NEWSLETTER

April 2020

Vol No.12 Issue No.04

Code of Ethics for Civil Servants

Coronavirus in India

-By Dr. Seema Pawar, Project Director-VBE, FRNV

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. COVID-19 outbreak is spreading rapidly around the world impacting and destroying the lives of millions of people worldwide. More than 1 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 have now been reported to WHO, including more than 60,000 deaths.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The dominant measure to fight against COVID-19 in India so far has been either about the state enforcing lockdowns or encouraging social distancing, self-quarantine, work from home, hand hygiene and cough etiquette. In the latest, a study by experts at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has estimated that India may be able to reduce its Covid-19 cases by 62 per cent if social distancing and quarantines are strictly observed.

But we know that this is much more than a health crisis. We are all aware of the profound social and economic consequences of the pandemic. The economic fallout of this unprecedented lockdown has been dire. Businesses have closed, unemployment has risen and productivity has fallen. The restrictions many countries including India have put in place to protect health are taking a heavy toll on the income of individuals and families, and the economies of communities and nations.

Besides economic effect, the country is reporting cases of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, on the frontline of the battle, being shunned and harassed by others for fear of being infected. Even under such circumstances, our heroes against COVID-19 are working tirelessly to save lives.

While most of the citizens are observing social distancing during the lockdown, there are instances of people disregarding all norms, and even attacking the police who were trying to enforce the ongoing lockdown. Stray cases of persons not observing mandatory quarantine or misbehaving with doctors and nurses. A few shopkeepers have been reportedly indulging in profiteering. Some people are hoarding essential commodities. This is the time to be tested for maintaining values dear to all of us. Above all, we have to be united in the war against this virus and follow the guidelines strictly, not only in our own interest, but also the interests of the Nation.

We, in the FRNV, wish to salute all the Front Line Warriors such as Doctors, Nurses and other Support Service Providers such as scientists, lab technicians, ambulance personnel, police and paramilitary forces who are making commendable sacrifices to save lives and overcome this deadly virus. Mean while **STAY HOME, STAY SAFE.**

Reference:
•https://www.financialexpress.com/photos/business-gallery/1916254/coronavirus-helmets-bangalore-traffic-police-wear-themed-headgear-to-spread-lockdown-message/
•https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/coronavirus-cases-in-india-live-news-latest-updates-april6/liveblog/75000925.cms
•https://qz.com/india/1828141/indias-coronavirus-response-must-address-caste-and-class-divide/
•https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/coronavirus-in-india-social-distancing-quarantines-reduce-covid19-cases-icmr-study-1659140-2020-03-24

Values for the All India Services
-By Br. Prasanna Swaroopa, Life Member, FRNV

The Context for examining Values Decline

There is a general feeling across our Country that there has been a decline of values in all walks of life. This of course is a very broad statement, and can mean almost anything. That doesn't mean that we don't need to do something about it.

Since the scope is very large, let us see if we can compartmentalize the problem, and find some way of addressing each segment separately.

In order to do that, first of all, let us understand what would decline of values mean from the point of view of the citizen? What would be the context in which, we, as citizens of this Nation, talk of decline of values.

The following are the broad areas based on which we as citizens make that point: *(NOTE: This, of course, would be just one possible way of viewing the problem space.)*

•**Services received:** As citizens, we receive the services of government agencies. These services include education, electricity, water, housing, passport, driving license, ration, healthcare and so on.

•**The ease of life in general:** This refers to the day-to-day life – food, clothing, shelter, transport, safety and security, goods needed for life in general, healthcare and so on.

•**Interactions with others:** Our interactions with other citizens and the quality of those interactions.

•**Our responsibility towards nation:** These include fundamental duties of citizens, paying taxes, paying for the services received, not causing disruption to the services, respecting law of the land, etc.

For the purpose of this discussion, let us focus on only the first from the above list – 'Services Received'. Lot of the problems we face while receiving the services, are the cause of the feelings of despair and the feeling that values are on the decline and the conclusion that 'nothing works here'.

The services we receive can be from the following five broad categories:

1.   *Legal system*
2.   *Utility service providers*
3.   *Public enterprises*
4.   *Law enforcement machinery*
5.   *Private enterprises*

For the purpose of this article, let us narrow our scope a little further. Let us examine just the first three in the above list. Who is responsible for these? Yes, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).

Values in this Context
Coca Cola as a business has a business plan to focus on their growth; but they also have the following Shared Values that guide their actions:

•*Leadership*
•*Collaboration*
•*Integrity*
•*Accountability*
•*Passion*
•*Diversity*
•*Quality*

IKEA, the multinational group that designs and sells ready-to-assemble furniture, kitchen appliances and home accessories, etc. has the following Values:

•*Humbleness and willpower*
•*Leadership by example*
•*Daring to be different*
•*Togetherness and enthusiasm*
•*Cost-consciousness*
•*Constant desire for renewal*
•*Accept and delegate responsibility*

Why do these organizations have these values? Values are not just about preventing corruption, and values are not just about ensuring accounting and finance practices are legally done. Values go beyond these. Why would Coca Cola identity passion and accountability as values; and why would IKEA identify humbleness and togetherness as values? Refer the book on 'Good Values, Great Values' for understanding the importance of values for any organization – business or otherwise.

Having identified these values, organizations need to focus their attention on living by these values. It is not the business targets that puts these organizations on top or performance charts, but the values they demonstrate.

Values in the Indian Administrative Service

Let us return to the role of the IAS in our country. Let us not forget that they are one of the three pillars of our democracy. We have the necessary systems – defined by the relevant acts – that define how the various agencies need to function to provide the utility services to the citizens. On an ongoing basis, these systems have been improved upon with amendments. Then where are we going wrong?

The Indian Bureaucracy needs to focus their attention on 'values'.

Where do we begin? The good thing is that already some thought has gone into it. The All India Services (conduct) Rules, 1968 enumerates the code of conduct for the Services.

Here is a small portion of this set of Rules:
General— 3(1) Every member of the Service shall at all times maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of the Service.
(1A) Every member of the Service shall maintain:-
(i) high ethical standards, integrity and honesty;
(ii) political neutrality;
(iii) promoting of the principles of merit, fairness and impartiality in the discharge of duties;
(iv) accountability and transparency;
(v) responsiveness to the public, particularly to the weaker section;
(vi) courtesy and good behavior with the public.
3(2) Every member of the Service shall take all possible steps to ensure integrity of, and devotion to duty by, all Government servants for the time being under his control and authority.
(2A) Every member of the service shall in the discharge of his duties act in a courteous manner and shall not adopt dilatory tactics in his dealings with the public or otherwise.

If all these codes of conduct have been identified, then we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

• Where are we going wrong?
• Are the officers of the various Services living by these codes?
• If they are living by these codes, where then is the gap in implementation?
• What are codes or values are required bridge the gap?

Recommendations

We need to carry out a study to understand why are the citizens not getting the desired level of satisfaction in the various services they receive from the different government agencies. A beginning can be made in this regard by establishing a mechanism for gathering feedback from the citizens regarding the various services.

More importantly, we need a systemic solution to address the larger challenge of instilling and sustaining values in the Indian Services. Like in the case of any other kind of organization, the following schematic diagram gives us a picture of the areas of intervention for values inculcation and monitoring:
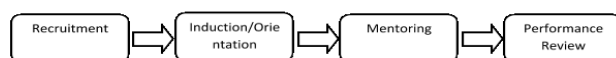
While induction training, mentoring and ongoing performance reviews are usually in place, the importance of bringing in the right candidates cannot be overemphasized. Let us discuss the subject of 'recruitment' of the 'right' candidate here:

Recruitment

This is perhaps the most critical stage to ensure that the right candidate enters the system. In this digitally connected world of today, students have already formed strong opinions regarding the workplace, even before setting foot into it.

Imagine a candidate joining the Services with the confirmed view that corruption is the only way to make progress in one's carrier. Will this individual be able to effectively contribute to progress in the Nation?

Keeping this in mind, it is also important to *keep the age of the candidates as low as possible*, because after a certain age candidates will come with their strong biases, and becomes difficult to mould them with values specific to the Services.

Therefore, it is very important that the best attempt be made to ensure only the 'right' candidates enter the system. The candidates need to be examined for the presence of the following values (an indicative list):

• *Humility*
• *Integrity*

•*Empathy*
•*Transparency*
•*Industry*

Here are some possible ways of assessing the values orientation of candidates (these are of course in addition to examination of skills of the candidates):

•*Psychometric tests*
•*Including experienced former officers from the Services in the Interview Panel*
•*Have elaborate discussions around moral dilemmas, faced in the Services*
•*Group interactions that bring out subtler aspects of the personality of the candidates relating to their values-orientation*

There are many Senior Executives (both in the Government and private sector) who believe that more weightage needs to be given to the values-orientation of the candidates. Many believe that some executives, with a higher sense of values, even though not highly skilled, have made enormous contribution to their fields of work.

Keeping this in mind, it is important to examine/evaluate all the candidates for values also (along with skills/knowledge) right from the initial stages. Otherwise candidates with 'good' values-orientation tend to get eliminated just because they are not very skilled/knowledgeable in certain subjects.

No amount of effort (resources included) is in excess in getting the right candidate, and with the right set of values, particularly in a space where they will be engaged till superannuation managing the affairs in the Service of the Nation.

Reference:
•*IKEA:*
www.ikea.com/ms/en_US/the_ikea_story/working_at_ikea/our_values.html
•*Coca Cola: www.coca-cola.co.uk/about-us/mission-vision-and-values*
•*Good Values, Great Business: A book by Br. Prasanna Swaroopa, T. D. Chandrasekhar, published by Sage Publications, 2019.*
•*The All India Services (conduct) Rules, 1968:*
https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Revised_AIS_Rule_Vol_I_Rule_10.pdf

How Modi govt is quietly 'revolutionising' the training of IAS, IPS, IRS officers
- By Sanya Dhingra

Generalist, bureaucratic and status-quoist — these are some of the criticisms levelled at civil servants in India. The Modi government is quietly working to change this perception, through some sweeping and controversial reforms undertaken in the civil services.

A revamped foundation course for trainees, a digital platform for relevant on-the-job training, a proposed university dedicated to the training of civil servants, and deliberations on setting up a separate ministry for training — by introducing fundamental changes in all rungs of civil service officers in the country, the Modi government is seeking to radically transform governance.

While these steps have often been eclipsed by the more controversial reforms attempted by the government — lateral entry of domain experts, forced retirement of "tainted" officers, concerted attempts to break the stranglehold of the IAS, experiments with the time-tested recruitment rules of civil servants, etc — civil servants told ThePrint that the reforms in training, albeit less headline-grabbing, are expected to have long-term implications for the country's estimated 2.5 crore civil servants from Group A, Group B and Group C.

"Over the last few years, there has been a concerted attempt to re-orient training to ensure that it becomes more futuristic, in sync with transformations in policy-making and experience, rather than theory-based," said a senior official in the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
"It is something that the Prime Minister has been personally invested in — to ensure that the country's civil services shed the image of being status-quoists."

Shift from theory to practical implementation

Soon after coming to power, the Modi government introduced an assistant secretary programme for fresh IAS recruits, wherein they would be appointed to different central government ministries for three months before they are sent off to their respective state cadres.

Through the three months, officers are required to work on projects — any new policy in their areas — and present it to their ministries on completion of the programme.

The reform, known to be a brainchild of PM Narendra Modi, was brought in to ensure officers get

a hang of the nuances of policy-making at the national level from the beginning of their careers.

"That reform was the first to signal a shift in how the focus of training is changing," said a senior IAS officer. "The government did not want officers to simply be consuming theoretical knowledge before they are sent to their cadres."

Since then, the government has been working towards changing the course structures and curricula of the various training institutes to ensure there is a shift from theoretical knowledge to practical implementation.

Last week, ThePrint reported that the government is all set to introduce an online test for civil service recruits before they begin their foundation course (FC) — an introductory course for fresh Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Revenue Service (IRS) and other recruits.

"The idea is to ensure that all the theoretical training that the officers would get during their foundation course is given online, and officers can be tested on it before they start the actual FC," said the IAS officer quoted above. "This would ensure that the FC focuses on case studies, field and skill-based training."
However, this shift is not limited to the foundation course alone. The officer said all levels of training — including at mid- and senior-level — will gradually undergo this change.

Online training – digitising the civil services
Crucial to this shift is the government's emphasis on its Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) programme — an online training module for central- and state-level civil servants launched earlier this year.

"It will take time, but what is being attempted is to create an entire digital architecture wherein there is constant training of officers that is relevant to their role," said the DoPT official.

While the government is yet to take a final decision in the matter, it is said to be exploring the idea of linking the training of officers to their postings in various departments.

"A lot of times, training and courses had nothing to do with what officers actually did on the job," said

the IAS officer. "Since there is an increased focus on domain expertise, officers will be encouraged to undertake courses in their areas of work through iGOT."

The government has already tied up with all its training institutes and international universities like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to provide online training to all government employees in governance, administration and public policy through iGOT.

Among other things, iGOT will considerably lower the cost of delivery of training since it will be digitised.

Breaking the silos, upending the hegemony

Increasingly, the Modi government has invoked the idea of "breaking silos" in the functioning of civil servants, and ensuring there is no hierarchy between the 20-plus civil services.

It is an indirect form of restructuring that the government has sought to bring in through the training of officers as well.

Last year, Modi launched Aarambh, a combined foundation course for civil servants, to ensure that members of different services are not trained at different academies.

"The idea behind a common foundation course is that officers do not develop a sense of hierarchy from the beginning of their careers," said another official from the DoPT.

"The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy is often seen as the most premier of training institutes because IAS officers go there... Now, with all civil services going there, this perception is bound to change."

Greater assimilation is one of the goals of iGOT as well.

"While the training so far has been good, it has been limited to a privileged few within the government," said the official.

"At present, no more than 5,000 officers get trained in a year, while the actual number of government officers who should be getting training is 8-9 lakh," the official added. "What this does is make 1 per cent of the bureaucracy highly trained, while the others

become redundant. Mandating online training is bound to make training more easily accessible."

The larger vision

According to officials, the reforms instituted so far are not random. They are driven by a larger vision to "revolutionise" the civil services, said the second DoPT official.

In order to streamline training reforms, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had last year asked the DoPT to explore the idea of splitting itself into two departments.

While the move has not progressed further, it signalled the PM's emphasis on transforming training, DoPT officials said.

In the same vein, the government is now exploring a proposal to establish a National Civil Service University (NCSU) that would oversee the training of all IAS, IPS, IRS and other civil services.

"While the plan has not firmed up yet, the idea is that the university should be able to ensure that there is a common minimum standard of training followed by all national training academies," the first DoPT official said.

The NCSU would be set up under the DoPT with training institutes such as the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, the National Academy of Direct Taxes, the National Police Academy, and the Indian Institute for Public Administration (IIPA) under its jurisdiction.

"Right now, the training institutes in Delhi, Mumbai, etc tend to have better trainers, curriculums... There is no standardisation," the official said. "The university will ensure that the same rigour and high-order faculty resources can be instituted across the board."

The second DoPT official said the university would also be "a breeding ground for professional trainers" who can then impart training across the academies.

"Right now, training postings are seen as a punishment. Once the university comes into being, it will ensure that there are ample number of professionals who can train other officers in public policy, governance, etc," said the second DoPT official.

The university will ensure that there are regular training analysis, curriculum revisions, etc. undertaken by all academies to ensure that India's civil servants remain in sync with rapid transformations in governance models, technology, etc, officials said.

"There are many changes that are being worked on, but the underlying point is that training is not an area that got much attention traditionally. It was casually remarked that the bureaucracy is unchanging and averse to growth and learning," said the second DoPT official. "Under this government, you see a concerted attempt to change that."

Source:
https://theprint.in/india/governance/how-modi-govt-is-quietly-revolutionising-the-training-of-ias-ips-irs-officers/381410/

An Enemy That Never Sleeps

This is an enemy that never sleeps, knows no time, and recognises no boundaries. It is on the march, relentless, and mutating. "The global impact of COVID-19 has been profound, and the public health threat it represents is the most serious seen in a respiratory virus since the 1918 H1N1 influenza pandemic." This is the sombre observation of the Imperial College, London, in its most recent report. In this backdrop, the response of the government – at the Centre and in the states — in a resource-constrained country like ours, has been commendable and deserves appreciation. The national strategy of containment — testing those with a travel history in the past two weeks, those that clinically present symptoms akin to the coronavirus, and those who have come in contact with the former two categories — has meant sharply targeted surveillance. This, followed by quarantining for observation, and isolation of those testing positive, have helped mitigate its scale and spread so far. That less than 200 cases have been reported so far in a country of India's size is praise-worthy. There is a reason for cautious optimism as we head into the critical stage 3 of the outbreak.

In these extraordinary circumstances, it is time perhaps to think beyond this specific battle. The fact that in the first two decades of the 21st century alone, the world has seen four global zoonotic epidemics -- SARS, Avian Flu, Ebola, and now the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus -- raises troubling questions about the unexpected vulnerability of post-modern societies. Societies, in which

consumerism – production and consumption in ever-increasing quantities -- is ubiquitous and social connectedness and community, rare.

What should be troubling is the emerging and re-emerging zoonoses that are rapidly increasing in incidence and geographical spread. The unpredictability of the occurrence of these infections in human populations is because they originate from animals and are often caused by novel viruses detected only after outbreaks occur. In an increasingly inter-connected world, emerging zoonoses in one country can potentially constitute a threat to global health security, as is the case with the corona pandem. Zoonoses matter not just because they spread like wildfire, but because they bring in their wake high mortality and morbidity.

The states constitute the theatre of public health action. Yet, the current strategies for the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases remain fragmented with no coherence between the animal and human health sectors. In the absence of a coherent policy and coordinated action at the state level, there has not been any focussed effort to develop a structured, scientific surveillance and response protocol for the management and control of zoonotic diseases and their public health risks. The scale of the problem and the rising public health risks associated with zoonotic infections point to the urgent need for a paradigm shift to ensure a better real-time public health response. The human, economic and social costs are far too high to not consider a step-change in our social and epidemiological response in the future. Central to such a step-change are three imperatives:

First, the social imperative as communities, to embrace a minimalist lifestyle that supports sustainable production and consumption. We must recognise that we cannot sustain the current levels and patterns of production and consumption. In an irony peculiar to our times, countries including India are pursuing two potentially conflicting goals -- to safeguard the environment and ecology and achieve high economic growth. In the growth versus sustainability dynamic, it is clear that sustainability is taking a hit. The poor water and sanitation and abysmal solid waste management in our unsustainable cities represent critical failures that have far-reaching and long-term consequences on public health and the capacity of the state apparatus to respond to epidemic crises. It is clear as day that the content of economic growth needs to change, relying less on finite resources, and the emphasis shift to human development from mere economic growth.

Second, adopting a strategic approach to predict, detect and control these infections through the application of data science that will enable an integrated and interdisciplinary engagement between the animal and human health sectors. It is perhaps time to adopt the 'one health' approach -- a collaborative, multisectoral and transdisciplinary approach -- integrating the local, state and national levels, with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes. We must recognise the interconnectedness between people, animals, plants and their shared environment if we are to effectively address the challenges of antimicrobial resistance.

Third, and perhaps the most important over the medium to long term, is to develop the capacity in the states for rapid response and managing outbreaks and epidemics at scale. This will require a slew of reforms in every state: Strengthening preparedness, surveillance and response; capacity building and promoting research; enhancing Centre-state and inter- -state cooperation and collaboration; and advancing health education, risk communication, and social mobilization.

Emerging zoonotic infections are unexpected and unpredictable events. What we have not faced, and hopefully will never have to face, is a full-blown community transmitted national outbreak that will be a health calamity. These novel diseases will continue to confront and challenge our resilience and ability to respond effectively. While the national efforts should continue to fill the current gaps in knowledge associated with the origin and transmission of many zoonotic infections, the corona pandemic provides the sense of urgency to establish a sustainable public health programme. The most important lesson that we might learn is that identifying the risk factors for a disease is important; but of greater consequence are the social determinants of disease -- poverty, education, livelihoods and access to basic civic amenities like water and sanitation. The single-minded focus demonstrated in defeating the coronavirus should pervade our action for overall health and wellbeing, especially of the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. That must remain the immutable public health goal that we address with indefatigable resolve.

Source:

ROLE MODEL :
The warrior against Corona Virus.

Kerala is the first state in India to get a corona positive patient. A female medical student from Wuhan, China was the first COVID-19 positive to arrive in Kerala. Today she has recovered fully and is back to normal life. The brain behind the success is K.K. shailaja fondly known as Shailaja teacher.

The health minister of Kerala. 63 year old first time minister, Shailaja set an example to the world in handling the Nipah virus outbreak in 2018. When the news about the corona outbreak started to come, Shailaja and her team sprung into action.

They knew that the Malayali students studying in Wuhan would return. Every department was kept ready as they tracked the first student returning from China. She was immediately screen at the airport and sent to an isolation ward and now cured. Shailja who worked as a school teacher in Kannur had no experience in the medical field. She says 'she believed in a systematic and scientific approach and got advice from around the world to handle the crisis.'

A 40 member team is always at her office looking on and tracking the latest updates on the virus spread. When everyone was afraid of meeting an infected person as a minister, she set an example by visiting them at the isolation ward.

She says her visit will boost the confidence of the patients. Shailaja teacher is one of the two women ministers in Pinarayi Vijayan cabinet. The Government of Telangana has sent a team of doctors to Kerala to study about how to handle the epidemic. After Nipah, Shailaja teacher insured and established an institute for virolology at Kerala.

Hailing from a very humble family at Kannaur, Shailja taught physics and chemistry at government school retired in 2004 and entered active politics. Kerala is the only state in the world that is silently dealing with the corona out break without much fuss.

> **"There is no book in the world that is so thrilling, stirring and inspiring as the Upanishads."**
>
> **— Max Müller (German Scholar)**

Dear Readers,

FRNV invites stories from its readers on deep-rooted values that have helped us in our everyday lives. Some of these stories will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter. So put your thinking caps on, recall the values integral to your life which you cherish and write to us at shilpi@valuefoundation.in.

Chief Editor: Shri Gopal Ganesh