

MISSION KARMAYOGI : SELF CONFIDENCE

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

- PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

The first Prime Minister of India at the inauguration of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi on 29 March 1954.

Introduction

1. **Focus on Competencies - from Rule to Role.** The government recently announced the rollout of the Mission Karmayogi, a scheme aimed at preparing civil servants for the future. Mission Karmayogi emphasises competency driven capacity building and human resource management, facilitating a shift from 'rule-based' to 'role-based' learning and competency building system. It is the most profound shift in the outlook of HR managers and cadre managers that will help drive the understanding that a role should be performed by an individual who possesses the best competencies for that given role. The programme ensures that all civil service officials will be able to access the competency building products and build the competencies required to efficiently discharge their roles. These competencies would typically include ***behavioural attitudes***, functional knowledge and skills, and domain expertise.
2. The technology platform namely 'iGOT Karmayogi' being linked to competency profile of officials will inspire and encourage lifelong learning and the platform will support online, face to face and blended learning. The platform will leverage upon the existing features of smart Learning Management Systems and will provide state of the art features that will help roll out the grand vision of a Digital India served by a digitally trained and enabled force.
3. To resolve the challenges posed across, Hon'ble PM has listed down 6 traits that every civil servant should possess - Professional & Progressive, Energetic & Enabling, Transparent & Tech Enabled, Creative & Constructive, Imaginative & Innovative, Proactive & Polite. This will transform the Bureaucracy so that the Civil service becomes: (a) skilled (b) open (c) converged and (d) connected.
4. While this is undoubtedly a step in the right direction and will impart the necessary expertise to civil servants and equip them for the challenges during their tenure, ***the key question is whether expertise is the real problem.*** In fact, ***expertise can be outsourced but attitude cannot.*** Are we selecting the persons

with the right attitude to man various positions that are so critical in governance? Are we training them appropriately for this purpose? Are we managing them properly?

5. What really needs to be done is to look at the manner in which recruitment takes place, the in-service training, transfers, assessment of officers, incentives, and disincentives by the way of promotions and selections to critical posts. However, before taking a call on these aspects, it would be **essential to determine what is required in an officer who mans the senior civil service.**¹

Conceptual Background

6. Almost all civil servants occupy leadership positions and, therefore, have to consistently lead teams. Hence, it is imperative that they possess necessary qualities or have potential to be trained for the same, becoming leaders worthy of respect. This is and should remain the core focus of Mission Karmayogi.

7. Considering the selection process, it is felt that officers have the knowledge and they are capable of acquiring more of it. ***What is required is the transformation of the attitude of an officer, the necessity and utility of Ethical Behaviour.*** A periodic upgradation of skills and learning from each other should be the focus of in-service training. This is imperative in the context of a fast-changing world both in terms of technology and management. The competency Dictionary lays down the major components of Ethics as Integrity, **Self Confidence**, Attention to Detail and Taking Accountability. Each of these qualities is interwoven with Self Confidence being the visible output.

8. Although self-confidence can mean different things to different people, in reality it simply means having faith in oneself. It is an attitude about own skills and abilities. It means you accept and trust yourself and have a sense of control in your life. You know your strengths and weakness well, and have a positive view of yourself. You set realistic expectations and goals, communicate assertively, and can handle criticism.

9. For a Civil Servant, Self Confidence would have *Professional Competence* at its foundation layered with *Humility, Empathy, Positivity, Irreproachable Integrity, a Zeal to 'Make a Difference'* to the people they serve, Belief in the "*Good of the Organisation*", excellent *Communication Skills* and the *Character to Believe in & Stand for what is Right* irrespective of the consequences. '*Service before Self*' is the religion of a Self Confident civil servant. This quality is non-negotiable as **Confidence breeds Confidence**; it is only self confident public servants that can restore the confidence of citizens in the bureaucracy & public administration.

Discussion

10. Today, the **Public Perception** of unethical conduct of Public Servants would include the following:-

- (a) Indulging in Corruption in high places by colluding with politicians, contractors, corporate groups etc.
- (b) Misuse of power for personal benefits.
- (c) Biased decisions to favour influential persons.
- (d) Manipulation/ withholding of information.
- (e) Deliberate delays in service delivery.
- (f) Non-application of mind, negligence and dereliction of duty.
- (g) Intellectual dishonesty.
- (h) Lack of professional integrity to please the hierarchy or out of fear of reprisal.
- (j) Being a party to electoral malpractices etc.
- (k) Abdication of responsibility and passing the buck.

11. The related **Expectations** from the Public Servants in governance would be as under:-

- (a) Humanism and positive thinking.
- (b) Imbue purity in thought, speech and action.
- (c) Realizing the dignity of being a government servant.
- (d) Appreciating his/ her placement in government as an opportunity to serve society.
- (e) Understanding the sanctity of Public Funds thereby providing maximum benefit to citizens.
- (f) Display of 'sense of justice and impartiality' during decision making.
- (g) Ability to stand up to truth despite adversity or fears.
- (h) Develop self-confidence & faith in oneself and in one's ideas even if contrary to popular opinion.
- (j) Motivate oneself to be the change they want to see in society.

(k) Fresh thinking, renewed energy and rejuvenation to do something extra-ordinary and useful to society.

(l) Empathy for citizens, especially for vulnerable sections of society such as women, children, elderly and differently abled persons.

(m) Inculcate 'Rational thinking', 'self-accountability' and 'self-transparency' which are benchmarks of ethical conduct.

(n) Motivate employees to adhere to higher ideals in life and to walk on the path of truth and righteousness, come what may, and become a **role model for others in the society**.

12. If we analyse above expectations, **each one of them falls in the realm of Ethical Conduct**. Work ethic is basically the belief that work is a good moral. It also refers to a set of values that are defined and characterized by diligence and hard work. Work ethic can as well be defined as the inherent ability of work to strengthen character.ⁱⁱ **This Strengthened Character is the Self Confidence we are in search of.**

13. Character is how others perceive someone. Much like an actor who plays a role, the character traits that one possesses portray an image in others' minds. One's character develops as Actions become Habits. These habits reveal one's character. Eventually, this role determines the outcome of one's life. Being aware of your actions and habits plus improving on faults strengthens one's character.

14. Today's environment is not only fast-paced, but also highly competitive. In order to keep pace and stay ahead, possession of several key work ethics is a plus for achieving a success. Holding key traits such as character, teamwork, appearance and attitude add value to both for the individual and the organization. **Self Confidence is the reflection of these Work Ethics.**

15. The published Competence Dictionary defines Self Confidence as the “Belief in own capability to accomplish a task and being able to express confidence in dealing with challenging circumstances, without being arrogant or boastful”. It lays down **Desirable Attributes** at various levels as given in the Table below:-

<p>Level 1: Acts Confidently within Job Role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidently performs the tasks within the job role • Presents oneself well • Executes activities with minimal supervision • Displays the willingness to take up additional responsibilities
<p>Level 2: Continues to act Confidently Beyond the Limits of Job Role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes job-related decisions on his or her own, keeping in mind civil services' values • Able to say 'No' to all backed by a strong reason • Acts confidently when the outcome benefits the public good, even when peers or partners disagree • Presents own point of view clearly and confidently in front of others
<p>Level 3: States Confidence in Own Ability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits expertise and believes in own ability to get the work done • Explicitly demonstrates confidence in own judgment • Accepts responsibility for the consequences • Able to articulate own point of view confidently and clearly even when in disagreement with others
<p>Level 4: Takes on Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets excited by challenging assignments • Expresses own point of view clearly, confidently and politely when in disagreement with senior officers, stakeholders, or others in power • Acts in the favour of larger public good without being afraid of consequences
<p>Level 5: Is Confident Under Extremely Challenging Situations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingly takes on extremely challenging (that is, personally risky) tasks • Challenges the status quo and is not afraid to take action, as long as the outcome is for the betterment of the community • Remains positive even under stressful conditions • Explores multiple ways to overcome the challenge at hand

16. **Summary.** However, above attributes need to be translated into specific **Character Traits which need to be Developed as part of Mission Karmayogi**. An analysis of above competencies can be deduced to the under mentioned qualities:-



17. To build trust, Aristotle maintains that a public administrator, for example, must intend to do, ***“The right thing to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive and in the right way”***. Translating this intention into conduct requires rooting trust in one’s character and exhibiting it consistently. This *provides others with a rationale not only to trust public administrators but also public service organizations*. Burns called this consistency in conduct, “Transactional leadership.”ⁱⁱⁱ This is how trust begins to influence and shape attitudes in public service organizations and beyond.

Take Away Points

18. Most modern Civil Service Ethics laws and Codes of Ethics for civil servants and public officials, endorse the following *Minimum Set of Principles* which are essential to be included in the Training Objectives of civil servants, as part of the Self Confidence vertical:-^{iv}

(a) Serving the Public Interest. Civil servants and public officials are expected to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in government, by demonstrating the highest standards of professional competence, efficiency and effectiveness, upholding the Constitution and the laws, and seeking to advance the public good at all times.

(b) Transparency. Civil servants and public officials are expected to use powers and resources for public good, under government policy. They should be accountable for the decisions they make, and prepared to justify their actions.

(c) Integrity. Civil servants are expected to make decisions and act solely in the public interest, without consideration of their private interests. Public employment being a public trust, the improper use of a public service position for private advantage is regarded as a serious breach of duty.

(d) Legitimacy. Civil servants/public officials are required to administer laws, and to exercise administrative power on behalf of the Government, or the Parliament, or other such authority. That power and authority should be exercised legitimately, impartially and without fear or favour, for its proper public purpose as determined by the Parliament or their employer.

(e) Fairness. Civil servants and public officials should make decisions and act in a fair and equitable manner, without bias or prejudice, taking into account only the merits of the matter, and respecting the rights of affected citizens.

(f) Responsiveness. As agents and employees of the elected Government, civil servants and public officials are required to serve the legitimate interests and needs of the Government, other civil servants, and all citizens, in a timely manner, with care, respect and courtesy.

(g) Efficiency and Effectiveness. Civil servants and public officials are required to obtain best value for public assets deployed in or through public management, and to avoid waste and extravagance in expenditure and the use of public assets.

19. Along with training, the HR/ man management front also needs to be simultaneously addressed. Certain measures that may be considered are given in

succeeding paragraphs.^v

20. There are a large number of officers who have done well in their careers. Such officers can be asked to mentor officers who enter the service for the first few years. These initial years in the service are critical in moulding officers. The existing ethos does not encourage the culture of support and guidance. An institutional arrangement should be made in this regard.

21. Postings should be based on integrity and competence and not on allegiance. This can easily be done for critical posts, to begin with. An agency like the UPSC can be assigned to prepare a panel from which the government can select an officer.

22. The Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) were an instrument through which officers were evaluated annually and their promotions were based on these ACRs. However, consequent to the Supreme Court order, these ACRs have ceased to be confidential as they have to be communicated to the concerned officers. This has impacted the efficacy of ACRs and needs to be reviewed.

Conclusion

23. Self confidence directly relates to a positive attitude, which is considered to be an essential characteristic of a civil servant who is often required to function under extreme stress. Attitude shows that a person has a determined way of thinking or feeling about something. Individuality and self-confidence matter to her or him. With a positive attitude, he/ she remains constructive, optimistic and confident. The civil servant shows improvement and progress with no possibility of lack of conviction. Such attitude will encourage them to acknowledge the broader civil service priorities, ensure their actions and efforts are in national interest and are committed to the principles of democracy. They will influence & motivate the environment, take evaluations positively and view criticism as an opportunity.

References

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^v Swarup Anil (2020). 'What's Needed to Make Karmayogis from Civil Servants'. Available at: <https://www.cnbctv18.com/politics/civil-service-human-resource-management-6886801.htm>