CHAPTER III

Ethics in Superior Civil Services
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"The first line of defense against anti-public actions by public executives is to develop their own moral sensitivities"

Harlan Cleveland.

The preceding chapters discussed public service ethics as the reflection of individual and environmental factors. Both play an equally important role in ethicising the administration. However, according to some scholars, "personal values of public servants are the most important elements in public service ethics" (Chapman: 1993) as they "determine much about when and how we perceive and react to ethical dilemmas" (Gortner: 1991). The study of individual and his/her values as the most important element, in the study of public service ethics is the contribution of the New Public Administration Movement (Marini: 1971).

3.2 How is Human Behaviour Evaluated?

The evaluation of human behaviour and character is the most difficult task as human beings are socialised in different ways and perceive, think, believe differently and hold different ideals, motives, aims and purposes (Keirsey and Bates: 1984). However, as early as 1923, Jung has suggested that
the best measure of individual character is to study the 'mental activity' as it helps to understand the self and motivation. He classifies 'mental activity' into four categories. Those dealing with perceptions (result of a combination of values and beliefs) having sensing and intuitions as components and those dealing with judgment with thinking and feeling as its constituents. He puts forth the argument that every individual possesses all the four but with variations. Based on this theory we have assessed human perception and thinking reflecting their self in administration.

This chapter mainly discusses administrators' perception of the concept of ethics, their abilities and commitment to identify and implement ethical standards. It also discusses their attitude and their behaviour towards public service ethics over the years. While the former helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of recruitment and training systems the latter helps in understanding the influence of organisational and political systems on the ethical behaviour of the administrators as well as the effectiveness of ethics institutions in maintaining integrity among the administrators.

3.3 The Concept: Respondents' Perception

The emergence of public service ethics as the central issue has necessitated its understanding essential with its various aspects, by the administrators essential. In its absence it is difficult to decide 'ethicality' or
even near ‘ethicality’ of actions in the given context. It would also help the administrators in identifying various nuances of ethical standards and a choice among skills presented for ethicising the administration. With this assumption we asked the administrators as to what is ethics in administration in their perception? And its relevance for a developing country’s administration?

The administrators perception of its relevance is associated with various problems the country is facing. In otherwords, they attribute the above directly to deteriorating public service ethics. A majority of them (67 per cent) interpret ethics from negative angle associating it with illegal activities such as bribery, fraud, nepotism, misuse of official power and public funds for personal gains. It is viewed as avoiding improper use of powers vested in the office for personal, material and non-material gains. It is also perceived as "impropriety in dealing with the finances of tax payers". The remaining views can be divided into two categories. Those who identify ethics with accepting responsibility, accountability for action and being responsive and empathetic as ideal components of public service ethics; and those who identify impropriety other than financial as unethical. They identify the following as unethical acts - using official phone for personal purposes, influence peddling, improper use of discretionary and other powers, inaction, etc. Said an administrator, ". . . I may be committing a
corrupt act even when I make a personal call from my office telephone. In effect, I should go to a public phone to make a personal call. But that would be taking a lot of time affecting my work”. An act to be considered unethical, therefore, involves "misuse or arbitrary use of powers, among other things, given as they are increasing multi-fold at a rapid pace". Therefore, in the view of a majority, being ethical in action is "staying out of illegal activities”.

The above views may broadly be placed into two divisions - positive and negative interpretations. Further they may conveniently be grouped into six - (a) misuse of official position or authority constituting breach of trust and law; (b) deviation from rules, laws and norms; (c) personal gains (in monetary or non-monetary forms); (d) non-action when action is required; (e) responsibility, responsiveness and accountability; and (f) actions for public good.

3.4 The Standards Guiding Administration: Respondents’ view.

Next in importance is familiarity with relevant ethical standards. It is, infact, considered essential as the standards change with time when “we achieve a better understanding of absolute moral standards” (Denhardt: 1988). For example, change in standards from Weberian efficiency and economy to New Public Administration Movement's Social Equity. Its significance is even stressed by Leys’ as early as 1944. He, while writing in
the context of policy makers, says that to be ethical requires that an administrator examines and questions the standards by which administrative decisions are made rather than relying exclusively on customs and tradition (as discussed in Dendardt 1988). Following the suit, Anderson (1954) also states that all administrative decisions have basis in some implicit decision standards which are often unexamined assumptions. While concising the writing of 1950s literature of ethics, Denhardt (1988) writes that to be ethical requires that an administrator examine and question the standards or assumptions, by which administrative decisions are made. “The standards should reflect to some degree the core values of our society though not relying exclusively on custom and tradition”. Similarly in the era of New Public Administration, social equity and public interest were stressed as basic operational standards and guidelines for public administration and administrators. Therefore, keeping in mind the importance of relevant standards, for the period and context, in administrative decision-making and actions we asked our respondents as to what standards guide administrators in their actions? The standards differed according to the nature of work of the respondents though the ultimate goals remained public interest, social equity, economy and universal values like justice, equality etc. For example, while efficiency and economy remained standards for those administrators occupying positions as Executive Heads of Public Undertakings, social change, economic development etc., were more important for respondents
working in line departments. However, public interest was most frequently repeated followed by social equity. They accounted for 46 and 27 per cent respectively. Though public interest is identified as the most appropriate standard by a majority, its interpretation differs. Interestingly respondents interpreted public interest narrowly with the interests of various powerful pressure groups rather than the interests of the poor, downtrodden and unorganized sections. Likewise social equity standard was also perceived very vaguely. It is more often defined as “equalizing all sections of society by reserving seats and posts for the weaker sections of society to improve their social status” rather than bringing internal balance in the social system. This may be attributed to lack of familiarity with ethical nuances of standards as they have not been emphasised either during training period or as group exercises (mainly by peer groups and associations) as post training activities, therefore giving more self-perceived observation of standards.

Likewise there is difference in the perception of means to be adopted to reach the set goals. The administrators views, in this regard, are placed into two groups for our convenience - those emphasising bureaucratic values (represented by efficiency, economy and competence) and those emphasising humanitarian values (represented by empathy, fairness and diligence). While 56 per cent of respondents supported bureaucratic values 43 per cent
supported the 'human face' of the administration as desirable means to reach the goals in an effective, democratic and ethical manner.

It is the presence of these two sets of values and their importance in the organisational structures and processes; the selection of 'one best value' in the given context; and domination of 'expected values' (like political expediency and lobby interests) over accepted values (like public interest and social equity) would present the administrators with ethical dilemmas. Though 85 per cent of our respondents come across ethical dilemmas 54 per cent face them 'frequently' in their functioning. However, according to the respondents, a majority of dilemmas are not extremely disturbing, plunging the administration and the administrators in deep crisis.

From the above discussion, it may be inferred that while at the outset constitutional values are considered as standards guiding administrative actions it is clear that ethical dilemmas still persist among administrators. Therefore, in order to get an insight into whether the ethical dilemmas are solved in a scientific manner we prepared a few questions based on S.Bailey's (1965) framework. The results of our discussions are presented here.
As for ambiguity (first quality advocated by Bailey) the administrators appear to recognise the role of various forces in the making and implementation of public policies. Though 64 per cent of respondents acknowledge that universal standards should guide actions and decisions, the reality, according to them is different. In a majority of cases, political expediency and other forces like caste and community, influence administrative decisions and actions. The occurrence of moral ambiguity appears to be more among the second generation respondents. 75 per cent of second generation respondents feel that in a majority of cases, caste, community and other lobby groups exercise pressure to "take away a major portion of social benefits". According to them "caste, community and specific lobby factors have grown oversize in today's administrative decisions and actions". Despite recognizing ambiguity in public policies the administrators feel 'helpless' in modifying the same as they are approved and supported by the elected bodies.

As for second moral quality identified by Bailey 47 per cent of the respondents feel the necessity of recognising contextual forces' influencing moral priorities. According to them "the nature of values is not static, and values change through time". They feel that changes in the values are "natural phenomena" which need to be given their "required place" in administrators decisions and actions. For example, the change in values from
impartiality to social equity (explained earlier in the chapter) called upon the
administrators to recognise the change and orient themselves to the changed
contexts. This is explained with their experience and reflection as
implementators of the goal of overall development of the nation. Different
methods, like planned intervention of the state, anti-poverty programmes,
and of late economic liberalisation etc., are seen as changing values of
administration. These changes are seen by our respondents as involving "a
great deal of introspection of values involved in them" to gauge their impact
on various sections of society before advising the government and
implementing them. Economic liberalisation is taken up while explaining
contextual ethics. This is predicted to bring two effects. While it is strongly
criticised by a small section of respondents (constituting 12 per cent) who
predict that it will work against national interest, increase poverty levels, and
widen inequality, the other section (constituting 29 per cent) is optimistic
about its role in bringing development. The remaining, however, are neither
greatly optimistic nor pessimistic. The first section though against economic
liberalisation thinks that it cannot stop from implementing various
programmes made under it and therefore will have to compromise with it.

Regarding the third quality advocated by Bailey a majority of
respondents recognise the existence of paradoxes. However, Paradoxes arise
out of adherence to certain obsolete procedures even at a time when nature
and functions of the state have changed. Official Secrets Act, 1923 is often used example to explain the paradox. According to a respondent "paradox of procedure is best explained with the parallel expectations arising out of the need of democratic principle of disclosure of information to the concerned public (gaining momentum recently with the initiation of thinking for right to information) and evolved practice of maintenance of secrecy by the bureaucracy".

Visualising this, some of them also reflect that to be ethical in approach to administration would sometime mean to act beyond the purview of rules. They argue in support of their thinking as such deviation from rules cannot be taken as unethical acts as in ultimate analysis "they exist to meet the requirements of the people". The administrators, may at times, have to ignore rules and regulations to "help the needy at right time". On this understanding many think that they need not always be rigid in holding to rules (See Chapter five for detailed discussion) as different kinds of problems arise and that "their genuine solution may lie in their intelligent settlement without hurting the larger frame of law and public interest".

3.5 Moral Qualities

Any amount of familiarity with standards and possession of best of the skills is considered as of little use, without the possession of certain moral
qualities by the administrators for ethical administration. "...Notice that integrity comes first ahead of competence, productivity, knowledge and initiative. Right now it is being rediscovered that job competence in the public service is useless unless accompanied by ethical standards" (Caiden, 1981).

In fact, "ethical behaviour in the public service is considered as a blend of moral qualities and mental attitudes". As discussed in chapter one, many qualities / virtues are suggested, from time to time, by the scholars as desirable qualities for ethical administration. Since it is difficult to cover all those qualities we confine to the discussion of certain qualities very frequently argued as essential. They are service orientation, fairness, accountability, empathy, consultation, optimism, courage etc. The qualities advocated by S. Bailey (1965) are operationalised into two items each to secure information and is based on self-perception of the administrators. (See table 3.1)

Optimism is operationalised as positive outlook and innovative zeal. From the table it can be seen that 69 per cent of our respondents view their role positively. About 74 per cent of them think that they have always viewed their role in the organisation positively which has "encouraged them to work with enthusiasm". Likewise about 64 per cent think that they apply new ideas
and innovation to improvise efficiency of the organisation. The variation in the thinking of men and women is not much. First generation respondents appear to be more optimistic than the second generation. They accounted for 37 per cent as against 31 per cent of second generation respondents. Change in work climate explanation is strong in explaining the variation. While the first generation thinks that both organisational and political environment supported them in their innovative, 'good' and 'ethical' actions giving them further encouragement to work the second generation finds it missing. In the experience of second generation respondents introduction of innovative ideas and methods and ethical actions to improve the system are not encouraged. Recollecting from his experience, a deputy commissioner said that all his efforts and innovative ideas, to simplify procedures in district commissioner's office to make it easy for the public to deal with the office and reduce corruption, were discontinued immediately after his transfer from the place. He on his visit to the same office noticed that "the business had returned to usual". Despite such discouraging environment a majority of the administrators "try to use powers vested in them to reach organisational goals effectively". For instance a rent control officer noticed that "no work was going on in a systematic manner in her office. There were inordinate delays caused either purposefully or due to lack of guidance". She explains that she, as head of office used her powers to reshuffle the entire office (first step taken) despite of opposition from vested interests. Close monitoring of
official work (second step) and access to public (third step) "put back office on track". She also observes that "cases were disposed off quickly with the introduction of new system".

Table 3.1

Details about Self-Assessed Attitude Towards Public Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N=60, (Figures in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 60 n = 27 n = 33 n = 41 n = 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimism</th>
<th>Ag.</th>
<th>First Generation</th>
<th>Second Generation</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) I have always viewed my role in the organisation from a positive angle</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) I use new ideas to improvise administration so as to reach efficiency and organisational goals</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courage</th>
<th>(a) Once I take a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.0 36.0 25.0 31.0 29.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
decision, under normal circumstances it will not be changed, more so under sectarian or political pressures.
b) I have even come into conflict with powerful opposing parties and higher authorities on issues.

**Average**

| 46.5 | 24.0 | 23.0 | 27.0 | 21.0 |

**Fairness**

(a) People consider me as quite considerate and humane in my dealings with them.
(b) I believe in consultations with affected parties before taking any serious decision.

**Average**

| 50   | 23   | 27   | 25   | 25   |

*(Differences to aggregate are due to rounding).*
As for courage (second moral quality mentioned by Bailey) 61 per cent think that they do not change decisions under some sectarian or political pressure, 32 per cent have even come in conflict with higher authorities or opposing parties for which either they are either rewarded (mostly by people's support and appreciation) or punished (by transfers within six months or one year of assumption of office). The Chief Executive Officer of a Zilla Parishad (ZP) recollecting from her stay at ZP said that she came across the allocation of large amounts of money to "favoured areas of development" (which are strongly backed by local political leaders) under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, leaving other areas of the district under-developed. On a detailed survey through extensive visits and inspections, "I started diverting money to less developed areas which was strongly opposed by local political leaders and subordinates at the block and taluk levels. There was large scale opposition from all quarters. ... I did not change my decision of disbursing money equitably. ... the local leaders took the matter even to the Chief Minister. Since nothing materialised even at that level also they gradually stated supporting my action". In another officer's experience, the lobby to build shopping complex within a sports stadium for raising money to help a group of political leaders was opposed by her as "such construction was not advisable in the interest of larger public". Her holding to her decision led to her transfer within a week and incidentally the government also fell.
Regarding the third moral quality, fairness (considered as the result of wider consultations and humanness). Half of the respondents expressed that they have always tried to be fair-minded although their emphasis varies on consultations and humanness. Most of the respondents reflect that they would consult their colleagues and affected people before taking any major decision. They accounted for 57 per cent as against 43 per cent who feel that they are seen by others as considerate and humane. Interestingly, more of second generation respondents think that they go for frequent consultation than the first generation. They accounted for 34 per cent as against 23 per cent of first generation. However, more number of first generation feel that they are considered as considerate and humane than second generation (22 per cent and 20 per cent respectively). While, a large number of women feel that they are more considerate in their administration, more number of men think that they need to be tough in administration. The variation is noticeable in their thinking on this aspect. 28 and 21 per cent of women think that they are seen as humane and consulting as against 14 and 35 per cent of men administrators. However, most of our respondents think that participation from people to solve their problems is not forthcoming with the administration and the administrators.

Empathy, also a component of fairness, “allow(ing) sensitivity in judgement while maintaining objectivity” (Gortner: 1991) was also among the
frequently mentioned qualities essential for ethical administration. 42\% of the respondents feel that they have "attempted to be empathetic majority of the times" (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details about Self-Assessed Attitude Towards Public Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=60, (Figures in percentage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=60 n=27 n=33 n=41 n=19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag. Level First generation Second generation Men Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic    42.6 41.0 43.5 37.5 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diligent      26.2 27.5 25.0 18.5 33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal    21.3 23.5 18.5 26.5 16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other     9.8 -    -    -    -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Differences to aggregate are due to rounding).

Though the variation between the two generations is not much (as seen from the table) the general thinking of the first generation respondents is that "they were trained to be more impersonal and neutral in their view to the public" and that "they were expected to be straight faced, strictly adhering to rules, maintain secrecy, maintain distance from people and be impersonal in their dealings with the masses". The second generation administrators feel that "due to changing outlook of administration, with the introduction of various anti-poverty and developmental programmes and particularly with the establishment of panchayati raj institutions, they are expected to be more 'responding' to the public and "work in close association and co-operation
with the people". There is, however, noticeable variation between men and women in this regard. 48 per cent of women administrators as against 37 per cent men administrators think that "they are more empathetic in their functioning than impersonal". In fact, in the view of some, impersonality is a negative quality resulting in "lack of interest and inactivity". The change in interpretation of the concept may be due to changing values of governance and their accommodation by the administration. At the same time 21 per cent think they are more impersonal. The first generation respondents think impersonality to be the most required quality. They accounted for 23 per cent as against 18 per cent of the second generation. Interestingly men attach greater importance to impersonality than women.

Along with empathy, accountability and leadership qualities were very often heard to be essential. Accountability, which gets more emphasis, is interpreted by the respondents as the fulfillment of the duties and obligations assigned in a “satisfactory manner” through the processes laid down by the organisation/s (for example, hierarchy, rules, legal and political directives etc.). However, 73 percent of the administrators lay greater stress on legal accountability where they are “accountable for their action in the public domain through the established legislative and judicial processes”. In other words, the overwhelming perception of legal accountability appears to have downplayed moral accountability of the administrators towards the
society they serve. Writing on similar lines a scholar says that “many a public servant will not venture beyond the legal requirement of a case irrespective of the moral implications or the problems of fairness”.

Continuing the argument we shall discuss the self-assessed motives of administrators to join superiors civil service. This aspect is taken for discussion as “motives combined with action” (Gortner: 1991) reflect human behaviour. In fact, Abraham Maslow’s theory of motivation "allows it (motivation) to be used in every day discussion of behaviour. "His hierarchy of needs”, while open to debate, "still proves useful to individuals wishing to understand the link between motivation, behaviour and ethics”.

Keeping the above in view, we asked the respondents reasons for joining civil service. A majority of the respondents mentioned that service to public is the main motive for joining the service (see table 3.3) although it is not reflected in their thinking. This is evident from the cross-check of information secured through substitute statements.

According to cross check information, a large majority of the respondents attached importance to factors like status, power, and career prospects. Status appeared to be very high on the minds of first generation as against power and authority along with status for the second generation. For
instance an Indian Police Service officer of the second generation, who served in one of the best private companies prior to joining police service perceived that, "if I were to continue in the company at the maximum I would have got two promotions. But I had to travel by scooter to office and that my powers would have confined to my section of office". On the contrary he perceived that his present position has given him "wide powers along with chauffeur driven car, bungalow and other facilities" of which he could not have secured in the private company. Similarly, another second generation officer, serving as a doctor in government hospital before joining civil service, views that if he were to be in his earlier job he "would have retired as chief of a government hospital". But that his "present office would take him to the highest position including that of the head of the health department in the state or centre".

Interestingly, pay package is not an important criterion for many joining the service as shown in the table. However, it is quite contrary to the information obtained from the open-ended question. About 60 per cent of the administrators feel that the salaries are not commensurate with the market price. Some of them also compared themselves to the old time administrators' (of equal rank) salaries and view that their salaries were 32 times higher than the present salaries.
Table 3.3
Perceived motivation of the respondents to join civil service
N=60, (Figures in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire to serve</th>
<th>n=60</th>
<th>n=27</th>
<th>n=33</th>
<th>n=41</th>
<th>N=19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag. level</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career prospects</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Differences to aggregate are due to rounding)

Career prospects are stressed more by the first generation as they think that "they hardly had any other openings and opportunities for career development and position in society unlike the present situation where you get many equivalent and even better opportunities". Similarly though some variation in the perception of men and women exist on all the factors, it is not noteworthy except in one instance. Women attach greater importance to career prospects. Likewise, security and power are also seen by them as important. Therefore the conclusion that may be drawn is that service motive is sidelined by other motives. A study conducted (Bogaards: 1997), in Andhra Pradesh recently also supports the view that service to public did not serve as
a motivating factor for civil servants. "None of the respondents mentioned the wish to do service or "Seva" as a motivating force" (Bogaards: 1997).

3.6 Immoral Behaviour in Superior Civil Services

Also constituting a part of human conduct is immoral (illegal behaviour in emphasised here) behaviour. It assumes excessive significance in the context of public office as it is the result of a trust and the occupants are expected to possess high moral quality "akin to what is expected from clergy, nurses and parents". This, however, has deteriorated the world over as reported by various studies and also by experiences of the people. This is largely seen as the phenomenon of 1970s. In otherwords, public bureaucracies have not succeeded in maintaining the standards set for their meaningful and trustful existence and that Indian bureaucracy is no exception to this.

The ethics in superior civil services in India has come under severe criticism in recent times as discussed in the introductory chapter. The personnel associated with unethical and illegal behaviour are on the increase. For instance 1,210 cases were registered against public servants of various ranks in a span of one month (between 01-06-1996 to 30-06-1996) under charges of corruption (Times of India (Bangalore) : 18-07-1996). In Karnataka, in 1991, six members of All-India services were found in
possession of wealth beyond their known sources of income attracting the attention of anti-corruption laws and enforcing agency (Indian Express (Bangalore): 02-12-1995). This number, however, increased five times in five years. By early 1997 the number had risen to 29 (Times of India (Bangalore): 21-02-1997). Similar instances were also found in other states. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raided houses of four top level officers on corruption charges. Even the Governor ordered an inquiry into a case of misappropriation of money worth Rs. 4 crores against a senior Indian Administrative Service officer and ordered the termination of services of another senior officer against whom eighteen charges of corruption had been proved during enquiry (Times of India (Bangalore): 08-12-1995).

In similar instances, the Chief Secretaries of Tamil Nadu and Kerala were suspended on charges of corruption. In 1997, in Bihar five officers of Indian Administrative Service were convicted and jailed in the Rs. 950 crores fodder scam (Indian Express (Bangalore): 20-02-1996). In Madhya pradesh, Lokayukta indicted three Indian Administrative Service Officers in a Rs. 13 crores land scam. The Verdict of the Lokayukta reads as "they are accused of facilitating allotment of land in Jabalpur worth Rs. 13 crores to the Motor Parts Dealers Welfare Association for a mere Rs. 16 lakhs". There was also an instance of a joint secretary in the Ministry of Surface Transport, Government
of India, illegally amassing wealth worth about Rs. 10 crores (Times of India (Bangalore): 19-02-1996) for which he was jailed. The court even refused to grant bail to him taking cognizance of the seriousness of the matter (Indian Express (Bangalore): 20-02-1996). On many occasions, the Supreme Court has also issued directives to the Government to take action against erring officers. For example, in 1995 it directed the Government of India, to initiate disciplinary proceedings against five top administrators for their involvement in illegal activities. Even some of the officers have also been accused of more grave social crimes like involvement in drug rackets and nexus with criminals and politicians. It was reported that two Indian Police Service officers of Maharashtra apprehended by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence were suspectedly engaged in narcotics racket (Times of India (Bangalore): 10-12-1996). The Vohra Committee report has brought out the nexus between politicians-bureaucrats-criminals for mutual personal gains.

The secondary data are supported by the views of the respondents who also believe that public service ethics have deteriorated over the years, whatever the reason. The discussion in brief is as follows.

In order to understand the administrators view about Public Service Ethics, we asked them about its status in today’s administration. A majority of the administrators feel that public service ethics fell short of the expected
standards. About 80 per cent of our respondents held this view as against 16 per cent who hold opposite view (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Perceived Deterioration in Public Service Ethics over the years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=60, (Figures in percentage)</th>
<th>n = 60</th>
<th>n = 27</th>
<th>n = 33</th>
<th>n = 41</th>
<th>n = 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag. Level generation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, there is deterioration</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, there is no deterioration</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know cannot judge</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Any other</td>
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(Differences to aggregate are due to rounding)

Interestingly, all respondents of the first generation very strongly felt that it has drastically deteriorated over the years, as against 54 per cent of the second generation. Comparatively a large per cent of women think on the same lines. They accounted for 59 per cent as against 47 per cent of men administrators. The respondents who hold different views gave the following justifications in support of their views: (a) Given the nature and scope of public administration it is doing its best though there are certain failures which are unavoidable; and (b) the track record of ethics in public service is better when compared to ethics in private service. They refuse to accept the
argument that such comparisons do not hold good as the domain and scope of public service are much broader and that the ideology of public service calls upon some sacrifice.

When we asked related question to assess the status of Public Service Ethics, many administrators felt that the per cent of honest officers is reducing over the years. According to a senior administrator "such percent of honest officers has come down from 90 to 50 in a span of 20 to 25 years". Another administrator expressed similar views. According to him, "ninety per cent of bureaucracy, at all levels, is extremely corrupt". Interpreting honesty as resisting pressures (mainly political), another administrator, mentioned that "30 per cent of administrators could be considered as honest". Based on experience in the investigating agency an administrator said that "there is a minimum of 60-70 per cent corruption in all developmental programmes. In some cases it is as high as 95 per cent". Even some of the first generation respondents hold that the present generation administrators "exhibit little commitment to public service". According to an administrator many are joining service for personal and monetary gains. Another, senior administrator felt that moral agents in administration "belong to archives". Some of them take the view that it has reached the lowest point from which retrieval is very difficult, even not possible with "the kind of attitude of both politics and administration towards public service". They express their
apprehension that "if no appropriate actions are taken deterioration would continue with time". Even such deterioration in administration is reinforced by a study conducted by the Civil Servants (Lalbahadur Sastri National Academy of Administration, (1995)). According to it, members of the service have become a part of corruption and black money culture and that one of the main incentives for young people joining civil services is the opportunity to make money.

Overview

This chapter while assessing public service ethics from the administrators' angle analysis its both dimensions - moral and immoral. While the former is assessed at the individual's level, taking the administrators perception and self-assessment about various prerequisites of ethical administration the latter is assessed at the aggregate level taking into account the increasing instances of illegal behaviour in the context of superior civil services in a developing country.

A majority of the respondents interpret the concept of ethics negatively associating it with illegal behaviour and being ethical in administration would be "staying out of illegal behaviour". This conditions the administrators thinking about ethics in a particular way which may cause the violations of subtle principles of ethics.
Values like public interest, social equity, economy, justice, equality, fairness etc., are viewed as the relevant standards guiding administrators actions. The emphasis on these values also, like the previous, is lop sided embedded more in the superficial perception. However, it is popularly believed that public interest (most frequently repeated guiding standard) has not always formed the basis of government policies and administrative activities.

The ethical dilemmas, arising out of choice among conflicting values and the means to realise them, are faced by the administrators. Their presence is viewed as a positive quality as they assist in “avoiding taking seemingly wrong decisions” by the administrators. According to the administrators, the solution to them are, in a majority cases, evolved by the individual administrators based on their experience. This, according to them is mainly “because they are largely considered as individual problems and therefore, ‘left to them’ to find solutions”.

An effective solution to ethical dilemmas in public service can be found according to S. Bailey when the administrators possess certain mental attitudes and moral qualities. The respondents’ self assessment goes along the
lines of Bailey's thinking though the quality of fairness is interpreted in different ways by the administrators apart from our specifications.

Along with the above mentioned qualities accountability and empathy are seen as the most important qualities required for ethical administration by the respondents. Legal accountability is stressed excessively by the respondents, as it would "keep them out of trouble", downplaying moral responsibility and accountability.

From our discussion, it may be inferred that though empathy, humaneness, fairness, justice etc., are embedded in our philosophy and socio-cultural systems and that though our respondents deeply believe that "they intensely empathise with the masses most of the times while taking decisions and actions" they get drowned in the overwhelming organizational systems. This, however, is not to suggest that 'human face' of administrators is totally missing. To suggest so would be wrong. However, we propose that changing organizational goals and values have, to a great extent, pushed humanitarian values to the background.

The immoral aspect is viewed through, (a) the number of convictions of personnel of higher civil services under anti-corruption laws which is showing an increasing trend. The quality of issues is further reinforced by the
interventions of the highest court of the land through issuing directives to the
government to take action against its erring top level officers, and (b)
perception of the administrators in this regard. A majority of our respondents
also hold the view that public service ethics is consistently deteriorating and
if it continues unstopped it would cause major problems not only to
administration but also to the society at large.

In short, 'commitment' to public service among the personnel is
deteriorating and that there is no clear idea as to what constitutes public
service ethics leading to ethical failures in public administration domain of
the government. The emergence of these is traced to various factors, the most
important of which are the quality and orientation of the personnel at the All-
India services level which constitute the subject matter of our next chapter.
1. Stephen Bailey suggests that ethical dilemmas can be successfully solved if the administrators possess certain mental attitudes and moral qualities. While mental attitudes assist in judging the correctness of actions in a given context, moral qualities reinforce them. These together help administrators in objective self analysis to a certain extent as total objective self-analysis is quite impossible.

The constituents of mental attitude are:

a. Recognition of moral ambiguity in all men and all public policies. It is essential to understand that public policies are neither totally good and ethical nor totally bad and unethical. Though they aim to serve larger public interest quite often they also serve special interests. This is because they are made and implemented by human beings who cannot totally rule out some personal interest or interest of people 'close' to them. This understanding would make administrators understand 'reality' and work within a given situation balancing both sides;

b. Recognition of contextual forces influencing moral priorities. Priorities attached to values and actions get changed with change in time and
context. It is essential that this is recognised and acted upon suitably to avoid rigid adherence to specific values; and

c. Recognition of paradoxes of procedure. The procedures which are established to assure predictability and efficiency should not be placed above responsiveness as it would defeat the purpose of reaching public interest. While the procedures, established scientifically, minimise individual authority. They also weaken administrators sense of moral responsibility as the actual connection between the individual (here administrators) and his output (efforts towards public interest) gets severed.

The moral qualities required are

*Optimism:* which encourages the administrators to reach public interest;

*Courage:* the will is to be right even in the face of opposition but without fear of favour; and

*Fairness:* Bailey attaches greater importance to fairness as administrator and public service deal with individuals and their requirements.
2. In fact, they are viewed as the result of three major sets of values playing equally important role - democratic, bureaucratic and personal values (Gortner, 1991) giving scope for value conflicts and ethical dilemmas among the administrators who are "summoned to serve neither this person not that one, and certainly not themselves, but society generally" (Roelofs as quoted in Gortner, 1991).

3. Though the procedures, rules and processes established on the basis of scientific principles provide 'one best way' of doing the job 'impartially and justly' they, on many occasions curtail individual autonomy. On the other hand, rigid adherence to them finds the administrators subordinate to their primacy whereby they tend to lose a sense of moral responsibility for their actions. Thus, they may preclude individual initiative to do what is 'right' and lead to unethical outcomes.

4. The quality of courage, operationalised as adhering to the decisions taken and stand by them. However, courage is not always defined as 'coming into conflict'. It is also viewed as convincing the concerned authority about the pros and cons of the decision. In the ultimate analysis courage is to hold to rational decisions.
5. Assessment of immoral behaviour through perceptions is very difficult. In order to overcome this limitation, the statistical information regarding involvement of administrators in corrupt practices as reported in the newspapers and government documents is presented in this section along with the perception of administrators towards corruption.

6. A Committee was appointed by the Government of India in 1993 July under the chairpersonship of N N Vohra to examine the nexus between politics-bureaucracy-crime. It submitted its report in 1993 October.

7. Staats viewed that "it (public service) is also a concept, an attitude, a sense of duty - yes, even a sense of public morality”

8. A senior police officer narrated the following incident from his experience. "When I was in Belgaum I saw an instance where the Assistant Collector of Customs used to take some businessmen for pleasure trips along with the family members. Businessmen used to finance the trips. Even the smallest amount of money (say Re. 1 or Rs. 2) was spent by businessmen".