



## **TALK**

# **"ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNANCE & REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES – THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE"**

by



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on

**Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019,**  
**At Civil Service Commission of Maldives,**  
**Male**





## **ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNANCE AND REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES – THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE**

**Dr. Aly Shameem Chairman of the Civil Service Commission,**

**Mr. Shaheed Mohamed, Mrs. Fathimath Amira, Mr. Zakariyya Hussain,  
Mr. Ibrahim Shaheeq, Members of the Civil Services Commission,**

**H.E. Mr. Sunjay Sudhir, Ambassador of India to the Maldives,**

It is indeed an immense privilege for me to speak today at the Civil Service Commission of Maldives. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India had visited Maldives on June 8, 2019 and emphasized India's "Neighborhood First" policy and assured India's full support to the Maldives in realizing its aspirations for broad based socio-economic development, and strengthening of democratic and independent institutions. The Hon'ble President of Maldives reaffirmed Maldives's "India First" Policy, and pledged full support towards deepening the multifaceted, mutually beneficial partnership between India and the Maldives, which has traditionally been characterized by trust, transparency, mutual understanding and sensitivity.

The two sides signed 6 MOU's during the visit, one of which being the MOU between the National Centre for Good Governance, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Maldives Civil Service Commission on the Training and Capacity Building Program for Maldivian Civil Servants. The agreement envisages capacity building activities for 1000 civil servants of Maldives at the National Centre for Good Governance over the next 5 years.

The agreement envisages that NCGG will be the nodal institution for designing customised training modules and its implementation taking into account the requirements of the Civil Service Commission, Maldives. The subject matters of the training program will include public administration, e-governance and service delivery, public policy and governance, information

technology, best practices in fisheries in coastal areas, agro-based practices, self help group initiatives, urban development and planning, ethics in administration and challenges in implementation of SDGs.

My visit to Maldives, in pursuance of this laudable initiative is to design the implementation modalities for effective follow-up action. I am grateful to the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission for giving me an opportunity to speak on a subject close to my heart, “Ethics and Accountability in Governance and Redressal of Public Grievances – the Indian Experience.”

### **The All India Services**

As an Institution, the Civil Services particularly the All India Services have always commanded considerable respect from the people of India. Such respect emanates from a perception that decision-making would be neutral and unbiased and would enable the Nation to achieve the objectives outlined in the Preamble of the Constitution.

In a broader sense, the challenges that civil servants face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are no different from those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - **Commitment to the larger public good against all odds**. Further the New Age competency remains anchored in integrity, building credibility and trust in the institution of civil service. Even in a New Age India, these values are foundational and non-negotiable. You can hire skills, but leadership and faith in fairness and impartiality cannot be outsourced.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed a significant expansion of the Civil Services processes and responsibilities. Recruitment has become competitive, training norms more stringent, performance appraisal timely and constant evaluations have been introduced on the capacity of the civil servant to meet current challenges. There is greater emphasis on performance management practices. Effective management of public resources has necessitated open, transparent and accountable systems of delivery. The regulatory oversight by the Central Vigilance Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the

Central Bureau of Investigation has increased. The appointment of India's first Lok Pal is a demonstration to the world that India is not second to any Nation, in making its public administration clean and fair. Clearly accountability levels in Government today are far higher than they were ever in the past.

### **The Indian Civil Service**

The Covenanted Civil Service provided the European elite of the Indian administration. Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Directors of the East India Company nominated youth to writer-ships. A nominee had to pass a simple examination before being admitted to the Company's training college at Haileybury before going to India. This was changed in 1853. The Charter Act 1853 enacted that appointments in the Covenanted Civil Service should be filled on the basis of an open competitive examination, and the first competitive examination was held in 1855.

The introduction of a competitive examination offered a trust worthy method of selecting at higher level of both ability and character. The structure of the examination was intended to give the greatest weight to those subjects that formed the staple of an English gentleman's education. The Macaulay Committee recommended that the company's civil servants should go out to India by 25, and should be men who have first taken a degree at Oxford or Cambridge. The whole emphasis was on general education, on the enlarging and strengthening of understanding, which must precede special education or training in skill necessary for the dispatch of professional business. Between 1855-1863, as many as, 174 of the 414 successful candidates had come from Oxford and Cambridge. But in the next 9 years, of the 383 successful candidates, only 70 came from the 2 Universities. In 1876, the upper age limit for recruitment was reduced to 19 and the lower age limit was reduced to 17. The Secretary of State justified the change and said that it had the approval of the Universities.

The Covenanted Civil Servants were those who had entered into a covenant to serve the Company faithfully and honestly, started their careers as young

men at the bottom of the service and rose gradually to higher positions. The other category of public servants, were those who signed no such covenants were the uncovenanted service.

One of the big challenges of that period was the reconstitution of the Covenanted Service into the Executive and Judicial branches to improve the administration of justice by improving the quality of judges and judicial administration. In 1876, the Government of Bengal called upon the Covenanted Civil Servants to indicate their choice either for the Executive or Judicial branch of the Service. Such an option provided an unbroken course of judicial training for all officers who wanted to work as District Judges, and thus improved the quality of judicial administration of the province. By 1892, 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the appointments of the Indian Civil Service were to be appointed from the Provincial Civil Service. By 1918, the number of vacancies in the Indian Civil Service had risen to 200, and the Secretary of State Montagu had recommended appointment of 50 Indians by nomination. Thus began the Indianization of the Indian Civil Service.

Further the Government of India Act 1935 created the Federal Public Service Commission and the Superior Services were divided into 3 classes (a) All India (b) Central and (c) Provincial. The All India Services were recruited by the Secretary of State to work in any part of India, and though as a rule assigned to a province, their members were subject to being transferred to another province. A certain number of officers were borrowed from the provinces to discharge the functions of the central functions of the Government of India. The Central Services dealt with the Indian States and Foreign Affairs, with the administration of the State Railways, with Posts and Telegraphs, Customs, Audit and Accounts and with Scientific and Technical Departments. Post independence, while most of the All India Services were abolished, the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police Service were allowed to continue post Indian independence, for the considerations of National Unity and the positive needs of India's all round development, and the attainment of a minimum standard of administration.

In 1947, after the transfer of power, there was a sudden depletion in the Indian Civil Service owing to the departure of British and Muslim officers. The Indian Civil Service was replaced by the Indian Administrative Service in the same year. In July 1948, a Special Recruitment Board was set-up, for emergency recruitment of over-age personnel. Following the enactment of the Constitution of India in 1950, the Federal Public Service Commission became known as the Union Public Service Commission.

The Union Public Service Commission conducts the Civil Services Examination in 3 successive stages – the preliminary examination, the main examination and the personality test. The preliminary examination consists of 2 objective type papers and is meant only for initial screening of candidates. One of the papers is general knowledge and the other tests them in any one of the large number of optional subjects. Only those candidates who qualify in the preliminary examination are eligible for admission in the main examination which consists of a written examination of conventional type papers and a Personality Test. The conventional type papers test the candidates in compulsory subjects in the form of one essay paper, one paper each testing proficiency in English language and any of the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the of the Constitution and two papers on 'General Studies' and an optional subject having two papers. The test for proficiency in English and any other Indian language is only of a qualifying nature. About 850 officers are selected for 24 services from about 750,000 applicants of whom, 100 officers are selected to the Indian Administrative Service. The IAS officers thus selected are allotted to respective State cadres as per the Cadre Allocation Policy, subject to the reservation roster and the underlying principle of maintaining a ratio of 1:2 between insiders and outsiders.

The IAS officers are trained under the National Training Policy, with induction training comprising of a Foundation Course which is common for all Services and a Professional Course for each service. The current policy envisages a common Foundation Course at a single Institute – the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. Mid-Career Training Programs are conducted at five stages of a professional career with a 2 fold objective : firstly

to update the knowledge of the participant in the context of rapidly changing policy environment, and secondly to develop competencies for changes in the job profile as would happen when a promotion takes place. Mid-Career programs also serve as a medium for enhancing formal qualifications, thereby creating greater confidence in an officer.

The Indian Administrative Service has been often referred to as the Steel Frame of the Governance. The Service has a neutral and anonymous character.

### **Indian Governance - The High Moral Tone**

***“I am ethical, I am accountable, I am the IAS”*** is the motto.

Those who won freedom for India and created its constitutional system were men of rare talents and dedication. India's constitutional values are deeply rooted in high moral tones with a universal dimension.

In the Constituent Assembly, Acharya Kriplani said

“I want this house to remember that what we have enunciated are not merely legal, constitutional and formal principles, but moral principles and moral principles have got to be lived in life. They have to be lived, whether it is in commercial life, political life or the life of an administrator. They have to be lived throughout. These things we have to remember if our Constitution is to succeed.

These moral principles in the Indian Constitution have been reflected in the code of ethics for civil servants which include financial probity, integrity in work, intellectual honesty in tendering advice and morality in personal life. The code of conduct envisages All India Service officers to be model citizens well above the social norms of the times. Over the years, the Nation's personnel policies have established functional and comprehensive systems for assessing reputations for honesty and probity in public life.



My father told me – “***Never fudge a TA bill, Never fudge a log book.***” This is the first step towards a life of honesty in Government.

## **India's National Policy Framework**

India's contemporary National Policy Framework has aimed at enhanced transparency and accountability in governance with focus on Fiscal Federalism, Transforming Rural India and Improving Quality of Public Service Delivery.

### *Fiscal Federalism: Finance Commissions, GST and NITI Aayog*

The recommendations of the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission in 2015 represented transformational reform in India's fiscal federalism. The share of tax devolution to States increased to 42 percent of the divisible pool as against 32 percent recommended by the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission. There was a compositional shift in fiscal transfers to States and considerable fiscal autonomy. The Goods and Services Tax came into force on July 1, 2017. It envisages creation of a unified common national market, prevents cascading of taxes, harmonizes laws & procedures and rates of tax, reduce the interface between the tax payer and the tax administration and benefits a large segment of consumers with low taxes. The GST Council provides a constitutional framework for voicing State's concerns in tax enforcement at a national forum. The NITI Aayog has done enormous amount of work in the last 4 years. The “Transforming India's Developmental Agenda” has placed emphasis on accelerated growth & inclusion strategies, employment generation, energy conservation and efficiency, good governance and Swachh Bharat.

### *Transformation of Rural India: The Jan Dhan Yojana, the Aadhar Act and the BHIM application*

The PradhanMantri Jan Dhan Yojana – the National Mission for Financial Inclusion ensured universal access to financial services in an affordable

manner and resulted in a significant increase in credit flows to rural sector. The Aadhar Act 2016 was promulgated as a money bill to ensure targeted delivery of financial and other subsidies benefits and services. The Aadhar Act enabled the State to ask for information pertaining to a person's identity for disbursement of services/ subsidies. The third major step in this direction is the introduction of BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money), which is a mobile application facilitating e-payments directly through banks and promotes the drive to cashless transactions. Collectively the Jan Dhan Yojana, the Aadhar Act and the BHIM application have provided for a transparent government where subsidy flows reach the beneficiary in a timely and effective manner.

### *Improving the Quality of Public Service Delivery*

The first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century governance were focused on improving delivery of public services. Most Indian States formulated Legal Frameworks for Public Service Delivery. The State Acts envisaged providing public services within a time limit. The Acts also contained penalty provisions recoverable from the salary of the designated officer if the public services were not delivered within the stipulated time period.

In 2011, State specific Public Service Delivery Acts, were enacted by Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi and Bihar.

A major step in bringing transparency to Public Services Delivery was the Right to Information Act 2005. The RTI Act has emerged as a vehicle for greater transparency about the manner of functioning of public agencies. Aadhar has the potential of transforming targeted service delivery, improving operational efficiency and reducing leakages. Aadhar has already been introduced as a key enabler for many types of service delivery including passport services, direct benefit transfers etc.

## **The Constitutional Provisions – “*The Services*”**

Articles 309 to 311 of the Constitution deal with Services. These are

- 1. Article 309 Recruitment and Conditions of Service of Persons serving the Union and the State**
- 2. Article 310 Tenure of Office of Persons serving the Union or a State**
- 3. Article 311 Dismissal, Removal or Reduction in Rank of Persons employed in Civil Capacities under the Union or a State**

Article 309 empowers the authorities to make rules relating to the conditions of service of public servants. It can hardly be contended that Government Servants while entering into a contract of employment under the State, have waived their fundamental rights. That said, the nature and incidents of official duties may necessarily involve restrictions of certain freedoms in relation to a Government servant as distinguished from private citizens.

Restrictions upon the rights of the public servants can, therefore, be imposed only on the grounds specified and to the extent that such restrictions are reasonable. While the public servants possess the fundamental rights as citizens, the State also possesses under the proviso to Article 309, the power to regulate their ‘conditions of service’. The interests of service under the State require efficiency, honesty, impartiality and discipline and like qualities on the part of the public servant. The State has thus the constitutional power to ensure that every public servant possesses these qualities and to prevent any person who lacks these qualities from being in the public service.

It seems therefore that State regulation of the conditions of the service of public servants is valid only to the extent that such restriction is reasonably necessary in the interests of efficiency, integrity, impartiality, discipline, responsibility. Restrictions are placed on the upon the freedom of Government servants in the interests of discipline which prohibit employees from right to

strike, joining associations, engaging in trade or business or any activities which come within the meaning of 'public order' or morality.

### **The All India Services (Conduct) Rules 1968**

The All India Services (Conduct) Rules 1968, lay down that every member of the Service shall at all times maintain absolute devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of a member of the Service. Further Members of the Service are shall maintain high ethical standards and honesty, political neutrality, promote merit, fairness and impartiality, accountability and transparency, responsiveness to public and courtesy and good behaviour with public.

Members of the Service shall commit to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and other democratic values, defend and uphold the sovereignty of India, maintain integrity in public service, take decisions in public interest and declare any private interests relating to his public duties, not misuse positions as civil servants, make decisions on merit alone, refrain from doing anything contrary to any law/ rules, perform and discharge duties with highest degree of professionalism, not misuse his position as civil servant and not take decisions to derive financial or material benefits for himself or family or friends.

No member of the Service shall use his position or influence directly or indirectly to secure employment for any member of his family with any private undertaking or Non-Government Organization.

No member of the Service shall be a member of, or be otherwise associated with, any political party or any organization which takes part in politics, nor shall take part in, subscribe in aid of, or assist in any other manner, any political movement or political activity.

For interactions with media, connection with press or radio, previous sanction of the Government shall not be required when a member of the Service in bonafide discharge of his duties or otherwise, publishes a book or contributes

to or participates in a public media. In all such cases, the views expressed are his own and not those of the Government. Criticism of Government is not permitted. The Rule says that no member of the Service shall, in any radio broadcast or communication over any public media or in any document published or in any communication to the press or public utterance make any statement of fact or opinion that has the effect of an adverse criticism of Central Government/ State Government. There exist restrictions on unauthorised Communication of Information, says that no member of the Service shall communicate directly or indirectly any official document or part thereof to any person to whom he is not authorised to communicate with such document or information.

There are restrictions on accepting gifts. No member of the Service shall accept any gift without the sanction of Government if the value of the gift exceeds Rs.5000/-.

Further no member of the Service shall give or take or abet the giving or taking of dowry.

No member except with previous sanction of Government, receive any complimentary or valedictory address, or attend any meeting or entertainment held in his honour. However, the Rule does not apply to farewell entertainment of a substantially informal and private character held in honour of a member of the Service.

A member of the Service may without the previous sanction of Government undertake honorary work of a social or charitable nature, undertake occasional work of a literary, artistic or scientific character and participate in sports activities as an amateur.

Every member of the Service shall submit an annual return in such form as may be prescribed by the Government giving full particulars regarding the immoveable property inherited or owned or acquired either in his own name or in the name of any member of his family or in the name of any other person.



Acquiring immovable property shall mandatorily require prior knowledge of Government.

The All India Services (Conduct) Rules 1968 also contain provisions related to instructions issued by Government with regard to contact of members of All India Services with Foreign Nationals/ Missions, Association with Indo-Foreign Cultural Organizations, Procedure to be followed in accepting offers of Scholarships/ Fellowships and other kinds of grants from Foreign National Institutions and Participation in Conferences/ Seminars. Clearance of Ministry of Home Affairs under FCRA Act 1976 is required to visit abroad to participate in international seminars.

### **India's Fight Against Corruption: Zero Tolerance Approach**

India's "*zero tolerance to corruption*" approach, as well as "*minimum government and maximum governance*" approach resulted in simplification of the governance model in recent years. Some of the steps included abolition of the system of attestation/ authentication by Government servants for submission of certificates, abolition of personal interviews for recruitments to lower level posts and weeding out inefficient public servants and those of doubtful integrity above the age of 50 years, prematurely. A special investigation team was constituted to fight black money. Government conducted online auctions of coal blocks. Government sought international cooperation in G-20 meetings on ending tax havens in Europe and other countries. In bilateral meetings with Swiss authorities India has said combating the menace of black money and tax evasion was a "shared priority" for both the countries.

Corruption impacts service delivery, when speed money is asked for registration of documents, sanctioning bank loans, amendments in land records, driving licenses, and other routine services. Every form of corruption has an economic impact, and fighting corruption is an imperative need.

My approach to fighting corruption in my 3 decades in Government has been enhanced supervision, increasing transparency, greater stakeholder engagement and severe penalties with time bound completion of disciplinary proceedings. I always felt that prevention of corruption should be based on credible deterrence and strong audit and accounting mechanisms. Further robust oversight and monitoring always send a strong message to potential wrongdoers.

In this backdrop, in my tenure as Mission Director National Rural Health Mission, I introduced significant changes in bringing transparency to accounting procedures in NRHM by putting in place technology options for transfer of moneys to beneficiaries-accounts under the Janani Suraksha Yojana. Streamlining of procurement procedures is always useful. At AIIMS, I drafted the Procurement Manual to enable health sector procurements. As Chairman Board of Revenue, I pushed for timely judgment writing, transparency in land records computerization, and enhanced supervision of District Collector Offices. I also focused on expediting timely completion of disciplinary proceedings so that the guilty are punished within a reasonable time frame.

### **India's Institutional and Legislative Framework to Fight Corruption**

India's fight against corruption is led by a robust and time tested institutional and legislative framework including the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, an independent Central Vigilance Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General, the Judges (Inquiry) Act 1968, the Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta Act 2013, the Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2011, the Prevention of Money /Laundering Act 2002, the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act 1988, which cover a number of areas of criminalization and bribery. All civil servants are mandatorily required to declare their assets on an annual basis. The Elected Representatives are required to declare their assets every election cycle.

## **The Focus on Preventive Vigilance**

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) traces its origin to the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, headed by Shri K.Santhanam, Member of Parliament. The Santhanam committee identified 4 major causes of corruption namely, administrative delays, government taking upon themselves more than what they could manage by way of regulatory functions, scope for personal discretion in the exercise of powers by different public servants and cumbersome procedures.

Based on the recommendations of the Santhanam committee, the Central Vigilance Commission was established in 1964 by a Government of India resolution as an apex body for prevention of corruption in Central Government Institutions. In 1997, following the directions given by the Supreme Court of India in the Jain Hawala Case, statutory status was conferred on the Vigilance Commission. The Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003, provides for constitution of a Central Vigilance Commission to inquire or to cause inquiries to be conducted into offences alleged to have been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 by public servants and corporations.

## **Vigilance Awareness Week 2018**

India celebrated the 2018 Vigilance Awareness Week from October 29 to November 3, 2018 on the theme '**Eradicate Corruption – Build a New India**' under the aegis of the Central Vigilance Commission. National Awareness was sought to be created that eradicating corruption was the foremost condition for creating a New India. The Vigilance Awareness Week further highlighted that corruption increases business costs, negatively affects financial investments and impacts the poor the most as they pay a high percentage of their income as bribes. Vigilance Awareness was spread through several outreach activities undertaken by Banks, Public Sector Undertakings and Other Organizations through screening of short films, conducting essay and debate competitions among students and online

reporting of corruption complaints. The Central Vigilance Commission has instituted several awards to recognize organizations for making a contribution to corruption free governance.

The CVC has endeavored to ensure transparency, objectivity and accountability into the public administration. Several preventive vigilance measures have been introduced by the CVC. The Commission has sought to promote ethics through education of students and youth, observance of vigilance awareness weeks, process simplification to reduce discretion and interface with public servants, focus on training and skill development and awarding exemplary punishment in all cases of proven misconduct to create deterrence. The CVC has sought to create a people's movement against corruption through an e-pledge to be voluntarily taken by the citizens and organizations. An integrity index for organizations has been developed for enabling transparency, efficiency and citizen centric governance. Measures like Government E-Market (GEM) have helped improve the accountability and integrity in public procurement by encouraging e-tendering and e-procurement.

### **Strengthening Audit and Accounting processes**

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India is an important institution in India's Fight Against Corruption. Since 2014, the C& AG adapted to the Government's reforms in financial governance in the organization's accounting and auditing practices. Some of the big changes introduced in financial governance are amalgamation of the Railways and General budgets, the merger of plan and non-plan expenditures, opening up of a number of sectors for foreign direct investment and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax. The urban local bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions that constitute the third tier of Government receive close to Rs. 14 lakh crores annually, but suffer from poor governance systems, weak financial management and poor accountability.

Looking at the enormity of the flow of funds to urban and rural local bodies, their numbers and the geographic spread, the C& AG has identified their audit as a critical area that must be clearly understood from the perspective of materiality and risk and addressed accordingly. The C& AG has recognized the changing paradigms in revenue administration, including the challenges posed by shadow economy and black money, transfer pricing, accommodation bills etc. and the need to manage large volumes of digital information that will emerge from increasing automation of tax filing, assessment and recovery procedures.

### **Transparency in Governance**

The Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 is a rights based law that has deepened India's democracy and created a durable stake for citizens in the administration of the Nation. The Prime Minister has said that the implementation of the RTI Act should not be limited to a citizen's right to know but also cover the right to question. The process of accessing information should be transparent, timely and trouble free. After a decade of implementation, the power and usefulness of the RTI is being felt across the Nation. The RTI Act has led to improvements in governance. By sharing information, the citizens have become part of the decision making process, which leads to creation of trust between citizens and Government.

In his lecture on "The Right to Information Act for Transparency and Accountability" the Chief Information Commissioner of India said that areas where transparency helps in improving governance include tender committee deliberations and decisions regarding major contracts, defence procurement processes, from framing specifications to procurement decisions, ownership and possession of land and settlement dues of retiring employees. The Chief Information Commissioner also suggested digitalization of cutting edge service delivery processes, digitization of records, RTI appeals and public grievances, data mining, and suo moto disclosure by government agencies.



### **The Lok Pal and Lok Ayuka Act, 2013**

The Lokpal and Lok Ayukta Act 2013 amended some provisions of the CVC Act, 2003 wherein the Central Vigilance Commission was empowered to conduct preliminary enquiry into the complaints referred by Lokpal in respect of officers and officials of Group B, C and D, besides Group A officers for which a Directorate of Inquiry will be set up in the Commission. The preliminary inquiry reports in such matters referred by the Lokpal in respect of Group A and B officers are required to be sent to the Lokpal by the Commission. The Commission has also been mandated to cause further investigation into such Lokpal references in respect of Group C and D officials and decide on further course of action against them.

### **Amending the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**

The Prevention of Corruption Act is an Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the prevention of corruption. The law provides for punishments for taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of official acts. The investigative powers have been given to the CBI and State Police Authorities. The Government has said that accountability standards for public servants have to be kept at realistic levels so that officers do not hesitate in taking honest decisions. Government has proposed an Amendment Bill to the Prevention of Corruption Act to replace the definition of criminal misconduct that requires the intention to acquire assets disproportionate to one's income also needs to be proved in addition to the possession of such assets, thereby raising the threshold to establish the offence of having disproportionate assets. The Bill was taken up for discussion and passed by the Rajya Sabha on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and by the Lok Sabha on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The Act has received the President's assent on July 26, 2018.

## **Strengthening Safe Guards for Whistle Blowers**

In order to give statutory protection to whistle blowers in the country, the Public Interest Disclosures and Protection to Persons making the Disclosures Bill, 2011 was introduced in the Lok Sabha in August, 2010. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha, in December, 2011, as the Whistle Blowers Protection Bill, 2011 and was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014. The Bill has received the assent of the President on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014. Further amendments were made to the Act in 2015. This was done with a view to incorporate necessary provisions aimed at strengthening safeguards against disclosures which may prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of the country, security of the State, etc. The amendments addressed concerns relating to national security and strengthened the safeguards against disclosures which may prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

## **Crackdown on Benami Transactions**

Though the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 has been on the statute book for 28 years, the same could not be made operational because of certain inherent defects. With a view to providing effective regime for prohibition of benami transactions, the said Act was amended through the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amended Act, 2016. The amended law empowers the Income Tax authorities to provisionally attach benami properties which can eventually be confiscated. Besides, if a person is found guilty of offence of benami transaction by the competent court, he shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term not less than one year but which may extend to 7 years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to 25% of the fair market value of the property. The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016 came into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2016. Several benami transactions have been identified since the coming into effect of the amended law.

## **Redress of Public Grievances**

In India, public grievances can be categorized into three broad groups (i) grievances arising out of abuse of office and corruption on the part of public functionaries, (ii) grievances arising out of systemic deficiencies within an organization and (iii) grievances arising from non-fulfillment of needs/ demands. For the first category of grievances, strong statutory interventions have been envisaged. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> category of grievances, which largely emanate from systemic deficiencies or which are in the nature of demands/ requests, are best handled through a strong internal grievance redressal mechanism.

India has established several constitutional and statutory institutions which look into complaints filed by citizens. The Lok Ayukta and the Central Vigilance Commission have already been discussed. The other statutory institutions being the National Human Rights Commission, the National Commission for Women, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a Banking Ombudsman Scheme in 1995 and an Insurance Ombudsman was created in 1998.

In the Government of India, there are two designated nodal agencies handling public grievances (i) Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and (ii) Directorate of Public Grievances, Cabinet Secretariat. The grievances received by the Department of AR&PG are forwarded to the Ministries/ Departments/ State Governments who deal with the substantive functions linked with the grievance for redress, under intimation to the complainant. The Directorate takes up about 1000 grievances every year depending upon the seriousness of the grievance and follows up till its final disposal.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances launched the Centralized Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) in 2007 for receiving, redressing and monitoring of grievances from the public. The CPGRAMS provides the facility to lodge a grievance 'online' from any geographical location. It enables the citizen to track online the grievance being followed up with departments concerned and also enabled DARPG to monitor the grievance. The citizen can access the system through the portal [www.pgportal.nic.in](http://www.pgportal.nic.in)

The DARPG has issued several guidelines for redress of public grievances by Departments to ensure the system is accessible, simple, quick, fair and responsive. These include observing every Wednesday as a meeting-less day in the Central Secretariat offices, designating a senior officer as Director of Grievances/ Grievance Officer in every office, deal with a grievance in affair, objective and just manner fixing the time limit for disposal of work relating to public grievances and staff grievances.

Currently the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances is handling 16,00,000 grievances/ year of which 95 percent are being disposed off satisfactorily.

## **Future Policy Challenges**

### *Indian Democracy needs Strong Institutions*

The contribution of the All India Services to National integration has been well documented. The institutional legacy and sustenance is largely based on the vigor and enthusiasm that individual civil servants have shown while serving in these institutions. It is critical for the sustenance of Indian Democracy that we continue to strengthen institutions with significant historical legacy to benefit the lives of millions of citizens. Institutions are built by sound value systems and employee empowerment is achieved by synergizing the

organizational objectives with individual aspirations creating a win-win situation for all stakeholders.

### *Quality Decision Making – the need for robust data*

21<sup>st</sup> century decision-making has become far more complex and has to be based on robust data sets. Quite clearly the statement that “In God we trust, everybody brings data to the table” is appropriate. The websites of Departments provide for large volumes of historical data, speeches, annual reports and technical papers. At the National level, the Ministry of External Affairs, NITI Aayog and the Reserve Bank of India provide huge volumes of data, speeches and important decisions on their websites. In Departments where datasets need strengthening, the provisions of the Collection of Statistics Act 2008, is utilized to appoint statistics officers for collection and collation of statistics.

### *Greater regulatory oversight*

In 21<sup>st</sup> century's liberalized era, regulatory oversight of key industry has become a critical area of governance. India is a young Nation and regulatory administration in is a rapidly expanding subject. The most visible regulatory authority of India is the Reserve Bank of India established in 1935. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the Competition Commission of India, the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority are amongst recently established regulatory authorities. A deeper understanding of industry and a roadmap for ensuring a level playing field are necessary for success of a civil servant working in a regulatory authority.

## **Conclusion**

I joined the IAS in 1989 and developed an intense interest in Public Administration. I greatly looked upto several mentors from whom I learnt a lot.



I introduced digitalization practices into 2 major institutions the AIIMS and the Board of Revenue – Digital AIIMS and Digital Rajasva Mandal – which were called the First Digital Revolution in Health Care and the First Digital Revolution in Revenue Court Administration.

The citizen is the centrality of a civil servant's odyssey, and commitment to the larger public good against all odds is the defining goal. I have the opportunity to interact with the Maldives Civil Servants who have visited the NCGG in 2 rounds of meetings and there exist a number of areas of similarities in our governance structures and policy approach.

I am reminded of George Bernard Shaw's vision

“I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I love. I rejoice life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle for me, it is sort of a splendid torch which I have got hold of, for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

That's what a civil servant can be – an inspiration to one and all.

To conclude, I am grateful to the Maldives Civil Services Commission for giving me this opportunity to deliver this address.

Jai Hind.

## **V.Srinivas, IAS**

*Academic Qualifications:* M.Tech Chemical Engineering from College of Technology, Osmania University, Hyderabad

*Age:* 52, joined the IAS at 22 in 1989

### *Postings in Government of India:*

2018 (Dec 6 till date): Additional Secretary to Government of India, DARPG, Ministry of Personnel, PG and Pensions

2010-17: Deputy Director (Administration) AIIMS, New Delhi  
Joint Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Textiles  
Joint Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Culture with additional charge of Director General National Archives of India

2003-2006: Advisor to Executive Director IMF, Washington DC, USA

2001-2003: Private Secretary to Finance Minister of India  
Private Secretary to External Affairs Minister of India

2000-01: Deputy Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Petroleum

### *Postings in Government of Rajasthan:*

2017 – 2018: Chairman Board of Revenue for Rajasthan and Chairman Rajasthan Tax Board

2007-10: Secretary to Government, Planning and Finance (Budget)  
Secretary to Government, Family Welfare & MD NRHM  
Secretary to Government, Science & Technology

1989-2000 Deputy Secretary Finance/ District Collector at Jodhpur/ District Collector Pali/ Director Watershed Development & Soil Conservation department/ Additional Area Development Commissioner IGNP/ Sub Divisional Officer at Nimbaheda and Bhilwada

### *Important Orations/ Talks (44)*

- (1) “21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges for Civil Services” at the Foundation Course of Rajasthan Administrative Service at HCMRIPA, Jaipur dated August 2, 2019
- (2) “Ethics and Accountability in Governance” at the Special Training Program for Permanent Secretaries of Gambia at the National Center for Good Governance dated June 6, 2019
- (3) “India’s Welfare State Programs 2014-2019: Entitlements and Inclusion” at the Special Training Program for Maldives Civil Servants at the National Center for Good Governance dated April 15, 2019
- (4) “Ethics and Accountability” at the Phase I Professional Course of the Indian Administrative Service at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration dated March 21, 2019

- (5) "The Central Secretariat, Indian Civil Service and the Indian Political Service 1834-1947" Foundation Day Lecture of National Archives of India dated April 11, 2019
- (6) "Rise of China in the world economy" at the India International Center dated January 17, 2019
- (7) "India and IMF" at the International Monetary Fund Washington DC dated October 23, 2018
- (8) "The Torch of Justice Burns Bright" at the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association, Ajmer dated August 13, 2018
- (9) "The Rise of China in the International Monetary System and Implications for Other Countries" at the Chennai Centre for China Studies, Chennai dated July 27, 2018
- (10) "India and IMF" – Talk at Kobe University, Osaka Japan dated July 15, 2018
- (11) "India and IMF" – Talk at Thammasat University, Bangkok dated July 17, 2018
- (12) "Fiscal Federalism – Finance Commissions, NITI Aayog, GST Council" Talk at IIC, New Delhi
- (13) "The Rise of China in the International Monetary System" – Talk at ICWA, Sapru House, New Delhi
- (14) "A March to New Age India - 21<sup>st</sup> century Challenges Before Civil Services" – Civil Services Day Key Note Address at HCMRIPA, Jaipur
- (15) "G20 – A Decade in Multilateralism" – Talk at NMML, Teen Murti Bhavan, New Delhi
- (16) "India at 70: IMF Relations" – Talk at India International Center, New Delhi
- (17) "World Economic History - Major Financial Crisis, 1930 to 2017" – Talk at National Archives of India, New Delhi
- (18) "India and the IMF" – talk at the National Archives of India, New Delhi
- (19) "Archiving the History of Reserve Bank of India" – International Archives Day oration at RBI, Pune
- (20) "The Economic History of India 1943-2017" – Talk at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Course LBSNAA, Mussoorie
- (21) "Cultural Diplomacy – India's outreach to the World" – 125<sup>th</sup> Librarian's Day oration at National Library Kolkata
- (22) "Leadership and Institution Building" – Independence Day oration at Amity University, Jaipur
- (23) "Improving the Functioning of Revenue Courts of Rajasthan" – talk at LBSNAA Mussoorie
- (24) "Fiscal Federalism in India" – Talk at the Centre for Multilevel Federalism, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi
- (25) "The Role of the Board of Revenue in Revenue Matters" – Talk at the HCMRIPA, Jaipur

*Awards/ Fellowships/ Books: Authored 2 books*

(1) Indian Council of World Affairs Fellowship for book research proposal "India's Relations with International Monetary Fund 1991-2016: 25 Years in Perspective" under publication by ICWA published on July 26, 2019 launched by Governor Reserve Bank of India (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> book "Towards a New Age India: Governance Transformed 2014-2019" to be published by Konark Publishers date of release August 31, 2019 (3) Authoring Sapru House Paper "Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Implications for Asian Countries" (4) AIIMS Leadership Excellence Awards for 2017 and 2015 for outstanding administrative leadership (5) A number of certificates of appreciation/ commendations for outstanding public service in AIIMS, Agriculture, Culture, Textiles and Planning from Health Minister of India, President of India, Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Secretaries of Health, Culture and Textiles respectively (6) National Junior Badminton Champion 1984 and All India Universities Badminton Champion 1988. Led Government of India delegations to over 50 countries (7) International News and Views Corporation's Civil Servant of the Year 2017 (8) Authoring 3<sup>rd</sup> book with Manohar Publishers "The Flying Geese: The Rise of Asia in the World Economy"

*Publications – 121 papers and articles*

(1) India and IMF 1991-2017, (2) India's IMF Programs 1966 and 1981, (3) The Global Financial Crisis 2008 and Policy Responses, (4) Achieving Durable Inflation, (5) From Planning Commission to NITI Aayog – The Transformation of India, (6) The Revolution in Banking Sector Technology, (7) Journey of India's Central Bank, (8) Indian Economy – Critical Milestones during 70 years, (9) Major Financial Crisis – 10 paper series (10) G20 – A Decade in Multilateralism – 10 paper series (11) The Rise of China in the International Monetary System (12) Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, (13) AIIMS – A Brief History (14) Health Care For All – The NHP 2017 (14) The First Digital Revolution in Health Care (15) Digitalization of AIIMS – Transformation of a National Health Institution (16) Improving Functioning of Revenue Courts of Rajasthan (17) Fiscal Federalism in India

*Book Reviews (5)*

(1) From Great Depression to Great Recession by Atish R. Ghosh and Mahvash S. Qureshi (2) Who Moved by Interest Rate by Duvvuri Subbarao (3) Dialogue of the Deaf by TCA Srinivasa Raghavan (4) An Economist in a Real World by Kaushik Basu (5) Advancing the Frontiers of Monetary Policy by IMF Monetary Policy Department

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