management of public services. While expressing concern on the attempts made by the legislature, executive and the judiciary to encroach upon each other's domain, the conference urged that measures should be taken to restore the faith of the people, particularly the weaker sections of the society, in the fairness and
capacity of administration. The concept of social audit as an instrument of greater accountability was emphasised. The conference, however, recognised that the implementation of any action plan would require consistent support at the highest level in the government as well as coordinated action including essential legislation and monitoring through a nodal cell or department reporting to the cabinet secretary/chief secretary. Further, the increasing establishment expenditure and large size of government staff is adversely affecting the development process by reducing the invertible funds. The ambit and scope of government intervention needs to be redefined so that the superfluous can be dispensed with.

5. The conference resolved that the Central and state governments would work together to concretise the action plan dealing with the following themes:

   (i) Accountable and citizen-friendly government;
   (ii) Transparency and right to information; and
   (iii) Improving the performance and integrity of the public services.

I. Accountable and Citizen-Friendly Government

   The following specific areas were to be addressed:

   1. Citizens' Charter: The central and state governments would formulate citizens' charters for departments and offices, starting with those which have a large public interface. These citizens' charters would specify standards of service and time limits that the public can reasonably expect avenues of grievance redressal and a provision for independent scrutiny with the involvement of citizen and consumer groups. These citizens' charters would be widely publicised; efforts would be made to these charters operational over the next three months.

   2. Redressal of Public Grievances: All central and state departments would publicise widely, facilities at various levels for the prompt and effective redressal of public grievances from the secretariat downwards to the village. Review of existing systems of redressal of public grievances and institution of
measures for streamlining them with a built-in system for independent monitoring, should be in place over the next six months.

3. Review of Laws, Regulations and Procedures: The Central and state governments would work together for the simplification of existing laws, regulations and procedures, repeal of obsolete laws, reform of laws operating against the weaker section and steps to reduce the time and cost of the disposal of cases in civil and criminal courts. The entire process of approvals, sanction and issue of permits would be made simpler, transparent and single-window-based. A priority agenda will be adopted and implemented over the next one year for this purpose.

4. People's Participation, Decentralisation and Devolution of Powers: There was recognition of the need for greater decentralisation and devolution of administrative powers at all levels. Consistent with the spirit of the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution, immediate steps would be initiated by different state government, with the involvement of the Central Government to strengthen people's participation in government. Steps would be taken to ensure adequate devolution of powers and resources to the elected local bodies in rural and urban areas, in line with the recommendations of the state finance commissions. The Central and state governments would encourage and sustain people's participation and dedicated voluntary agencies in all the schemes for the delivery of basic services, as resolved earlier in the conference of Chief Ministers in July 1996.

II. Transparency and Right to Information:

The conference recognised that secrecy and lack of openness in transaction is largely responsible for corruption in official dealings and is also contrary to the spirit of an accountable and democratic government. Steps would be taken to ensure easy access of the people to all information relating to government activities and decision, except to the extent required to be excluded on specific grounds like national security. The Government of India would take immediate necessary steps, in consultation with state governments, for examining the report of the Working Group on Right to
Information and for introducing in parliament legislation for Freedom of Information and amendments to the relevant provision of the Official Secrets Act 1923 and the Indian Evidence Act. Endorsing the proposals made in the action plan, some of the state governments indicated the need to include provisions which would ensure that the misuse of provision under this right do not lead to embarrassment of the governments. While some of the states have already initiated steps to provide the right to information, others would also undertake a similar exercise. The Central and state governments open computerised information and facilities counters in all their offices with large public interface, so that information and assistance is available to the public on essential services and approvals. The ongoing efforts for systematic and phased computerisation of governmental operations would be speeded up with the help of the National Informatics Centre. In this process, particular attention will be given to areas of computerisation which provide significant benefit to the population such as land records, passports, investigation of offences, administration of justice, tax collection and administration, issue of permits and licences, etc.

III. Improving the Performance and Integrity of the Public Services:

1. The conference noted that people-friendly and effective administration depends on cleansing of civil service at all levels, adherence to ethics, commitment to basic principles of the Constitution and clear understanding of the relationship regulating the politicians and the civil service. It was agreed that elimination of corruption in the public services would require prevention, surveillance and deterrent prosecution. It would also need to deal ruthlessly with the instances of nexus among politicisation of the civil service would be curbed so as to minimise its impact not only on the moral and motivation of the services, but on the sustained flow of responsive services to the public and services, as well on the sustained flow responsive services to the public and efficient execution of schemes.

2. The existing rules and legal provisions in Central and state governments would be amended to enable the immediate and exemplary prosecution and removal of corrupt officials and for weeding out staff of doubtful integrity. At
the same time, a suitable mechanism would be evolved to reward employees doing good work.

3. The investigation agencies and vigilance machinery would be strengthened by Central and state government with the provision of adequate staff, powers, resources and independence.

4. The existing procedures for departmental enquiries and vigilance proceedings of government employees would be revamped.

5. The areas of discretion available to various levels of administration would be reduced to the minimum, along with steps to prevent their arbitrary use.

6. The role and power of audit in the identification and pursuit of financial and procedural irregularities would be strengthened, and there will be close networking of various agencies like Lok Ayukta (Ombudsman), vigilance machinery, income tax authorities, enforcement directorate and CAG.

7. The conference appreciated the importance of encouraging and ensuring the commitment of the employees of public services to ethical standards and basic principles of Constitution such as secularism, social justice, and attention to the needs of weaker sections, rule of law, professionalism and integrity. The state governments would consider similar to the draft code being considered for introduction at the central level.

8. It was recognised that frequent and arbitrary transfer of public servants affect the ability of the system to deliver services effectively to the people and the implementation of poverty alleviation schemes. It was agreed that institutional arrangements should be evolved for enabling objective and transparent decisions on postings, promotions and transfers of officials, particularly those working in key areas to ensure stability of tenure and depoliticised postings at all levels. Though some misgivings were expressed regarding the mechanism of the civil service board, it was clarified that the Board as envisaged in the action plan was to basically aid the political executive in the state governments to implement a streamlined and transparent transfer and promotion policy so as to ensure stability of tenures to the government functionaries and to sustain their morale.
The objective of administrative and civil service reform with the thrust areas that are being pursued with varying degrees of emphasis are:

- Public enterprise privatisation and restructure;
- Ensuring affordability of civil service, by pursuing well-sequenced options for downsizing, retrenchment and redeployment of redundant staff, weeding out incompetent staff and attractive schemes of voluntary retirement;
- Enhancing productivity of the civil service and rationalising the mission and organisational goals by functional reviews, deregulation, restructuring and privatisation of public enterprises, and encouragement of public-private partnerships;
- Devolution of functions and resources to elected local bodies;
- Promoting accountability, transparency and responsiveness of public agencies by installing a regime of citizen-friendly services and access to information through decentralisation, citizen's charters, effective redress of grievances, right to information, laws for transparent procurement, electronic governance, user consultation and empowerment of user groups in areas like the management of education, health, use of water, forest and natural resources;
- Strengthening meritocracy and motivation by sound human resource management practices and database, reduction and monitoring of transfers through transparent guidelines and civil service boards, merit-based recruitment, improved performance assessment, operating a regime of rewards and sanctions for performance and the implementation of a well-designed action plan to train all employees at different stages of the career; and
- A vigorously pursued anti-corruption agenda.

Despite the announcement of impressive reform packages and the achievement by individual states in different areas, the performance has not been uniform across sectors in the reforming states. The defining task of redefining goals and reorganising government departments and machinery has been taken up in stop-go fashion. This is
partly due to the pulls of political forces and vertical hierarchies in administration and the ineffectiveness of central coordinating systems. The law on right to information is not credibly enforced in a number of states and much useful information is not in the public domain. The report of the core group of administrative reforms in 2002 refers to islands of success in the midst of generally lacklustre progress in citizens' charters. The group notes that e-governance is yet to take root in the absence of process reengineering and change of mindset. Performance has been more sustained and better linked with fiscal goals where a government has installed a strong unit within government to oversee, with intellectual support from a think tank like the centre for good governance. Senior officials recognise that complex exercises like functional reviews and organisational restructuring would need to be undertaken with clear outcomes in view, along with strategies to neutralise opposition from vested interests.

The plan to improve in transparency, accountability and independence of the civil service are critically important. Several states are already implementing innovative reforms in delivering to public services often with the aid of information technology. The challenge is to broaden these initiatives and apply them across the country, including the poor states where the governance is weak. Civil service reform is often identified with the cost-containment measures of personnel retrenchment and real-wage reduction for fiscal reasons. Reduction of fiscal deficit certainly demands containment of the runaway growth in salary and pension expenditure, which often accounts for more than 100 percent of the revenues in many states. However, while the cost-containment dimension is important, administrative reform is much more than staff freezing and indiscriminate abolition of posts. The goal of government employment and wage policy is neither to minimise employment nor to compress wages, but to achieve a workforce with the size, skill mix, motivation, professional ethos and accountability necessary to: provide quality public services; reduce transaction costs for the private sector; design and implement economic policy; execute budgets and investment projects; preserve key assets of society; and facilitate institutional development throughout the economy.
Political instability and regime change have been major factors in the difficulty of sustaining the momentum of improvement in states. The credibility of the reform agenda in public perception has been dented by persistence of inefficient and unresponsive services. The transfer policy is among the most transparent and aimed at stability of tenure; but the officers in higher levels have been subject to arbitrary transfers and short tenures. The reform agenda has not had significant effect on the resistance of ingrained tendencies for centralisation and departmental hierarchies to organisational restructuring and devolution of powers and staff to elected local bodies. The demotivating factors for good performance assessment, liability of officials to premature transfers, poorly codified cadre rules, weak systems of establishment control and sanctions, insufficient recognition and reward of merit, unsatisfactory human resource database, poor work environment and inadequate opportunities for upgrading skills and knowledge. Corruption continues to be a major problem. There is inadequate capacity within secretariat to obtain and use well-researched advice and to monitor the governance reform process. There is a tendency to overstress the outputs of computerisation at the expense of process reengineering and organisational backstopping.

As part of long-term measure, each ministry and agency could be required to submit a concrete restructuring plan consisting of a statement of objectives; strategies for achieving these objectives; a staffing program; a timetable; simple indices of administrative performance; training needs; and financial requirements. Once the plan is approved after full discussion at the highest level and irreversible initial steps toward its implementation have been taken, the ministry or agency in question can freely recruit from other ministries; resume normal wage increases and promotions; have its reasonable financial needs met; and move up to the new salary scale established in the meantime. Such a process would create incentives for all government entities to improve their organisation and operations as fast as possible in order to be allowed to "move up" to the new flexible structure, and for individual employees to join the more dynamic government entities. Along with this, ministries could think of radical ways to depart from conventional methods of providing education or health care based on staff
and building and examine whether fully subsidised services are not in fact crowding out alternative quality providers.

4.15. Improving Public Service Delivery in India

There are many reasons for the poor quality of public service delivery in India. Internally, administrative structures and responsibilities are highly fragmented, while human resource management places more weight on seniority than merit. It will obviously take time to reform these long-standing structures and systems. But experience throughout India shows that civil servants do respond to external pressure for delivery of better services. Three key elements for success:

- Better public access to information
- Stronger accountability
- More independence from political interference

I. Better Access to Information:

To demand better public services, citizens need to be better informed about service standards, norm and should have ready access to forms and other such material opening access to information short circuits the rent-seeking opportunities that secrecy provides. Citizens' charters are one such vehicle to empower the public in their dealings with service providers. It is important, however, that such charters be developed in consultation with major stakeholders and widely disseminated. One model is the charter developed by the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation in June 1999, with assistance from Praja (NGOs).

NGOs can also do much in collecting raw data, transforming it into usable information, creating databanks that other organisations can tap and disseminate relevant information to a wider audience through report cards, surveys and public hearings. In Bangalore, for example, the Public Affairs Committee conducted a user survey of maternity wards that led to a major restructuring of the service by the Bangalore City Corporation. Other NGOs have concentrated on public interest litigation to produce governments into action to improve the performance in laggard services.
Several states are using information technology to improve access to information. Tamil Nadu has placed all major government orders of public interest on its website. Andhra Pradesh's portal contains extensive information about Government departments, schemes and policies. It also allows citizens to contact Government officials directly, from the Chief Minister's office to down. Audit provides (initially) for limited online transaction processing as well. Computerisation is also being used to re-engineer business process and speed up decision making.

Finally, the centre and several states are promoting greater transparency by adapting right to information legislation. Maharashtra provides access to cabinet-level documents (with some narrow exceptions), a public records commission to record keeping and cataloguing, an independent appeals process, penalties for non compliance and a high-level council to monitor implementation. These initiatives will be followed closely, to see whether they can counter well-entrenched practices and interests within the civil service to limit public access to information.

II. Stronger Accountability:

The Indian administrative structure was designed in colonial times to facilitate the collection of revenue and preserve law and order. Government reporting relationships are inwardly focused and strongly hierarchical, with the pivotal role played by the district collector and authority flowed upwards to the district collector and magistrates, who in turn reported to superiors in the state capital. While a host of developmental function have been added since independence, these basic reporting relationships have survived largely unchanged. Recently, reforms have attempted to enhance their "external" accountability and customer orientation. Some states, such as Madhya Pradesh, have sought to empower local communities by allowing them to recruit their own teachers through an Education Guarantee Scheme. Others, such as Jaumabhoomi (birth place) in Andhra Pradesh, regularly bring bureaucrats in contact with local villagers to listen to their concerns.
The vast majority of staff at the centre and in the state governments is promoted on the basis of seniority and merit. In practice they will be promoted regardless of their performance as long as no adverse remarks are entered against them. Performance evaluation is weak and poorly linked to the system of rewards and promotions. Even more problematic is the failure to punish or weed out corrupt or incompetent officers. The process of sanctioning malfeasance or maladministration is fraught with multiple review and appeals stages, resulting in years of delay. In only a minority of cases are criminal or administrative sanctions imposed. As a result, India civil service has little to motivate than to better performance beyond their innate professional ethic.

Independent audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) are one of the primary institutional mechanisms for executive accountability. But the CAG mainly focuses on financial irregularities. Some performance appraisals are carried out, but they rarely indicate how management can be strengthened. Discussion of CAG reports by the Public Account Committees of parliament and state assemblies are not open to the public and often come after a long delay, which reduces the prospects for effective follow up. Clearly, audit procedures should be improved. But there should also be wider use of other accountability mechanisms. The Lok Ayukta (Ombudsman) in Karnataka seems to be generating good results and may hold valuable lessons for other states. The success of vigilance and ombudsman functions depends on having enough independence, budget and staff resources to investigate and prosecute corruption. In addition a comprehensive anticorruption strategy should include: a radical overhaul and simplification of the procedures for imposing major and minor penalties, expanded “whistle blower” protection and publication of the property and tax returns of senior officials. Each state should be asked to pass the Corrupt Public Servants (Forfeiture of Property) Act, already drafted by the Law Commission.

III. More Independence from Political Interference:

This issue is sensitive, for the right to transfer civil servants in clearly vested within the political leadership under Article 310 of the Indian Constitution, which maintains that Civil servants serve at the “pleasure” of the ruling authorities. Yet few
would disagree that both civil servants and politicians often abuse this power—the former in seeking prime postings, the latter for a variety of legitimate and occasionally illegitimate reasons. This resulted in a reduction of average tenure for key senior civil service positions to less than a year in state like Uttar Pradesh. Chronic political leaders rewards supports and put its "own" staff into place. Compounding this problem is the absence of effective transition mechanisms. Since most reforms in large public organisations require several years to produce results, it is impossible for even the most capable and well-intentioned manager to implement lasting improvement. Several approaches have been tried to curb the excess transfers. Karnataka for example, has a new system of cadre management authorities to approve transfers, posting the number of transfers on a public website. This system has reduced transfers below the 5 percents norm in most departments. The success of these initiatives should be followed closely and extended to other states when appropriate.

India now needs to move from its decentralised patchwork toward an intergovernmental framework that improves service delivery without increasing fiscal pressures. Good fiscal management would suggest re-allocating public funds from central and state schemes to a well-designed fiscal framework for local governments—guaranteeing their autonomy and accountability while helping them to match resource allocations with local preferences. It would also suggest creating incentives for local governments to collect a share of their revenues from local tax payers as through land taxes. Flows of funds from the centre and state governments should depend on good local performance and resource mobilisation. Performance should be monitored not only by the local audit fund, but also by local journalists, civil society groups and panchayat leaders from neighboring districts. This would help strengthen accountability and ensure greater participation and empowerment of local communities—one of the primary objectives of the decentralisation process.

Many internal and external observers of Indian administration have argued that decentralisation and local empowerment will ultimately be essential in improving the quality of service delivery at the village level. Faced with slow and uneven progress on
decentralisation, the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution ratified in 1992, obligated states to decentralise to lower levels. The amendments created distinct rural and urban governments, mandated periodic elections and established an important accountability mechanism the Gram Sabha (village assembly). But they left matters of implementation to the states. The most visible achievement of these reforms has been the high degree of political decentralisation. With the election of more than three million local politicians—a third of them women and around a fifth from scheduled castes and tribal—India's decentralisation has, at least nominally, opened the state to democratic participation. But progress on the fiscal and administrative aspects of decentralisation has been much more modest and hesitant. Administrative evolution has often failed to take account of the limited capacity of local government, the economies of scale in delivering services, or the potential role of the private sector. And a serious overlap of responsibilities among state, district, block and village governments obscures the lines of accountability to voters. For the most part, local governments still raise little revenue of their own (though the potential is much higher) and deliver few services. Instead they are usually treated by state and central bureaucracies as service agent for higher level government.

The federal structure, the common institutions and practices across states and the ongoing program of decentralisation make India a fertile laboratory for reform. A variety of changes at the centre, state and local levels, implemented with varying degrees of success, can be quickly scaled up and disseminated across the country. India is a leader in the information technology revolution and states such as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are making impressive gain in applying information technology solutions to a variety of public sector problems. For all their weakness, cadres such as the Indian Administrative Service remain a tremendous reservoir of talent and capacity. Perhaps most important, some broader dynamics—such as the rise of the Indian middle class and the growth of NGOs dedicated to governance—are fostering social demand for good governance. So, while the Indian public sector reform agenda has remained fairly fixed for a decade or more, India herself is changing in the ways that make reform more feasible.
Despite a great influence of the political world, the Indian civil service has so far been able to keep its own identity. During the British days, the politicisation was much less. However, with independence bequeathing a new role of development, the Indian civil servants could not hold their flock together. The number of cases of corruption has also increased tremendously. This has been partly due to the political pressure and also partly on account of erosion in the values of the civil servants. In recent times, a number of civil servants have been jailed and the courts of law in India have found them guilty of dereliction of their duties and amassing wealth many more times in proportion to their earnings.

4.16. The Future Perspective of Indian Administration Service (IAS)

The future of the IAS hangs in the balance as there is growing scepticism about their relevance and utility in the 21st century. First, the states were never in favour of such a service superimposed by the centre on them. Secondly, their supremacy is challenged by the technocrat services that have been playing an increasingly relevant role in the specialist and technical areas. Thirdly, their contribution has not been in tune with the people's expectations. Fourthly, the other contribution services rigidly and totally dislike the position of dominance enjoyed by the IAS. Fifthly, their efficiency has been challenged and questioned by politicians, the role in the future, 90 percent feel that there is a definite role for them in the 21st century. They prognosticate a shrinking of the control of sectors under the IAS in the wake of privatisation and the specialisation of services. However, the role of coordination in the higher echelons would remain. The IAS in order to survive and endure the demands of the 21st century needs to remould and recast itself into a modern and professionalised service that is sensitive to the changes in times.

Professional Competence: This skill is the care with which a problem is studied, the manner in which a paper is prepared, the industries for which all relevant data is
collected and analysed, seeking advice with professionalism and a complete knowledge of the problem.

Open Government: There is a need for a more open government where there is freedom of access to information. With the exception of security matter all other areas ought to be thrown open to public scrutiny to make the IAS more accountable and less complacent. There is a need for an open government and the IAS has to emerge out of the shroud of mystery.

Redefinition and Restructuring: The IAS has to forgo control of the non-essential and non-performing areas. It has to reduce and trim down to a realistic number. Redefinition and restructuring would be the main focus of the government in the immediate future and this would naturally call for intensive and sustained pressure from the IAS across the board.

Expedition of Economic Reform: The IAS would have to take the lead in hastening the speed and impact of reforms in different sectors and region of the national economy. Their special efforts would be called for in enforcing economic reforms in the relatively backward regions, where environmental factors might in other respects be adverse.

Working with Voluntary Organisation: The IAS in the future would have to enlist the support and cooperation of NGOs and other voluntary and business organisations when working on areas in the social sector such as education, health and anti-poverty programmes relating to the oppressed and weaker sections of the society. The emphasis would now shift from implementation to monitoring, tackling their problems and ensuring departmental support.

Crucial Balance between Centre and the States: With the states becoming more assertive and competitive in terms of development and more demanding in terms of monetary and other assistance from the centre, there has been a shift of power in
favour of the states. The IAS would then have a significant role to play as an important link between the centre and the states. The distant and poorly developed areas would need concerted efforts by the service to facilitate their development. The IAS would have to become a more cohesive body in terms of its functioning and management. There would be a greater exchange between the centre and states to enable better coordination and flow.

Decentralisation and Democratisation: The IAS would have to reorient itself in the context of the new constitutional status being accorded to the rural and urban elective bodies as advisors and implementers of policies and programmes at the state and district levels. There should be greater interaction and appreciation of the local aspiration and needs as expressed by the local representatives.

Good Equation with Other Services: It is essential for the IAS to evolve harmonious working relationships with other services, generate a new team spirit of service and play a proper coordinating role in the interests of the team as a whole. The realisation should come to the IAS officers from the earliest stages. The IAS is expected to perform its new and challenging, structurally-necessary orchestrating role only by creating the right atmosphere.

IAS as Model Citizens: The IAS officers should be model citizens well above the social norms of the times. The IAS should at least show better than average standards of honesty in comparison to other parts of bureaucracy. They ought to observe financial probity, integrity in work, intellectual honesty in tendering advice and morality in personal life. There is a need for personal and professional values within the IAS. The incumbents and probationers could be made to interact with role models from within the profession to learn from their experiences. There could be greater recognition of the efforts and services of the honest and committed officers to serve as models that others could emulate.
Strong Anti-Corruption Measure: The government ought to make its intention very clear regarding weeding out corruption by appointing persons of high reputation and good track records in key positions such as Cabinet Secretary, Chief Secretary, Vigilance Commissioner, etc. The politicians should take the necessary initiative in putting in place strong anti-corruption devices to give the honest and the sincere officers' greater moral support and courage. The government ought to make compulsory the routine measures such as assessment of reputation for honesty, scrutiny of property returns, administrative and disciplinary inquiries and prompt action on discovery of assets disproportionate to known income, questioning extravagant life-styles, etc. The IAS will have to appear proactive in the campaign against corruption. They have to be cautious and careful about the image they collectively present to the people as they live in glass houses and cannot be disdainful of the public opinion. The IAS officers of the future in order to be successful must be accommodating and pragmatic while dealing with the pressures on the job, while continuing to hold firmly to the law and basic principles and norms of morality.

4.17. Conclusion

The new challenges of globalisation, political decentralisation and social empowerment have an unfailing impact on the role of the civil service. The consensus now is on liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. The role of the civil service in the changing scenario will be reduced in certain areas and transformed in other areas. The regulatory mechanism during the period of transition will require a high degree of specialised knowledge in society and this can come only from a very high quality institutional training. To tender sound political advice on terse economic matters, mere generalist background will not help and higher services will have to work in tandem with research bodies outside Government. Globalisation and liberalisation, if it is to lead to higher growth with social justice would require the civil service to play an enhanced role in the delivery of facilitator service and development of human development resources.
By the late 1990s, it was increasingly clear in India to many sophisticated observers of Indian administration that the public sector was in need of serious overhaul restructuring. The country has inherited a colonial administration from the British that was lean and relatively corruption-free, but focused narrowly on the tasks of maintaining law and order and gathering revenues. It then expanded rapidly as the state took on a large number of social, economic and developmental functions, ranging from fostering the green revolution to occupying the 'commanding heights' of the economy to strengthening environmental regulation.

India, as envisaged by the framers of the constitution, was to be a secular, casteless, equal society. Yet, by creating a system of reservations and making special provision for certain minorities as well as states, it created vested interests which could be exploited by politicians. Also endemic is the level of corruption in politics as well as in the officialdom. It was the Indian bureaucracy which had earlier provided a stable backbone to the fledgling democracy. But now, even in the ranks of the bureaucracy of which there is a great abundance; have been penetrated by corrupt practices. Further, despite this massive number of officials from the smallest 'block' level to the top most ministry level, decision making remains highly centralised, rendering the services of many of these officials to be essentially clerkish, dressed in a better garb. In other words, there is a marked administrative ineffectiveness and incapacity in addition to corruption, which does not go well for the country. Reform in the institutional structure of the bureaucracy is something that the government should seriously consider in the near future to ensure impartial and effective governance.

Structural changes at the policy level will automatically follow from the slimming induced by liberalisation and privatisation. But the areas not covered by complex economic activities, will not only remain but will have to be manned by civil servants familiar with latest developments in computer and information technology intensively trained through well designed programmes at specialised institutions both in the public and private sector, in India and abroad.
All these are the unfinished tasks and future challenges. And in every single area the services will have to play a decisive role as the actual implementers of specific programmes or as facilitators, particularly in the key areas of economic reforms, science and technology and preservation of environment. The crying need for the service even as it embarks on its journey towards the 21st century - is to adopt "moral resurgence" as the goal which translated in administrative language means no more than objectivity, integrity and service as a duty and moral responsibility. Minus the re-impregnated moral élan, the service will falter and fail. This applies to our political masters too who have not only to provide moral leadership but also to create an environment conducive to the discharge of their duties by the civil service; old value system has to be reinstalled. Missionary zeal has to be resurrected and superimposed on the value system relevant to the strife for excellence.

The civil service in India has continued to be mired in obsolete paradigms of the past that primarily emphasise the law and order functions of the administration.57 There is a predominant culture of conformity and little incentive for innovation that hampers adaptability to the new tasks of development. Esman M.J. rightly highlights the fact that the "State bureaucracies are representative of the publics they serve by ethnic criteria, but not by other factors such as class, caste or occupation, since educational opportunity, the key to meritocratic access, is not distributed anywhere in India".58 The bureaucracy also suffers from a paradox, where extreme impersonality exists together with ready susceptibility to personal pressures and interventions.59 In spite of being based on meritocratic recruitment, the IAS is not insulated from society. P. Evans, for instance, classifies the Indian State as being neither predatory nor developmental and is of the view that the primary problem is "the recalcitrant challenges of India's social structure" and problems "exacerbated by the way the bureaucracy has defined its

relation to society." The ethnic religious and regional divisions in India add to "the administrative nightmare" of trying to govern such a huge country. And, in spite of no being patrimonial in character, the bureaucracy suffers from "less internal capacity, more difficult environments and less carefully defined agendas of involvement". These features combine to "put embedded autonomy of the sort that characterises the developmental State out of reach".

Viewed in this context, one would tend to foresee that the civil service shall remain intact, more or less in the present from. The shape and responsibility of civil service is not likely to change much in the next few decades. However, what is bound to change and that is already happening, is their internal composition, the objectives set for them and their orientation. The accent on their skill formation and skill up gradation will become even sharper. As regards the recruitment to the services, the initial training and the pre-requisites for entry into services are being looked at very closely by a high-powered committee set up by UPSC. Whether the IAS retains its reputation, could be debated but there will have to be a fast track service which makes its impact on the governance of the country. However, the relationship between the civil servants and the political masters, be at the local level, be at the state level, or be at the national level, needs a very careful reconsideration. There has been a suggestion that as in the case of members of the Judicial Services the views of the civil servants should also be publicly known and should project beyond the views of the political master. It would, at the first sight, appear to be a revolutionary thought but if we are looking for a strong, fearless, efficient and dedicated civil service, but some such concept will have to be evolved.

To ensure that public servants behave as public servants and this includes namely the political administrators, the civil servants, members of judiciary and the elected representatives of the people, they will have to be subjected to full accountability not only for misfeasance but also for nonfeasance. And this will have to be ensured strictly, even ruthlessly. Some of the pillars of democracy lack accountability

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61 Ibid., pp.69-70
while they seek accountability of others. This will have to be rationalised. The public sector, as we know it now, will undergo a radical change in the next two decades. Not only most of the national and state level known as public sector undertakings may be divested but even the functions presently discharged by various public authorities could be passed on to the private sector.

As part of the process of de-bureaucratisation and de-concentration of authority, the process of entrusting decision making responsibility of government to regulatory commissions is in evidence. It is quite likely that such commissions shall be set up in many more areas of governance. For the recruitment of civil servants, already there is the Public Service Commissions on which the government will have virtually no control. Whether this would be for the better or it have adverse implications for governance will depend on how these commissions function are allowed to behave.

In the area of Indian civil service reforms, the issue of public appointments postings is central. Key postings, if recommended by Civil Service Boards, would ensure the impartiality of the decision. Following which, the government will choose one appointee chosen by the Civil Service Board. A subject committee of Parliament would confirm the appointment through public hearings. Once appointed, the functionary would have guaranteed tenure of three years with provisions for removal or transfer only on grounds of proven incompetence or corruption. Success or failure in implementing the Civil service reforms will depend upon the sincerity and continuing support from the government, the strong commitment from department among civil servants. Citizen-oriented governance has emerged as a significant focus of administrative reforms in India in recent years. The bureaucracy has taken a leap forward in taking measures towards fostering accountability, promoting transparency and openness, civil service performance and integrity. Many structural measures are being introduced. These need mindset of bureaucracy and citizens also providing the much needed support and feedback.