

*Paths
to
Good Governance*

Thoughts and Words

Dr. Sanjeev Chopra



Special Edition

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Journal of LBSNAA



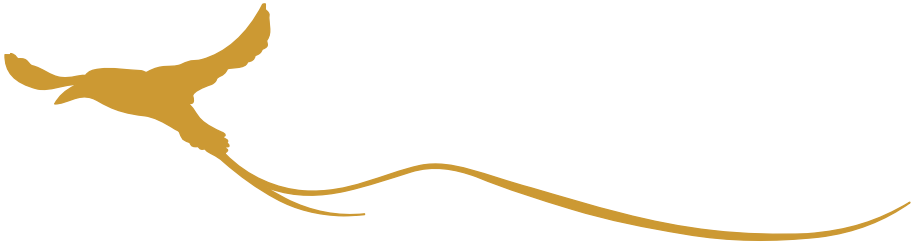
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National Academy of Administration

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*Special Edition
on
Paths to Good Governance*

*Thoughts and Words
Dr. Sanjeev Chopra*

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Lal Bahadur Shastri
National Academy of Administration



Dr. Sanjeev Chopra

He belongs to the 1985 batch of the IAS, West Bengal cadre. In addition to serving at the helm of various departments in his allocated cadre, Dr. Chopra has also served in the Government of Uttarakhand as Secretary in the departments of Industrial Development and IT. At the Government of India, he served as the Mission Director of the National Horticulture Mission and the National Mission on Micro Irrigation, besides heading the NAFED as its Managing Director and also the National Horticulture Board. He also looked after International Cooperation in the Ministry of Agriculture. He holds a PhD in Management in addition to degrees in Law, History and Literature. A recipient of the Robert S McNamara Fellowship of the World Bank and the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship of the University of Cornell, he was also Guest Scholar at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC and attended the Twenty-first Century Trust Fellows Program at Merton College, Oxford.

He has written extensively on policy issues in governance and development interventions in rural development, agriculture, marketing reforms, co-operatives and farmer organizations. He has been invited to deliver lectures and talks at IIMs, ASCI, FRI, IGNOU and at symposia and conferences across the country. He has also delivered keynotes at International Cooperative Alliance conferences at Beijing, Abu Dhabi and Ho Chi Minh City. He has several books to his credit, including 'At the

Crossroads: Development Discourses in India', 'Agri-Matters', 'Ten Thousand Crores', besides three edited volumes on Policy Colloquia on Cooperatives in the SAARC Region, and articles in leading papers like E.P.W, Mainstream, Frontier, Encounter, Millennium Post, Garhwal Post etal. He curates a Literature and Arts festival, 'Valley of Words' at Dehradun in November every year.

Foreword

Running an institution is always extremely demanding. To be an able head of an academic institution, one requires to be a good manager, a team leader who can ensure harmony amongst team members, and above all an ability to provide erudite stewardship. An academic institution can't be run by a corporate executive. Similarly, even a truly scholarly professor may not be able to provide effective institutional leadership.

A training academy is also an academic institution and providing leadership here becomes all the more demanding for obvious reasons. A leader leading all the trainers or coaches can't provide effective leadership and command respect if he/she fails in walking the talk. This could be one of the many reasons why several training academies in our country fail to make a mark for want of the right leadership possessing all three key qualities: administrative acumen, scholarship and above all, integrity.

It is in this setting, this anthology of speeches delivered by Shri Sanjeev Chopra, Director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration becomes unique. Speeches delivered by Shri Chopra are formal in nature, but even in these customary addresses he has dealt with several important issues, he rightly wants the trainee officials to apply their mind. Both, the diversity of themes Shri Chopra has touched upon and the sincerity with which he approaches them are remarkable. From philosophical themes like *Rajdharm* to practical issues like advancement of technology, he has dwelt on a wide range of subjects at length effectively, with due profoundness. His reflections on professionalism as also the core values of the institution, his emphasis on why Groupthink also should respect individual opinions different from the collective one and his appeal to convert adversity into an opportunity are indeed thought provoking. Also important are his views on issues as diverse as agriculture, science and technology, globalisation and also the COVID-19 pandemic for they bring with them the wealth of his experience, depth of his research and also valuable insights that he has gathered.

The texts of these speeches, although conventional in nature; betrays the richness of his decades long experience. Also, his dispassionate analysis adds great value to the reader's understanding of the subject. In addition, the adroitness with which Shri Chopra has treated a variety of themes makes reading this anthology enjoyable.

It is really commendable that Ms. Gauri Parasher Joshi applied herself to documenting Shri Chopra's speeches and present them through this anthology. This anthology also tells us as to how a creatively talented thoughtful

institutional leader can make a difference when the person is capable of providing not just administrative leadership but also leadership of thoughts and ideas. An anthology of speeches like these by an administrative officer also reassures one that in spite of the overall degeneration of systems and institutions, we still have many talented thinker-administrators amongst ourselves. One only wishes that their tribe increases!

New Delhi,
22nd March, 2021

Vinay Sahasrabuddhe
Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha and President ICCR

Editor's Note

It is not often that the members that make up the life of an institution look up to the head with the highest esteem and with the will that they have a lot to learn from the head, precepts, even habits to imbibe from his years of experience, from his relentless zeal to get things done, his wise optimism for the future and his ability to forgive and forget. It is an honour for me to be able to pen a few lines on the objective for compiling this collection of speeches by Dr. Sanjeev Chopra, the Director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. A man of letters, Dr. Chopra has written extensively on governance and its many aspects like agriculture, industry and management, the last is also the subject of his PhD. These are also just a few of the departments in which he worked to usher in positive change. While he has spoken at a large number of fora over the years, it is this collection that spans his tenure at the Academy in Mussoorie that scripts an idea of how the aims of an institution can be aligned with those of the nation which in itself is a significant task. In one of his speeches Dr. Chopra addresses the disappointment of the Officer Trainees of the 2018 batch of the IAS at not being able to be present on campus for their Phase II program and in the course of doing this, there is a moment of metamorphosis that impacts the Officer Trainees' perception and directs it towards a sense of pride in duty. A listener or reader, even though not present at the time that the speech was delivered would be able to re-live that moment of transformation—from disappointment, to pride and optimism that the audience that comprised the young Officer Trainees would definitely have been touched by.

The context and text of the speeches leaves one with the strong feeling that the young recruits to the civil services are surely in good hands and will be mentored well if the premier institution for their training can be guided by such a great degree of balance, of depth of thought combined with the wisdom of moderation, of a sense of writing into the history of our times, a necessary mingling of the sciences with the arts, of bringing together thirty-six years of work and innovation, of learning and unlearning with a frank understanding of the raw enthusiasm that tends to drive the youth.

Herein, we have a treasure of messages that emanate from Dr. Chopra's own experience and his wide and intense interaction with the issues that have marked his time in service and with the large number of persons in government and without that he has come into contact with. The members of the Editorial Board join me in wishing Dr. Chopra long years of happiness and good health and we know that for someone who has immense reserves of energy and the will to take his ideas to fruition, Dr. Chopra will be engaged in working towards deep research and analysis in whichever subject he takes up. We also await eagerly the completion of his work on the maps of India.

Know Your World: *A address to Special Foundation Course*

22 January, 2021

AHEAD OF THE COVID CURVE

Delighted to welcome you here at the Academy. You have been the frontline Covid worriers at a time when India has shown to the world that when a nation responds with alacrity, tact, empirical evidence and strong political vision backed by an administrative apparatus and a set of laws which are both enabling and empowering, even during a challenge like the COVID pandemic which has brought many other economies to a virtual halt, India was not able to transcend the crisis, but convert it into an opportunity. From a country which did not have a single PPE kit, to one of the largest exporters, and to become the country with multiple manufacturers of the Covid vaccine and a public rollout to reach thirty million in a matter of weeks is an accomplishment to be celebrated! And it is indeed great to acknowledge that Hyderabad is also home to one of the vaccine companies – and these days the strength of a nation is defined by its spirit of enterprise, innovation, discovery and an eco-system which fosters excellence in thought and action.

*Not gold, but only men can make,
A nation great and strong,
Men who for Truth and Honour's sake
Stand fast, and suffer Long*

Not for a moment am I suggesting that you go in for long-standing suffering for the sake of your nation: all I am saying is that one has to pause, reflect and act keeping in mind the larger direction in which the country is moving and contribute to making an India that is *Atma nirbhar*, an India that is *Swachha*, and an India that respects her daughters, an India that is not only self-sufficient in food, but becomes the granary and the food basket to the world, an India whose IT professionals ride the crest of the Gen X technologies, whose physicists and astronomers give India the leadership in space, whose defence

forces protect the country - from the higher Himalayas to the last water mile in our exclusive economic zones in Lakshadweep.

THE CITY OF HYDERABAD

Let me say a few lines about the city of Hyderabad, and the transformation it has seen in the last three decades. My first visit to the city was during Bharat Darshan, and it was just one more city on the tourist circuit – one visited the Char Minar, and the not so well kept Salar Jung Museum, the cantonment town of Secunderbad and the lovely Biryani. While in service, and especially during my earlier posting in the Academy, I have visited the city almost every year – as participant in the development dialogues of the CDF, at seminars and workshops at NIRD, Manage, ASCI, SVPNAA and the University of Hyderabad, as also the JNU Reunion organized by the redoubtable Vibhu Acharya, who was then the DG of this institution. I have seen Hyderabad grow – from the city of pearls and Char Minar (unfiltered cigarettes) to the city of IT and Pharma, I have seen the modernization of the railway station to the establishment of a brand new airport, which was futuristic in conception, design, implementation and then of course, the Metro. The city also boasts of a number of new academic institutions – like the ISB, IIT and five big technology giants - Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Apple and Facebook. The city has icons beyond the political space – from Satya Nadella to Pulella Gopichand, Sania Mirza and PV Sindhu, besides the revamped MCHARDI which, under the leadership of the current director Harpreet, and the previous director Dr Vibhu Acharya has made tremendous strides both in infrastructure as well as in centres of learning

RESPONDING TO NEW CONTEXTS: REDEFINING RAJ DHARMA

*The old order changeth,
Yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways
Lest one (good) custom corrupt the world!*

Although the general principals of administration – embodied as they are in Raj Dharma - the welfare of the people - have not changed from the times of the Artha Shastra, avenues and techniques of resource mobilization as well the application of resources has changed. The state has taken over many of the social and civic responsibilities especially with regard to provision of education, health and public infrastructure.

Let me elaborate on these by walking you through the various stages in the formation of the state. You see, in the first instance, you can have a state only when we have settled agriculture. Pastoral societies can be very advanced, but they are societies, not states. One of the features of a settled state is a territory which is exclusive and provides privileged access over its resources to its own citizens, often to the exclusion of others. Fixed territories, settled agriculture with individual or joint ownership, and provision of revenue in cash and kind from which payments are made to priests, accountants and professional soldiers is the hallmark of a state. Chanakya laid down one-sixth of the farmers' produce as the legitimate share of the state, and ensured that the state built large granaries to enable the farmer to deposit his share of revenue in kind. Under no condition should the king collect more than one fourth – and there were clear norms whenever the share had to be raised from one sixth – these included wars, coronations and/or state sponsored religious congregations. However, we note that in the hey-days of the Mughal Empire, Todar Mal, the Revenue Minister of Akbar was collecting one-third of the produce as revenue, and that too in kind, which actually meant *that the intermediary became more important than the farmer*. In other words, till the advent of mercantilism, the main source of income for the state was revenue from agriculture.

With mercantilism and the rise of colonial empires, backed by strong naval armadas, the source of revenue shifted equally to customs, duties and commercial transactions which were heavily loaded in favour of the mother country. Thus, unlike its feudal predecessor, the Grand Mughals whose abundant wealth was the stuff of legend and imagination, the main income of the East India Company did not come from agriculture: it came from plantation codes for indigo, jute, tea, rubber and spices. The terms of trade were designed to promote the export of raw cotton, leather and jute, and facilitate import of cloth which destroyed the livelihoods of millions of weavers and artisans. In the name of free trade, commodities like opium were grown commercially in India for sale in China which destroyed the health of the Chinese and the food security of Indians. Thus, it is important for us to understand the role which state policy plays in the economics of agriculture.

Then came the Industrial Age with its focus on manufacturing and almost every state tried to encourage its own industry, and global rules for tariffs and trade, the World Trade Organization (WTO), bilateral and regional associations.

I was setting the context for our conversation. When India became independent, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, and while the Union government raised taxes from customs, excise and Income tax, land revenue was the mainstay for the state governments. Over the years, many changes have taken place:

- Land revenue is no longer the mainstay for any state government. In fact, as revenue, or for that matter, even the cess on land revenue has not been revised for decades, the cost of collection is often higher than the revenue itself. In many states, land revenue has been abolished.
- Agriculture is NO longer the principal source of GDP or livelihood. Thus, the principal officer in the district has to spend more time on MGNREGA and NRLM than on settling revenue disputes. In fact, when we were under training, there used to be a state service called the Agricultural Tax Service, which became very powerful, not because they enforced any tax, but because the then government decided to appoint all of them as Private Secretaries to Ministers for Agriculture and subsequently Income Tax was abolished in one state government after another.
- Land settlement and surveys will give way to satellite imaging and mapping through drones and IT. Likewise for crop surveys – through FASAL and CHAMAN
- Land disputes are still a major, though not primary, driver of litigation.
- Agriculture, especially ‘procurement farming and commercial farming’ is driven by migrant labour.
- Services account for the bulk of GDP even in states like Punjab
- Enforcement of Rights-based legislation is the primary responsibility of a District magistrate
- Services like the Corporate Law Service usher in a new era of transparent decision making – for corporates, governments and civil society have to walk hand in hand. Corporates have taken over many functions which were regarded as exclusively sovereign. This is no longer the case. As the APC and later as ACS Industrial Development in the government in West Bengal, I was often invited to be the Chief Guest at the Annual Day celebrations. Most of the High Commission offices and Embassies have their Republic or Foundation Day functions sponsored by the corporates. Thus, Mitsubishi (India) supports Japan and Samsung funds South Korea. I am glad to note that you are here in large numbers.

- The profile of the Forest service is getting transformed, because like the Ministry which is its cadre-controlling authority – it's about forest and environment – and environment is all encompassing. From saving forests in Arunachal to cleaning the Ganga and protecting us from air and noise pollution – the scope is ever expanding, and will also call for collaboration across services. Take the global trade in the wild and endangered species. Will it not bring the police, the forest, the customs and income tax together?
- I could go on and on – for while the political leadership will set the broad contours, it is for us to define the way forward. No Home Minister can actually define the nitty gritty of crime control - and as long as we adhere to a professional code without bragging about it, you will not have a problem.
- Last but not the least, we are no longer an economy of scarcity – we are an economy of plenty. We may still have the largest number of BPL people, but our future will be driven by upskilling them, making them aware of opportunities across the world, and ensuring that they are connected. Thus, industrially advanced districts will have to make provision for migrant workers and their families, ensure that housing, health care and education are made available and ensure financial, legal and electoral literacy, and the districts from where the workers are migrating should maintain their profile, and ensure a feedback mechanism. Fortunately, we have the Aadhaar card which makes it so easy for administration to connect.

Technology

Further, the power and reach of the mobile will grow exponentially. Information will be available to everyone, and though some of it may be coloured, we will transit to an age of information abundance. Almost all districts and departments will have interactive websites, which will offer services on demand, and within a fixed time frame. Most of the functions for which people have to visit offices – birth, death, income, police verification and entitlement certificates – will be available online. There will be resistance to these changes as well, for it cuts down discretion. Take the case of GST – one nation one tax, or E NAM – one nation - one market. In the case of GST, one realizes that this single tax regime has made such a big difference to the way that real estate, gold, precious metals and FMCGs were transacted in the past. The rate of collection of GST is higher than the GDP growth rate, which also means that informal transactions are giving way to formal transactions. It is true that there is still scope for improvement, but the templates have been laid. As mentioned earlier, once the measure of land, and the collection of tax is put

on technology platforms, the rest becomes easy. Part of the reason of the farmers' agitation in Punjab is that whenever you move from the informal to the formal, the process hurts those who are in a superior bargaining position.

Public Institutions

What was once regarded as 'populist' is now mainstream – rather it is a matter of Right. We have moved from providing basic rations to balanced rations, including pulses, healthy meals for all ICDS centres and schools, in most states cooked meals are now available at affordable prices. Public policy has responded to health care, cooking gas and affordable housing. This requires mobilisation of resources, as well as the ability to design and implement programs – both as mega projects as well as micro-management at the sub-divisional level. This will call for an integration of effort from all the services. As such, institutions of service delivery are already in the process of transforming themselves, and the change which the Income Tax department saw last year is unprecedented anywhere in the world.

Expectations

But while we can fathom the changes in technology and institutions, the third dimension of change is Expectations – which are rising faster than technology and institutions of public delivery. Our expectations are shaped by Amazon, Swiggy and Make My Trip. The young urban woman of India expects 100 and the CMs helpline to respond with the same alacrity. Well, in many cases the first response – that of acknowledgment is done quite promptly – but beyond that, the system has to recalibrate itself. It is very good, because the first step in this direction has been taken – and so from My Gov. in to My Bengal – at least all information is being provided, and I am sure that in the next phase, there will be clear follow-up protocols in place.

Breaking Silos

Before I close, let me address the elephant in the room. Why do we have so many services, and why does inter-service rivalry continue in spite of the best efforts made at both the personal and institutional levels? Does the IAS think of itself as an arrogant service? Why should there be differences in pay scale and opportunities for professional growth when everyone actually takes the same examination? Will Karmayogi and IGOT (Integrated Government Online Training) make a difference? Should the government not try to complement competence and commitment with attitude, aptitude and aspirations?

Obviously, the answer is yes, and let me assure you that the civil services you join will be shaped by your passion, your interest and your willingness to reform and think out-of-the-box. Given the nature of our jobs, one cannot expect or imagine revolutionary changes all of the time. But my view is that 'conscious incrementalism' a term over which I can claim intellectual property rights is the best way forward. In our Academy, we have introduced compulsory ethnic wear on every Friday, and I hope that we will start this here as well. We have also made it a point to use the Vikrami calendar in all our correspondence – for we must know which month we are talking about. Change does not necessarily call for application of funds – but it does call for a change of mind-sets, the willingness to listen, dialogues across age, gender and professions and the last but not the least, the art of non-adversarial communication!

Professionalism

All of us are professionals, and we have chosen, or at least actively engaged in deciding the course of our lives. A good professional collaborates for optimal results, and we have to understand that we need to get ideas and implementation strategies from everywhere - houses without windows are better than those with bare walls, and those which have a welcome arch certainly become centres of intelligent discourses, multiple ideas and usher in creativity, as we saw in Vaishnavi's fusion dance yesterday.

Let me end with a quote from Sardar Patel:

"You will not have a united India unless you have a good All India Service with the independence to speak out its mind!"

P.S. Krishnan: My Mentor's Mentor

30 December, 2020

Last year, I was privileged to deliver the Dr. R.S. Tolia Memorial Lecture organised by the Sustainable Development Forum Uttarakhand (SDFU). Dr. Tolia was my mentor in more ways than one, but his mentor, and the person he drew inspiration from, was P.S. Krishnan. While talking of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and the Special Component Plan (SCP), he would often tell us that if there is 'one' person in the civil services who has ensured that these are now 'integral' to the development intervention strategy, he was P.S. Krishnan, a man who became a legend in his lifetime, and one whose legend grows. In fact, the impact of his work is steady, long-term and 'embedded' and it will continue to yield positive outcomes in the times to come.

Another civil servant mentioned in his writings, and whom I have known personally, Shri D. Bandyopadhyay, the bureaucrat responsible for the implementation of land reforms in the state of West Bengal. I have seen how the rural hinterland in West Bengal has been transformed through operation Barga in which the names of sharecroppers were recorded through a dedicated initiative. In fact, Bengal's self-sufficiency in food is a direct consequence of operation Barga.

I have mentioned these two names for I have known them personally, and seen how they have transformed institutions of governance – the ones that you and I are part of – and have made laws work for the poor.

I take this opportunity to thank my dear friend Dr. R.S. Vundru for giving me this opportunity. I have known him for nearly a decade and I have seen him grow as an organic intellectual: one who takes meticulous case of facts in writing and researching articles and one who does not hesitate to call a spade a spade. I also take the opportunity of thanking Shri Mallepalli Laxmaiah for the opportunity to speak on the life and remarks of late P. S. Krishnan.

P.S. KRISHNAN: A Man of Many Parts

Civil servant, reformer, revolutionary, activist, writer, thinker, fighter for a cause, historian, meticulous scholar of the Constitution, a man with a

phenomenal memory, polyglot – Malayam, Telugu, Hindi, English and Sanskrit, personification of praxis, and most importantly one who could mobilise all sections of society for the fulfilment of dreams of the founding fathers of the Constitution as well as of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Shradhananda, Jyotiba Phule and last but not the least, one whose support for linguistic reorganisation of states has helped in changing the image, imagination and the maps of India.

P.S. KRISHNAN: The Person

Krishnan's life and work encompassed 'the rarest of the rare' among Indian bureaucrats. The bureaucrat in him sought to mould governance and public administration into a proactive instrument of reaching out to deprived communities. Challenging the Himalayan inequity was not new: what was rare was this challenge emerging and functioning from within the system, from the inner core of the steel frame.

P.S. Krishnan's crusading work started from his formative years. His vision was derived from a synthesis of ideologies of Ambedkar, Gandhi, Marx, Narayana Guru, Vivekananda and Periyar. Fired by such a synthesis and equipped with an encyclopaedic knowledge of India's thousands of castes and their regional variations, he evolved strategies based on unassailable constitutional and legal premises, crafting them with intricate details.

Praxis Personified

GRAMSCI used the term to describe 'unity of thought and action'. His praxis began as a young officer in Andhra Pradesh as early as 1957. He started camping in Scheduled Caste (SC) *bastis*, tribal villages and hamlets of the laboring Backward Classes (BC), thereby infusing confidence and self-esteem in them. Inevitably, this infuriated the incredulous upper caste classes.

The stories of Krishnan's early days in the government make for fascinating reading. He confronted head-on the monster of caste oppression and abysmal poverty in villages, the entry of this sub-collector and later Collector, the visible representative of the mighty state, had an electrifying effect on those benighted villages. He got the *Jamabandi* (a record of rights) made and updated there, and stayed and ate food with the people living in the *bastis*. Those were the days when the term Dalit was not even known; the consciousness and resistance that the word meant would emerge much later.

We can only imagine the shockwaves these actions would have sent through the upper caste communities, who now were forced to step into the despised, obnoxious streets of the lowly to meet the Collector to transact their business.

Naturally, he often faced antagonism, hostility and persecution from powerful sections of village society. No wonder his ACR read:

'Undue partiality to depressed classes, strident advocacy of inter-caste marriages, uses his knowledge of Sanskrit to debunk religion, trusts the words of the villagers rather than village officers, acts in a manner that helps subversive elements.'

Ambedkar, Swaraj and the three Swamis

I am aware that this part of the lecture is not on P.S. Krishnan but is based on the similarity as well as dissimilarity in the thoughts of the two great leaders: Gandhi and Ambedkar whose imagination of India has left an indelible mark on all of us.

While Dr. Ambedkar was unsparing in his critique of the Brahminical Hinduism specially the Indian caste system with untouchability, he was sincerely appreciative of the works of the three Swamis: Dayananda, Shradhananda and Vivekananda. These Swamis were forthright in their critique of the Hindu Society.

Like Swamis Vivekanand, Dayananda and Shradhananda, Dr. Ambedkar was clear that social and educational reform must take precedence over political reform: something to which Gandhi agreed, but the rest of the Congress did not. While Gandhi may have been the face of the Congress, the real financial and administrative control of the Congress Secretariat was with Motilal Nehru with whom Swami Shradhananda had major differences, Swami Shradhananda was one of the most iconic figures of his time, and had set up his own Dalitoddhar Sabha in Delhi, which did not receive the requisite funds. In frustration, the Swami left the Congress party, because he believed that political freedom had no meaning in such an unequal society. Dr. Ambedkar described him as the 'greatest and most sincere champion of the untouchables.'

Likewise, Swami Dayanand whose Arya Samaj rejected the Sanatani discourse of caste - and Swami Shradhanand who attempted to draw the attention of Congress to this were quite clear that Hindu society was under a major threat and that if it did not undertake internal reform, it would perish. In their views on the Swami, both Dr. Ambedkar and the Mahatma Gandhi were one

Gandhi ji said that untouchability cannot be given a secondary place on the Congress Programme. Without the removal of the taint, 'Swaraj' is a meaningless term. I consider the removal of "untouchability" as a most powerful factor in the process of attainment of Swaraj.

However, one must mention that the main focus of the Congress continued to be political. One may even argue than the Congress used the Mahatma

Gandhi's name for his was the only face which drew people to the National Movement.

UNDERSTANDING KRISHNAN

Incrementalism

To a question by Dr. V. Vasanthi Devi, former Vice Chancellor of MS University, Tamil Nadu, and the author of his conversational autobiography, 'A Crusade for Social Justice' which read: It is your pragmatism, your belief in incrementalism, your readiness to go step by step, your belief that all great liberating missions in history have only succeeded by taking one step at a time, your abundant patience that helped you chip away the mighty rock of injustice and discrimination with one chisel stroke after another. Did your proximity to the power structure in the Indian Administrative Service help you to craft the strategy? Krishnan replied, "it is not quite correct to say that "incrementalism" as such is my approach. I have looked at opportunities available to me at each point of time, kept in view the maximum possibilities available, and tried to push matters to the utmost extent possible in fulfilling the goals of Social Equality and Social Justice. In some situations, at some points of time, the opportunities were less and I had to trim my sails accordingly. When reaching out for the maximum, if I got something less than that, I would accept it and continue efforts for the balance.

Let not good be an enemy of the best

As Dr. R.S. Tolia often said let not good be an enemy of the best, Mr. Krishnan was a realist to the core. He understood and acknowledged the asymmetry of power between the land-owning BCs and the Dalits. He understood the world view of Prime Minister Charan Singh. This did not dent his idealism. He was aware that this particular government would support the Mandal Commission recommendations. A unique feature of Krishnan's personality was his willingness to work with all political dispensations. He worked with both the NDA and the UPA regimes and with state governments across the country, irrespective of their ideological dispensations. His point was very clear – the agenda for social reform is not the exclusive 'repository' of any one party.

Political parties tend to look at the next elections; those who look at social change have to look at their work in terms of decades. As one goes through his writings, one notes that he had developed a very good rapport with leaders across the spectrum - from Presidents Giani Zail Singh and R. Venkatraman, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and almost every Prime Minister from our current Prime Minister (i) Narendra Modi; (ii) Manmohan Singh; (iii) Inder

Kumar Gujral; (iv) H.D. Deve Gowda; (v) V.P. Singh; (vi) Indira Gandhi; Ministers (late) Ram Bilas Paswan of the LJP, Yogendra Makwana of the Congress, Thawar Chand Gehlot (BJP), at present Union Minister for Social Justice and every political party from the AIADMK, RPI and social organizations like the NAF. He knew Brinda Karat from the CPM as well as the RSS ideologue Bhagaiah from Karnataka, and everyone in between.

The lesson from his life is that as long as your association with the political executive is not for any personal gain, but for putting your point of view across on issues which you feel are important – from the issue of Kisan credit cards to workers at brick kilns or nutrition or GIs, or Swachha Bharat, there is no problem. Mr. Krishnan wanted the implementation of the Mandal Commission, but never took any credit for it. As long as the political executive is clear about it, officers will not have any problems.

The Role of the State

This was in fact one of the main points of divergence between Gandhi and Ambedkar. Whereas Gandhi felt that society had an inherent capacity to reform itself, Dr. Ambedkar, and after him Mr. P.S. Krishnan were ‘statists’ to the core. They both believed in the ‘instrumentalism’ of the state, and argued that most of the entitlements for the ‘weaker/depressed/suppressed classes’ stemmed from Dr. Ambedkar’s position as a member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council. In fact, he brought about this scheme of reservation for SCs in 1943-44, which on the eve of Independence was extended to STs, and introduced the landmark Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme (PMS) for SCs (and a little later for STs also) as well the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme.

The first step of the reservation for SCs in services under the State, also stemmed from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s endeavours from his vantage point as Member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council. From 1950, STs were also brought within the purview of the reservation scheme. This got constitutional affirmation after the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January, 1950.

The point to note is that while Dr. Ambedkar was quite open about it, many Congress leaders were not. We may also note that the second Round Table Conference, and the Yerwada Pact were about representation and power. Dr. Ambedkar wanted a separate political dispensation for the ‘untouchables’, but the Mahatma wanted to represent all Indians, and certainly all Hindus. In order to go with Gandhi ji’s idea, Dr. Ambedkar reluctantly gave up the valuable advantage of a separate electorate for the SCs (already firmly in his kitty) as Gandhi ji and other leaders were opposed to it, in exchange for the

commitment of Mahatma Gandhi himself and the entire national movement not only to the reservation of seats in the Central Legislature and Provincial Legislatures, but also fair representation for them in appointments to public services, elections to local bodies (fulfilled only in 1993) and educational support for SCs.

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA AS 'THE INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE'

Change is the Law of Nature

While we all know that change is the law of nature, it is inevitable, the question is: how does change take place in a society in which class and privilege are firmly entrenched. For Marx and others in the socialist tradition there was no possibility of 'internal restructuring and reform'. For nationalists, the sense of belonging to a nation evoked a higher sense of loyalty. For those with a religious disposition, change could be affected by change of heart. To rationalists, change could be brought about by addressing the faculty of reason and enlightened long-term self-interest.

For Dr. Ambedkar, the Constitution of India was the Holy Grail: starting with the Preamble, and his emphasis on the key words: Liberty, Equality and most importantly, Fraternity, which to Dr. Ambedkar was not fellowship in the sense of European enlightenment, but Maitree, from the Buddhist Sangha and the term dignity is also so encompassing.

ARTICLES HAVING A DIRECT BEARING ON EMPOWERMENT OF DALITS AND WEAKER SECTIONS

Let me therefore take you through the Articles which have a direct bearing on Empowerment of Dalits and Weaker sections. I have drawn this from his chapter 'Constitution of India and Dalits', but while he chose to comment on them in the context of the issue they addressed, I have listed them sequentially, for in my opinion, it is easy to go chronologically, and it also has the advantage of providing the wide angle to the reform scenario.

Article 15: Clause (4) of Article 15, can be categorised as the 'socio-economic and development Imperative', which was strengthened in the 93rd Amendment with the insertion of Clause (5), empowering the state to provide 'reservation' by law for BCs/ SCs/STs.

Article 16: Clause (4) of Article 16 permits the State to make any provision for reservation in public employment in favour of Backward Classes of citizens, which has been interpreted to mean SCs, STs, and BCs.

Article 17: Article 17 abolished “untouchability”, and forbade its practice in any form and made the enforcement of any disability arising out of “untouchability” an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 23: Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human beings and begar, and other similar systems of forced labour. As we are aware two-thirds of bonded labourers in India are SCs, about one-fifth are STs, and the rest belong to the BCs.

Article 46: Relates to rules of promotion of education and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, and their protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”

Article 164: Clause (1) of Article 164, requires that states having a large tribal population should have a minister in charge of tribal welfare who may in addition be in charge of the welfare of the SCs and BCs.

Articles 243 (D), 243 (T): Article 243 (D) and 243 (T) provide for reservation of seats as well as offices of chairpersons under the 73rd/74th amendments. These two chapters which provide a constitutional base for local bodies, reservation for SC and ST, women in general as well as SC and ST women.

Article 244: Read with the Fifth and Sixth Schedules the Article, it provides for territorial autonomy for the Scheduled Areas and STs.

Article 275: Two special provisions for the STs are contained in the proviso to Article 275 (1), which mandates provision of grants-in-aid of capital and recurring sums to a State necessary to meet the costs of developmental schemes for the promotion of the welfare of STs and raising the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas.

Articles 330, 332 & 334: Articles 330, 332 and 334 provide for what is referred to as ‘political reservation’ i.e. reservation of seats for SCs and STs in proportion to their population in the Lok Sabha and in the State Legislative Assemblies.

Article 335: Ensures that claims of the members of SCs and STs shall be taken into consideration in the making of appointments of services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State. *Thus, as Krishnan explains, it is Article 335 and not Article 16(4), that is the real source of the Right of SCs and STs to reservation.*

Article 338: ‘Safeguard of Safeguards’: provides for a Constitutional machinery to ensure that all the safeguards for the SCs and STs, and now for BCs also, are fully and properly implemented.

Article 338/340: Articles pertaining to BCs, who were recognized as a constitutional category entitled to developmental focus at the Union level in

1990. The sweep of Article 340 and Clause 4 of Article 15 is wide and comprehensive and envisages their all-round development and welfare.

Articles 341 & 342: Articles 341 and 342 provide the constitutional base for identification and specification of SCs and STs, which has been done on the basis of specified criteria. Article 340 deals with the identification of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, the procedure therefore and measures and grants required to remove the difficulties under which they labour and improve their condition.

P.S. KRISHNAN - The Academy, Mussoorie and Dehradun

Mr. P.S. Krishnan was a much sought after speaker in several academic institutions, including his own *Alma Mater*, the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. It is indeed a matter of great honour for us that the first Memorial Lecture is being held here. Also, this is the first time that all the officer trainees are here, and it is good that they will get to hear about the life and work of Mr. P.S. Krishnan. The institutions that Mr. Krishnan was very fond of included this Academy, and the IIPA, which had organized the first Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture.

While at this Academy he has spoken on several themes: Social Exclusion, Dalit Empowerment and the Empowerment of India, Land Reforms, POA Act, SCP and TSP as well as on the Role of Civil Servants as catalysts of change. More than that, each visit to the Academy was also an engagement with the staff of the Academy, as well as with the SC community in Mussoorie.

He was held in the highest esteem by the Directors, Joint Directors of the Academy: especially Mr. P.S. Appu, Dr. N.C. Saxena, Mr. B.S. Baswan, Mr. Wajahat Habibullah, Mr. Lalit Mathur, Dr. V.K. Agnihotri as well as P. Michael Veda Siromani. Thanks to his nudge, the Academy has become a 'Model Employer', and an exemplar. Each of his visits also impacted the lives and livelihoods of the citizens of Mussoorie.

Personal Interventions

There are at least four interventions made by him which are remembered by Mussoorie and Dehradun. The first is the settlement of Bansghad – a predominantly Schedule Caste village whose lands had been forcibly taken by the powerful land mafia from Saharanpur with strong backing from the powers that be in Lucknow (Uttarakhand was still part of UP). Not only did he intervene, he was able to back it up with the relevant sections of the UP Land laws which disallowed the transfer of land from the SCs without following the relevant procedure – which obviously had been overlooked by the District

Administration. It also led to the suspension of the SSP and one officer-in-charge of a police station who were blatantly 'hand-in-glove' with the mafia, and the DM too received a show cause notice.

The second relates to the Dhobi Ghat of Mussoorie where their traditional water source was being illegally tapped – and this would have endangered their livelihoods. His personal intervention ensured that there is no shortage of water in the Mussoorie Dhobi Ghat. On another occasion when he was coming for a lecture to Mussoorie, he saw an anti-encroachment drive in which the petty vendors belonging to SCs/BCs were being evicted, he wrote to the then Chief Minister, Ms. Mayawati who ensured that they were given an alternative place near Kulri to maintain their livelihoods.

Case Study of Kusum Vihar Colony

An officer brings about change when he intervenes, as and when he can. If the officer is conversant with law, has command over his facts, and also has the ability to place them in a context she can achieve whatsoever she wants. The Kusum Vihar Colony, in a technical sense was an encroachment by people from Scheduled, Backward and minority communities, on government land which was to be acquired for building a residential complex, commercial space and government offices, under the relevant provisions of the Land Acquisition Act.

Not only did Mr. Krishnan find 'technical' defects in the notification, he was also able to pinpoint that the Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA) cannot be rendering a much larger number of people homeless to secure housing for government officials and commercial spaces. He argued about the right interpretation of 'public purpose'. So in this case, he asked the officers and political leadership of the State of Uttarakhand to reassess the issue, and his intervention made all the difference.

The Take Aways from this Case are:

- You must know the Law, and all the judgements and case laws related to the subjects.
- You must know all the facts: in this case then, the number of people being rendered homeless.
- You must be able to place the facts in the context
- You must not begin with an adversarial approach, and last but not the least:
- You must refer to the Constitution of India as often as you can!

ROLE OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

With regard to the role of training Institutions, I must say that at least in this Academy, we lay great emphasis on the core values – all of which seem to draw their inspiration from P.S. Krishnan. The first of these is Serve the underprivileged. We say, affirm and practice this credo. We have to be the voice of the underprivileged and we have to be proactive in addressing any issue of injustice. As you are aware, last year every Officer Trainee of the IAS visited at least one brick kiln, and we are trying to ensure that BIS standards are made for brick kilns – for if BIS has standards for hotels and hospitals and shop floors in the manufacturing sector, why not for brick kilns? This year, the Officer Trainees will look at nutrition issues for women and children. As such, training institutions must be proactively engaged in action research.

The second core value of this Academy is Integrity. And the wider definition of integrity includes intellectual integrity. The third core value is Respect for Diversity, Empathy and Humility. I am confident that my officers will never let go of this value. Equally important is professionalism. As I mentioned in the Inaugural address, professionalism means respecting the professional work of other professionals as well and last but not the least is collaboration, and this collaboration with the Centre for Dalit Studies is a fine example of how together, we can create a new value system.

Training Institutions can also take the leadership role in preparing and uploading case material on the IGoT platform which will make it easier for every government employee at all levels to understand the key features of the Indian Constitution which is truly a document of great empowerment. As government officers who have taken the oath to uphold the Constitution of India, this should be integral to our life and bearing.

Before concluding, I must state that Mr. P.S. Krishnan was, in very sense of the term, a true Karmayogi, one who lived the life of Yoga Karmsau Kaushalam in the finest tradition of the civil service.

As Stephen Marglin has shown, 'the emphasis of self-interest, calculation and maximization in economics has classical examples of 'self-evident postulates', and reflect more an ideological commitment to the superiority of the episteme than a serious attempt to unravel the complexities and mysteries of human motivation and behaviour.

Source: Uttarakhand Action Plan for Climate Change, Government of Uttarakhand, 2014].

Source: Citizen science growing in India: Study by Dinesh C Sharma, Down to Earth, 27 August, 2019.

Source *Hindu Editorial*, *Birds hit*: On state of Indian birds, Feb 19, 2020]. Therefore, it is imperative that citizen science initiatives should be encouraged.

Green Shoots in the Garden: *Inaugural Address to Phase I (2020 Batch)*

21 December, 2020

Mr. P.K. Sinha, Principal Advisor to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, members of the Course Team of Phase I, my colleagues on the faculty and my dear officer Trainees. As a batch, you are indeed privileged to receive the inaugural keynote from one of the most respected civil servants in the country. He has been our Cabinet Secretary during some of the most crucial years when the country was in the process of transforming itself, and he acquitted himself with great credibility and provided leadership to the civil services. For me personally, he has always been a pillar of support, both before and after my current assignment as your Director. He was amongst the first persons I called on after taking over as the Director of this Academy. Even before this, I have had the privilege of receiving his guidance and support in my earlier assignments as well as the head of the Civil Services Officers Institute (CSOI), an institution which he nurtured with great care and affection, and made it the center of social, intellectual, cultural, artistic as well as the culinary life of civil servants in the country. Interventions like CSOI and Sanskriti School have indeed made life much simpler for the civil servants when they first move to the Government of India. Thank you Sir for your personal involvement in such initiatives.

We are all here to mark the transition from the Foundation course to the Professional Phase I. It is called the IAS Professional Phase I, the focus is on three expressions: the IAS, Professional and Phase I. We generally know something about the IAS and the Course Coordinator has already briefed you about the Phase I course. Let me, therefore, focus on professionalism, the core values of the Academy, the Weberian and Marxist concepts of the state and its bureaucracy, the IAS and the making of the Nation, and last but not the least *Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam*.

Who is a professional? A professional is a person whose primary identity comes from his chosen profession for which s/he has received adequate training to equip herself for the assigned roles which are clearly laid down by an authority which has the sanction of the state, and recognition by the society."

Professionals work in their organization, not just because they love their work, but also for remuneration, and this is also the primary source of their livelihood. The term is also used to differentiate between an individual employed in a particular field from an amateur who is unpaid. We understand this quite clearly in the context of a professional cricketer versus an amateur. Likewise, a professional journalist is one whose primary source of income comes from writing for a newspaper, and he is different from the occasional columnist or book reviewer.

Most professionals are also subjected to a strict code of conduct enshrining professional, ethical, moral and even sartorial obligations. Thus we know, both implicitly, and from our training that certain modes of conduct, behavior, dress, language are acceptable, and some are not.

BUT LET ME ELABORATE ON ELEVEN POINTS THAT MAKE A PROFESSIONAL

- Professionals are TRAINED: Professionals are TRAINED to perform their Roles, which are clearly marked out. As the *Mission Karmayogi* launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister clearly stipulates, each task in the government is clearly spelt out. Thus, this Mission, along with FRACING which is the framework of roles, activities and competencies, and IGOT are steps in this direction. And this training has to be continuous – both offline and online, and it must incorporate changes in laws, changes in technology and most importantly, changes in expectations.
- Professionals are accountable: Professionals recognize their role in activities and results around them. They recognize and take responsibility for their actions, words, choices, words and more. They know they can't control others but they can influence. They aren't victims, but take ownership to create the best possible results.
- Professionals see the big picture and adjust their actions based on that vision: Professionals see their role in the big picture of their team work. They operate based on that vision, so they rarely create silos and participate in ways to move the entire organization towards those desired goals.

Recognize the professional worth of other professionals, and learn to co-operate, collaborate, and recognize excellence in others

- Recognize, but not get overwhelmed by hierarchy: those above you are there because they moved into the profession earlier than you did.
- Committed to building their skills to excel at their job today and in the future: Professionals value their job and are consistently and intentionally

working to get better. They pursue improvement through deliberate practice, training, study, observation and more. They possess a master mentality- with the goal of becoming the best they can be.

- **Trusting and trustworthy:** Professionals realize the importance of trust in the workplace. Team and working relationship cannot become very strong without trust, and so they build trust by being trustworthy first. New Public Management is all about this.
- **Willing to help, even when it's not "their job."** Professionals see themselves as part of a team, so they are willing to help, but not take over. In part because of their big picture view, they recognize and look for ways to help; because they view their job as more than the restrictions of their job description.
- **Able to work well with others -** Professionals know they are party of multiple teams and in order for them to succeed, the team must succeed. This means they focus on working well with others and building the relationship to help make that happen.
- **Seek recognition from their peers, and makes a clear distinction between the professional and other distinctions.** A doctor or a CA or an officer may head the local Rotary Club - but the primary recognition has to come from the peer group
- **Professionals also come together in their Associations from which others are excluded, and it is this exclusion of others which defines them.** Professional associations can collaborate and federate with each other as we did in CARUNA.
- **We are Governance Professionals :** We are professionals because we are known by the Service we belong to. We derive our mandate, strength, values from Article 311 which is a very rare honor for us – for few services are created or recognized by the Constitution. As such, the Constitution of India is the Holy Grail. We are, in a manner of speaking, creatures of the Constitution, and the Constitution itself was a deliberative process and a collaborative exercise. Each word in the Constitution, including the Preamble has been carefully discussed and debated, and therefore we are more fortunate than the ICS whose mandate was primarily to collect revenue and maintain law and order. Our responsibility is on a much wider canvas and an unparalleled scale, for in addition to the above, we also have to ensure that the Rights-based legislation like the Right to Work, Food and Education are implemented both in letter and spirit, not as a matter of grace, but as a fundamental entitlement .

All this is in sync with the core values of the Academy:

CORE VALUES OF THE ACADEMY

- **Serve the Underprivileged:** Be humane in your approach while dealing with people; be the voice of the underprivileged and be proactive in addressing any injustice against them. You can achieve success in this endeavor if you act with integrity, respect, professionalism and collaboration.
- **Integrity:** Be consistent in your thoughts, words and actions which will make you trustworthy. Have courage of conviction and always speak the truth to even the most powerful, without fear. Never ever tolerate any degree of corruption, be it in cash, kind or intellectual.
- **Respect:** Embrace diversity of caste, religion, color, gender, age, language, region, ideology and socio-economic status. Reach out to all with humility and empathy. Be emotionally stable and grow with confidence and without arrogance.
- **Professionalism:** Be judicious and apolitical in your approach; be professional and completely committed to your job with a bias for action and results; and continuously pursue improvement and excellence.
- **Collaboration:** Collaborate in thoughts and actions by engaging deeply with all to evolve consensus. Encourage others, promote team spirit and be open to learning from others. Take initiative and own responsibility. The IAS and the Making of the Nation - In the morning we had a discussion about the IAS in Perspective, and about how the Service has shaped itself and the nation. In a manner of speaking, so far the success of the nation and that of the IAS have been intertwined – for we are the ONLY service which connects:
 - i. All three tiers of governance,
 - ii. All the states and UTs with each other and with the Union government
 - iii. All sectors of the economy: from MGNREGA to Ease of Doing Business
 - iv. The legislative and the executive arms of government– for the legislature also keeps a close watch on the functions of the bureaucracy

PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATE

Although speaking from entirely different perspectives, both the Weberian and Marxist schools of history are clear about the fact that bureaucracy is the core 'of the state, and that it would be impossible to run a state without bureaucracy. Their views diverge because of the difference in their conception

of the state – for Weber the state is a rational organization which privileges competence and merit to work for the development of all the components of the state, whereas for Marx, the state represents clear class interests. However, one must mention here that the nature of the state itself has changed so completely over the last century. For Marx as well as Weber, or for that matter Bonaparte, the state existed as an end, by and in - itself, the citizen was still more of a subject, and the state conferred some rights which were abstract, now the Right to Food, or Work clearly specify what those entitlements are. The state is re-imagining itself with the citizen at the core, and her expectations drive the state, not the other way around. This is a thought I leave with you for further discussions as the course proceeds.

The Transformative Phase: While it is true that the numerical strength of the Phase I will always be less than the FC, and even though there will be greater academic work load, this is the TRANSFORMATIVE Phase that will define your profession and your personality. Your inputs will now be geared specifically to the first decade of your professional life. Let me assure you that the entire faculty has looked at each module and each session with great care. You will have insights from the field, as well as a sense of perspective from the luminaries who have led the transformation in their respective domains

‘Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam’ Before I close, let me remind all of us that the leitmotif of our service is *‘Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam’*: True Yoga is skill in action, and this is taken from the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 50 in which Krishna talks to Arjuna about *Sthithprajnya*- a person endowed with the wisdom of equanimity, who is firm in his thought and action under all circumstances. The ideal person is not swayed by every gust of wind; he is committed to excellence in action. Verily, perfection in action is Yogah.

With these few words, let me welcome you to the Professional Phase I course.

The Brink of a Long Journey: Inaugural Address to Phase II (2018 Batch)

6 July, 2020

PART-I

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister, PMO, MoS DoPT and DONER, Prof P. Amudha, CoE who is with us online, members of the course team, N.K. Sudhanshu, Manoj Nair, Monika Dhami, Alankrita Singh, Gauri Parasher Joshi and Dr. Milind Ramteke, my colleagues on the ACM, Nandini Paliwal, Aswathy S., Vidya Bhushan, Professors Sunita Rani and Ramachandran, members of the language faculty, friends and last but not the least the officer trainees of the 2018 batch!

For the last few days, I have been thinking of how to begin this address. Conventionally, there is an element of welcome, which is there for sure, but more than that I wish to address the sense of apprehension about how this course will pan out. I also know that there is a sense of deep hurt amongst many of you that while your Alma Mater could have, it chose not to invite you—and as many of us have had very frank conversations, some of you also harbour the feeling that we at the Academy shied away from our responsibility. Let me try to address these issues, and in the process also nudge you towards a conceptual clarity on issues like governance and decision making, hearing voices which are nearly drowned in group think, the sense of perspective, understanding that good is not an enemy of the best, but a step in that direction and also a synoptic review of what the Academy has been doing in the times of COVID.

GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

As administrators, implementing decisions which may not be popular in the immediate/short run is part of our mandate. We have to learn to accept whatever decisions are taken by those above us in the hierarchy, if you can explain the reasons for and the circumstances under which decisions are taken it is perhaps a shade easier to understand the process. Let us also understand that good governance is about doing the right things - keeping the long term in

view and factoring in the views of multiple stakeholders. It is also about taking decisions based on information that is currently available, and not on wishful thinking or optimistic projections, especially when the health and lives of people are concerned. We also have to see what message we convey, as well as a realistic assessment of our own capabilities. Right now as we speak, three of our faculty colleagues, P. Amudha, M.H. Khan and Gauri Parasher Joshi are on home quarantine - for it is not just their own health, it is also the health of others around them that becomes important. We have erred on the side of caution, but circumstances like this do call for prudence, and I am sure this will resonate with many of you.

BEYOND 'GROUPTHINK'

The second point I wish to make is that even in this group I felt that 'groupthink' takes over. The popular or dominant view was that we should have a course – but those who did not want it wrote to us privately – and I am a bit concerned about this. We should not create an environment where those who have a different view feel intimidated, or so insecure that they withdraw from the decision-making process. And I also want to state that like the Academy; you have to keep yourself prepared not just for Plan B, but multiple variants of this.

Having said this, let me also share with you that the Academy and the DoPT concur with the opinion that this option will still leave something wanting - and so it has been agreed that as and when the Assistant Secretary program is held for your batch, we will have a short module for you at the Academy. And therefore, this decision has to be seen in a perspective, I will give you two examples to illustrate my point.

THE SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE

On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Academy, on September 1, 2019, Dr. Jitendra Singh made an interesting point that while sixty years is a milestone in the life of an individual, it is perhaps a chapter in the life of an institution, but in the life of a civilizational nation like India, it is but a footnote in history.

The second is from an address by the Cabinet Secretary on 18th February to the participants of Phase III, and to a question on why the IAS is not a specialist service, he said – we are the 'context specialists'. And so in the context of the times, this is the best that could and should have been done.

LET NOT GOOD BE AN ENEMY OF THE BEST!

Let me now come to your apprehensions about this course. True, it is not on the campus of the Academy – and you will for sure miss the sheer beauty and the clement weather of this place at this time - but the imprint of the Academy’s spirit - will drive each and every session of the course. In fact, we have been able to spend more time in this course design than most other Phase II courses, for normally this is the high season for courses at the Academy. We would have had - for example – either the Phase III or the ITP as well as the Retreat of the Golden Jubilee and other batches, including the 35th year reunion of my batch, programs of the Gender centre, CPSM, CDM, CCRD, and the per capita faculty time available for you would have been less. Here we were, planning your course – first in the physical mode, and then online - so let me set your apprehensions at rest about his program. Sudhanshu, the course team and your Academic Council are convinced that this course will not be found wanting in terms of content - rather we have been able to garner technology to assist us, and now that Indian platforms are also coming up, we will make increasing use of these to connect with you seamlessly.

PART-II

WHAT DOES THE LITTLE VIRUS TEACH US?

More than anything else, life is an attitude - for our circumstances will never be in our control, as this little virus has shown us that all our plans can go awry. It is how we respond to them individually, and collectively that makes a difference. Do we just sit back and do nothing? Do we take the challenge in our stride? Do we take an active and engaging role? In fact, as the frontline warriors of COVID, you have done precisely this. You have led from the front, and given a sense of confidence

THE ACADEMY IN THE TIMES OF COVID

What was your Academy been doing in the times of COVID? We did what we are best at doing – performing our role as a lead knowledge organization with a bias for action. Within days, an online collaborative platform called CARUNA was initiated by twenty-two services associations – for the first time ever, for COVID called for a response of a different order. For this, the credit goes to the anonymous civil servant - but I will fail in my duty if I do not acknowledge three individuals: Shri B.K. Jha of the IRS, our very own K. Srinivas then Additional Secretary DoPT and now the EO, and the ever-ebullient Archana Verma, now Principal Secretary, Assam.

The CDM under the leadership of P. Amudha and C. Sridhar, who is now at the PMO, was able to document government orders and best practices of the district administrations, disaster management departments and the health departments across the country as a one stop source. We were delighted that the PM tweeted about the contribution of CARUNA.

We had regular interactions with the DoPT, including the Chief Guest for today's function Dr Jitendra Singh, he gave us positive strokes and motivated us to continue our good work – from IGOT to preparation of masks by the SSS.

Thanks to him, the WCD Minister, Smriti Irani, has given the Gender and Child Rights Centre at the Academy additional responsibilities – and Alankrita and her team are now looking at the entire gamut of issues concerning not just women in civil services - but also the syllabi of the UPSC, publications of books on Sheroes by the National Book Trust, strengthening the machinery at the district and sub-divisional levels for ensuring speedy justice, as well as institutional security for women and children. The Gender Centre is also taking the lead in a multi-institutional collaborative effort for online courses on Gender and Child Rights as well as for Juvenile Justice.

The Academy's faculty was engaged in online discussions and webinars on a range of issues – with the J. PAL team at Harvard, Khan Academy to understand how to prepare online content, IIMs at Indore and Kozhikode, the NISG, with the Institute of Human Settlements and AILSG, and of these there is one that has been supported by the CVC. Transparency in procurement of commodities – an initiative which involves working with IRMA, ISI, MANAGE, VAMNICON, MEML, FCI, NAFED and NDDDB to understand how institutional arrangements, processes and technologies can make transparent transactions. This is being co-ordinated by P. Amudha and Milind Ramteke. Dr. Ramteke is the newest addition to our faculty – he joined earlier this year and you have not met him, but he has also compiled the sixty-five conversations of the Prime Minister's popular radio program Mann Ki Baat. We will soon be publishing it with a Foreword from our Hon'ble Minister. The Academy will also be coming out with a publication of The World from Amudha's Terrace and Window – for her photography skills are improving with each sunrise at the Academy.

As the head of the TRPC and the faculty for languages Nandini Paliwal has been the principal head hunter for the Academy, and this is indeed the most important task, for an institution is made by the people who come and teach here, and most importantly act as your counsellors. And I have to admit that it

is these counsellor sessions, and the informal one-to-one interactions that we will miss in an equal measure. The TRPC is also engaged in the preparation of new case studies. In this she has been ably supported by our Professor of Management, Sunita Rani and professor of law, Shri Ramachandran.

You will be glad to learn that Senior Deputy Director Aswathy S. been accepted at Oxford – and she leaves in September, but in addition to her preparation for Oxford she has been studying the public health system in Kerala, books on V.P. Menon and the Early Indians besides Virginia Woolf, Shashi Deshpande and Gita Sen. Manoj Nair is on your Course Team, he has been doing zen mediation while taking his bike to all the forlorn places in search of flora and fauna, besides working on a coffee table book on the sounds, sights and birdsongs of the Academy .

The PMO and the DPIIP have also asked to work on the mapping of GIs in the different districts. Once the website is ready, you will also be able to provide your inputs This task has been undertaken by Monika Dhama and Vidya Bhushan. Vidya has created much more than a Paper Tiger on this issue now, and he will explain this to you in detail when he interacts with you.

Monika has revamped the Souvenir Shop, and has been in touch with NIFT for designing the academy's formal wear, trekking wear and accessories. Don't feel low that you don't have physical access to the souvenir shop. once the products are ready, they will also be available online. She has really worked hard on redesigning the module on Ethics for your batch, and I can assure you that it will be one of the most engaging sessions for you. Do check out Immanuel Kant on the net before the categorical imperative hits you!

The quality of about thirty of Gauri's verses (during the Lockdown) can well be imagined from this extract from her prose. She writes, "They seemed to be trickling out of me like persistent rain leaking through old roofs. And then, quite like the whimsy of rain, the flow subsided, leaving me confused about whether I ought to stir my cauldron of thoughts afresh or soak in the grains of desert sand that verse had left in its wake. Perhaps, I have chosen the latter for now, involuntarily... Let me not test Fate by throwing the precious present into the arms of the future, which may be unaware or caught by surprise..." You can now imagine the quality of the Special issues of The Administrator that are currently under her thumb. You will be interacting with her quite often as she is also on the course team.

As far as I am concerned I have been working on mapping the Indian states: Aspirations, Assertions and Adjustments. Almost every ethnic/linguistic

group in the country has been aspiring for and asserting the right to a separate state – but has settled for something less – this is adjustment, and the quest for the reorganization continues! This will also be on the IGOT platform soon.

Before closing, I would like to compliment you on the quality of your dissertations and your assignments, especially the bricks kiln assignment. The sensitivity shown by many of you in understanding the issues faced by women and children engaged in the primary sector of the construction industry is indeed commendable. We have received expert comments as well, and if you can, as a batch ensure that the entire value chain in the construction sector – from the manufacture of bricks to a zero-carbon footprint – can be done as per the Bureau of Indian Standard norms which you will help design, you would have done yeoman service to the nation.

I close for now, for we are all looking forward to the address of our Hon'ble Minister, and I look forward to the first ever online Phase II in times when the virtual is the new real.

Thank you and Jai Hind

Saplings Ready to Branch Out: Valedictory Address to Phase I (2019 Batch)

8 May, 2020

The only thing certain is that nothing is certain!

The Uncertainty Principle of Heisenberg is not limited to the world of sub-atomic particles. It applies equally to empires, institutions, technologies and diseases. Till recently, we thought that Cancer was the Emperor of All Maladies. Now COVID is the front runner.

When I delivered the Inaugural Address to the Diamond Jubilee Batch, not in anyone's wildest imagination could we have thought that I would be giving an online Valedictory address - even though we are in the same campus, but physically distanced from each other. Friends, I must emphasize that we should use the term 'physical' rather than 'social' distancing - for I think that even though we have not been able to meet many times in person, our interactions on phone, email, Whatsapp the Academy's radio, exchange of articles, book reviews, and watching and discussing the same movies has brought us all together as a family. Thanks to our forced confinement on campus, we have a much better idea of the flora and fauna, and the landscape that surrounds us. We have read many more books than we would normally have and we have had time to reflect on our situation and also compare it with the lives of those who are certainly not as privileged as us. We have also learnt to live with less, observe and reflect more, and realize how frail, yet precious our lives, as well as of those we love are.

Recall also our sessions at the Statue of Unity. With speakers from Singularity talking to us about 'Abundance for all' around the corner, and Yuval Noah Harari's grand thesis about Homo Deus being almost divine, and in control of everything, our quest for a Five Trillion-dollar economy by India @75 looked like a vault of ambition, but certainly within the domain of the possible. Not any longer. In fact, over the last two decades, all chroniclers of the meta narratives of history - from Samuel Huntington to Francis Fukuyama to Milton Friedman and Robert Kaplan or for that matter Henry Kissinger - have had to come to terms with the fact that humankind has a strange way of rebounding and rebooting itself, hopefully for the better.

Before I commence my address, let's put our hands together for the Phase I team led by Ms. Nandini Paliwal, a distinguished colleague who has put together a program quite comprehensive in content, as wide and diverse as could be and, for using a pedagogy which was both meaningful and engaging. Together with her course team: C. Sridhar, Vidya Bhushan, Manoj V. Nair and Gauri Parasher Joshi, she has done the Academy proud. Yesterday, she handed the baton to an equally capable colleague Vidya Bhushan who will now walk you through the fifty-three weeks of district training in the times of COVID.

Let me say that every crisis is also an opportunity. In all crisis situations, there are some institutions and individuals who emerge stronger, many become less relevant, and some become redundant. Fortunately for us, your Service has acquitted itself with flying colours. If there is one organization in the country which has led from the front, 24X7, from the time the first sign of this crisis came to the fore, it is the IAS. For a change, there is a consensus of opinion about the leadership provided in this crisis - from the Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba to the Health Secretary Preeti Sudan, Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and Secretary Personnel Dr. C. Chandramouli, all our senior colleagues led from the front. The Health Ministry spokesperson, Lav Agarwal and the CEO of MyGov, Abhishek Singh, became the most visible faces of the government. Yours was the first Association to contribute Rs. 21 lakhs to the PM CARES fund, and we followed this with an appeal to donate one day's salary to this account for the current financial year. Let me also state that it is not the quantum of contribution, it is our willingness to be part of the collective effort of the nation to contribute to the larger cause that makes the difference.

You are also aware of the CARUNA platform, which brought together all the twenty-two service associations on a voluntary platform. Both Amudha and Sridhar have done excellent work on this, and this has made the Academy so proud of them. Let me also acknowledge Additional Secretary K. Srinivas and the ever-ebullient Archana Varma for their boundless energy, enthusiasm and outreach on this count. The preface to the CARUNA Report presented to the Cabinet Secretary was written under the pseudonym of 'an anonymous officer'. This is important, for we have chosen an ethic to remain in the background, to focus on our work and to do it well professionally. Let me also make a distinction between the work done by you in your personal and professional capacities. If you get the Sahitya Academy Award for your poetry, or if you gain recognition as a sculptor, you are entitled to it by all means, but when you run a district or a sub-division, or an institution like the Academy, the credit goes to the Team.

COVID has also shown that in the near foreseeable future, the role of the state at all levels will be salient. It also suggests that multi-level collaboration and inter-agency co-ordination are the key. From the Prime Minister to the Gram Pradhan, and from the Health Ministry to the rail coach factory and the MyGov platform - every institution has to work in tandem. The network of the IAS has indeed been an asset for the country, and for a change, the media – from India Today to Amar Ujala, The Hindu, Business Line, Hindustan Times and The Print - have given us positive coverage for the excellent work done by young officers in the field. However, the problem with performance delivery is that it raises expectations. This too, is both opportunity and challenge!

While we are all waiting to see the COVID curve flattening, and I hope that it happens, sooner rather than later, COVID has certainly ushered in the flattening of government hierarchy and functioning. Most officers have learnt to handle Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, webinars, Vimeo and social media platforms with the same felicity with which they would draft an office memorandum, but isn't this a much better option.

Is this pandemic different from its predecessors? Yes. This is the first pandemic in the age of 'Information Technology' and the 'counter-factual'. It is almost impossible to suppress information. There will definitely be fake news, but it will also be difficult to brush anything under the carpet. You have also been taught that the counter-factual is an important consideration in any nuanced discussion today. If the government quarantines, there is a problem because livelihoods and economies are adversely impacted. If it does not, there is an even greater problem - lives may be lost forever. But if the government takes no decision at all, that's the worst. Remember therefore, that the IAS is a service in which you have to take decisions, and we draw our strength from *Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam*: Yoga is excellence in action.

PART - II

I now come to the second part of my address. Act we must, but ours is not the Charge of the Light Brigade. We have to think through the implications of our action. We are creatures of the Law and the Constitution, but the interpretation is not cast in stone as we saw in *Separate but Equal*, as well as in 'Article 15'. The letter, the spirit and the context are all significant. This brings me to the theory of 'dominant discourses' or the meta narratives which offer us the framework of understanding our lived reality.

Take for example the date today. We are all so comfortable with 8th May 2020 as per the Gregorian calendar that we do not realize that as per the official Indian calendar, today is the Pratipada, the first day in the Krishna Paksh in the month

of Jyeshtha in 2077 of the Saka era. By the way, this calendar was chosen, amongst many other choices, including the Vikrami Samvat and the Kali calendar by a committee set up by the Government of India in 1957 under the chairmanship of the eminent scientist Meghnad Saha. Fortunately for us, our important festivals and in many cases, marriage ceremonies and property buying are still based on this calendar, and now with easy conversions available on the phone, it is not likely to disappear from our consciousness

Incidentally, the Gregorian calendar was established in the Vatican in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII, when the Holy Roman Empire was at its peak, replacing the Julian calendar which was established by Julius Caesar in 45 BCE. Even the terms CE and BCE, though an improvement over AD and BC are a subtle reminder that there was a world before Christ, and one after him. A simple search on Google will show you that there are over a dozen calendars, including the Islamic, Jewish, Chinese and the Tibetan calendar, which still exist today. Does the physical reality of a day – measured in terms of sunrise and sunset - change if we measure it across calendars? I am not saying that we should all adopt calendars of our choice: life may become difficult then - all I am saying is that we should accept the fact that there are so many ways of looking at the same thing, and we should not close our minds to possibilities that are not conventional.

Thus GDP, the established measure of growth is not the only marker we should look at, for we should consider the damages caused to the environment as well as to social, cultural and aesthetic artefacts. The ultimate irony is that at a recent conference held to discuss Gross Environmental Product (GEP) as an alternative measure of growth, chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Vijay Raghavan who also spoke to you at Kevadia, the matrix was on valuing eco-system support services, but again in term of the GDP.

Let me give some more examples. These days we use the term 'organic agriculture' as if it is the exceptional way of doing agriculture. The fact of the matter is that even today, this is the default option for agriculture, and we should be using just agriculture for this, and 'chemical or GM' agriculture for farming that is not natural. When we say health systems and the Health Ministry, it is actually the Ministry which privileges the allopathic system. However, we have a ministry for AYUSH and a Ministry of Health. Isn't AYUSH providing health and wellness? The nomenclature says it all. When we say 'alternative systems of medicine', we end up mainstreaming the system which is backed by market forces and the big pharma lobby. Sometimes powerful parallel discourses support each other. A good example is patriarchy

and nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century. In fact, let me quote from WC Bonnerjee, the President of the Indian National Congress at the turn of the twentieth century who questioned the obsession of social reformers with widow remarriage and women's education by saying: 'just because our women prefer to remain at home, and not engage in conversations outside of the family, it does not make our men unfit to run the nation'. Again, Tilak was opposed to the Age of Consent being raised from ten years to twelve for girls (for consummation of marriage) as he felt that it was easier to build consensus on political, rather than social issues.

The dominant discourse is often so powerful that it clouds out other voices. Let us look at the representation of Jyotirao Phule to the Hunter Commission on Education in 1882. Phule challenged the logic of rote learning and the reinforcement of prejudice against women and the (so-called) lower castes, and the non-universalization of elementary education. Read in contrast with Macaulay's Minute on Education which laid the foundation of the education system in the country, we have two alternative discourses on education. I take this opportunity of complimenting the Rahul Sankritayan Manch and the House Journal Society for bringing out a selection of 'Readings on Equality'. Do read it during your journey to the districts.

PART - III

I now turn to my favourite subject: How has history looked at pandemics in the past, and whether there are any lessons for the future. In early 542, plague struck Constantinople, the present-day Istanbul, then the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire under Emperor Justinian. Till the plague appeared, his generals had re-conquered much of Western Europe, but after 542, the Treasury could not pay the soldiers, and the state system crumbled. By the time the Plague finally petered out by 750, a powerful new religion, Islam, had arisen, and its followers ruled tracts of his territory, along with the Arabian Peninsula.

In his work *Epidemics and Society: From Black Death to the Present*, Prof. Snowden writes about how 'disease outbreaks have shaped politics, crushed revolutions and entrenched racial and economic discrimination, or overturned the dominant views of and about the sovereign and the authority that stems from it.' The earliest formal quarantines were actually a response to the Black Deaths, and had their basis in the forty days of purificatory rituals of the Old and the New Testament.

In the sixteenth century, we had the 'Columbian exchange', when the discovery of the so-called New World actually wiped out the indigenous

population of the Americas, but look at the report of the Friars to the King of Spain: 'It has pleased Our Lord to bestow the pestilence of small pox among the Indians, and it does not cease'. It is impossible to say how many people died in the New World epidemic, but the discovery of Americas was possibly the greatest demographic disaster in the history of the world, and also marked the beginning of the organized slave trade, and forced migration from Africa to the American colonies.

From then to now, there have been several waves of epidemics and pandemics, and the scale has been on the rise on account of globalization. This also means that action has to be taken at a global scale, and in the case of COVID, the world is actually in lockdown, an unprecedented moment in history.

We certainly know how the virus spreads. We know for sure that it is agnostic to age, gender, religion, status, geography and climate. We know that there is little that organized religion can do to prevent its spread, and for the first time in human history, the Grand Mosque at Mecca, the Tirumala temple complex, as well as the Papal sermons in the Vatican have been severely restricted. Does it therefore mean that organized religion may perhaps never be able to recover? Maybe... I will dwell on this over the next few weeks, and share my thoughts with you on an optional webinar!

PART - IV

From Rebels without a Cause to A Cause without Rebellion

This is a story which I tell every batch when I have an interaction called 'One to One'. Perhaps, this was the reason why I identify closely with the HJS publication, 'Three.One.One' Of course, this is named after the Article which gives Constitutional protection to civil servants. The last two issues have come out very well, and I am sure this tradition of creative expressions across all genres will grow.

But let me come back to my story. During my formative years at college, I was a Rebel, because it was quite fashionable to be a Rebel, because we had read Camus without really understanding him. Being a Rebel was an end in itself. Later at JNU, I felt I was a Rebel with a Cause who felt that protest marches, slogans, writing polemical pamphlets and ensuring that the cyclostyled version was available before breakfast in all the hostels was like 'revolution at daybreak'. Fortunately for me, realization dawned that one needs to be powerful in order to change the actual reality, and what better way than access to 'state power' through the UPSC?

So, when a million young women and men aspire to join the civil services, and then you are selected - you are not rebelling against the system, you are making it stronger; you will now decide how to further any cause that you hold dear to yourself. Each one of you is competent to take up one or more causes, and work on it. In my case, it was co-operatives, farm procurement at source, kisan credit cards and value chains for agriculture. Even if you do not get a direct chance to work for the cause you hold dear, there is nothing which prevents you from reading, writing and commenting on it, and nudging your batch mates, and later your juniors in that direction.

Add Caution to Courage; Compassion and Conviction.

And finally, as you go out to the field and join the ranks of the frontline warriors against COVID-19, with abundant courage, unparalleled compassion and the firm conviction to serve your country, please add 'caution' to your vocabulary. Your lives are very precious, and therefore please do ensure that you take all the necessary precautions.

PART - V

From the first day of April till today, The Nature Lovers Club has shared the Species of the Day with all of us. From tomorrow, and for the days to come, let me offer you a bird called 'Hope' a poem by Emily Dickinson-

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
 That perches in the soul -
 And sings the tune without the words -
 And never stops - at all -
 And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
 And sore must be the storm -
 That could abash the little Bird
 That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
 And on the strangest Sea -
 Yet - never - in Extremity,
 It asked a crumb - of Me.

The Meaning of Holistic Learning: Valedictory Address to 14th Edition of the Uttarakhand State Science and Technology Congress (USSTC), Dehradun

29 February, 2020

I am delighted and honored to be asked to deliver the valedictory address at the 14th edition of the USSTC which has been so ably steered and mentored by my distinguished friend and colleague Dr. Rajendra Dobhal, the Chairman of this conference, who has the wonderful knack of getting everyone to agree and to come together on a common platform. The distinguished speakers and erudite professors who have spoken before me represent the best in their fields and we have had a galaxy of speakers. I would specially like to compliment Dr. Dobhal and the organizers for ensuring that while focusing on the needs of Uttarakhand and deliberating on the Uttarakhand Knowledge Network, the speakers came from across the country and represent so many disciplines – from Mathematics to medicinal plants. I would also like to thank the organizers for inviting a student of literature and history, and a professional administrator to speak at a forum where the leading lights of the scientific fraternity are present.

I took up this challenge to address you because of my considered belief that a valedictory address is a very safe zone – both for the organizer as well as the speaker. No questions may be asked, and no rebuttal is possible, and the only real concern is that the Chief Guest does not speak longer than the allotted time. But an address to you is different from what I normally talk about – policy challenges, implementation issues, PPPs, land management, aspirational districts, India and the world, Sardar Patel and the civil services – and about the seminal books I have read or reviewed in the recent past. I have also spoken on issues connected to agriculture and rural development, industrial policy, inclusion – in all its dimensions, and of late, on emotional intelligence, non-adversarial communication and leadership issues. Now that's a fairly long list, and an ever-growing one, but the Director of the Academy is expected to have an eclectic reading list, and give two to three inaugural speeches or keynote addresses every month in different parts of India on subjects ranging from India's Look East Policy to Technology in Governance and 'grandmothers and patriarchy'. However, let me also state

that even though it involves hard work, I enjoy connecting the dots, starting from what I have read in the past few years on the subject, and looking up the contemporary writings and discussions on it.

The Internet and the Library are two excellent sources for information about most material which is legally accessible! For the last week, our Library has been able to download most of the sixty presidential addresses delivered each year on the occasion of the Indian Science Congress, usually in the presence of the Prime Minister. Others are not readily available, but we have established contact with the National Library and the Indian National Science Association office in Kolkata, and I will present this remarkable treasure for non-commercial use to the Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology (UCOST). Obviously, one cannot refer to all the papers, but some broad trends stand out, and it is clear that the discourse of science and scientific temper cannot be done in silos. It also shows a fundamental difference between the way the Indian Science Congress is different from the Royal Society (of Sciences), which made a very clear demarcation between the world of science, and the world of morals, politics and divinity. “When Thomas Hooke dress up the statures of the Royal Society in 1663, he inscribed as the objective “to improve the knowledge of natural things, and all useful arts, Manufactures, Mechanick practise, Engynes and Inventions by Experiments” adding the phrase “not meddling with Divinity. Metaphysics, Moralls, Politicks, Grammar, Rhetoricks, or Logick”

And therefore, while in the West, physics and metaphysics were considered as two poles, we did not accept the binaries, and this is perhaps the reason why JC Bose was the first one to posit that the living and the non-living are actually on the same axis. Another interesting observation is that in most presidential addresses we have reflection on a quote from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Geeta, from Einstein, from the Tirrukai (if the conference is being held in the South), and refer to the great achievements in the sciences, the arts, in languages and philosophies at different times of our history.

In the 47th Presidential address to the Indian Science Congress in Bombay in 1960, Prof Parija chose to speak on the Impact of Society on Science. The implication being that whether we like it or not, the political economy drives the way governments set their priorities, and that a society cannot produce science in isolation. He recalls the age of Kalidasa, the author of Shakuntala who lived around the 4th and 5th century A.D. and during this period we find mention of many illustrious names. To name only a few, Nagarjuna, the physician, Varahamihira, the astronomer, Vararuchi, the grammarian and Amar Singha, the lexicographer belonged to this period. These men were

noted in their own branches of learning. Amar Singha, in particular, records in his lexicon careful observations on plants and animals and each synonym given describes a particular characteristic or group of characteristics of plants and animals. There was, also an attempt at classification of living beings according to the habits and modes of reproduction. Our sculpture gives evidence of careful observation of the human and animal body and of the plant world. The period may be called the peak period of scientific thought and it extended over a few centuries, because the Chinese pilgrims, like Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsang speak highly of Indian medicine. It is recorded in the history of the Sui Dynasty that in the early seventh century, books on Brahminical Astronomical Manual, Mathematics, Calendrical method and Pharmaceutics were translated into Chinese.

He also drew our attention to the fact that while the potential of science is never in doubt, the decisions on where and how it is deployed makes all the difference.

In 1961, the presidential address of Dr. R.N. Dhar was on the nitrogen problem – and it reflects how the Green technologies were moving into the country to address issues of agricultural production and productivity. The next session was held in Cuttack, and Dr. B. Mukerji spoke about the ‘impact of life sciences on Man’, but started by offering his tribute to Emperor Ashoka “Emperor Ashoka realized for the first time in history that war was futile and that the spread of dharma or righteousness was more important than the expansion of empires. The neighbourhood of Cuttack was once a great seat of Kharavela, had established many monasteries and hostels for monks and scholars there. For centuries afterwards, Cuttack and its environs remained a famous seat of Buddhism and streams of scholars came to study in the University, known as *Ratnagiri Mahavihara* from Tibet and from areas in north-western India. It is also significant that some portions of the Vedas – the *Atharva Veda* in particular – are maintained as living traditions in Jaipur, as they are nowhere else in India. Ever since the seventh century A.D., Kalinga developed a distinctive style of sculpture and temple architecture, which have made Bhubaneswar, Konark and Puri household words wherever Indian art is admired. This great tradition and spirit of original expression in art, literature and culture were maintained till very recent times by an unbroken chain of scholars and artists, little known to the outside world except perhaps, the astronomer, Chandrasekhar Samanta Roy and the artist, Giridhari Mahapatra. In an atmosphere pervaded with such glorious culture, tradition and lore, I have every hope that the scientists assembled here today will be able to deliberate effectively on Science, its achievements and its impact on society.

The next year, Prof Kothari spoke on Science and the Universities. He highlighted the fact that a little bit of humility and uncertainty would help science and scientists. Many a times, scientists were assuming a degree of arrogance.

I will skip a few sessions and discuss the address of the then Education Minister, Hamayun Kabir, who (like me) did not have a degree in science. He was, however, a member of the committee which drafted the Preamble to the Constitution. He is also known to have steered the UDHR in 1948. In his address, Science and the State in India, he made two crucial points. The first was that the universities and research institutions did not speak to each other. I think that the dialogues are far more open and frequent these days. The second issue related to the migration of our best scientists and researchers. This continues to this day - both in the realm of science and technology, and we need to address the eco-system of our university and research organizations.

In the Diamond Jubilee year of the Association in 1973 the Presidential address was on 'Sixty Years of Science and Technology', and Dr. Bhagvantam drew our attention to work done by the various surveys – the Botanical Survey, the Zoological Survey, the Geological Survey, the Anthropological Survey: these were the first 'knowledge organizations' of India, and collected the data and base materials on which the universities could then build on. He also cautioned us against following the United States of America or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics model blindly.

Our resources and traditions are different. Perhaps we can afford to be a little more Indian in identifying the solutions to our problems using the resources we have at hand.

I will now take up Dr. Bambah's address of 1984 on the themes of 'Quality Science in India' – for by then, we had many more universities and departments of science, besides of course, IITs, but somewhere along the line, the questions were: are we producing quality science and scientists, and if there was one reason for mediocrity getting entrenched, it was the examination system. Fortunately, most institutions have moved on to a semester system, and with online learning and project-based assessment, things are perhaps better.

Fifteen years later, Dr. Manju Sharma, who later became the Secretary to the Government of India addressed the Chennai edition of the Science Congress and invoked Sir C.V. Raman and quoted from his inaugural address at the Presidency College Madras in 1941:

'The History of science has shown that real, fundamental progress is always due to those who ignore the boundaries of science and have treated science as a whole'. She spoke on the new Biosciences and the opportunities they afforded for the next century. In fact, she pioneered the positive partnerships between industry, research institutions and government. She also ended her address with two quotes, one from the Rig Veda, *suvigyanamchikiteshujanaya* (science of the highest quality is done by the learned and the knowledgeable) and *vigyan va dhyanaadbhuyo*

Earlier in her overview she spoke about urbanization, demographics, food production as well the new age epidemics. Cancer was the emperor of all maladies, and universal protocols for the treatment for AIDS were just about beginning to take shape.

But the way Coronavirus is hitting the world makes one wonder if we ever know what is going to hit us and where. No one, I repeat no one, could have predicted in November last year that not just China, but also Korea, Japan, Singapore, Iran and now Italy are going to get so badly affected as to disrupt the global supply chains, push down the prices of agricultural commodities the world over, and bring a virtual halt to all air traffic in the region. But this was an aside.

We now move to a seminal address by Prof Mashelkar 'Panchsheel for the New Millennium' in which, he called for focusing our attention on five key issues, which includes child-centered education, woman-centered family, human-centered development, knowledge-centered society, and innovation-centered India.

Earlier this year, at the Bengaluru Congress which many of you may have attended, the theme was Science and Technology: Rural Development, and late President Kalam had been stressing on this aspect through his inspirational talks before, during and after his presidency. As a matter of fact, rural development, and themes associated with it viz, food security, agriculture, integrated rural development, reaching the unreached have been taken up by the doyens of the science congress. Why should the youth from Nagaland and Arunachal have to go to the NCR for jobs in the BPO sector?

At this juncture, I would like to dwell on two papers that I had written while at Cornell. While trying to understand the policy contours in which the biotechnology policy of India should be placed, I looked at science policy, knowledge traditions and the role of science and technology in the nation-building project. Across the world, agriculture extension agencies and

research institutions find it easier to deal with SoPs, and till recently, ignored 'Metis' or practical skills

'Metis' is most applicable to broadly similar, but never precisely identical situations requiring a quick and practiced adaptation that becomes almost second nature to the practitioner... In a sense 'Metis' lies in that large space between the realm of genius, to which no formula can apply and the realm of codified knowledge, which can be learnt by rote.

The point which Scott is making quite forcefully is that can the practical skills which the farmers and pastoralists evolved over the centuries go hand-in-hand with knowledge from the formal, university or state system? Is knowledge power? Or does power decide which knowledge is relevant? Is participatory planning and consensus building a new form of 'power' or a genuine realization that there are limits to the hubris of the development administrator or planner? What is the relationship of 'skills' to the more formal 'epistemic' knowledge? Is collaboration possible? Are the terms of the discourse between the two ways of knowing fair? Is there something about the method or process of the 'Metis' from which formal 'knowledge' can be learnt?

I would like to refer to two books – which are eight decades apart in time, but offer an integrative view of the role of science in society. Both understand and appreciate the transformative role of science and technology, but in their own ways, both also show the challenges which technology creates. Hints from Self Culture by Lala Hardayal, first published in London in April 1934, and Yuval Noah Harari's 21 Lessons for the 21st century. Lala Hardayal was a rational thinker, scholar extraordinaire, and the leading light of the Ghadar party. In these books, he gives reasons for the study of each subject, from mathematics to physics to metrology to poetry, dance and sculpture. He did not pronounce any exclusion, but said that the foremost study is that of the history of science in order to understand how Humanity has acquired an immense store of scientific knowledge through the centuries – from Aristotle to Einstein, and his list of scientists and scholars whose lives and works had to be read included Archimedes, Hippocrates, Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, Aryabhata, Sushruta, Darwin and Al Haithan – and they were people from across the globe!

Not for nothing is Harari the world's leading thinker, intellectual and best seller. In his first book, Sapiens, he surveyed the human past, examining how an insignificant ape became the ruler of planet earth. He followed it up with Homo Deus, which explored the long-term future of life, including the conquest over death, disease and disability, and how human beings make become gods, and what might be the ultimate destiny of intelligence and consciousness.

In the book under reference how can insights about the distant past and distant future help us make sense of current affairs and of the immediate dilemmas of human societies? What is happening right now? What are today's greatest challenges and choices?

THE WAY FORWARD

Let me now posit two major challenges - for Governance in India, and for Uttarakhand. Let's first talk of our state, and whether we can all take up the challenge of mitigating climate change, and making Uttarakhand carbon neutral, involving her citizens, especially the youth to actively engage with documenting traditional wisdom, celebrating jugaad as Metis and preserving the rich and irreplaceable biological diversity in our country. Uttarakhand is most vulnerable to climate-mediated risks. Mountainous regions are particularly vulnerable to climate change and have shown 'above average warming' in the 20th Century. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), impacts are expected to range from reduced genetic diversity of species to receding glaciers and an upwardly moving snowline, depleting natural resources, erratic rainfall, irregular winter rains, advancing cropping seasons, fluctuations in the flowering behaviour of plants, shifting of cultivation zones of apple and other crops, reduction in snow in winter, a rise in temperature, an increasing intensity and frequency of flash floods and drying up of perennial streams.

The challenge for the state is to convert this enormous challenge into an opportunity and harness the power of science and technology across sectors with the ultimate target of making Uttarakhand a carbon neutral state

HARNESSING THE POWER OF 'CITIZEN SCIENCE'

Just imagine sitting with your laptop in your home and working in your spare time, and being able to discover a new celestial object. Or using a mobile app on your smartphone to report rainfall or spot a migratory bird, thereby ending up contributing to a significant research finding.

Citizen science is nothing but scientific work undertaken by common people, who are not scientists themselves or even students of science, but collaborate with scientists and research institutes. The concept is gaining rapid popularity in India and citizen science projects have considerable potential to contribute to environmental monitoring, regulation and even decision making.

The case in point is a recently-released scientific report. State of India's Birds 2020, a rare synthesis of scientific understanding and citizen-led initiatives, using over 10 million observations made by over 15,500 bird watchers,

achieving what would be difficult for small groups of researchers working alone, and which has concrete implications for conservation policy-making on the ground.

UCOST, USAC, IIT Roorkee, GBP, AIIMS, HRDI Universities of Kumaon and Garhwal, FRI, FSI, ONGC, IIP and ICAR institutions and defence establishments and some very fine schools, colleges, NGOs and scientists who have made a name for themselves across the country and the globe could all work together.

Last but not the least, is a question which leads me to my home turf: excellence in administration. What good is all of this if I still have to run from pillar to post for my land record, or make endless rounds to get a decision on my entitlements? Why can't the government institutions at sub-district levels – schools, hospitals, ICDS centres, tehsil and block offices work with the same efficiency as UCOST or the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration? To my mind the reason is that we have still not given a competency framework to those at the cutting-edge level. Our Academy is now leading efforts towards FRAC and iGOT 2.0, a platform which will enable all government employees across central, state, districts and *panchayats* to understand the competencies required for their specific roles. Everyone who works for the government will have his or her defined role to prevent ambiguity, and she will also have the requisite support – in terms of rules, precedents, practices, court cases and web links – and this training can be undertaken online by the officer at her time, her place, her phone/computer, and more importantly, her pace! This is certainly an idea whose time has come, and all of us have to work together on this task of making our public systems perform better to make Ease of Living the defining leitmotif of governance.

ⁱ As Stephen Marglin has shown, 'the emphasis of self-interest, calculation and maximization in economics has classical examples of 'self-evident postulates', and reflect more an ideological commitment to the superiority of the episteme than a serious attempt to unravel the complexities and mysteries of human motivation and behaviour.

ⁱⁱ Source: Uttarakhand Action Plan for Climate Change, Government of Uttarakhand, 2014].

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: Citizen science growing in India: Study by Dinesh C Sharma, Down to Earth, 27 August, 2019.

^{iv} Source Hindu Editorial, Birds hit: On state of Indian birds, Feb 19, 2020]. Therefore, it is imperative that citizen science initiatives should be encouraged.

Stepping into a Mentor's Shoes: *Inaugural Address to Phase IV (2018 Batch)*

4 November, 2019

Let me join the course team in welcoming you to your Alma Mater – and I have had the privilege of training many of you and interacting with many more during the course of our careers. It is always nice to be back at the Academy, and each course has something unique about it - but to my mind the best part of this program is that you are now heading towards the peak of your careers – and you have an equal number of years ahead of you. Therefore, this is the time for stock taking, and recalibration. And this is the time when you can reflect on the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) as a service, you can introspect internally both on the opportunities to reinvent the processes of governance, help set the agenda for governance, and in the process redefine and recalibrate our roles – as well as the challenges - from lateral entry, from technology and from newer institutional contexts where many of our traditional roles can become redundant, or outsourced, or simply taken up by those who are not members of the Service.

As you are aware, we spent a week at Kevadia at the Statue of Unity where your younger colleagues were 'immersed' in a week-long exposure to a special foundation course, *Aarambh*, which was curated by the DoPT with the World Bank, Singularity University and the Institute of the Future, with additional sessions from Dr. Kiran Kumar, the head of Mission Mangalyan and Prof Vijay Raghavan. We had the World Bank President, Dr. Malpass speaking to us about the achievements of India on the twin fronts of poverty alleviation and improvements in the EODB with which I am sure many of you are involved. What strikes one is both the range and depth of knowledge, and an understanding of how successful organizations – whether as nations or enterprises or universities respond to, or better still anticipate change and move along with the technology and institutional innovations of the time. And my proposition is that as a Service, we in the civil services must ride the crest of change and accept the challenge of a \$5-trillion economy for India @75.

A competent and professional civil service has often delivered the objective of the sovereign, provided the sovereign is clear of what is expected: and in the process of delivering its mandate many new opportunities and possibilities

appear on the horizon. I use the term sovereign in the real and direct sense of exercise of power, and not the vague and general sense that sovereignty lies with the people of India. Well, the people of India elect a government at both the centre and the state, and those who exercise power on their behalf are 'sovereign' to the extent the Constitution has defined their powers of legislation and implementation, subject to judicial review and scrutiny with the clear proviso that while the Parliament is supreme and has wide powers of amendment, the fundamental verities of the Constitution cannot be tampered with. However, before Independence, the ICS had a covenant with the Secretary of State for India, and prior to 1858 it was with the EIC. An idea of their salience can be assessed from the abstract of my recent article in the special issue of *The Administrator*:

By whichever ideological disposition one may look at British rule, post the Royal Proclamation of 1858, which more or less coincides with the establishment of a merit-based civil service in India, there is a general acceptance that the ICS fulfilled its mandate of keeping the Empire geographically intact, revenue plus and offering protection to the commercial interests of the mother country. Management guru Peter Drucker marveled at the institution, which despite its (initial) reluctance to accept bright Indians into its fold, emerged as one of the finest organs of administration. India got a merit-based civil service after hundreds of years of arbitrary governance – after Kautilya's Arthashastra of the 3rd century BC, the next efforts at a rule-based pan India administration was made by Samudragupta. After a hiatus of many centuries, the revenue settlement was done for the Mughal Empire by Todar Mal, but it soon disintegrated, and the later Mughals were a poor shadow of their forbears.

This enterprise of getting 'civilizational India' in a marked territory appears to have been an externality, for throughout its existence, the British were well aware that the best way to rule this country was to harp on the 'differences' and promote these by playing one against the other. However, the rulers' imperative compelled them to have a common currency, a common civil and criminal code, extensive use of English and a system of governance, the topmost echelons of which were manned by the ICS. Controlled by the Secretary of State for India, this elite group kept the country together in all branches of administration – from the revenue to the judiciary to the development departments.

I must also mention that we are not discussing the EIC or the British rule – our focus is the instrument used by the British, and then by the leaders of the new Republic, and how effective this instrument was in accomplishing whatever it was asked to accomplish.

Let us first take up the territorial imperative – for as Kaplan puts it so succinctly in *The Revenge of Geography*, the only reality is the 'ground' reality – both

literally and metaphorically. It is true that the territorial imperative was an externality – more from the point of view of what James Scott would call “seeing as the state”. For while a general notion of Bharat or Hindustan as a civilizational entity had been existing for several millennia – and the opening lines of the Mahabharata have Sanjaya describing the line-up of the kings with their respective armies, India never had a nation state in the Westphalian sense of the term. Yes, there was a Chanakya and a Samudragupta, but the concept of *Dharma* laid greater emphasis on self-regulation and a balance of power, and though there was a general consensus on trade and commerce and traders, minstrels, professionals and mendicants roamed freely, and farmers too voted with their feet, we had areas of influence, rather than integrated state systems. Who, for example, was a Chakravarti maharaja, and what was the Ashvamedha Yajna? This marked the spread of hegemony and/or the acceptance of a tribute and a marriage of convenience to forge an alliance – but the contours of internal administration and the test of loyalty was determined by the ruler. Now, loyalty to a person is quite different from allegiance to a nation.

Thus, B.B. Mishra says “*The natural boundaries which the physical features of India provide, have constituted a source of strength in terms of geographical unity. At the same time however, the compactness of the region’s geography made it inward looking and largely isolated from the rest of the world, despite a series of foreign invasions ... All India empires which could otherwise engender an All India territorial concept were a rarity. And even when there was an all India territorial empire, like that of Chandragupta Maurya in the fourth century BC or of Samudragupta, a thousand years later, it proved to be short-lived, and the exception, rather than the rule*”. Thus, India’s political history lends itself to the conclusion that within the limits of its natural frontiers, there was always the quest for power and dominance of the ruling potentate with various well defined regions, each having a dominant linguistic affiliation. The regions and frontier states have also tried to make inroads, and Delhi or Agra have not always been the centres of power. Often times, the linguistic and religious identities were often juxtaposed – thus the failure of Tughlaq to establish his capital in the Deccan is a good illustration of how he was frustrated by both Muslim and Hindu chiefs. Even in the hey days of the Mughals, Delhi’s hold over Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa and Khandesh was notional. The Rajputs were both friends and foes of the Mughals, and in the anarchy that followed the post Aurangzeb period – the worst possible depredations were made as there was no central chain of command. And it was in this anarchy that the EIC became emboldened to create an army that was bigger and more effective than the ‘sovereigns’ from whom it derived its legitimacy.

My proposition is that the predecessor service, the ICS, played a significant role as the lead integrative agency – for whether it was as Collectors and Magistrates, or as Political Residents, or later as LGs/Governors and members of the Legislative Councils, they were a group that identified with each other, and also identified their interests with that of the district/province they were serving. They were powerful and dominant - not just because of the statute, but on account of the informal network and camaraderie. Of course, they had their share of acrimony and bitter animosities towards each other. But they did what no one had ever done before on a pan-India scale - the determination of boundaries on all the frontiers: with Afghanistan on the north west and with Tibet, Bhutan, Burma (now Myanmar), Sikkim and Nepal in the past. It is interesting to note that at various points of time in our history, all our neighbours have extended their tribute and influence deep into the country – the Afghans actually captured Delhi and became the rulers though in the period of the Mahabharata, Gandhara was very much part of Bharatvarsha which extended right up to Kamarupa and Manipur. The Gurkhas had taken major parts of the Kumaon extending their rule to the Tarai and Garhwal, and came up to Dehradun. The Burmese extracted tribute from all of Assam and the two important centres of Bengal – Chittagong and Murshidabad, and there was both intrigue and adventure in delineating the boundaries of Sikkim with Nepal and of Cooch Behar and Dooars with Bhutan.

The nineteenth century was also the century of surveys and maps to scale, and there is many an interesting story about how the road to Lhasa was surveyed by the Rawat brothers - Nain Singh and Kishen Singh and the opening of trade, of Kalimpong being the nest of spies. These maps and trade routes were important for a reason. These marked the delimitation of India's frontiers. For even the reasons were greater glory to the Empire, the political stability of India proceeded mainly from ensuring that the India under the Raj was insulated from Russia and China (including Tibet) by creating buffers and boundaries. Within India, they clearly marked out territories which had to be administered directly, and those which were to be part of the subsidiary alliance with the Nawabs and the Maharajas. This process was complete by the time of the Proclamation of 1858 and the control over India moved from the EIC directly to Her Majesty's government who exercised her authority through the Secretary of State for India. Incidentally, the administration of the princely states was also managed by the members of the ICS, who were called Residents. Often, the Commissioner or even the Deputy Commissioner exercised the powers of a Resident over the neighbouring states. It is also interesting to note that these were called princely states, never kingdoms. Thus, it was the ICS which ran the Empire, and it was the ICS and its successor

service which laid the foundations of a new nation. Ebrahim Rasool, a former Ambassador of South Africa to the United States of America and a provincial minister and member of the African National Congress spoke of the civil services in times of transition as 'undertakers of the old, and the midwife to the new-born' civil service. Post-independence, the integration of states was achieved by Sardar Patel with the direct assistance of VP Menon who took care to design a common instrument of accession for the very wide range of individual agreements that the Raj had made with the 562 princely states.

What holds a nation together? Its confidence in itself, and the commitment of its instruments, and the induction of the best talent to those entrusted with carrying out its mandate. May I suggest that by the end of World War 1, England had lost her nerve – both in terms of their military might, intellectual capacity and political foresight. They also lost the will to govern. Fewer graduates from the best universities were now taking and succeeding in the exam. When KPS Menon topped the ICS exam in 1921, it was the beginning of the end for the British component of the ICS, and by 1922 the examination was also held simultaneously in India. The 1935 Act reserved 40 percent of the total number of seats for Europeans, because they were losing out to the Indians in terms of a combined merit. The Act also provided for 20 percent seats for co-option from the provincial services.

After the Second World War and the election of Atlee as the Prime Minister, it was clear that the days of the Raj were numbered. In a fit of incompetent rage, the Secretary of State unilaterally announced the abolition of the ICS. It was at this juncture that the Sardar as the Interim Home Member stepped in – got the covenant shifted from the Secretary of State to the Interim government and laid the foundation for the formation of the IAS and the IPS as the successor services to the ICS and the Imperial Police in the teeth of severe opposition from members of the Congress. His reasons for the defence of the ICS and the need for a successor service have been well documented in the special edition of The Administrator which was released by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi on October 31, 2019 and as you will be getting a copy, I will not dwell on this.

However, the institution has grown from strength to strength – for the best and brightest have opted to join its ranks. That the people who join constitute the best minds in the country has been universally acknowledged, and even the Hon'ble Prime Minister made a reference to this fact in his tweet.

The strength of this instrument has been the process of selection, its versatility, its willingness to look at 'signals' and take the first mover advantage, so far. As such, the instrument has coped with regime change, and the move from

revenue to law and order management to development interventions and municipal governance, besides retaining the co-ordination function. And there were some administrative traditions which Prime Minister Modi advised the young administrators to emulate: these included tours to the interior and a direct contact with the cultivators and artisans, the writing (and updating) of district gazetteers, and handing over notes to one's successor. One can also argue in hindsight that one great advantage of the ICS was there were no silos – they ran all the departments.

Now there are two ways – or rather two or three ways to look at ourselves. We can turn 'exclusivists', or we can look at the option of inclusion. We need to think through this - and as the head of this Academy, I also need to address the elephant in the room. By the IAS, do we mean only those who did their FC here? Are not the inducted officers equal members of the Service, or are we going to define 'merit' only on the criterion of birthing. Are we going to treat the members of the allied services as allies, or competitors? What will be our attitude to the lateral entrants? Most state associations, and even the IC&AS Association have been grappling with these issues – to no clear answers, but let me look at the pointers. From resistance to acceptance to welcome – now many state associations organize a welcome dinner for the Inductees to the IAS. Between lateral entrants as Joint Secretaries to an officer of the Forest or the Economic service, we prefer the latter. Well, all of us have done the Foundation Course together. When it came to opening the portals of the Academy for induction of the lateral entrants, there was an internal resistance here, and I was a part of it. Would we like to be called 'change-proof', or should we take change in our stride and welcome it. That would depend on how we perceive ourselves. And I would want you to perceive yourselves as confident, strong and powerful. We must not shy away from it. It is our Dharma to be powerful, but we have to exercise power, not for personal pelf, but for those whom we are meant to serve, for the marginal and small farmer, for the MGNREGS worker, for those in aspirational districts, as well as on the negotiating table at the United Nations and the World Bank.

Finally, what is the purpose? Is it self-perpetuation in itself and for itself, or is it for a larger cause? If it is the former, then why would anyone else stand for it, and for how long will it be seen as legitimate. If on the other hand, we are for a cause which is larger than the sum of the parts, there will be support from many quarters, both seen and unseen. Institutions with doors do better than institutions which only have windows, and those without ventilation and fresh air fade into oblivion.

Sardar Patel and The Making of the IAS

26-31 October, 2019

While every nation has to have a bureaucracy, the shape it takes, the role it performs and the salience it has in the eco system of governance depends largely on the vision of those who were instrumental in setting it up, the confidence they had in working with them, the mode of selection as well as the conventions laid down by the founding fathers of the nation. This in turn depends on the experience of those who were at the helm at the time of the establishment of the Service.

This paper will take a look at the role of Sardar Patel, not just in the making of the IAS, but also the retention of the ICS, and laying the foundation of an ideal relationship between the political leadership and the permanent civil service. It was a relationship of trust and mutual confidence backed by Constitutional Guarantees, an absolutely fair and transparent system of selection, besides inculcating, by example, a sense of patriotism and nation building among them. By placing on the nascent civil service the role of keeping India united, Patel made them responsible for this mammoth task, which we take for granted today, but which at the time of Independence was fraught with many an uncertainty. It will also examine Patel's experience in public life: as the Mayor of Ahmedabad Corporation, as the leading light of the INC and the Gujarat Congress and later as the Home Minister in the Interim cabinet, and the possible impact it may have had on his views on the civil service.

BUREAUCRACY AND THE SHIP OF THE STATE: THE ICS AND THE EMPIRE

By whichever ideological disposition one may look at British rule, post the Royal Proclamation of 1858, which more or less coincides with the establishment of a merit based civil service in India there is a general acceptance that the ICS fulfilled its mandate of keeping the Empire geographically intact, revenue surplus and offering protection to the commercial interests of the mother country. Management guru Peter Drucker marveled at the institution, which despite its initial reluctance to accept bright Indians in its fold emerged as one of the finest organs of administration.

India got a merit based civil service after hundreds of years of arbitrary governance – after Kautilya's Arthashastra of the 3rd century BC, the next efforts at a rule based pan-India administration were made by Chandragupta and Samudragupta, followed by Harsha, who could not extend his domain beyond the North. After a long hiatus, Todar Mall established a revenue code for Akbar, but the latter Moghuls were a shadow of their forebears. In the Anarchy² that followed, which is reflected in the sub title of Dalrymple's book by the same name - *the East India Company, corporate violence and the pillage of an empire*, governance was reduced to collection of tax, suppression of dissent and a feeble attempt at fixing the borders.

The East India Company, and later the Empire did what no one had done before. Inadvertently, they fixed the 'borders and maps of civilizational India'. The rulers' imperative compelled them to have a common currency, a common civil and criminal code, extensive use of English and a system of governance, the topmost echelons of which were manned by the ICS. Having done this, they realized that the best way to rule this country was to harp on the 'differences' and promote these by playing one against the other and assume the burden of keeping these borders sacrosanct. This is the one marked difference between a civilizational society and a nation state, but in the latter project, the ICS, and later its successor service, the IAS played a salient role.

The Indian Civil Service, was part of the nineteenth century Imperial Civil Service, created according to the provision of Section XXXII (32) of the Government of India Act passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1858³; was the higher Civil Service of the British Empire in British India, which remained in existence during the entire British Rule in the country between 1858 and 1947, the year of India's freedom. The members of this Service while working for the office of the Secretary of State for India were responsible for approximately thirty crore Indians (population of the country at that time) in two hundred and fifty districts. They were responsible for keeping control over the country in various forms and the implementation of policies of the Colonial Government.

The British Parliament had by its historic decision taken in 1861 abolished the system of nomination for the Service and resolved induction of people in the ICS through competitive examinations from English of all British subjects, without racial distinction. The competitive examination for the entry to the Civil Service was combined for the diplomatic, the home, the Indian and the Colonial Services. The minimum age was fixed at 21 years while the maximum age limit was 24 years, and everyone was entitled to a maximum number of

three attempts. *Incidentally, there was no retirement age, but officers were expected to resign after thirty-five years.*

From the day the Civil Service was thrown open to the Indians, it attracted to its ranks some of the ablest men in the country who made their mark in the various branches of the administration. The first Indian to enter the ICS was Satyendranath Tagore, a brother of the poet. Seven years after Tagore's admission in 1864, four more Indians, namely, Surendranath Banerjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Beharilal Gupta and Shripad Babaji Thakur, followed his example.

Sir Surendranath Banerjee, who belonged to the second batch of Indians that entered the Service, would probably have won many administrative laurels had not his brilliance cost him his job. Two more names of brilliant civilians may be mentioned by way of illustration. The achievement of *KPS Menon*, both in the academic and the administrative domain, were impressive. He appeared for the ICS examination in 1921 and outshone all his competitors, Indian and British, by standing first.

But these were exceptions, for while the Royal Proclamation made all Her Majesty's subjects equal, with few honourable exceptions, most British officers harboured deep rooted prejudice. While the Congress and every shade of Indian opinion wanted a greater opportunity for Indians, it was only from 1922 that simultaneous exams were held in London and Allahabad, and the Indian component got much better change. Later as per the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935, the Federal Public Service Commission and the Provincial Public Service Commissions were constituted.

The recommendations of the Government of India Act 1935, also proposed that future batches of the ICS officers should be composed of 40% Europeans and 40% Indians, remaining 20% appointments be filled by direct promotion of Indians from the Provincial Civil Services.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE SARDAR

It may be mentioned that just as Indians were making a dent in the ICS, Sardar Patel was emerging as one of the main lieutenants of the Mahatma, leader of the Congress, the undisputed mass leader who had a 360 degree connect with everyone - from the peasants of Bordoloi to the workers of and mill-owners of Ahmedabad and the heads of provincial Congress committees across the country.

With the working of the Government of India Act, 1935 elected governments in provinces were formed. In most of the provinces, the Congress had formed the government under the supervision of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the then

Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board. Thus, the Sardar had an overall control over the Congress government in provinces and experience of working with Civil Services. Prior to this, he had successfully dealt with Civil Servants in different capacities: as the Chairman of the Ahmedabad Municipality (1924-28), the Satyagrahas, especially the Non-Co-operation Movement (1920) the Bordoloi Kisan Agitation (1928), and the catastrophic floods in Gujarat (1927). From his vast experience, the Sardar had not only understood and appreciated the importance of the members of the Indian Civil Service and visualised their role in the near future, especially in keeping India united, but had also developed an unambiguous approach towards them.

Meanwhile, Patel had also cut his teeth in the Congress organization. When he tried to revitalise old institutions like Gujarat Sabha, when Gandhi was made its President in 1917. Together, they transformed it from an elite to a peoples' institution, and broadened its social base. Gujarat Sabha was given the responsibility to carry out a constructive programme to serve the people. Its members were asked to organise a march to Nilgiris to demand the release of Annie Besant who was arrested there for the Home Rule activities.

After the failure of Kheda peasant movement, Gandhi and Vallabhbhai realised the inherent weakness of Gujarat Sabha. It had a fragile structure, and lacked the organisational solidarity. He also found India National Congress in Gujarat in a state of disarray and realized the importance of establishing a hierarchy of provincial, district, taluka and village Congress Committees. In 1921, Vallabhbhai was made its President, the position he enjoyed up to 1946. He learnt the art of managing large and complex organizations, trusting people, delegating responsibility and keeping an ear to the ground.

With the launch of the Quit India Movement, the formation of the INA, the revolt of the Naval ratings and the economic collapse of Britain after the World War, the writing on the wall was clear. The days of the Empire were numbered. The British were keen to cut their losses, (especially their prestige), and leave. It appears that their reactions were driven both by a sense of impotent rage and sheer inadequacy to deal with such a complex situation. Rather than consult the members of the interim Cabinet or the leadership of the Congress which was spearheading the freedom movement, their decision making reflected their lack of concern about the governance of the country they had direct and absolute control for nearly a century. And so, amidst deepening crisis in the Interim Government, the Secretary of State decided in October 1946, to stop further recruitment to the Indian Civil Service, with the indication of the possibility of termination of his connection with the Services earlier than the date of Constitutional changes. Such a step had dangerous implications. A

breakdown prior to the transfer of power in the already depleted Services, endangered the country's administrative unity. The British had built their Empire on the foundations of such unity through the "Steel Frame." Such a "Frame" was all the more needed in a newly-born democratic India, yet, riddled with fissiparous tendencies. Patel felt more than any other leader that only a single, all-India Administrative Service and Indian Police Service could help him preserve what the British had built and through which that had ruled over India.

Acting with alacrity, he called a conference of the provincial Chief Ministers (then called Premiers/Prime Ministers) on 21-22 October 1946 at New Delhi and spoke to them with stern confidence: The sooner the Secretary of State's control is ended and the present structure wound up, the better. He went on to say:

The main question was whether a Central or a Provincial service should replace the ICS and the IP, recruitment to which had been stopped by the Secretary of state in view of the Constitutional changes The Interim government is in favour of an All India administrative service. The reason which prompted the decision in favour of an All India administrative service was mutual advantage to both Centre and the Provinces. Under this arrangement, it would facilitate liaison between the Centre and the provinces, ensure a certain uniformity of standards of administration and maintain the central administrative machinery in touch with good realities. The provincial administrative machinery, on its part will acquire a wider outlook, and obtain the best material for the higher posts.

Eleven provinces which then constituted British India (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, U.P., Punjab, Bihar, C.P., Assam, NWFP, Orissa and Sindh) were represented by their Premiers or Revenue Ministers and /or their Chief Secretaries shared their frank views in this conference. While seven provinces were clearly in favour of retention, Punjab, Bengal and Sindh wanted the ICS replaced with a provincial service. Assam wanted a new Service in which the control should be with the province, and not someone far away. Note here that even then, the North East felt its 'distance from Delhi'.

The Revenue Minister of Punjab Nawab Muzaffar Ali Quzailbash felt that the 'provinces must have full control over their services', and to have full control, they must also select their own services. This would also ensure proper representation of communities and greater attention to local problems, and on the whole be conducive to efficient administration. Provinces should place the services of their officers on deputation with the Centre'.

Typically, in his closing remarks, the Sardar stated that 'there was a general feeling in favour of the formation of an All India service and hoped that after

the general scheme was framed, those who were at present not in favour, would be convinced that adequate allowances had been made for Provincial susceptibilities regarding control and would agree to join in. It was in this meeting that induction to the IAS was also discussed, and the following consensus emerged. 'It was agreed that the quota for promotion of Provincial services men in the proposed service should be 25% of the superior posts. The provinces should be left free (to select) to devise rules of selection for the Provincial services quota, but the process selected would be subject to a certificate of fitness by the Federal Public Service Commission. It may be noted that the extant provisions gave a 20% promotion quota as per the 1935 GoI Act.

The conference also agreed that training for all members of the higher civil services – whatsoever be the mode of recruitment should be under a central scheme- and also that cadre allotment should be done in consultation with the provinces, and in making the allotments, the candidates should, as far as possible be allotted to the province of their origin. As Sardar Patel was in great hurry to fill the vacant position, he convinced the provincial heads, and decided to induct officers who were discharged from the Indian Armed Forces. Training for such offices was started at Metcalfe House in New Delhi on April 1947. He addressed the first batch of trainee officers at Metcalfe House on 21st April 1947. Speaking on the code of conduct for public servants: he said,

Above all, I would advise you to maintain to the utmost the impartiality and incorruptibility of administration a civil servant cannot afford to and must not take part in politics, must be involved himself in communal wrinkles to depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to the base public service and to lower its dignity similarly no service worth the name can claim to exist if it does not have in view the achievement of the highest standard of integrity.

You are the pioneers of the Indian service. The future of the service will depend upon the foundation and traditions that will be laid down by you, by your character and abilities, and by your spirit of service. You can look forward to your future with trust and confidence and if you serve in the true spirit of service and sure you will have your best reward I shall ask you therefore to devote yourself to your studies fully conscious of responsibilities and opportunities that await you.

Earlier, he had called some thirty senior officers of ICS in early 1947 to his house at 1, Aurangzeb Road (now Abdul Kalam Road) and he touched and moved their hearts when he extended a humble invitation to join the government after independence to play the role in building independent India.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES

The issue of constitutional guarantees to the civil services was not uncontested, and Patel's intervention in the Constituent Assembly proved necessary for the acceptance of two Articles relating to the Services. One, Article 311, made it difficult for the political executive to punish officials, while Article 314, guaranteed the terms and privileges of members of the Indian Civil Service in accordance with an assurance that Sardar had given shortly before independence. As mentioned earlier, the Sardar was keen that Civil Services should feel 'secure' in their new *Avatar*, especially as they were seeing a major transition in their roles and responsibilities. Both provisions attracted criticism, as many members of the Assembly had been imprisoned during the freedom struggle by the officials whom the Article would protect.

Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, a future Speaker of the Lok Sabha, said of Article 314: 'This is an extraordinary guarantee ... This guarantee asks us to forget that those persons who are still in the service— 400 of them — committed excesses.' He went to say that while ordinary masses had not been guaranteed food and clothing but an extraordinary guarantee was being given to persons who committed excesses thinking, this was not their country and got salaries out of proportion to the national income. Professor Shibban Lal Saxena expressed his opinion that the Article should not bind future Parliaments from determining the conditions of service of its servants. It would be derogatory of the Sovereignty of Parliament. Another member, Babu Ram Narayan Singh had expressed his opinion, with regret that no reciprocal assurances were forthcoming from those assured of a safeguarded future.

H V Kamath and Nasiruddin Ahmed also did not agree with the language of the proposal. Mahavir Tyagi, a bureaucrat turned freedom fighter also opposed the proposal of special protection to civil servants saying that it would be a perpetual liability to future parliaments. He was also not in the favour of speedy elevations to the Secretaries and Joint Secretaries and wanted to insert a provision of freedom to the future parliaments to reduce the number of secretaries according to their requirements. He opined that the pay offered to the bureaucrats would be a great burden on the state exchequer and thought that the bulk of the benefits from the Independence went to the service people. Rohini Kumar Chaudhary, while supporting the Article appealed to the members of the civil services to return the Constituent Assembly's gesture by renouncing a part of the guaranteed remuneration in the country's interest. He mentioned that the civil servants unlike Congress leaders had made no sacrifice and were drawing higher salaries and better perks than the ministers.

Dr. S. Deshmukh opined that the service was really a reminder of the days of India's slavery, and should not be incorporated in the Constitution. He felt that a guarantee could be given to them, but it was not necessary to include it in the Constitution.

The Sardar took the bull by the horns. In his address to the Constituent Assembly, the Sardar praised the Civil Servants who had option of providing services to outside agencies on better terms, but they decided to work with the new Government without any apprehensions. Challenging those who were negatively disposed towards the Civil Servants, he said:

There was plenty of scope at that time for them to come out (of Government Service) and get better terms from outside agencies. Even now, if you are not willing to keep them, find out your substitute and many of them will go; the best of them will go. I will like to assure you that I have worked with them during this difficult period I am speaking with a sense of heavy responsibility, and I must confess that in point of patriotism, in point of loyalty, in point of sincerity and in point of ability, you cannot have a substitute. They are as good as ourselves, and to speak of them in disparaging terms in this House, in public, and to criticise them in this manner, is doing disservice to yourselves and to the country. This is my considered opinion.'

Sir, I am distressed (said Patel) that a senior member like Mr. Ayyangar... harbours the feeling that [the I.C.S. officers] are enemies of our country. If that is so, it was his business and the business of those people who think on those lines to move first a resolution to dispense with them and run the administration in [a] vacuum.

I have worked with [these civil servants] during this difficult period. I am speaking with a sense of heavy responsibility, and I must confess that in point of patriotism, in point of loyalty, in point of sincerity and in point of ability... they are as good as ourselves... [T]o speak of them in disparaging terms in this House, in public, and to criticise them in the this manner, is doing disservice to yourselves and to the country...

What is the use of talking that the service people were serving while we were in jail? I myself was arrested; I have been arrested several times. But that has never made any difference in my feeling towards people in the services. I do not defend the black sheep; they may be there. But are there not many honest people among them?...

I wish to place it on record in this House that if, during the last two or three years, most of the members of the services had not behaved patriotically and

with loyalty, the Union would have collapsed. Ask Dr. John Matthai (the Finance Minister). He is working for the last fortnight with them on the economic question. You may ask his opinion. You will find what he says about the Services.

You ask the Premiers of all provinces. Is there any Premier in any province who is prepared to work without the Services? He will immediately resign. He cannot manage. We had a small nucleus of a broken Service. With that bit of Service, we have carried on a very difficult task...

The Police which was broken have been brought to its proper level and is functioning fairly efficiently. The Heads of the Departments of the Police in every province are covered under this guarantee. Are you going to change that? Are you going to put your Congress volunteers as captains? What is it that you propose to do?

Learn to stand upon your pledged word... Also, as a man of experience I tell you, do not quarrel with the instruments with which you want to work. It is a bad workman who quarrels with his instruments...

So, once and for all decide whether you want this service or not. If you have done with it and decide not to have this service at all, even in spite of my pledged word, I will take the Services with me and go. The Services will earn their living. They are capable people...

If you want an efficient All-India Service, I advise you to allow the services to open their mouth freely. If you are a Premier, it would be your duty to allow your Secretary, or Chief Secretary, or other services working under you, to express their opinion without fear or favour...

I see a tendency today that in several provinces the services are set upon and told, 'You are servicemen; you must carry out our orders.' The Union will go, you will not have a united India, if you have not a good all-India service which has the independence to speak out its mind, which has a sense of security that you will stand by your word and, that after all there is [a Constitution] of which we can be proud, where their rights and privileges are secure.

This Constitution is meant to be worked by a ring of Service which will keep the country intact. We have in our collective wisdom come to a decision that we shall have this model wherein the ring of Service will be such that will keep the country under control...

Today my Secretary can write a note opposed to my views. I have given that freedom to all my Secretaries. I have told them, 'If you do not give your honest opinion for fear that it will displease your Minister, please then you had better go. I will bring another Secretary.'...

[A]ll Members of the Parliament should support the Services, except where any individual member of the Service may be misbehaving or erring in his duty or committing a dereliction of his duties. Then bring it to my notice. I will spare nobody, whoever he is.

But if these service people are giving you full value of their Services and more, then try to learn to appreciate them. Forget the past. We fought the Bruisers for so many years. I was their bitterest enemy and they regarded me as such, but I am very frank, and they consider me to be their sincere friend.

What did Gandhiji teach us? You are talking of Gandhian ideology and Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian way of administration. Very good. But you come out of the jail and then say, 'These men put me in jail. Let me take revenge.' That is not the Gandhian way. It is going far away from that...

Therefore, for God's sake, let us understand where we are... If you want to take anything from the Service, you [should] touch their heart... Don't take a lathi and say, 'We are a Supreme Parliament.'

You have supremacy for this kind of thing? To go back on your word?

All opposition collapsed after this intervention. The articles were accepted. The paragraphs quoted show that the Sardar's defense of the I.C.S., as also his roles in creating its successor, the I.A.S., and the Indian Police Service, sprang from his grasp of the follies of revenge and of breaking one's word, and from his grasp of the criticality, of a bold civil service in a democracy.

SARDAR PATEL: THE PATRON-SAINT OF CIVILIANS AND HIS CIVIL SERVANTS

It is generally believed that but for the vision and sagacity of the Sardar, the ICS officers, who were regarded as protégés of the British, would be booted out after Independence, and replaced by patriotic persons. Nehru had himself once remarked of the Indian Civil Service (ICS): 'I think it was Voltaire who defined the 'Holy Roman Empire' as something which was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. Just as someone else once defined the Indian Civil Service, with which we are unfortunately still afflicted in this country, as neither Indian, nor civil, nor a service.'

However, Vallabhbai's deep-seated trust in the civil servants won him several battles post-independence. No wonder, Rajmohan Gandhi: the author of Sardar's biography says,

'His stout defence of the man of the ICS and his role in the founding of its successor agency, the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police

Service earned him the title of the civilians 'Patron Saint'. The civilians' industry, ability and in some cases the independence had impressed Vallabhbhai, but he also saw All India Services as a protection against separatism and they gave centre a lever against the provinces.

As an administrator in charge of Home, Patel's immediate task was to grapple with the problems the country was facing on political as well as administrative front. Girija Shankar Bajpai, Secretary General to the Government of India and the senior most ICS, called it, 'a double task: conservative, in the good sense of the word, in what had been provinces in the old India; creative in the Indian States. Neither was easy. To the ordinary stresses of a transition caused by the withdrawal of trained personnel, who had wielded all power for a hundred years, was added to the strain of Partition and the immense human upheavals and suffering that followed it.' Bajpai thought: 'The fate our new State hung in the balance during those perilous months ... that, despite some oscillation, the scales stayed steady was due not only to the faith of the people in its leaders, but to the firm will and strong hand of the new Home Minister-Sardar Patel.'

As per the British historian Judith Brown: 'Patel, as Home Minister in the Interim Government, was well aware that in the turbulent days of 1946-47, the ICS, whatever its previous image in the eyes of Congressmen, was a bastion against chaos and disintegration of Government.' Patel was 'partly instrumental in persuading other Congressmen that continuity in administration must be maintained, clearly the Service was a source of stability.' He, therefore, turned to those members of the ICS who had opted to serve free India. He needed them as much they needed him. The British had left them orphaned; while Prime Minister Nehru and pro-left Congressmen openly aired hostility towards them as a class.

Patel's concept of the Civil Service emerged from the belief he held and which he once expressed to his Home Secretary H.V.R. Iengar: 'It would be a bad day if people did not look up to officials holding high positions. Ministers come and Ministers go, but the permanent machinery (the Civil Service) must be good and firm, and have the respect of the people.'

The officers working with the Sardar found that he listened, was not omniscient, said little, said it clearly, decided quickly, delegated freely, inserted no second thoughts and took responsibility. In addition he was accessible to his officials and often in direct touch with them. He was in short, the Civil Servant's ideal minister.

The government faced an extremely difficult administrative problem over the implementation of the Congress Working Committee resolution directing it to

take immediate steps towards the formation of a linguistic Andhra State. Iengar, as Home Secretary, was however, opposed to making a move in the matter. Being in a quandary, he asked Patel: 'Sir, the gentlemen who have passed this resolution include Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and you yourself. All of you are Cabinet Ministers and you have taken this decision. What do you expect of me to do about it?' without a moment's hesitation, Patel asked me: 'Are you or are you not, the Home Secretary?' Iengar was little taken aback. 'Of course, I am', he replied. 'Then', Patel said, 'do your duty as Home Secretary.' After the Cabinet meeting, Iengar called on Patel and told him rather in lighter vein: 'I have succeeded in getting you as Home Minister to overrule yourself as Sardar Patel of the Congress Working Committee.'

Patel had a quick eye for merit and could gauge the potential of each officer and knew what use to make of him. From his officers he demanded fidelity and integrity; and in return he gave them his trust. A striking example of Patel's trust in Civil Servants is typified by the confidence he reposed in his redoubtable States Secretary, V P Menon, which he enjoyed to a degree as no other Civil Servants perhaps did, even when he was a non-ICS. Such confidence Patel had expressed as early as July 1946, when he told him: 'Menon, you and I are working for a common purpose. Let there be no mistake about our determination to achieve Independence. If the British are under the impression that they can hang on because of the difference of opinion between the Congress and the League, they are mistaken. We will not consider any sacrifice too great to achieve our objective.'

Menon describes Sardar's leadership in these words: 'Leadership is of two kinds. A leader like Napoleon, who was master of both policy and detail, wanted merely the instrument to carry out his orders. Sardar's leadership was of the second category. Having selected his men, he trusted them entirely to implement his policy. Sardar never assumed that he knew everything and he never adopted a policy without full and frank consultation. Whenever we entered into any discussion, we did so as personal friends rather than as Minister and Secretary.'

Patel, as an administrator was precise, direct, sometimes biting but always strong. It could be soft and soothing, or cut through like a razor. But he was never discreet in the use of words. His effectiveness lay in his restraint, in his unerring judgment, fair-mindedness and inflexible determination. Iengar calls him a 'genius in the art of administration' who had 'a tremendous capacity for listening-and listening patiently and carefully—before he made up his mind. And, thereafter, he was a rock.' And, 'after listening and reflection', when he

had made up his mind, then, 'you knew that a giant had got up and moved inflexibility into action.'

Even those who were not directly under him feel his presence. Once a bureaucrat, who had an unpleasant experience with another very senior politician, asked Patel in some context if he really wanted his honest opinion. Patel erupted: 'Does Government pay you Rs 4000 a month for your dishonest opinions? It is for you to give an honest opinion; and it is for me to accept it or not.'

The conditions changed rapidly when the Congress assumed charges in the interim Government formed in October 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the Food Minister. He was a God-fearing man, a man of very strict principles and of the highest integrity. However, he was not familiar with the intricacies of administration, and whenever he was faced with a difficult situation, he invariably consulted Sardar Patel, and on some occasions he even brought him to the Ministry to attend some official discussions (K L Punjabi).

MKK Nair recalls 'On April 27, 1948, Sardar Patel wrote to Nehru, 'I need hardly emphasize that an efficient, disciplined and contented Service, assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work, is a sine qua none of sound administration under a democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule. The Service must be above the party and we should ensure that political considerations, either in recruitment or in discipline and control are reduced to the minimum, if not eliminated altogether.' (MKK Nair)

Philip Mason, a British ICS, had commented that Patel was 'a natural administrator who did not seem to need experience.' Things seemed to come to him instinctively and intuitively. He belongs to that rare class of administrators who are born, not made.

It was no wonder that the death of Sardar Patel (December 16, 1950) was mourned by the Civil Servants with all the poignancy of personal bereavement. After his death, a condolence meeting was held in the Central Hall of Parliament in New Delhi when all civil servant posted in New Delhi their tribute of tears to his memory. The meeting, which was presided over by Sir, Girija Shankar Bajpai, passed a resolution re-affirming the officers' determination to render devoted service to the nation. The resolution stated that they owed 'a special debt to him for his confidence and support, and for his keen and unflinching solicitude for our welfare. In grateful remembrance of his services to India and his trust in us, we pledge our complete loyalty and unremitting zeal in service to the land that he helped to liberate and to strengthen.' He went on to say 'We meet today to mourn the loss and to pray

tribute to the memory of a great patriot, a great administrator and the great man. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was all the three, a rare combination in any historical epoch and in any country.'

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Remembering Late B.N. Yugandhar, Former Director, the Academy

13 September, 2019

B.N. YUGANDHAR, the legendary ex-Director of our Academy passed away after a prolonged illness at a government hospital on 13th September, 2019 at Hyderabad. His last rites were performed by his son Stay Nadella at Mahaprasthanam, in the simplest possible and fitting manner. Some newspapers commented that very few IAS officers were present at his funeral. He and his family wanted it that way. As the Hindu reported: The 1962 batch IAS officer, who passed away at the age of 82 on Friday, scaled heights in an illustrious career, but carried them with least frills and modestly. He strictly went by the rule book and managed to steer clear of controversy.

A remembrance meeting for him was held at the campus he headed, and in the auditorium that he had conceptualised last Monday. Tributes had started pouring in from across batches, services and cadres and political leaders he had worked with, (although the most influential person he worked for, PV Narasimha Rao, had pre-deceased him). Vice President Venkaiah Naidu wrote “saddened by the demise of former bureaucrat, late B. N. Yugandhar. He was an upright and committed officer who worked for the upliftment of the marginalized sections of society and to improve life in rural India.

He had trained a generation of civil servants at the Academy, first as a Deputy Director in the seventies, and later as the Director from 1988 to 1993. However his involvement in the life of the Academy commenced from his days as a probationer for he was elected as the President of the Mess Committee, who in many ways is the representative of his batch.

His batchmate NR Krishnan recalls Yugi as one who ‘believed in laying down broad goals and objectives’. Another ex-colleague Amitabha Bhattacharya wrote ‘fortunately the Academy has been steered in critical junctures by sagacious administrators like B.N. Yugandhar. Thereby making it a premier training institution for civil servants’. JVR Prasad Rao, former Union Health Secretary said ‘was inspired by his Never Say Die approach, incorrigible optimism and above all a tremendous sense of humour. He will be greatly missed by his admirers.’ Shanta Sheela Nair described him as ‘Thought master and taught us the value of hard,

relentless work and the pursuit of anti-poverty measures with selfless passion and deep commitment.'

My batchmate R Subrahmanyam, who had a very close association and bonding with him wrote *"as the Director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie, the training ground of young IAS officers, he turned the place around. New buildings came up, infrastructure was upgraded: and more importantly, a new purpose was drilled into the IAS officers – to be proactive, upright, empathic and strong. Never to stop, he re-wrote the development story of the country standing with legends like SR Sankaran. A new creed of positive and proactive administration was unveiled. It was the poor who attracted his attention. He always said, 'focus on the poor, others can take care of themselves.'* And we were enriched by his vision. Society emerged much stronger, better administered, more educated and prosperous.'

Those whom he trained had a very special love and affection for him. My colleague and Special Director Arti Ahuja in a fitting tribute wrote *'He drummed into us the values of empathy, discipline and non-tolerance of mediocrity and 'çhalsa hai', never for a moment making us feel that we were a privileged lot. These values stood 'Yugandhar's Probationer''* in good stead in the years ahead.

A short movie on the life and times of this legendary bureaucrat based on archival material available at the Academy and short video clips sent by his colleagues and trainees was screened and a slim volume listing the resolutions and messages from across the country was published. Floral tributes were offered by employees who had worked with him, and what was remarkable was a recollection of the keen interest he had in the welfare and betterment of those who were at the margins everywhere. No wonder the Mess workers and their families were amongst those who were most saddened by this loss.

Two additional secretaries, both his trainees, V Srinivas from the Department of AR & PG and K Srinivas from the Department of Personnel and Training flew in to pay their tributes in person. V Srinivas wrote *'B.N. Yugandhar was the man who instilled the love for land reforms in IAS probationers, established the Land Reforms Unit at the Academy, had an incredible commitment to implementing the ceiling laws, protection of tenancy rights and protection of common lands and temple lands. 'The torch of justice must burn bright', he would often say. It was by listening to his eloquence and erudition of the subject that I learnt that 'Revenue Law is a subject of great beauty with tremendous spiritual strength.*

K Srinivas called him ‘Late B.N. Yugandhar was a colossus in many ways – a giant of a man, in his thoughts, deeds and quite literally as well. My first encounter with him was as a greenhorn probationer in 1990 as he strode across the Director’s lawns of LBSNAA – tall, gaunt, wearing a long coat, only a pipe missing to complete Sherlockian image.

Last, but not the least, the Central IC&AS Association tweeted:

B.N. YUGANDHAR was a man who became a legend in his lifetime. He will live on, and the Academy commits itself to carry forward his work, especially in the domain of Rural studies and Land management with a clear focus on land rights for the marginal and small farmers. The Academy proposes to name the Centre for Rural Studies as the BN Yugandhar Centre for Rural Studies.

The Diamond Jubilee Batch: 94th Foundation Course Inaugural Address

27 August, 2019

At the outset, let me *congratulate all of you on your sterling success* in the Civil Services Examination. It is indeed one of the toughest *and most challenging examinations in the world*- and it gets tougher with every passing year as the number of aspirants grow, competitive professional coaching is available, and aspirations are rising. Unlike some of my colleagues who feel that the Services are losing their sheen, I am absolutely proud and confident of the civil services, and believe that there is no parallel to the myriad opportunities which the civil services have to offer – and now you are part of the great Indian steel frame – a structure which defies both rust and dust – and which gains strength from the expectations of our key stakeholders as well as our own zeal and dedication in fulfilling the Constitutional mandate that has been entrusted upon us.

Let me also *compliment you for having toiled so hard for this examination*. No one, to my knowledge has cracked this exam without a lot of hard work, and I doubt if anyone ever was absolutely sure of making it to the list. I must mention here that three or four days before the UPSC results, I recorded in my diary: *Lest I ever become very arrogant and state that I was confident of clearing this exam, let me record how tense and insecure I am feeling today*. I penned this on 2nd June, 1985 when I was still working for the Economic Times and harboured the impression that my written exam and the interview had both gone off quite well.

Let me impress upon you *the fact that you are here as a matter of RIGHT*. You are not in the civil service by the Grace or the goodwill of anyone – or because you belong to families which are connected with the affairs of the state. Unlike politics or Bollywood or the corporate world, you are not here because of any inheritance. You have worked hard to get where you have reached – and you can certainly have this particular chip on your shoulder.

Please also remember that *you are here because your selection was absolutely above board*. The processes of UPSC are absolutely fair and transparent, and as you

would have noticed, every step in the process was clearly defined, and there is zero scope for error.

I would also like to mention here that as most of you are qualified professionals, you have made a *conscious career choice* in opting for the government, rather than seeking higher paid assignments in the corporate world, or moving to foreign pastures where life could be comparatively easier, but certainly less eventful.

And you are all very fortunate – for without the *blessings of Almighty* and your parents, guardians and teachers, you may have just missed the mark. For those of you are atheists, you can give yourselves another pat on the back!

You are a very special batch for you have joined in the Diamond jubilee year of the Academy. Therefore you are the '*forever Diamond Batch*', *for no batch before and after can be a Diamond Jubilee batch – and only Diamonds are forever!*

This is the first batch which will visit the Statue of Unity at Kevadia, and you will interact with the best of thought leaders from the world of technology, polity, commerce, governance: like our Prime Minister, many of them feel that incrementalism and 'improving the business as usual strategy' cannot take India on the high growth trajectory that he has envisioned for the young civil servants. He will be addressing all of us at the Statue of Unity on 31st October, the birthday of Sardar Patel, to whom goes the credit of integrating and uniting the country in letter and in spirit. The Prime Minister places infinite confidence in the commitment and calibre of young officers from all services, this trust is instrumental in his insistence on sending young officers to *aspirational districts*, or leading the Swach Bharat campaign. He expects, much like Sardar Patel, that civil services will not only integrate the country, but also play a pivotal role in making India a \$5 trillion economy in the next five years.

Now that I have done what a Director should normally do – celebrate your success and compliment you for your accomplishment-let's ask us a question. *Are we going to treat this milestone as an end in itself, or the means to an end?* It will be fair and legitimate for many of you to think that we have arrived ... now we need to be rewarded for all the hard work that we put in for all these years. *Is this a laurel in itself – or is this the beginning of a long journey to contribute to making India the numero uno country – not in terms of population – which will happen not because, but in spite of you – but numero uno in terms of human development, happiness, equity and choice.* You also have the option of taking it easy; following the approach of 'satisficing' that is just doing enough that

your boss is not upset with you. I for one would recommend the first option for this opportunity is not available to all and sundry. Wherever you are—in whichever service – from the forest to the foreign – you can make a marked difference- and you will be known by what you did, rather than the post you held.

Yesterday, you walked around your Academy. You are aware that it is named after India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri – a man of action, who led by example, was rooted to the ground, resigned as the Railways Minister on moral grounds after an accident, gave us the slogan of *Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan* – for this was the time when the territorial integrity and food security of our nation were under stress, laid the foundations for the Green Revolution, Operation Flood (White Revolution) and set new standards for probity in public life. We are honoured that the Academy has been named after him. And what he said more than three decades ago is relevant even today:

The loyalty to the country comes ahead of all other loyalties. And this is an absolute loyalty, since one cannot weigh it in terms of what one receives, and again

The basic idea of governance, as I see it, is to hold society together so that it can march and develop towards certain goals, and the third: We all have to work in our respective spheres with the dedication, the same zeal and the same determination which inspired and motivated the warrior on the batter front. And this has to be shown not by mere words, but by actual deeds.

You must have stopped at the bust of Sardar Patel and read his stirring words: ... *You will not have a united India, if you have not a good all India service which has the independence to speak out its mind.*

And even before the insertion of Article 51 a (Fundamental Duties) he had stated,

Every citizen of India must remember that he is an Indian and he has every right in this country, but with certain duties.

I will not dwell longer on him as I shall be speaking to you about him when we have our session on Indian history, but I will share another quote, and this has to be seen in the context of Churchill's ostentatious claim that Britain is required to save India: *Tell Churchill to save England first before saving India'*

But for his insistence, the possibility of provincialization of the civil services was quite high. Many of the Congress leaders, including Prime Minister Nehru were a bit wary of the bureaucracy - but finally they all agreed not only to retain it, but also insert Article 311 which gives us a sovereign guarantee

about the security of service and protection against any arbitrary reduction in rank or status.

You may have visited the Gandhi Smriti Library which houses around two lakh books and journals. No one has written with greater sincerity, clarity and absolute conviction to Truth than the Mahatma whose 150th anniversary the nation is celebrating.

Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world, but to change ourselves. And he also tells us how to go about it:

Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny.

The one practical advice which I would like to give to all of you is to keep notes of your activities on a daily basis. It helps you to understand how you have evolved, or refused to evolve over time. The Mahatma not only kept meticulous records, he also acknowledged and replied to every letter that he received.

We now come to an interesting situation. This building that we are now sitting in is named after Sampurnanand Ji, a great Sanskrit scholar, and an ex CM of UP and Governor of Rajasthan, but a bitter critic of the ICS and the successor service – the IAS. He was for the outright abolition of the service, but he was restrained from doing so by none other than Prime Minister Nehru, who after his initial hesitation had swerved to Patel's view that an All India Service is required. I quote from Deepak Gupta's book *The Steel Frame: A History of the IAS*:

There were many politicians who were idealistic and true nationalists and wanted to develop India in a new way. Many wanted to enjoy the fruits of Power. In October 1950, responding to vehement criticism by the old UP veteran Sampurnanand about the continuation of the civil service, Nehru had noted that criticism of the service and its structures alone would not suffice.

It is true that while the push to have the Academy at Mussoorie came from the then UP CM Govind Ballabh Pant, Nehru was very fond of Dehradun and Mussoorie, and therefore when the question would have come up, he would have certainly preferred this to any other station. It is said that he always had these lines from Robert Frost on his desk at the Circuit House, Dehradun, which is now the Raj Bhawan.

*“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep*

We all know him as the architect of the Non-Aligned Movement and his belief in the public sector and institutions of higher learning, but he was also a scholar administrator whose quotes are worthy of emulating: *We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open.*

In the Adharshila buildings, you have halls named after Vivekananda, Tagore and Ambedkar. We are all inspired by his stirring lines: *‘Arise! Awake! Stop not until the goal is reached ...* but he also tells us how this is to be achieved how to go about it.

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life, think of it, dream of it, and live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way of success.

And one never knows when an idea fructifies. Till about two decades ago, we did not have the Civil Service Awards, and of course no newspaper ever thought of acknowledging the pioneering work done by the district officers. Today we not only have Indian Express honouring and acknowledging our best officers, India Today also brings out a special issue at the end of the year to showcase outstanding examples - of forest conservators, municipal and police commissioners and many others. The Prime Minister hands over the Civil Service Excellence awards in person. I must share with you that this idea of acknowledging the exceptional works started in the Academy through a publication called *Positive Strokes*. So plant new ideas and follow them – they will bear results at the appropriate time!

Tagore’s stirring poem is there in your Course Manual, but it bears reiteration:

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free,
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls,
Where words come out from the depth of truth,
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection,
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit,*

Where the mind lead forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action,

Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake.

More than the poem, let me mention that he was also a man of action, who renounced his knighthood to protest the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh. He founded the Santiniketan where he wanted to have a holistic education – from languages to agriculture, philosophy to social work.

The last icon I am going to speak about today is Dr Ambedkar. Not only did he play the lead role in giving us our Constitution, he was always fearless and forthright in his views. A liberal scholar, social reformer, educationist, jurist, reformer, erudite Parliamentarian, one who spoke so fearlessly against the caste system, he held the view that ‘cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence’.

I will close with these lines from him:

No great man really does his work by crippling his disciple by forcing on them his maxims or his conclusions. What a great man does is to not impose his maxims on his disciples. What he does is to evoke them, to awaken them to a vigorous and various exertions of their faculties. Again the pupil is not bound to accept his master's conclusions. There is no ingratitude in the disciple not accepting the maxims or the conclusions of his master. For even when he rejects them, he is bound to acknowledge to his master in deep reverence. ‘You awakened me to be myself: for that I thank you.’ The master is entitled to no less. The disciple is not bound to give more.

Welcome to the Academy! Welcome to the 94th Foundation Course! Let's try our best to do justice to the icons on whose names we have built the foundations of your Alma Mater.

Jai Hind

The Roots of our Service: *121st Induction Training Programme, Valedictory Address*

2 August, 2019

We are here today to mark the completion of the formal academic component of your induction training. It must be wonderful for you as it marks the end of classroom sessions, and the beginning of two modules of travel – the first of which will take you across the length and breadth of our great country to give you a real flavor of how your Service binds and connects people and institutions of governance, and the second to South Korea – a country which gives the world almost all the gadgets that have become ubiquitous in our daily lives – from cell phones to computers and cars – and which is now at the cusp of a great technological revolution – a country which has adopted and adapted so well to global markets, even while it has retained its ‘cultural core’ a country partitioned at the end of the World War and like us, is grappling with a difficult neighbor, one which has the nuclear potential – North Korea which is totally controlled by the military. I must also mention herewith that you will be spending your independence Day in Seoul – and this brings many a happy memory as last year. I led the ITP from ATI Kolkata around the same time to this wonderful country which has such a lot to teach us – from punctuality to cleanliness and strictest compliance with the rule of law.

So, why do we call it a Valedictory address: it does not mark, the end of your training, for the best part is still to come. Well, this is the last time you sit together as one group in an academic session in your Alma Mater – the Academy – of which generations of the IAS – starting from the 1959 batch are so proud. And therefore, we must reflect on how this Service came to be – how it is a continuation from, and yet so different from its predecessor service, the ICS, the expectations which the country has from us, and the contribution of Sardar Patel in fighting for the creation of a Service which is one of the core instruments in integrating India, and our role in this great task of nation building on the basis of our intellectual and moral integrity. For we must remember that a great nation can only be built on the strength of great institutions – but this is always a work in progress – and all of us are privileged and fortunate to be part of this great project. We have to learn that it is important to keep the larger picture in mind in our personal and professional

lives – and this is something one has to learn from the life of Sardar. At various points of time in his life, he had an adversarial relationship with the ICS – as the Mayor of Ahmedabad he forced the government to take action against an ICS Officer, JC Shillidy – the first time in India when the Imperial Government acted against a British ICS official.

As the leader of the Satyagraha in Kheda he mobilized the peasantry against the Raj, and was in direct conflict with yet another ICS officer Pratt – who not only spoke fluent Gujarati, but also invoked the name of Gandhi as a pious man – who should limit himself to what pious men usually do. But the point to note is that Patel recognized that the ICS was doing what it was meant to do. The problem lay in the very policies which the Raj was following, as well as its notion of prestige. Yes he realized that they too were professionals who would carry out the mandate given to them – and he realized that it would be impossible to run the newly independent country without this network. And therefore, in the teeth of severe opposition from many of his colleagues, agnosticism from Nehru and complete indifference from Mahatma Gandhi who preferred to give India a Swaraj which was based entirely on direct democracy at the village level – and which was opposed tooth and nail by Dr. Ambedkar – The Sardar stood firm in his view that the civil service had to be retained. Incidentally, in his meeting as the Home Minister of the Interim government with the Premiers of the eleven Provinces which then constituted India he spelt out his clear view on the need of an All India Civil Service. It must be mentioned here that he did not have strong views on whether the IP (the predecessor to the IPS) should be with the Union Government – this could, in his view be under the provinces. With regard to the Foreign Service, after much deliberation the External Affairs Ministry also decided to piggy back on this common examination. The induction from the provincial services to the IAS on a regular basis was also taken up in this meeting. This was indeed one of the most important meetings held on this subject, and I have just had the first set of papers collected from the National Archives. These are the minutes of the meeting, but we are also trying to see if the written memoranda given by the state governments can also be tracked – for this should give us an insight into what the provinces felt about the administrative arrangements that were needed for the country.

Friends, today we take ‘India, that is Bharat is a Union of states’ Article 1 of our Constitution as axiomatic. However this was preceded by a very strong ideological battle, not just with Imperial Britain and its protagonists – ranging from Curzon to Churchill and Mountbatten – who held the view that India was a geography which held so many races, beliefs, languages, creeds and people,

and that these people were also in some way inferior, who needed some kind of protection, and who did everything in their power to divide and vivisect the nation – from their insistence of separate electorates and special dispensations to princely states which held 28% of our population and 48% of our area, but also from the ideologues of Pakistan – Jinnah, Liaquat Ali and Iqbal who felt that the Muslims of India were a distinct nation within India as well as the Communists who felt peasants and workers of India should seek the help of Soviet Union to overthrow the ‘reactionary bourgeoisie’ in an armed insurrection.

We must pause here and understand that while the concept of a nation – state was based on the treaty of Westphalia, both India and China were civilizational entities, and as the Chinese thinker Zhang Weiwei, British academic Martin Jacques and Indian historian Radha Kamal Mookerjee have held – far before the modern nation-state came into being after the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire – the Chinese and the Indians had thought of themselves as a civilization, rather than as a nation. However, in the twentieth century, these civilizations needed the apparatus of a nation state to mark their boundaries, territories and to protect themselves from ‘nation states’. A modern state needed civil servants, armies, paraphernalia and formats for governance.

It was the Sardar who realized that if India had to make the transition from a civilizational entity to a modern nation state, it needed a powerful Service, not just to hold the provinces together, but also to give free, frank and fair advise to the political leadership which had the experience of mobilizing masses for a variety of causes – but had limited exposure to the nitty gritty of governance. One must mention here that one reason for the success of the Indian tryst with democracy was the predominance of lawyers, academics and ex civil servants – and therefore their understanding of the process, procedure and rule of law. This stood in stark contrast to the leadership of the Muslim League where the leadership was drawn from the feudal classes. Within the Congress, the mobilization of the peasants in the different Satyagraha and campaigns was largely undertaken by Vallabh Bhai Patel – and it was these campaigns that got him the epithet of Sardar, which suited his profile so well. Incidentally, the Patidars of Gujarat trace their roots to Punjab from where their ancestors had migrated many generations ago.

I will not dwell on the Sardar’s contribution to the Freedom Movement – that is well documented – but I say this with a caveat. It has not been documented from his point of view. ‘Towards Freedom’, ‘Transfer of Power’ as well as the National Archives have no dearth of material or references on him. However,

compared to the wealth of historical data left by the Mahatma and Prime Minister Nehru and the historical scholarship on them, the Sardar did not have a Boswell to document his life, and he was quite reticent to do it himself. His daughter dutifully recorded his political and social engagements in a diary – but several details, especially his engagements as the Home Minister in the Interim Cabinet and later as the Deputy Prime Minister are not readily accessible. It is only in the last two decades that we have had two monumental works on him – the first from the Mahatma’s grandson Rajmohan Gandhi, and the recent magisterial tome on him by Hindol Sengupta under the title: *The Man Who Saved India*.

The title of the book is certainly provocative? Was India facing any real danger at that juncture? Why have the names of Mahatma, Nehru and Ambedkar not been associated with ‘saving India’. The Mahatma was the universal apostle of peace, Ahimsa and non-violence, and Nehru was known for his non alignment, Planning Commission, commitment to higher education and large projects like the Bhakra which were the ‘temples of modern India’, and Dr. Ambedkar is largely credited with giving India its Constitution with Fundamental Rights, the Hindu Code and for his iconic status as the messiah of the Dalits – but the savior of India is Sardar. And there are two main factors for this. The first was the integration of princely states, which without his clarity of purpose, dogged determination and the support of civil servants like VP Menon may have proved to be the curse of Albatross for India. He insisted, and got away with ensuring a common format for the accession for all the princely states – who while being sovereign in their own kingdoms – had their own internal hierarchies – states like J&K and Hyderabad were 21-gun salute states, followed by 19 salutes, and going down.

A Reunion to Remember: Golden Jubilee 1969 Batch

30-31 May, 2019

We are delighted that you are all here with us today. Both the batch and the year are absolutely unique. Although the Golden Jubilee retreats started here at the Academy in 1997 – to mark the Golden Jubilee of India's independence and we had all the surviving members of the ICS here at the Academy, the tradition of having an Annual Retreat for officers celebrating the Golden Jubilee of their joining the IAS began from 1998. From the year 2011, the entire Foundation Course has been invited. This has gone a long way in continuing the esprit de corps that marks the interaction within each batch. 2019, however, is also a special year for the Academy, for we moved here in 1959 and we shall be celebrating sixty years of this institution on September 1, exactly 10 years after you joined the services.

The great thing about the Reunion is that it has spawned many more – while the Golden Jubilee is organized by the Academy, many batches are now coming together voluntarily to do their own batch retreats, and we encourage it. The 1979 batch is organizing theirs to mark 40 years from 12-114 July and the 1980 is calling theirs 80@40*20. Younger batches starting with ours in 2010 are also coming together to mark their Silver Jubilee. This year the 94 batch of the IAS is getting together! And as your batch is a trend setter—you can also plan your Diamond Jubilee, and I am sure the Academy would be happy to support it.

We are delighted that your retreat here coincides with the Phase II training of the 2017 batch of the I.A.S. They have been as excited as us to welcome and receive you – and to understand from you how the service and the state cadres have evolved over time. Later today, they will be putting up some songs from yesteryears. This is also an inter-generational, inter-service, inter-cadre and inter batch dialogue and such occasions are rare. When we include our faculty members, we have twelve batches, thirteen state cadres and twelve services present under one roof! Together with the spouses who bring in their own unique experiences as professionals and home-makers and connoisseurs of a range of fine arts, we can say with great pride and confidence that there is no parallel to this kind of a get-together.

The Academy has grown with time and our mandate now includes the Mid-Career Training Programme in addition to specialized courses and programmes from Ministries, departments, NITI, commissions and statutory authorities. After the Kargil War, your Academy was entrusted with the conduct of the Joint Civil Military Program for the top leadership of the armed forces, CPMFs, the All India Services and Central Services. We collaborated with EPoD of Harvard and have memoranda of understanding and cooperation with institutions in nine countries (France, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Singapore, Canada, China, Indonesia, Namibia, and Harvard University (USA)). We also assist the NCGG in conducting training for civil servants from Maldives, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Gambia, among others.

Over the next two days, we have a structured, though relaxed programme and I will not dwell on that. I shall, however, take this opportunity to brief the Goldens about how we have tried to keep the spirit of the Academy alive, for even though we lost many of our buildings, first in the fire of '84 and then in the earthquake of '91, our spirits were never down. From being mandatory till 1969, riding was about to be abandoned in the mid-nineties, but yours truly can claim some credit for ensuring that riding continues to this day. There are several options in the morning – from cycling to swimming to aerobics, yoga, running and the gym. The doctors are still hard-pressed for exemptions and the best discretion which the course coordinator can exercise is the exemption from morning PT.

Shramdaan continues – but now we are focused on cleaning our environment. Together with the Municipal authorities, Nestle India, Gati Foundation and local NGOs, we have undertaken a campaign to clear our environs of plastic. We are trying to practice and propagate the idea of a zero-waste campus. In consultation with FSSAI and NITI, we are in the process of promoting healthy eating habits, a seamless waste solution and auditing of food outlets including the Officers' Mess, the staff canteen, the Plaza Café and other outlets that pepper the food life of the Academy. The Academy has raised the very serious issue of packaging of food products for retail and bulk in multi-layered plastic with the FSSAI with the intent of working towards practical solutions to waste creation and a green Mussoorie. We have also decided to set up a body for Food, Planet and Health under the auspices of the Centre for Public Systems Management.

The trek continues to be one of the most memorable features of the Foundation Course. Last year, our officer trainees trekked to Nandprayag, Dodital, Kathgodam-Nainital, Badrinath, Uttarkashi, Karnaprayag and Rudraprayag. We are also delighted to share the news that our alumnus, Ravindra Kumar, of the 2011 batch of the I.A.S. carried the flag of the Academy to Mount Everest.

This was his second successful ascent to the highest mountain in the world, the first being in the year 2013.

On the academic front, our officers now write a dissertation to Qualifying for Masters in Public Policy from JNU.

You will also be happy to know that we are trying to upgrade our Library as the National Administration and Governance Library, and this will ensure that publishers will have to send us a copy of each book on public policy, public administration and governance. We are also establishing the Civil Services Museum with technical assistance from INTACH and financial support from the Ministry of Culture. We would be happy to receive memorabilia and souvenirs for the Museum, and we also look forward to your suggestions with regard to its curation.

Cultural programs continue to be the life of the Academy, but they are theme based now. We have India celebrations during FC, and Zonal days during Phase 1. The Academy also organizes the Inter services meet on sports and cultural activities and eighteen national academies participated in this event.

For the last five years, the Academy has been organizing a Literature Festival for officer trainees. Your batch mate Praveen Talha participated in the Lit Fest the year before. We will be reaching out to your batch to join the festival in the coming years. We have also started LINK- the Academy's innovation network to connect development administrators with innovators - and the response has been overwhelming. In addition to the House Journal society, we also have the Rahul Sankritayan Club for encouraging our officers to write in Hindi.

Last but not the least, the response from the spouses and the family members has been so encouraging. The personal and the professional cannot be treated as binaries, and in all our accomplishments, as well during periods of tribulation, one has to acknowledge their salient role. We have drawn up a schedule for them, and children of two schools-the Balwadi which is run directly by the Social Services Society, and the Kendriya Vidyalaya which is sponsored by the Academy-are looking forward to presenting a cultural program for them in the AN Jha Plaza, the best place for gup shup over fresh sugar cane juice!

The Academy is your Alma Mater - and it has grown from strength to strength with your support and goodwill. We are now positioning ourselves as the leading knowledge centre for governance and thought leadership in development interventions - and for this task we need your ideas, but more than that your blessings. This is, and should remain India's finest institution on governance and administration.

Jai Hind!

Beyond Binaries: *Remembering Dr. R.S. Tolia and Looking Ahead*

25 May, 2019

At the outset, let me thank SDFU, UCOST, GBPNIHESD, DLRC and in particular Dr. Rajendra Dhobal, Dr. R.S. Rawal, Shri S.K. Das, Ms. Vibha Puri Das, Shri N.S. Napalchal, Shri I.K. Pande, Dr. B.K. Joshi, for asking me to deliver the third RST Memorial Lecture. For a self-proclaimed acolyte, it is indeed a great honour to speak on a mentor – and that too in the footsteps of Padma Bhushan Chandi Prasad Bhatt - who has been an inspiration for those who are connected with ... and Padma Shri Shekhar Pathak - who through his journeys, travels and writings ...

I chose the title “Beyond Binaries” - for it is indeed difficult to confine the personality, the work, the writings and the boundless energy of RST in a simple category. One would not only have to use several commas, but even after describing him as Author, scholar, researcher, traveler and legendary bureaucrat, as Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand, represents the finest traditions of scholarly activism, combined with administrative prowess at its best. Blessed with the energy of juggernaut, Dr. Tolia puts in long hours at work which keep colleagues gasping for breath as they try to keep up with his tremendous pace. Said to require only about four hours of sleep, and can be found in his office at 1 a.m. Famed for his doctoral thesis on the administrative history of Kumaon and Garhwal under the British which earned wide accolades in academic circles. Dr. Tolia is equally well known for his plain speaking ability to call a spade a spade. There are additional descriptors, CIC, RTI activist, campaigner for a policy for Himalayan states ... And then one has to keep in mind how he combined in his personality some traits which were quite distinct from each other. But before I go into this, let me explain in some detail the examples/context in which binary is used by the Oxford English Dictionary.

‘This is to deconstruct the binary of time/space, where they collapse to form a moving present, it is ‘space that is lived and is transformed by imagination’.

‘The secular and the sacred have seldom existed as binaries in Indian thought, literature and practice; all essentialist constructions of the sacred and the secular are ahistorical.’

‘Whether exalting technology over people or people over technology, were not moving beyond the binaries that are currently limiting us.’

Thus Dr. Tolia was not just a man of action, he was also a man of words, he was not just a scholar administrator, he was an academic who wrote his doctoral thesis on the administration and administrators of Kumaon and Garhwal, he was a cartoonist who was prolific both with sketches and verbal descriptions, he was enamoured by technology, yet he had his ear to the ground, he was excited about Van Panchayats and JFM, but he acknowledged and respected the role of the professional forester, he was a formidable FRDC who was also clear that SIDCUL needed land for industrial development of the state, while recognizing the significance of organic, he acknowledged the role of fertilizers in the wheat rice economy of Udham Singh Nagar and Haridwar, while he wrote and spoke on the Kyoto Protocol, and the need to work on carbon credits, he also realized that this required great support from the MoEF and GoI, he was the CIC as well as an RTI activist, he had very strong views – yet he was open to correction when facts were placed in another perspective, he was a recluse, and he was also the life of a party, he was passionate about the state of Uttarakhand, yet he retained a sense of pride in having been a part of the UP administration, especially his stint as the DM of Varanasi, he taught is to neither defy, not deify the political leadership – and last but not the least, he was a very powerful man who did not understand the nature of power – in his own words – he was kicked upstairs!

And this is the man who mentored so many of us, wanted to make Uttarakhand India's number one state in all possible indicators of performance, was impatient with the pace of work, even though we all tried very hard, many times it just not to match with his expectation and certainly not his enthusiasm.

I will divide the remainder of my talk into three parts – the first will focus on Dr. Tolia as Historian, the second of Dr. Tolia's writings and third I will talk about what we should be doing to create an Uttarakhand which is more in sync with his vision...

Dr. Tolia is the first historian who has delved deeply into primary sources while working in the Administrative History of British Kumaon and has fascinated researchers and avid readers interested in the Central Himalayan region. He has the art to disarm and capture his readers and every time I read his books, I am blessed with a new perspective. His works on history are based totally on primary sources collected from the National, State and Regional Achieves, Forest Research Institute, Centre and State Secretariat Libraries, National Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House and the India Office Library etc. He has also made good use of the administrative reports available in the libraries and offices of the Commissioner and other bureaucrats as well as personal collections of records from a wide cross section

of people. Dr. Tolia has brilliantly depicted the Administrative History of Uttarakhand during the British rule with magical realism in his different works. They become alive with seeds of primary sources and have made waves among historians. His writings are gripping for intelligent readers to forget food and sleep.

With every read there is a new insight into the history of British Kumaon. After the cataclysmic events of 1857 a need was felt that civil servants who have held charge of districts should leave behind written notes for the benefit of their successors. The notes based on the experience gained by the departing official could serve as a benchmark, both to know the individuals with whom he is going to work with as well as the institutions that existed in the district.

The first dissent against forest policy surfaced in Uttarakhand in the princely state of Tehri Garhwal, where the administration of forest management was beset with many complications from the very beginning of the inception of modern forestry. When forest management was introduced there, the local people felt that their rights were being encroached upon.

The denizens of the State consistently opposed the forest policy and their resentment was first manifested on 27th December 1906 when the forest surrounding the Chandrabadni temple about 24 km from Tehri town was being inspected preparatory of being brought under reservation.

The next wave of forest dissent in Tehri Garhwal State coincided with the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Thus on 30th May, 1930 the people of Rawain in Tehri Garhwal State rallied in a place called Tilari to protest against the forest policy of the State. The State Army surrounded the demonstrators from three side and started firing. Diwan Chakra Dhar Jayal was issuing orders and in the salvo several people died, many were fatally wounded and those who jumped into the river Yamuna to save their lives were swept away. According to the book published by the Information Department of Uttar Pradesh on Freedom Movement, more than 200 people died.

Dr. Tolia is the first historian who unfolded the fact that British Kumaon was ruled as a Non-Regulating Province whereas a sizeable part of India was a regulating Province.

Dr. Tolia has rightly stated that the Commissioner of Kumaon from Edward Gardener to Henry Ramsay (1815-1884) were the founding fathers of British administration in this region. He observes, "Edward Gardener and George William Traill laid the foundation of a totally new form of administration. George Thomas Lushington and John Haller Batten silently ushered in several

structural reforms. In the able hands of Henry Ramsay, not only the gains of the preceding four decades were consolidated but Kumaon Garhwal was literally propelled into the main stream of modern India. The last six decades of British rule in British Kumaon, not very surprisingly, appear status – quo in their character as the British officials merely followed the dictates of a highly centralized and remotely seated provincial government.

Historically the post of District Collector dates back to the 18th century when in 1761, Henry Verelst was appointed as the first District Collector of Chittagong.

Dr. Tolia has also given credit to the valuable services rendered by Lal Moti Ram Sah in 1857. He was the contractor responsible for the urbanization of Nainital since 1841 when the British started settling here. Dr. Tolia has mentioned that he advanced money to all the British refugee in Nainital and supplied requisite funds to Ramsay on several occasions, when the treasury was empty & was always ready to pay up to Rs. 30,000 on Ramsay's call. Another merchant from Nainital, Shah Mohammad emulated Moti Ram Sah and Kundan Lal Sah to win the favour of the British. He was not affluent but placed Rs. 10,000 at the feet of the British at Almora, when other shad refused to extent help.

An unassuming man greeting high and low, exuding bonhomie and always bothered about the welfare of the people, he was the white sadhu for some and Ramji the reincarnation of Lord Rama for other.

Tea cultivation and horticulture were promoted and potato cultivation was introduced by Henry Ramsay in Uttarakhand and his contribution in the field of land revenue is also important. Village maps were prepared in his time and actual field survey was made.

THE WRITINGS OF DR. R.S. TOLIA

Of the 14 books and 4 monographs written by him, I will focus on three: Food for Thought and Action, Patwari, Gharat and Chai, and Transparency in Government through Right to Information. In fact, the time period when these books were written is also relevant. Food for Thought and Action was written when he was the FRDC – he describes this as the best period of his first three years in Uttaranchal. Patwari, Gharat and Chai was published when he was CS of the state, and the third ... TIG after he had just demitted office as the CIC.

In my view he enjoyed being the FRDC and the CIC much more than his term as the CS – for he was not the 'typical bureaucrat' who in order to remain in power would become part of the palace intrigue.

In FFTA, a compendium dedicated to all his colleagues in Uttaranchal (that is to all of us) he said.

“.....I have always held that a man’s views are his own only when these find expression in black and white i.e. when they become subject to a close scrutiny of his peers. If these views get appreciated, even if not accepted fully, writer’s labour are more than rewarded. Governance, at the end of the day, is that its practitioners make it to be. But, if it is practiced painstakingly, diligently, honestly and with an eye on incremental improvement over the present, no one need worry at all about its fate. That has always been to me the very essence of Gita, the greatest inspirational treatise which ever got compiled in the history of mankind. It is also, incidentally, the theory and practice of Karma. It has always provided me the greatest of pleasure and satisfaction as, I do earnestly hope, it would be to all those who happen to go through them.”

This is so relevant in today’s day and age when bureaucrats and ministers are more comfortable to pen down notes which are palatable. He taught us that your opinions must be placed on the file as clearly and cogently as possible. In fact, it was this training under him that helped me hold my ground as a rookie joint secretary in the Government of India. He had taught us to be fearless and forthright in our views, but that each argument should be buttressed with facts, counterfactuals and alternate proposals – however all these should be placed in a manner that your views should prevail!

Of the seventy one articles in this volume – ranging from Uttarakhand wild life parks authority to the review of special projects on SGRY, Uttarakhand First – an invite to the Uttarakhand is across the world to contribute to the new state, Ayurvedic education and extension, Institutions of Excellence – some clearly stand out. In his monograph Marketing, marketing and marketing – he rules the fact that the focus is on production, perhaps even productivity and Resource use efficiency – the challenge for every commodity – from milk to mushrooms to handicrafts and medicinal plants is Marketing. His catch phrase was “pre-production to post harvest’, and we were among the first states to leverage the AEZs promoted by APEDA. Another article that stands out is the author of Jim Corbett of Kumaon – which shows his qualities as a fine human being who could engage in such a wide range of conversation, and which reflects the eclectic nature and

In my review of this book, I had called it an online development dialogue – for he wanted us to participate and engage with him on the issues raised – from MDMs to Organic Board and the Uttarakhand Space Application Centre.

The response to this volume was overwhelming - and he soon followed it up with a sequel – Patwari, Gharat and Chai – representing in my view aspects of human resource development, issues of ecological sustainability and the scope

of horticulture sector as one of the principal drivers of the state's economic growth. This was published when he was the Chief Secretary. Again, it's important to understand the rationale behind this book.

Any government circular and resolution, by definition, has a very limited circulation, since it is intended for a select number of officers and managers responsible for its execution. At best it is a one-way communication, and at worst it fails to enlighten a reader, among other things, as to how a particular circular was received by the addressees or its ultimate outcome viz. immediate impact on the intended beneficiaries. Further, government circular or resolutions by and large do not disclose in extensor the rationale of commencing an initiative and invariably refrain from going into the nitty-gritty of the operational aspects of implementation: which has, as we all know, proved to be the main cause of their failures ...

I very strongly feel that senior government servants and supervisory managers must be encouraged to write trip reports covering the practical aspects of implementation of all major government initiatives, recording the view points of the implementing officers as well as their own, suggesting changes which might be incorporated in the original circular, and not hesitating to suggest even a major overhaul..

Of the seventeen articles in this volume the first is on the institution of the Patwari in the hill districts and his role as a revenue as well as a police functionary - and the concept of making policing a village responsibility. There are well researched articles on Gharats—he links them to employment, empowerment, appropriate technology, and then of course there are articles on primary commodities and their potential for livelihoods and entrepreneurship at grassroots - tea, vanya silk, bamboo, medicinal plants and herbs . Two articles are indeed much ahead of the times – preparing the state to press for carbon credits.

From a development administrator's perspective – the articles in these two books had all the ingredients to help the state march ahead with the momentum that had been built under his stewardship. Alas, this was not to be. What is surprising is that the document Uttarakhand Vision 2030 brought out by the Planning Department in 2018 lists several references – but none of the publications/monographs on development by Dr. RS Tolia finds a mention. Clearly the consultants who made this report on SDGs for the state were either unaware, or disinclined to take on record the deep insights into all the sectors that now constitute the SDGs. In fact, I am a tad disappointed with the report – for it could have been a report from any state. It fails to capture many of the out-of-the box ideas - there is of course the cursory reference to everything that is

politically correct – but where is the focus on ayurvedic education? Why can't Uttarakhand as a state be the hub for Ayurveda, Unani and Homeopathic colleges and wellness centres? The focus continues to be on the conventional? Why is there no link to using the resources of the state in the industrial production units of the state? Why have we not talked to Nestle, Baba Ramdev and ITC to use the hill ingredients (mandua ... check with navaneet) in their fast foods ? If Andhra could persuade ITC to come out with Ragi biscuits (and they are quite a rage), why have we lagged behind. Hill agriculture and horticulture cannot be revived, unless there is a market for hill produce)

We now come to the third book: TIG /RTI – which is dedicated to all the Information Commissioners. It's actually a manual on how to set up an institution outside the government – and when one visits the well-appointed office of the Uttarakhand Information Commission today, one may not realise the transition from a one-man-one-room camp office – without even a regular postal address. From making his office accessible, to easing the process of filling in the application form and making payments - every single detail has been addressed. as he himself says – this was more in the nature of a charge report – a note to his successor, which he felt should also be made accessible to Information commissioners across the country. He was also keen that all the state CICs and Information commissioners should have a forum to discuss issues of mutual interest – and I am glad to inform this august house that Uttarakhand is the host state to this year's conference of the State CICs. How happy Dr Tolia would have been to learn of this development.

With regard to this book, I would like to quote Justice M. Venkatchalliah, the former CJ of India:

Sunlight, as they say, is the best disinfectant. I wonder when sometimes I see some fights; I used to see some ten years ago when I was a judge for 35 years. When I had the occasion to see the fights, I was instantly weighing what kind of insensitivity prevails in the atmosphere of the governors. Persons become mere files, situations become mere reports, and there is least amount of insensitivity. And I saw a number of times, in my days I used to defend the government, when a notice under the Section 80 of the Civil Procedure Code used to be issued to the government before a suit. That's a very civilized provision that asks the government to tell what's happening and when it would rectify. The uncomplimentary frequency with which the notes would end, to say that there's no need to reply, we should await the intended suit, that's the kind of note that they would make.

We have an Article 350 in our constitution which is totally misunderstood. And it says every citizen has a right to make a petition to the government in

whatever bight ways he wishes. It has been interpreted as to mean a choice to ask the right question and not as a right to ask the government to respond.

ALL'S NOT WELL!

Let me state that there are certain developments that would have pained him – and he may not have allowed this if he was the CS. The Uttarakhand secretariat has become too big – almost like the secretariat of any other 'large state' like UP and West Bengal – and the people who man the secretariat have perfected the art of procrastination. Nothing moves, and procedure seems to have become an end itself – rather than a means to an end. His basic idea that a file must be initiated only by OSDs/Joint Secretaries did make a lot of sense. Somewhere along the line, everyone wants to play safe, and even routine files which involve zero discretion are being marked for the Ministers and sometimes even to the Cabinet for their approval. Decisions which were taken by field functionaries at the level of General Managers are now routinely being marked to the Cabinet. Adoption without adaptation has become the norm. Blocking physical access to the Secretariat does not make a difference.

The Panchayati Raj is losing its salience. The transfer of funds, functions and functionaries has been stalled. We were very keen that as per the constitutional provision for small states.... Uttarakhand should be allowed a two tier panchayat was never seriously followed up.

The Directorates were supposed to be knowledge management centers are indeed doing well, but in most cases, there is little input that is specific to the state. There are things he would have been very happy about, the airport and the number of flights, emergence of Uttarakhand as an educational hub, the development of the Dhams and the remarkable strides made by the RD department to name a few.

IN HIS WORK UTTARAKHAND @18

Some of the big What ifs: By this time both Nestle and Ramdev would have been making noodles out of Mandua and the demand would have ensured that agriculture in the higher hills became profitable, the network of *Gharats* would have ensured employment to hundreds, if not thousands, self-reliant co-operatives and FPOs would have flourished, another revised edition of Uttarakhand 2030 would have been out, and a critical review... Skill development coupled with foreign language training could have become the new growth driver so that even when young women and men had to leave their homes, they could have moved across the blue waters to much greener pastures ..

Uttarakhand could have been the first state to offer Organic status to all hill districts, while encouraging balanced agriculture in the plain districts – thereby achieving state level self-sufficiency in food, and high value agriculture and horticulture in the hill districts with focus on micro irrigation, off season vegetables, mushrooms, livestock, dairying, herding ...

We must also celebrate what has been accomplished. Uttarakhand is known as a herbal state, as a horticulture state, the partnership with the corporates for introduction of new varieties of apples and potatoes. Most departments and directorates are in sync with the need to bring in investments to the state, the successful Investment summit.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

We need to bridge the gap between technology and people. Technology must work for people – rather than the other way round. And technology is not necessarily the technology that is driven by capital with a capital C. We have the example of high tech water mills or *Gharats* which did not do well with technology foisted from above, but have worked well within the local community setting.

We have to respect our ecology and our environment, and adopt the eco systems approach, which calls for restraint to hubris: we have to live with, not against nature. We have to clean up our rivers, revive our water bodies, bring in an aesthetic which is uniquely our own, and usher in a tourism which is in sync with nature and our cultural and spiritual heritage. While it is true that technological determinism is gaining ground, and with people like Friedman leading the main argument about how technology has penetrated our lives, we have to ask ourselves: will this argument work for all equally or differentially. Are we going to be trend setters, or followers?

Excellence in everything we do.. and everything is relevant.. we need Nestles and ITCs and HLLs, just as we need SHGs for bee keeping, backyard poultry, handicrafts.. what is needed is the ability to dialogue and a non-adversarial approach However non – adversarial is not the same thing as an unprincipled or rapacious approach. What it means is that the norms should be quite clear, transparent and for all to access...

Will we be able to do it? The answer is an unequivocal yes. When I see the young officers of the All India services, when I see their idealism and their commitment, their willingness to look at multiple perspectives, their wish to excel and serve – besides of course their basic competence in law and constitution, I am very positive.

How does a state like Uttarakhand leverage its climate, its cultural heritage, its education, its organic tradition?

The challenges which Uttarakhand faces today include unprecedented urbanization, along with failure to develop health, education and housing infrastructure for the new migrants, as well as for the resource poor. So our next thrust has to be housing for all

THE GROWTH DRIVERS

Finally, we have this major question? What matters most in development is it empowerment alone? Or is it infrastructure of rural roads, provision of safe drinking water, schools, and hospitals with provision of institutional deliveries, air connectivity,

But more than anything, it was Trust, Access and the ability to engage with anyone and everyone. However, while he took cudgels on behalf of his colleagues and stood for them - in the Cabinet – he was outmaneuvered of his position as the CS – because in the highest traditions of the civil service, he was unwilling to breach the ethical and professional code of a civil servant. Like a true Karam Yogi, he strode out to become one of the most active CICs in the country – the legend of Uttarakhand's RTI success became an exemplar, and activists across the country actively sought.

LOOKING AHEAD

He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much;
 Who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children;
 Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;
 Who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty or failed to express it;
 Who has left the world better than he found it,
 Whether an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul;
 Who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had;
 Whose life was an inspiration;
 Whose memory a benediction.

- Bessie Anderson Stanley

Rooted Yet Free To Soar: *Valedictory Address to the IAS Professional Course,* *Phase I, batch of 2018*

10 May, 2019

Special Directors, Manoj and Arti Ahuja, Executive Director of CPSM and CoE designate, Prof. P. Amuda and, Prof Amudha, Course Coordinator, Vidya Bhushan, members of the Course Team, my colleagues on the faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen, and of course the '*bright young sparks*' of the 2018 Batch

A *Valedictory Address* is an occasion to mark a significant milestone in the journey of one's life - it is a time to reflect and contemplate on issues which are important, but not urgent.

I will therefore share with you some thoughts about the role of individuals, elites, state, technology and society from some 'competing schools of history'. These include: Thomas Carlyle (History is nothing but the biography of Great Men), Arnold Toynbee (the Civilizational school) and the school of historical and material determinism, which draws from the Marxist perspective.

Let me begin with Thomas Carlyle – who wrote his magnum opus: 'On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History' in 1840. According to him, the history of the world is but the biography of great men ... fortunately for us, he was eclectic in his choice of great men – he started with The Hero as Divinity: *Odin*, (Wodan in English) the father of all the Nordic gods, and on whom Wednesday is named – he is remembered because he gave up one eye to drink from the well of knowledge and thereby sought to extend his reign beyond the shores that his forefathers had known, The Hero as Prophet: Mahomet, the founder of Islam, for he united the entire Arab world under the realm of Islam, The Hero as a Poet: *Dante* – because he chose to write Divine Comedy in Italian, rather than in classical Latin, *William Shakespeare* for bringing out the *universal elements: love, hatred, jealousy, cunning, ambition, sacrifice, and of course the role of chance* on the stage of Life– from Macbeth to Merchant of Venice, The Hero as a Priest: *Martin Luther* for standing up to the Pope and questioning the practice of paying for Indulgences and for translating the Bible into German. The Hero as a Man of Letters: *Samuel Johnson* for organizing the first known alphabetic Dictionary of any language– thereby increasing access and *Rousseau*–for being the pre-eminent Enlightenment philosopher whose ideas lit the members of the French

Revolution and who is best remembered for these lovely quotes: *Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains! / The world of reality has its limits; the world of imagination is boundless / What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?*

And last, but not the least, The Hero as a King – and who would fit the description better than *Napoleon*. He is remembered not just for his military strategy, but for laying the foundation of ideas that underpin our modern world – *meritocracy, equality before Law, property rights, religious toleration*, modern secular education, and an efficient local administration.

INDIVIDUALS AND HISTORIANS

Carlyle's lectures and essays had a seminal influence – and led to the Great Man school of history – but obviously it could not include women and men who were born after him - Lincoln, Marx, Bismarck, Tolstoy, Lenin, Mao, Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and then there were scientists, notably Einstein and Marie Curie, women of literature Pearl S Buck and Virginia Woolf - and men of technology – Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Elon Musk... the problem with this theory is that we now realise that in the post-modern age, individuals are embedded in institutions – these people were great, but the context was even greater. Virginia Woolf – for example was 'embedded' in the Bloomsbury group and worked in the British Museum, and it's difficult to imagine her '*stream of consciousness*' without reference to her group. Moreover, for each of the great men who have been acknowledged, there are many more who have been missed out. And over time, each individual's role becomes a footnote and so we may comfortably state that while *some great men do make history – while greatness is also thrust on men who happen to be on the right side of history, for history has always been written by the victors*, and yet one has to concede the point that great men have looked at things differently-achieved substantial measure of success, and they were there at the right time!

THE CIVILIZATION PERSPECTIVE

We now move from individuals to civilizations, Arnold Toynbee, the great chronicler of civilizations articulated that without an understanding of how particular a civilization evolved and flourished, the major characteristics of its people, and their aspirational drivers could never be understood – and this was the key to the understanding of human progress. He studied twenty three civilizations – present and past – ranging from Hellenic (Greek) to Hindu (Indic), Islamic and Sinic (Chinese). While all civilizations are clearly very different from primitive societies– they are all distinct in their worldviews – thus some civilizations make pyramids, others focus on art and sculpture,

some build walls to keep everyone else out – others move from their shores to discover new lands, still others lay little emphasis on the material and turn their gaze inwards.

This theory lost favour with the advent of the Cold War, but it has recently been resurrected by Samuel P Huntington who in a counterpoise to *Fukuyama's* 'End of History' suggested that in the final analysis, the biggest challenge to the world is the clash of civilizations and in his world view it would be the clash between the Western world and the Islamic civilization. Edward Said has of course, in his counterpoise demolished the arguments and you may refer to YouTube for their complete expositions.

Toynbee's second argument on how each civilization grows and flourishes internally is more significant. He says that every society has a *creative minority* which exercises hegemonic influence over a dominant majority which co-opts/marginalises the 'others'. In today's context, the media plays this role of building 'consensus' for the dominant majority and contrarian views are neatly marginalised and side-lined. This is the abdication of the responsibility of the creative minority – which must guide the dominant majority to incorporate inclusive world views – but beyond a point, it cannot.

CAN WE BE THE CREATIVE MINORITIES?

My concern is this: *can we be the creative minority* which will build a new consensus for the dominant majority? In many ways, both the Service and LBSNAA have been playing this role – whether it was first discussion on the rights of loses of land, livelihood and habitation losers in Land acquisition, or the Right to information or Forest Rights – your Alma mater has been in the forefront. Taking the argument further, according to this view changes in society, including revolutions and rebellions are driven by an elite which provides the leadership to the dominant majority which gets convinced about the imperative for change.

While this theory has its limitations - it is an important tool to understand how and why societies change. Another takeaway from Toynbee is that people who are endowed with vision can see what many others before them could not. The classic case is that of the pyramids of Egypt and the ruins of the Capitol Hill in Rome. Why did no one before Gibbon write the 'Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire' - the ruins on the Capitol at Rome were there for all to see!

KARL MARX HISTORICAL MATERIALISM:

We talked of individuals and elites - and both these are completely discounted by the school of historical materialism which asserts that the *material conditions of a*

society's mode of production, determine its organization and development. However, the ultimate irony is that the revolutions spurred by the Communist manifesto have not given us the dictatorship of the proletariat, but dictatorship of men, who have been ruthless in holding on to power – and have built personality cults like never before! Lenin, Mao, Stalin, Ho Chi Min and now Xi Jinping the life time President of China – all of them seem to be closer to Carlyle's version of history, rather than their own.

This school is also closely aligned with the technological determinist view: changes in technology, and specifically productive technology, are the primary influence on human social relations and organizational structure, and that social relations and cultural practices ultimately revolve around the technological and economic base of a given society. "*The Handmill gives you society with the feudal lord: the steam mill, society with the industrial capitalist*" (Karl Marx: *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847).

IS THE EARTH FLAT?

The current and the most well-known proponent of this school, is Thomas L. Friedman. In his bestselling work, the *World is Flat*, he attributes different phases of globalization to different edges of technology – without ships, navies and industrial revolution, Pax Britannica may not have happened. The dramatic reduction in the time and cost of communication has linked people, finance and commodities as never before. The ten "flatteners" that he sees as levelling the global playing field are the emergence of Windows by Microsoft, and because it coincided with the collapse of the Berlin, he said, "*When the walls came down, and the windows came up* 'Netscape and the Web made the Internet accessible to everyone from five to ninety-five-year-olds. Workflow software, especially STMP and HTML was 'the genesis moment of the flat world.' And the next six flatteners Uploading, Outsourcing, Offshoring, Supply-chaining, Insourcing, Informing and Digitization sprang from this platform.

However, the great thing about our times is nothing goes unchallenged. Robert Kaplan demolishes many of his arguments in his 'The Revenge of Geography'. In a very nuanced manner, he argues that geography is the indispensable "backdrop" to the human drama of Ideas, (Will and Chance). The counterfactual: that 90% of the world's phone calls, web traffic, and investments are local, suggesting that Friedman has grossly exaggerated the significance of the trends.

Those who forget geography can never defeat it. That is the mantra of Robert D. Kaplan's new book, "The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us. About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate.

HOW BEYOND BINARIES?

How do we conclude? The Vedanta tells us that everything is relative and contextual. And that all truths are relative - that there are no absolutes. Unlike the Judaic religions which look at things from a Binary (right/wrong perspective), we in India have the remarkable ability to reconcile differences and celebrate diversity in almost everything, and dissent is very much a part of the tradition of learning and argument. Therefore while acknowledging the role of heroes; we should also note their foibles, follies and fallacies. Heroes can be heroes only if they can inspire their teams to do extraordinary work. Heroes have to build consensus, and be good communicators. And in our quest to put our best foot forward in the service of the state and society, the best way to resolve the work life balance is to give equal attention to Dharma, Artha and Kama, and keeping in mind that we all have to superannuate one day - a sense of Moksha. As administrators', your prescribed Dharma is Raj Dharama - *you will dispense justice and patronage without fear or favour, and without discrimination of any kind.* You have taken an oath to the Constitution – this will be the lodestar and guiding light for you. Raj Dharma is the Dharma of the state. Raj Dharma assures you sufficient Artha, and you must not lose out on the finer aspects of love, poetry, fine arts, music, erotica and emotional fulfilment – Kama – is an entirely legitimate expression and an essential component of the householder's Dharma, and then there is Moksha which is best discussed in Phase V!

THE CALL FROM AMBEDKAR

In fine, let me bring in a quote from Dr. Ambedkar, a hero, a member of the creative minority which gave us a constitution far ahead of this time, and who believe that technology will break many of the social barriers affecting on societies.

“No great man really does his work by crippling his disciple by forcing on them his maxims or his conclusions. What a great man does is to not impose his maxims on his disciples. What he does is to evoke them, to awaken them to a vigorous and various exertions of their faculties.

Again the pupil is not bound to accept his master's conclusions. There is no ingratitude in the disciple not accepting the maxims or the conclusions of his master. For even when he rejects them, he is bound to acknowledge to his master in deep reverence. *'You awakened me to be myself: for that I thank you.'* The master is entitled to no less. The disciple is not bound to give more.

Jai Hind

A Spect of Security: *A Address to the Joint Civil-Military Training*

27 February, 2019

INDIA'S AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Policy Paradigm

Let us at the outset, examine factors impacting India's food and agriculture policy. Food security is directly linked to agricultural development, and the domestic requirement of food, because the world's second most populous country cannot be critically dependent on imported 'staples'¹. Although India overcame the critical phase of food insecurity and dependence on external assistance for food by mid-eighties, the challenge of recurrent droughts and crop failures directed agriculture policy towards 'abundant precaution,' and therefore the focus has always been on 'production' to ensure that food prices remained stable, and within affordable range.

Moreover, it was also essential for food production to keep pace with the increase in population and the rise in consumption. India had to be cautious about its soaring food import bill. Having said this, it must be mentioned that typically food security was with reference to wheat and rice that are the principal crops. The country is still critically dependent on import of oilseeds and in most years the inadequate production of pulses has been a cause for concern².

Another point that needs to be mentioned right at the beginning of this paper is that while the Government of India has taken the lead in shaping the agricultural development of the country, the Constitution has given this

¹ Staples refer to the food commodities that form the main ingredient of the diet of a community. The WTO Agreement on Agriculture makes a special reference to staples with regard to calculation of eligible subsidies.

² The procurement of pulses has picked up –thanks to the revival of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed) – India's apex procurement agency. This year the country was able to match the domestic requirement of 24 MT with product of an equivalent area. Millennium Post, July 6, 2018.

mandate to the states³, and after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (CSTA), agriculture and allied sectors (extension services, animal husbandry, livestock et al) can be assigned to the Zila Panchayats. Agriculture is the fourteenth entry in the state list. It may be noted that according to the concurrent list, the Union Government has the mandate to trade and commerce in foodstuff, raw cotton, and raw jute among others.

The Drivers of Agriculture Policy

The Government of India drives the agriculture policy in at least five distinct ways. Firstly, the Department of Agriculture and Co-operation and Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW) drives the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). It is under these two programmes, that major funding for direct assistance to farmers, in terms of frontline demonstrations, introduction of new technologies (farm equipment, newer seed varieties, plant protection) is made available to state governments. The financial resources available to the state government are no match for those of the centre, which can therefore set the agenda and the direction of the interventions.

Secondly, the agriculture research agenda is driven by the National Agriculture Research (NAR) system. Till 2014, the Planning Commission⁴ used to approve the state plans. The Commission would advise the state departments to relocate their research wings to the agricultural universities (that are governed by the Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR). West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are perhaps the only two states which maintain their own independent research wings to study problems that are specific to their agriculture. West Bengal continues to maintain two important research stations, the Pulses and Oilseeds Research Station at Berhampore in Murshidabad and the Rice Research Institute at Chinsurah in Hooghly, both of which have many national and international research collaborations.

Thirdly, together with the Ministry of Commerce, the external trade regime is driven entirely by the Government of India. Whether it is the import of onions, or the export of potatoes, both are directed by the Union Government. Of late, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs has also begun participating in the process to

³ The Constitution of India has clearly defined the powers of the union and the state governments. After the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, many of these powers were transferred to the Zila Panchayats.

⁴ The Planning Commission has now morphed into the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI). While the buildings and the organisation structure are the same, there is a major change in focus: it is now a think tank with distinct knowledge verticals looking into development interventions across sectors. (Incidentally, NITI in Hindi means 'Policy').

protect interests of consumers. Thus, when prices of commodities like onion and potato cross the politically accepted price threshold, executive orders like the Minimum Export Price are issued, and the parastatals⁵ are also advised to import the commodity in question.

Fourthly, financial inclusion for farmers – both in terms of credit and crop insurance is driven by institutions directly controlled by the Union Government. The Kisan Credit Card programme as well as the National Farmers Insurance Programme⁶ depend substantially on the ‘institutional capacity’ of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the insurance division of the agriculture ministry. The Department of Fertiliser co-ordinates the supply of fertiliser, especially urea, to the states based on their cropping patterns and land holdings.

Linked to this is the fact, that the roll out of programmes like farmers’ insurance and soil health cards require pan-India collaboration and co-operation. States have the option of running these on their own, but would then lose the ‘funds,’ which accrue to these programmes.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Union Agriculture Ministry with its three departments - agriculture, co-operation and farmers welfare and agriculture research and extension and animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries is one of the larger ministries of the Union Government and operates out of Krishi Bhawan (KB). As such many policies are also colloquially termed KB⁷ policies, and the view on the Minimum Support Price (MSP)/ Minimum Export Price (MEP) is termed the KB view. While KB has established ‘Missions’⁸ to oversee the implementation

⁵ Parastatals which have been asked to intervene in price stabilisation include the State Trading Corporations (STCs), NAFED, National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF), Mother Dairy and Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (SFAC).

⁶ Called the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). However in West Bengal, it is called the Bangla Fasal Bima Yojana as the scheme offers benefits over and above those offered by the PMFBY. Here the farmer’s share of the premium for agriculture crops insurance is also borne by the state government.

⁷ Krishi Bhawan is the headquarters of the agriculture ministry. KB is always in favour of higher MSP, and lower MEPS because these favour the farmer. However, the consumer affairs and public distribution department always counters this because they would like consumers to pay reasonable prices.

⁸ Missions / Mission Mode programmes were launched by the government of India to deliver specific objectives with assured funding for implementation of a set of interventions, the cost of which was to be borne largely by the GoI as these were national priorities. Thus the Horticulture Mission was launched with the specific objective of raising horticulture production, and the Mission on Micro Irrigation was meant to promote precision agriculture. However, as state governments were not quite comfortable with the direct transfer of funds to the state missions (outside of the state budgets), the Missions since 2013-2014, have lost a fair bit of autonomy, and are subject to the same financial procedures as other government programmes.

of the production programmes, the actual work on 'ground zero' is the mandate and the responsibility of the state governments. Naturally states differ in their zeal, capacity and political will to implement the policy prescriptions laid down by the centre. However, in most states, the chief secretary heads the state level sanctioning committees for the RKVY, and the agricultural secretary heads the National Food Security Mission (NFSM). Likewise, the secretaries of horticulture and animal husbandry and dairying, also head missions that focus on High Value Agriculture (HVA). As the focus of this paper is on food security, we will examine the NFSM in detail with some references to RKVY, which sets the overall direction of agriculture in the state.

THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY MISSION

*The first duty of the king to his subjects is a full granary!*⁹

Ensuring food security has been the main focus of the KB interventions. The success of India's food and agriculture policy not only ensured the transformation of the rural economy and livelihoods – it also gave India the necessary political clout and stature in the comity of nations. And, therefore, from importing over 10 million tons in 1966-67, to becoming self-sufficient in 1985-86¹⁰, India has come a long way, owing to the determined efforts of the government to give full thrust to the Green Revolution¹¹. The National Food Security Mission has strengthened efforts towards self-sufficiency. The success of the Green Revolution in Punjab and Haryana, and irrigated tracts elsewhere, gave the confidence to replicate this model in the eastern region, that was well endowed with water. This submission is 'Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI).' The mission has widened the food basket of the country and has also been successful in achieving its objective of vertical growth by raising productivity per unit of land, besides a tangible increase in production of cereals, pulses and oilseeds.

⁹ Kautalya, The Arthashastra Selections from the Classic Indian Work on Statecraft, translated by Mark McClish and Patrick Olivelle, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 2012

¹⁰ Kumar, Richa. 2016. "Putting Wheat In Its Place, Or Why The Green Revolution Wasn't Quite What It's Made Out To Be". The Wire, 2016. <https://thewire.in/agriculture/green-revolution-borlaug-food-security>.

¹¹ Green Revolution (GR) provided for quality hybrid/HYV seeds, fertilisers, water, credit and assured procurement at MSP. First implemented in the fertile and irrigated tracts of Punjab, it was then extended to other irrigated tracts in North India.

Table 1: Outlay / Production from 2007-08 to 2016-17¹²

Year	Outlay (Rs. in Crores)	Production (in Million Tonnes)		
		Cereals	Pulses	Oilseeds
2007-08	1629	216.01	14.76	28.54
2008-09	3718	219.90	14.57	26.38
2009-10	4744	203.45	14.66	23.72
2010-11	7683	226.25	18.24	30.98
2011-12	8815	242.20	17.09	27.35
2012-13	10115	238.79	18.34	28.83
2013-14	9027	245.79	19.25	30.88
2014-15	10237	234.87	17.15	25.49
2015-16	5077	235.22	16.35	23.37
2016-17	4839	249.84	22.14	31.71

Besides quantitative improvements, the Mission¹³ has also laid emphasis on making qualitative changes in the way agriculture is practised in India. Demonstrations of new farm practices like SRI (System of Rice Intensification) and the cultivation of hybrid rice are conducted at district level. Awareness regarding use of farm machinery, nutrients, quality seeds, good soil practices et al, have yielded results in the form of increased consumption of seeds and machinery components for the cultivation of rice, wheat and pulses from 2007-08 to 2011-12. This in turn has triggered a substantial increase in the production of food grains.

There has been an increased sale of machines supported by Mission, which include water saving devices such as irrigation pump sets and sprinkler sets, which help in achieving the goal of more crop per drop. Farmers' Field Schools (FFS) enable the capacity enhancement; they help farmers get familiar with new agricultural technologies that lead to significant yield gains and a rise in farmers' income. Increased public and private investment in agriculture has also created direct and indirect employment opportunities, in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

¹² Sources: (i) "Statement Showing Release and expenditure of the State/UTs under RKVY during the XIth plan as on 10.10.2018" at http://rkvy.nic.in/static/Statements/RKVY_XI_Plan.pdf Accessed June 26, 2018 (ii) http://nfsm.gov.in/MeetingEC_GC.aspx Accessed June 23, 2018 (iii) http://nfsm.gov.in/Circulars_Notifications/2017-8/ProductionTarget_30May2017.pdf (Accessed June 23, 2018)

¹³ National Food Security Mission at <https://www.nfsm.gov.in/>

Lastly, the mission works on the principle of convergence between various institutions that are responsible for supply of agriculture inputs like power, water supply, credit and assured minimum price and procurement, so that farmers are not just left to the mercy of favourable monsoons.

West Bengal has taken full advantage of the NFSM interventions and its success is acknowledged by five successive awards that it received for contribution to National Food Security.

West Bengal: Five Krishi Karman Awards

West Bengal is the only state in the country to have won the Krishi Karman Award (Excellence and Accomplishment in Agriculture) five times in a row. These were for: record pulses production in 2011-12; total food grain production in 2012-13; coarse cereal production in 2013-14; oilseed production in 2014-15; and pulses production in 2015-16.

Krishi Karman Awards was instituted in 2010-11 to acknowledge efforts of the best performing states for production of food grains and individual crops, such as rice, wheat, pulses and coarse cereals, to encourage and motivate the states. Later in 2013-2014 oilseeds were also included in the individual crop category. The production figures for West Bengal¹⁴, which led to this recognition, are given below:

Table -2

Year	Production ('000 tonnes)			
	Total Cereals	Total Pulses	Total Food grains	Total Oilseeds
2010-11	14634.35	176.52	14810.87	703.27
2011-12	15855.79	153.98	16009.77	710.51
2012-13	16320.18	201.65	16521.83	821.50
2013-14	16941.07	215.23	17156.30	840.65
2014-15	17532.35	230.87	17763.22	858.09
2015-16	17415.53	256.20	17671.73	888.59
2016-17	17276.96	275.79	17552.75	893.84

¹⁴ Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Department of Programme Implementation, Government of West Bengal at <https://www.agricoop.nic.in>.

The award amount is Rs 5 crore in the food grains category and Rs 2 crore for the individual crops category. The performance of the states is assessed on the basis of notified criteria such as: production outcomes; implementation of crop production programmes; innovative approaches adopted for effective service delivery; post-harvest management etc.

Further, the two best performing progressive farmers, including one female farmer of the awardee states are awarded the agriculture minister's Krishi Karman Award for Progressive Farmers. This consists of a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh and a citation. The objective is to inculcate a sense of healthy competition and encourage the farmers to enhance the production and productivity of individual crops and thereby of food grains as a whole.

THE RIGHT TO FOOD

Of what use is the food in the granary, if the citizen is starving!

According to Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen's theory of Exchange Entitlements, famine is not about lack of production; it occurs when a large number of people in a region lose the means or their entitlement to access food grains. The National Food Security Act (NFSA) is that entitlement, which helps every citizen, especially from the most vulnerable sections to access food, along with income that flows in through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA). Similarly, as mentioned in his book, *Development as Freedom*,¹⁵ economic protection from abject poverty and unemployment relief are the freedom, that are necessary for the development of a country.

Even though the Right to Food was not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, the Fundamental Right to Life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution has been interpreted by the Supreme Court and National Human Rights Commission¹⁶ to include the 'Right to Live with Human Dignity.' This includes the right to food and other basic necessities. Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, provides that the state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health, as among its primary duties. It was only with the enactment of

¹⁵ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*. New York, Alfred Knopf, 1999

¹⁶ The National Human Rights Commission, established in 1993, is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as "rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants".

the National Food Security Act 2013 that the government's efforts at food security got a legal backing and citizens, especially the poor could demand it, as a matter of right. Prior to this, even though there were a plethora of schemes, they were dependent upon the 'grace' of the political executive, year after year (most certainly in the election and pre-election years).

How did the statutory backing come about? Among a series of developments, the most pertinent was the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the PUCL (People's Union for Civil Liberties)¹⁷ against the Union of India and all state governments. The PUCL moved the Supreme Court for recognising 'Right to Food' as a right under Article 21 of the Constitution, after it observed that several sections of the population could not access food grains for a variety of reasons, including the lack of financial resources. Other reasons included poor logistics, lack of monitoring, deliberate diversion of Public Distribution System (PDS) stocks, management issues within the Food Corporation of India (FCI). It is true that from the mid-nineties, efforts were made to streamline the PDS, as leakages had touched unacceptable levels, and both administrative will and technology united to take corrective steps. There was also a lurking fear that with India's membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)¹⁸, the total subsidy on food would come under observation and found non-compliant. However, developing countries could claim exemption with regard to subsidy on 'staples' meant for the resource poor, as these were exempt from this regime.

From Welfare to Right

The National Food Security Act 2013, marks a paradigm shift from a welfare approach to a rights-based approach, enabling 75 per cent of rural and 50 per cent of urban population (almost 2/3rd of the population)¹⁹ to receive highly subsidised food grains. Some salient features of this Act are given below:

¹⁷ The Public Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), established in 1976 is India's lead human rights advocacy and support organisation. It mobilises public opinion to ensure a better climate for the protection of civil liberties in the country; energises and creatively uses existing institutions like the courts and the press so that they may become more sensitive to the human rights situation in the country.

¹⁸ India joined the WTO on December 31, 1994. The Agreement on Agriculture does include certain safeguards for developing countries, especially with regard to staples and small farmer driven agriculture

¹⁹ The National Food Security Act, 2013 at http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2013/E_29_2013_429.pdf (Accessed November 20, 2018)

Coverage and entitlement:	Guarantee of 5 kg per person per month, with poorest of the poor (i.e. Antyodaya households) being entitled to 35 kg per household per month.
Subsidised price under TDPS and their revision:	Food grains under TDPS will be made available at subsidised prices of Rs.3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains respectively for a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act. Thereafter prices will be suitably linked to Minimum Support Price (MSP). (However this has not been done, as no political party wants to be accused of diluting any of the provisions of this Act)
Nutritional Support to women and children:	Pregnant women and lactating mothers and children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years will be entitled to meals as per prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) schemes. Higher nutritional norms have been prescribed for malnourished children up to 6 years of age.
Maternity Benefit:	Pregnant women and lactating mothers will also be entitled to receive maternity benefit of not less than Rs.6,000 as per scheme to be formulated by the Central Government.
Women Empowerment:	Eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above will be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards.
Food Security Allowance:	Provision for food security allowance to entitled beneficiaries in case of non- supply of entitled food grains or meals.
Grievance Redressal Mechanism:	States are mandated to appoint Food Commissioners with powers to impose penalty on public servants for failure to comply with the provisions of this Act.

Source: NFSA, 2013

Figure 1

Is NFSA the revamped PDS?

One line of argument is that NFSA is just a revamped version of the Public Distribution System (PDS), which was introduced during the inter-war years (mid-forties) to prevent speculative trade in commodities like wheat, rice and sugar. It was continued post-Independence, but was marked by nepotism, inefficiency, complaints regarding rent-seeking by almost everyone in the value chain – from the ration dealer, who had to cut corners on account of very low margins, irregular supply and patronage pay-outs to the political executive. However, by mid-eighties, it was realised that proper distribution of food was an effective tool for addressing issues related to poverty and malnutrition.

Evolution of PDS	Timeline	Details
PDS	1940s	Launched as general entitlement scheme
TPDS	1997	PDS was revamped to target poor households
Antyodaya Anna Yojana	2000	Scheme launched to target the 'poorest of the poor'
PDS Control Order	2001	Government notified this Order to administer TPDS
PUCL vs. Union of India	2001	Ongoing case in Supreme Court contending that 'right to food' is a fundamental right
National Food Security Act	2013	Act to provide legal right to food to the poor

Figure 2

Source: Author's research

The central and state governments jointly manage the PDS, with the centre being responsible for procurement, storage, transportation and allocation. The states are responsible for the distribution through Fair Price Shops (FPS); as well as for identification of families Below Poverty Line (BPL); issuing cards; supervision and monitoring²⁰.

²⁰ Sttttt

In many ways, the success of the NFSA depends on the seamless integration between both the centre and the states, and the clear division of responsibilities between them enables better monitoring. The figure below depicts the specific responsibilities of each tier.

- DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (Overall supervisory authority of food procurement and distribution)
- FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA (National agency for procurement of food Grains and Crops on the Basis of Minimum support Price)
- DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND SUPPLIES IN STATES (State nodal agencies for Distribution of food grains and Identification of beneficiaries)
- DISTRICT SUPPLY OFFICERS (Responsible for food supply in their respective districts under the supervision of the District magistrate)
 - FAIR PRICE SHOPS (last mile distribution)
 - BENEFICIARIES

Figure 3

Also, given the competitive politics, the ubiquitous media, including social media, civil society and an activist judiciary, any errors of omission or commission in the ground level implementation of this act get immediately highlighted.

State Initiatives

In fact, many states have taken pro-active steps to enhance the scope of coverage, well beyond the statutory provisions of the Act. What this implies is that the Government of India extends its financial support, only to the extent stipulated under the Act: anything the states want to provide beyond that has to be provided for, by the state exchequer. Thus, Tamil Nadu follows the 'zero exception' norm: the entire state is covered under the PDS with any extra costs being borne by the state itself. Similarly, the *Khadya Sathi*²¹ scheme of West Bengal covers almost 90 per cent of the population in the state. Punjab has

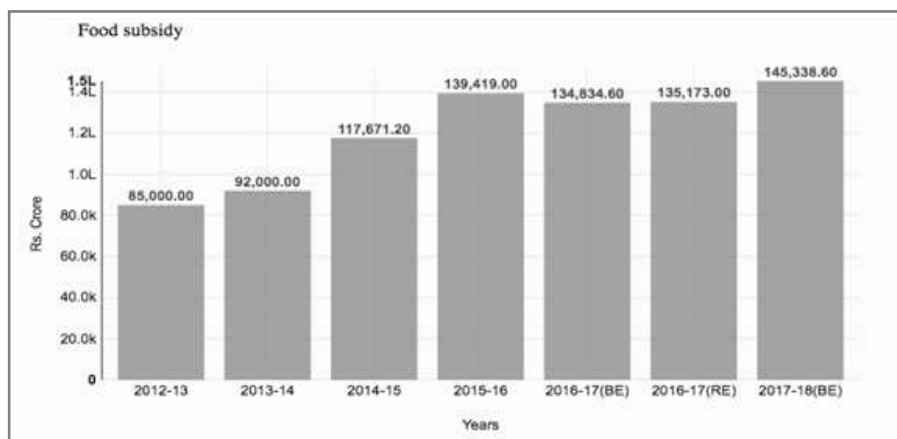
²¹ The Khadya Sathi (Food Support programme) was announced by the CM of West Bengal as a comprehensive measure to extend the reach of the PDS. The Khadya Sathi scheme was launched in January 2016 to provide rice at Rs. 2/- per kg. The scheme brings 8.59 crore people under food security. Out of these, 7.20 crore people get rice/ wheat at Rs. 2/- per kg and 1.39 crore get food grains at half the market price. See "Khadya Sathi: Food Security for Bengal" United News of India August 31, 2018 at <http://www.uniindia.com/khadya-sathi-food-security-for-bengal/states/news/1336268.html>

introduced the Atta-Dal²² scheme wherein pulses are also provided. States like Chhattisgarh have introduced the GPS tracking of food trucks and issue food coupons to reduce pilferage and ensure that benefits actually accrue to the poor.²³ There are many case studies on how a backward state like Chhattisgarh was able to accomplish this task, and also set an example for other states to follow.

The efforts certainly seem to be yielding results. The debate is about the 'quality of food,' mode of distribution and replication of best practices. A cursory scan of the Review of Rural Affairs (earlier Review of Agriculture in EPW) shows that the focus of research has changed – it is no longer about purposeful exclusions and significant diversions from the PDS, or the discrimination against certain castes with respect to their ability to receive the entitlements.

Budgetary Provisions for NFSA

The Act has also ensured adequate provision in the budget for its implementation. From 2014-15 till now, food subsidy makes up a good 6-7 per cent of India total budget.²⁴



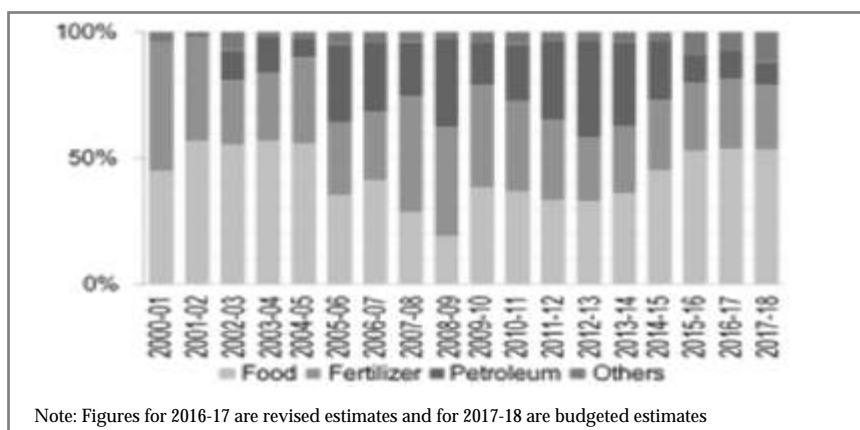
Source: Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget for Various years

Figure 4

²² The Atta – Dal scheme of the government of Punjab provides 25 kg of wheat at Rs1 per kg and 2.5 kg pulses at Rs 20/- per kg per month to the eligible beneficiaries. This scheme aims to cover around 30 lakhs families with an annual income of less than Rs 60,000 and land holdings of less than 2.5 acres (rural areas) and 100-yard plot holders in urban areas. Although this was launched by the Badal government, it has not been discontinued till the time of the writing of this paper, even though a new (politically different government under Captain Amarinder Singh has been in office for nearly two years.

²³ Shishir Sinha, "Bihar to eliminate PDS leakage in 2 years" The Hindu Business Line, July 06, 2014 at <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/Bihar-to-eliminate-PDS-leakage-in-2-years/article20811970.ece>

²⁴ Compiled from Union Budget of India of various years.



Sources : Union Budget documents; PRS.

Figure 5: Total Expenditure on Subsidies in Percentage Terms
(data compiled from annual reports of expenditure on Subsidies from
Union Budget documents – www.prsindia.org)

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recognises the NFSA 2013 as a comprehensive policy that ensures food security, primarily for the poor in normal circumstances, but for all during natural calamities, like earthquakes, tsunamis and droughts, irrespective of the economic and social status of individuals. The commission has also recognised the Act as being pivotal for achieving three Sustainable Development Goals²⁵ (SDG): to end poverty (SDG 1); to achieve zero hunger (SDG 2); and to move towards sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12).

The Right to Food: Impact on Procurement and Farm Prices

One immediate and direct impact of the Right to Food has been that many state governments have taken proactive steps to reform the PDS system, procure food locally and ensure a higher price for their farmers, besides cutting down the cost of logistics²⁶. This has also reduced the asymmetry of information and power between thousands of marginal players on one hand and the large agro-business aggregators on the other. When production goes up in the absence of a market or state procurement, the farmer prices tend to plummet. In order to

²⁵ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These 17 goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new issues such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. (However, abolition of poverty and end to hunger continue to be the two top goals: in their absence, the rest are meaningless)

²⁶ Till such time as the responsibility of providing rice to the states was the exclusive preserve of the FCI, states were not really concerned about the logistical costs, as the financial burden was to be borne by the Govt.

prevent distress sales, the West Bengal government undertook a massive procurement operation with two distinct but clearly related objectives. The first was to provide rice at Rs. 2 per kg to over 80 million citizens. Closely linked to this was the need to procure from within the state so that farmers got a fair price for their produce.

MSP and Procurement

The starting point of food procurement in India is purchase of food by the central or state government from farmers on basis of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) Programme, under which food crops are procured by the Food Corporation of India, or a state procurement agency at a minimum price determined annually by Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. Then these food-crops are stored in warehouses across the country to be distributed to the beneficiaries of the PDS on the basis of the lists of BPL persons maintained and updated by the state governments.

In this process, the state governments are the agencies for monitoring and identifying the beneficiaries. The food grains are transferred to various FPS through a specified transport system and infrastructure. In the FPS, food is distributed on the basis of a digitised list, prepared on the basis of the ration cards issued to them. This allows for the online entry and verification of beneficiary data as well as the online accounting of the monthly entitlement of beneficiaries, the number of dependents as well as the off-take of food grains by beneficiaries, from the FPS. Likewise, the computerisation of FPS allocation ensures the declaration of stock balance, and the web-based monitoring of truck movements and challans, ensures quicker and efficient tracking of transactions.

CASE STUDY FROM WEST BENGAL

Prior to the concerted drive for procurement under the *Khadya Sathi*, farmers were finding it difficult to offload their stocks at the MSP- and they were getting less than Rs. 1000/- per kg as against the MSP of Rs. 1360/-[#]. Moreover the 'aggregator' would also delay payments, besides there were issues relating to non-transparency and arbitrariness with regard to weight and quality.

Traditionally, paddy procurement in West Bengal was undertaken on behalf of various Custom Milled Rice (CMR) agencies by respective co-operative societies, by organising paddy purchase camps at the society premises or elsewhere, depending upon the need of local farmers. During the Kharif

[#] Personal knowledge of the author based on his extensive experience in his capacity as Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture in the government of West Bengal. The author was also the ex-officio member secretary of the State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

marketing season (KMS) 2014-15, 46 Kisan Mandis, that had the required infrastructure, were identified as Centralised Procurement Centres (CPCs). In order to incentivise the farmers to bring their paddy to those locations, Rs15/- per quintal of common paddy was allowed over and above, the MSP of Rs1360/- per quintal. Encouraged by the positive response of farmers, 275 CPCs were opened at all major paddy producing blocks in KMS 2016-2017. In KMS 2017-18 total number of CPCs rose to 325 and the amount of incentive payable to the farmers was enhanced to Rs 20 per quintal for common paddy. Also, CMR agencies are procuring paddy through 950 co-operative societies for the KMS 2017-18²⁷ operations is being encouraged. Over three hundred SHGs have participated during KMS 2017-18, and have procured 31217 MT of paddy till March 31, 2018 from 9600 small and marginal farmers²⁸.

No distress sale of paddy has been reported in the last six years²⁹. Farmers are getting a higher MSP than the MSP in the open market. Dependence on the FCI for rice procurement has reduced in the last 6 years. Last, but not the least, with the introduction of e-procurement software, payments to farmers are being made through National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT) within three days of purchase.

Table 3: Procurement Status in the State during last 5 years

Year	Minimum Support Price (Rs.) per quintal	Procurement of paddy (in LMT)	Procurement of CMR (in LMT)
KMS-2012-13	1250	25.93 (including levy ³⁰)	17.63
KMS-2013-14	1310	19.99 (including levy)	13.59
KMS-2014-15	1360	30.36 (including levy)	20.64
KMS-2015-16	1410	38.53	26.20
KMS-2016-17	1470	39.59	26.92
KMS-2017-18	1550	28.38 (till date)	19.29

Source: Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Government of West Bengal

²⁷ Improvements in paddy procurement in seven years: published on 31 August, 2018 in <http://aitcofficial.org>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Levy Rice: under this system a rice mill was bound to sell a certain percentage of the total rice production in a year (after milling) from paddy bought from farmers, to the government at a price fixed by the GoI. Levy percentage was 50 per cent initially and then reduced to 25per cent. It was done away with in 2015-16

THE RIGHT TO WORK: MNREGA IN WEST BENGAL

*Wage employment programmes are an important component of the anti-poverty strategy and have sought to achieve multiple objectives. They not only provide employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but also in times of floods, droughts and other natural calamities. They create rural infrastructure, which supports further economic activity. These programmes also put an upward pressure on market wage rates by attracting people to public works programmes, thereby reducing labour supply and pushing up demand for labour.*³¹

Right to work as a Human Right

The right to work is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights³² and mentioned under Article 41 (Directive Principles of State Policy). The Indian Parliament passed the Right to Work Act, which was notified on September 7, 2005. Along with wage employment, the inherent idea was to provide income security to all resource poor persons in the country.

MNREGA is the largest work guarantee programme in the world. The Act provides a hundred days of wage employment to a household whose adult members are ready to do unskilled manual work. If employment is not provided within 15 days, the member is entitled to unemployment allowance.³³ The list of work is prepared by the concerned Gram Sabha, ensuring a general consensus about the kind of work that has to be taken up with community assets such as schools, shelters, roads, water bodies and land shaping, taking precedence. This has a two-fold benefit - it reduces the role of middlemen and creates a sense of ownership among the local communities regarding the assets created. The funding is provided by the centre and the states as per fixed criteria. This makes the 'entitlement to work' a matter of right, rather than an act of grace by the political dispensation. It also means that there is recourse to the judicial process in case of a denial of the right to work. Again, while the state government implements it, the centre lays down the policy guidelines and also provides much of the funding.

³¹ Tenth Five Year Plan of India, 2002-2007

³² The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees protection of the person, of procedural law (claim to effective legal remedy), classical freedom rights such as, freedom of expression, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. These rights should apply to all people irrespective of their race, gender and nationality, as all people are born free and equal.

³³ "Overview Of MGNREGA-Vikaspedia". 2019. Vikaspedia. In. <http://vikaspedia.in/agriculture/policies-and-schemes/rural-employment-related-1/mgnrega/rural-employment-related?content=large>.

Allocations and Expenditure

The government of India and government of West Bengal's share in the overall allocations and spends under the MNREGA during Financial Year 2008-2009 to 2017-2018 are as below:

Table 4 : Performance During 2008-09 to 2017-18 under MGNREGA

Indicators	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 (As per Audit)	2014-15 (As per Audit)	2015-16 (As per MIS)	2016-17 (As per MIS)	2017-18 (as on 31.08.17)
Person days Generated (in lakhs)	786	1,551	1,553	1504	2012	2315	1714	2865	2,356	1,305
Wage ³⁴ Rate (Rs.)	75/ 81	81/ 87	100 / 130	130	136	151	169	174	176	180
Fund Received from Centre (Rs. in Crores)	932	1,787	2,117	2597	3395	2,894	3,744	4,711	5,383	3,218
Fund Received from State (Rs. in Crores)	64	136	271	222	497	656	506	1,023	942	350
Expenditure (Rs in Crores)	940	2,110	2,533	2927	3894	3777	4085	4853	7,264	4,200

Source: Compiled from archive reports and MIS of MGNREGA (www.nrega.nic.in)

Implications for Rural Economy

MGNREGA has direct implications for the rural economy as the MGNREGA wage sets the floor rate for rural wages, and the work is demand driven. Wage employment can therefore be created during economic shocks or agriculture

³⁴ Wage rate is determined by GOI. The revision of wage rate from January 1, 2008 was Rs 75.; From January 1, 2009 it was Rs 81; From January 1, 2010 it was Rs 100; From January 1, 2011 it was Rs 130; From April 1, 2012 it was Rs 136. Since 2012 the revision of wages takes place from April 1, of each year. The current wage rate for West Bengal is Rs 191, per day (Received as email communication from Secretary, Rural Development, Government of West Bengal)

off-seasons. Men and women get equal wages in rural areas, unlike private jobs which pay women far less for same kind of work³⁵. During the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2011-2012), *nominal farm wages in India increased by 17.5% per annum and real farm wages by 6.8% per annum registering the fastest growth, since economic reforms began in 1991*.³⁶ In addition to reducing the poverty level to around 32%, the programme also prevented 14 million people from falling into poverty and the debt trap.³⁷ This has primarily benefited the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and daily wage labourers. Wage rates are revised periodically to factor in inflationary trends. The programme is environmentally beneficial, as it involves the creation of durable rural assets which augment land and water resources, thereby strengthening the resource base of an area.

For example, Burdwan district in West Bengal turned around, 1445 acres of land which was either fallow, barren or prone to floods and droughts into productive farmland. This has increased, not only the overall paddy production, but also created huge social forestry assets. The district has been given the National Award for Effective Initiative in Social Inclusion by the Union Ministry of Rural Development.

Identity, Entitlement and the Right to Food

We now come to the Aadhaar Card, the unique identity document which facilitates access to a host of benefits/entitlements. It is important to note that many state governments, including West Bengal have taken the view that benefits/entitlements cannot be denied in the absence of Aadhaar card. This view has been upheld in a recent judgement of the Supreme Court (Justice (Retd) K S Puttaswamy vs Union of India, wherein the nine-judge bench unanimously upheld that privacy is a constitutionally protected right, emanating from the guarantee of life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution. However, most government schemes and programmes insist on, or at least seek Aadhaar card details. The fact that it is useful for getting benefits under government programmes is clearly mentioned on the Aadhaar card itself.

³⁵ "NEWS ALERTS | MGNREGA Improves School Enrolment, Education - Im4change - Page: 1". n.d. Im4change.Org. <http://www.im4change.org/news-alerts/mgnrega-improves-school-enrolment-education-21062.html>.

³⁶ Virmani, Arvind. 2001. "India's BOP Crisis And External Reform: Myths And Paradoxes". Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relation.

³⁷ Mishra, Sumit. 2016. "The Economics Of MGNREGS". Live Mint, , 2016. <https://www.livemint.com/Sundayapp/ueWD2KvNelmsOGEupZND6K/The-economics-of-the-MGNREGS.html>.

The multiple uses of Aadhaar

Several departments of the Government of India – from agriculture to social welfare, health and fertilisers have requested states/UTs to seed the Aadhaar numbers in the database of ration card/health card/kisan credit card/farmers insurance/fertiliser distribution. With specific reference to the National Food Security Act, the scheme will enable the weeding out of bogus/ineligible ration cards and better targeting of food subsidy. It will also facilitate availability of food grains to intended beneficiaries at FPS, check leakages and diversions etc. As per information given in response to a question in the Parliament³⁸, 100 % digitisation of ration cards and approximately 73% seeding of Aadhaar had been achieved by January 24, 2017, while approximately 1.78 lakh e-PoS were operational at FPS/PDS outlets. A state wise statement shows the number of ration cards deleted between 2013 to 2016 following detection of ghost/ fraudulent/ duplicate/ ineligible/ migration/ deaths etc. The process of digitisation, de-duplication/ Aadhaar seeding is shown in the next Table.

The Aadhaar saturation level (88.7%) indicates an easy enrolment procedure with fairly easy access (Table 6). The states with a high Scheduled Caste population as per Census 2011, i.e. Uttar Pradesh (Aadhaar saturation: 86.6%) and West Bengal (Aadhaar saturation: 93.2%) as well as the states with a large Scheduled Tribe population as per Census 2011, i.e. Madhya Pradesh (Aadhaar saturation: 88.9%) and Orissa (Aadhaar saturation: 92.4%) suggests that the most vulnerable sections i.e. SC/ ST population find it easy to get an Aadhaar Card. There are concerns regarding some of the north - eastern states as well as Jammu and Kashmir as the saturation is below 80%. The factors responsible for this variation may include gaps in infrastructure and a disturbed law and order situation. However, the Aadhaar enrolment procedure does not appear to be a hindrance for the SC/ ST population in these states.

Table 5: Deletion of fake ration cards

Sl.	States/UTs	State-wise Total
1	Andaman & Nicobar	37
2	Andhra Pradesh	9,67,000
3	Arunachal Pradesh	14,911
4	Assam	72,746
5	Bihar	41,369

³⁸ Answer to a question in the Parliament (Lok Sabha: the House of People) on February 7, 2017 at <http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/11/AU844.pdf>ACCESSED??

6	Chandigarh	0
7	Chhattisgarh	10,39,000
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1,647
9	Daman & Diu	0
10	Delhi	35,056
11	Goa	1,11,020
12	Gujarat	1,39,174
13	Haryana	1,92,130
14	Himachal Pradesh	3,260
15	Jammu & Kashmir	0
16	Jharkhand	7,933
17	Karnataka	46,19,988
18	Kerala	0
19	Lakshdweep	1,390
20	Madhya Pradesh	1,09,436
21	Maharashtra	21,62,391
22	Manipur	0
23	Meghalaya	0
24	Mizoram	997
25	Nagaland	0
26	Odisha	7,61,460
27	Puducherry	28,008
28	Punjab	1,01,249
29	Rajasthan	13,23,406
30	Sikkim	4,760
31	Tamil Nadu	3,70,727
32	Telangana	19,39,481
33	Tripura	1,76,986
34	Uttar Pradesh	24,72,135
35	Uttarakhand	0
36	West Bengal ^s	66,13,961
Grand Total		2,33,11,658

^s West Bengal has individual Ration Cards System

Source: Source: Answered given by Government of India, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in Lok Sabha - Question No: 844 Answered on: 07.02.2017 (<http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=46944&lno=16>)

Table 6: Aadhaar Saturation as on May 31, 2018³⁹

Thus, we note that the Aadhaar card has the potential for weeding out fake ration cards and plugging economic leakages. This would not only help in better beneficiary targeting but would also help save public money. Because of its nationwide coverage, even those living in the remotest of remote areas and the poorest of poor, will be entitled to the right to food.

FARMER SUICIDES

There is no denying the fact that the state of farmer suicides continue to shake the very foundation of the agrarian economy and all political parties - both in their manifestos and in their campaign speeches, bring up the issue of farmers' distress. Even though most state governments deny a direct linkage between agrarian distress and farmer deaths, the writing on the wall is quite apparent. The state wise data on farmers' suicides as per National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB)'s report titled Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, 2015 is given below:

Figure 8⁴⁰

³⁹ 2019. Uidai.Gov.In. Accessed July 12.
https://uidai.gov.in/images/StateWiseAge_AadhaarSat_24082017.pdf.

⁴⁰ National Crime Records Bureau. n.d. "Accidental Deaths And Suicides In India 2015."

Farmer Suicides – State wise⁴¹

The states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana, which saw more than 200 farmer suicides in 2015, are largely dryland regions. The other states that receive a higher annual rainfall have considerably fewer farmer suicides.

The National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB) report recorded, ‘Bankruptcy or Indebtedness’ and ‘Farming Related Issues,’ as major reasons for suicides among farmers/cultivators, accounting for 38.7 % (3,097 out of 8,007 suicides) and 19.5% (1,562 out of 8,007 suicides) of all such suicides, respectively during 2015 (Fig.9). The indebtedness issue is being addressed in a big way through ‘financial inclusion’ and ‘crop insurance.’

The point to be noted is that ‘Poverty’ accounted for 1.1 per cent of total suicides as can be seen in Fig.9.

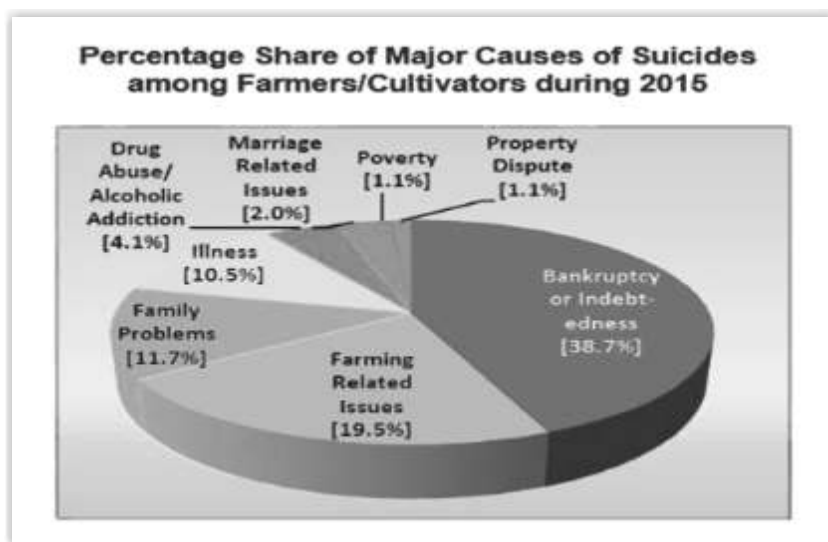


Figure 9

Although ‘farming related issues’ is quite a generic term, the main concerns are: high input costs, coupled with crop failure, or a failure to get proper market price. With the universalisation of soil health cards, efficient use of fertilisers and other inputs, this is likely to improve. The National Agriculture

⁴¹ “Suicides in Farming Sector” at <http://ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/ADSI/ADSI2015/chapter-2A%20suicides%20in%20farming%20sector.pdf> Accessed June 27, 2018

Market is expected to ensure a pan-India 'price discovery' mechanism, and the revival of Nafed⁴², after years of procrastination will ensure the procurement of pulses and oilseeds at an MSP in the event of a good crop. It may be mentioned that while the FCI is responsible for the procurement of wheat and rice, the mandate for the procurement of oilseeds and pulses lies with Nafed.

Incidentally, West Bengal has no recorded case of a farmer suicide in recent years: the one solitary case reported was from Jalpaiguri in 2011, which on enquiry was found to be on account of alcohol and health related issue.

However, the main concern of the policy makers today is not food security, but agrarian distress, especially in commodities other than cereals and pulses, for which the procurement policies and systems are in place. These issues are dealt with in detail by the Committee on Doubling Farmers Income, which sought inputs from relevant stakeholders, including the state governments.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: COMMITTEE ON DOUBLING FARMERS' INCOMES

The Government of India constituted an inter-ministerial committee led by Ashok Dalwai⁴³, additional secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture to examine the immediate, medium and long term steps required to transform the agriculture sector, with a major focus on farmers' income – rather than on production and productivity - which is what all traditional committees and Task Forces have been focusing on. For those involved in the agriculture sector, it is a clear indicator that we have moved beyond focusing our strategy on food security to farmers' income. As stated earlier, with the exception of oilseeds, the country has sufficient production capacity and adequate buffer stocks to tide over a drought year. Moreover, thanks to the irrigated areas of the country, and the spread of BGREI in areas marked by abundant rainfall, India has a reasonable food security cover.

The DFIC recognises agriculture as a 'value-led' enterprise and suggests empowering farmers with 'improved market linkages' and promoting 'self-sustainable models' to ensure continued income growth of farmers. This creates the basic strategic direction for four primary concerns: optimal

⁴² Nafed, India's apex marketing co-operative received a rehabilitation package in 2018, besides getting an in-principle approval for procurement of pulses and oilseeds in the event of MSP failure. The author was present at the function held to mark the occasion on April 26, 2018 at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

⁴³ Currently posted as the CEO of the National Rainfed Area Authority, which is tasked with the responsibility of developing a strategy for the non-irrigated agricultural tracts

monetisation of farmers' produce; sustainability of production; improved resource use efficiency; and revamping the (near) moribund extension and knowledge based services. Towards this end, the focus is on: diversification towards high value crops; improvement of price realisation; shift from farm to non-farm occupations; smart agriculture through precision farming; optimal nutrient and pest management; increasing cropping intensity by covering fallows and providing water; besides of course, improvement of crop and livestock production.

CONCLUSION

The eco-system of India's food security is evolving in the right direction: while there are pulls, pressures, expectations and frustrations, the multi-pronged approach is yielding results on expected lines. It cannot be denied that there is scope for improvement in almost every sphere: from food grain production to ensuring remunerative prices; plugging inefficiencies in the implementation of the Right to Food and Right to Work, to ensure near universal coverage of those entitled to these rights; strengthening the monitoring mechanism; and replicating best practices on a pan India level. The terms of discourse have changed - as articles in EPW⁴⁴, prior to the Right to Food Act were all seeking the enlargement of the PDS, and more importantly, making a case that the 'political economy of PDS' is based on 'systemic leakages'. The success of the Chhattisgarh model (which was earlier part of Madhya Pradesh and, therefore, regarded as BIMARU⁴⁵) shows how technological interventions can eliminate corruption in the PDS, and bring about substantial improvements in terms of outreach. Apart from altruistic reasons, farmer suicides are a major embarrassment for the ruling dispensation, and states are leaving no stone unturned to avoid farm distress. The universalisation of crop insurance is also getting stabilised after the initial hiccups. Both central and state governments are sensitive to the demands of their political constituencies – both urban and rural – and therefore the eco-system will be dominated not just by the focus on production, but also on public procurement to help the farmers, and public distribution to ensure access to 'food for all' to fulfil the commitments of the food security regime.

⁴⁴ Economic & Political Weekly (EPW), published by the Samit Shah Trust, Mumbai is one of India's most respectable social sciences journal. It publishes a quarterly review on rural affairs (earlier called the Review of Agriculture)

⁴⁵ 'Bimar' means sick/unwell. The acronym, Bimaru was used pejoratively for the Hindi speaking states Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In 2000, the predominantly tribal state of Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh; the resource rich Jharkhand, out of Bihar; and the hill state of Uttarakhand was carved out of UP.

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