

ASSIGNMENT PAPER

PEOPLE FIRST

(Mission Karmyogi)



MOZAFFAR UDDIN ABDALI – IPS (Post),

Roll No 4701

GUIDE – Dr. NEETU JAIN

Introduction:

People's participation in governance represents a shift in the development paradigm of the country, from citizens, as the recipients of the developments, to one that views them as active participants in the development process. Equally, it involves a shift from the "top-down" to the "bottom-up" approach of decision making processes, which affect people's lives, their businesses and their communities.

Civil servants play one of the most crucial roles in formulating the public policies as well as its execution at the cutting edge in India. They are the backbone of country's social economical and political managerial framework. Their contributions range from Judiciary to Healthcare, from Land to Seas, and, managing affairs which connect almost every walk of Indian life. Lots of expectations of the Nation are attached with the performance of these officials, who come from different background and environment, with different capabilities, and discharge diversified duties assigned to them. It has been regularly felt that the framework, in which civil servants are trained and perform, lacks efficiency orientations. In course of time some changes were brought in the training policies of civil servants, to infuse the efficiency, matching with their talents, and develop the competency, for achieving the required goals. But those efforts were in silos. Mission Karm yogi started by Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in 2021, is a landmark initiative, envisaging the transformation of HR management system for civil servants, from Rule Based to Role Based, in totality and developing suitable competency. As envisioned by our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, a competent and efficient civil servant of India needs to be:

- Imaginative and Innovative
- Creative and Constructive
- Proactive and Polite
- Professional and Progressive
- Energetic and Enabling
- Transparent and Tech-enabled

To achieve the required goal, under Mission Karm Yogi, a new competency framework for civil services has been designed. The framework has been divided in four sections named : (i) Ethos, (ii) Ethics, (iii) Equity and (iv) Efficiency. These sections have been further subdivided into the achievable targets. Ethos has been further subdivided into : (a) People First, (b) Strategic Thinking, (c) Organizational Awareness, (d) Commitment to the Organization, and (e) Leading Others.

The objective of this assignment is to study the ‘People First’ aspect of the framework for Mission Karm Yogi.

People first :

Kautilya in his treatise Arthashastra elaborated the traits of the king of a well governed States: "in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself he does not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he considers as good".

India carries a tradition of public welfare from the ages, and after independence of the country, it became the cardinal principle of the Constitution. Though, citizen-centric approaches have been center for government transformation, and public service reforms, ‘People First ‘approach, in Mission KarmYogi is not limited to the traditional ‘citizen centric’ concept of Public Administration. It talks, beyond the citizen centricity. Under Mission Karm Yogi, People First symbolizes passion for serving people with special care for the marginalized and disadvantaged. It envisages a kind of assurance given by civil servants for being approachable, welcoming, caring and rising above bias while interacting with the people. It gives the message that civil servants understand the needs of the people and constantly strive to improve the services.

What is the meaning of people first in public services?

“People first” means taking the needs and voices of people into account while designing, delivering, implementing and evaluating public policies and services. Governments can do this by directly involving citizens in decision-making processes and by collecting and analyzing data that can be used both to evaluate the performance of policies and services against people’s needs and expectations and to anticipate these needs. Broadly, a people centric approach is one where governments consult citizens about their needs and encourage their direct participation in policy making and service design and delivery. People centricity also requires a civil service that is representative and inclusive of the society, its policies and services target. A diverse and multi-

faceted workforce integrates individuals from diverse backgrounds who bring talent, distinct skills and points of view associated with their experiences. When the various segments of the population are represented in the civil service, service delivery can be better tailored to their needs. Moreover, if managed constructively, the contrast of diverse perspectives can also enhance innovation. ‘People first’ go beyond people centricity which includes, concepts such as “user centric” and “user driven”, which focus on engaging with people (users/citizens) to develop services and policies. It also considers the capacity and characteristics of the work force as a key lever for delivering services that are inclusive. Designing and delivering people-centric public services and policies entails overcoming resistance to change and breaking down silos in public administration. This implies working with a common objective of putting people at the centre, building and sharing collective knowledge, streamlining information flows and integrating data processes in order to collaborate and reach citizens wherever they are. In such an approach, the interactions between governments, people and relevant private sector agents are guided by the principles of access, transparency, integrity, responsiveness, accountability, equality and stakeholder participation. Under this approach Governments make conscious efforts to engage citizens in policy making, which means giving them the opportunity and necessary resources (e.g. information, data and digital tools) to collaborate during all phases of the policy cycle, and in service design and delivery. Inclusive policy responses should also target groups such as youth, the elderly, the poor, and those with limited access to information and technology, and/or perceive themselves as being left behind.

Why People First?

Though, India has witnessed considerable socio-economic growth, some sections can still be noticed marginalized. Their voices have not been heard. They have not been taken into account while formulating the public policies at large. Even in execution of certain public policies, due to some biases on the part of managers, they were ignored. This has led to socio-economic disparities. Women, members of schedule castes and schedule tribes are few of the examples. Disparities can even be noticed between urban and the rural ones. These socio-economic disparities are never in the interest of a democratic nation.

This is also needed because average citizen does not understand the complexities of governance and politics. They are hardly acquainted with the large structures and multiple levels of

government departments, and are unable to obtain rapid and equitable access to government services, whether "Regulatory or developmental or welfare oriented", preferably at his doorstep. That is why, stability, transparency, efficiency and continuity in the governance systems that the citizens are most immediately concerned with, is so necessary, and that is why, our priority in India must be to place the people at the centre of a modern public administration.

In addition to that, there is a requirement for citizen centric management because of the

- Attitudinal Problems of the Civil Servants, their indifference and insensitivity, asymmetry in the wielding of power at various levels and perceiving themselves as indispensable.
- Lack of Accountability- Seldom are disciplinary proceedings initiated because at most levels authority is divorced from accountability, Cumbersome disciplinary procedures, safeguards provided to civil servants, - performance evaluation systems within government which have not been effectively structured.

The vision of our constitution is to create a welfare state and by implication, provide for developing people centric managers of public affairs.

How 'people first'?

To make the concept 'people first' a reality, civil service framework in term of capacity building will have to be transformed step by step.

Firstly, civil servants will have to learn to respond sensitively to the needs of the citizens. They will have to understand the needs of the marginalized and disadvantaged, along with the needs of the wider public. They will have to strive to respond quickly to meet their needs in a respectful, helpful and responsive manner. They must report issues that affect service delivery. They should address all the issues of the citizens in an unbiased manner. They should ensure, that levels of service are maintained – highlights risks or concerns in order to meet community requirements.

As second step, civil servants need to anticipate the requirements of the Citizens. A civil servant will have to actively seek information from all sections of community to understand their needs and expectations. He or she should be accessible to all citizens and seeks their feedback to develop a clear understanding of their needs and outcomes. Civil servants require to establish mechanisms to address feedback from the community about the service provided. Civil servant

need to involve himself with diverse range of staff members, stakeholders, and delivery partners while developing implementation approaches in order to provide clarity on the benefits to the disadvantaged and to improve the quality of service provided to the citizens. Civil servant must understand issues from others' perspective, particularly from the disadvantaged ones.

At third stage, civil servants need to promote the Service to the Citizens. Civil servant will be required to project and prove himself being the role model of positive community service behaviors. They should be able to promote a culture focused on serving and meeting the needs of the citizens. They should thoroughly explore all the sections of the community, including the marginalized and the disadvantaged; and identifies methods to meet their needs – including using new technology wherever relevant. They will have to track trends that will affect their own Department's ability to meet current and future community needs and continuously strives to provide effective services to the public • They will be required to focus their decisions making, around the most excluded sections of the society; and design and monitor the execution of these initiatives.

At the next level civil servants will be required to actively improve the service being provided to the Citizens. They will be using multiple mechanisms to obtain insights from the community, in order to drive proposals, outcomes and quality in the area. They will constantly improve service by managing risks and ensuring service delivery within defined outcomes. They will work collaboratively with staff, stakeholders, community, and service delivery partners to deliver against service level agreements.

Finally the civil servants shall drive a Culture of Serving the Citizens. They must Create in-depth understanding of broad range of community requirements in the Department. They should be able to lead the community service outcomes at a strategic level and work across the Government to deliver best quality service, with a strong focus on the marginalized and disadvantaged. Civil service will be able to create a culture of working with and through delivery partners to establish service levels and outcomes which is for the people of the nation .

Way forward

To create a suitable environment for 'People First' oriented capacity building frame work, and working environment, country needs to:

- i. set right standards of the public services, - which is being done through creation of Citizen's Charter by every service delivery department.
- ii. be open and provide full information to its citizens , - which is being ensured through Right to information.
- iii. consult and involve people,- decentralization of power, and Panchayti Raj, is an important step in that direction.
- iv. encourage access and promote choices amongst its citizens, - which is being done by promoting private partner to enter into service area, and government agencies to compete with them.
- v. treat all the citizens fairly, - India's Constitution ensures that.
- vi. put things right when they go wrong, - country is consistently making efforts in that direction.
- vii. use country's resources effectively.
- viii. innovate and improve; and
- ix. work with other providers.

Once the 'People first' approach get integrated with the civil service capacity building and working frame work, the services of the country will be:

- **Collaborative:** Frequently, government departments work in isolated silos. Traditionally defined agencies have boundaries and service creation rarely cuts across them. With a joined up, collaborative government information will freely pass between departments creating an ecosystem of shared data that bring overall value to the citizen.
- **Agile and responsive:** It is unlikely that any big transformation will end up the way one visualize its start. It has to be responsive and adaptive to change. A truly people centric civil service should be agile and flexible so that it can continue to adapt to the public's needs.
- **Focusing on outcomes:** The aim of a citizen friendly civil service is to create a useful service for the citizen. Thus there will be a shift of focuses on the intended outcome instead, not merely on the output.
- **Third-party friendly.** One of the best ways to provide suitable services is by delegating work to third-party providers. The citizen is not interested in who delivers the service to

them or who built the application they use; they only care that it works, that it keeps their data safe and that it makes their life easier. By using third-party contractors, better services can be delivered to their citizens in a more efficient way and often at a lower cost to the taxpayer.

To conclude with, Mission Karmyogi is a paradigm shift in capacity building frame work envisaged by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from Rule based to Role based. It will undoubtedly help in creation of a civil servants group, which will be energetic and efficient, and will contribute more towards the development of the country.

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