

# The Service

**Connecting the IAS Community**

Monthly Online Magazine of the IAS Officers' Association, West Bengal

**T**he Service is back. This time, on line. The credit goes entirely to our young colleague, P.B. Salim. We must also thank the contributors. We are combining interesting snippets and enriching essays. From now on, you will get your new-look magazine on our revised web site [www.iaswb.org](http://www.iaswb.org). This is the first edition and there must be several terrible mistakes. Kindly log on, excuse, correct and contribute. Share your experiences, anecdotes, pains and pleasures. Let colours come back.

- Secretary, IAS Officers' Association

## Who's gone where?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vikram Sen (1987): Spl. Secy, Comm &amp; Industries.</li> <li>• Hari Ramulu (1987): Spl. Secy, Panchayat &amp; R D</li> <li>• Chandan Sinha (1989): Spl.Secy., Power</li> <li>• Kalyani Sarkar (1987): Spl.Secy, Dev. &amp; Plng</li> <li>• B P Barat (1994): Member Secy, PCB</li> <li>• Ravi Kant (1985): Took Voluntary Retirement</li> <li>• Arun Kumar Bal (1986): Director, C &amp; SSI &amp; Spl. Secy, C &amp; I</li> <li>• P. Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi (2004): Sub Divisional Officer, Jangipore</li> <li>• R. Aeron Israel Jebasingh (2004): Sub Divisional Officer, Jhargram.</li> <li>• Jagdish Prasad Meena (2004): Sub Divisional Officer, Islampore</li> <li>• Sanjay Bansal (2004): Sub Divisional Officer, Khatra, Bankura</li> <li>• A.B. Chakraborty (1977): State Editor, West Bengal District Gazetteers</li> <li>• Shyamal Kr Bhattacharya: Director, School Education &amp; E.O.Joint Secy, School Education</li> <li>• Satyabrata Chakraborty (1991): Labour Commissioner</li> <li>• Barun Kr Ray (1991): Secretary, KMDA</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• G. D. Gautama (1977): C &amp; SSI &amp; Tourism</li> <li>• Mira Pandey (1974): Animal Resource Development</li> <li>• Subesh Das (1982): Labour</li> <li>• A M Chakroborty (1974): Higher Edn. &amp; Sc &amp; Technology</li> <li>• K Sathiavasan (1981): Consumer Affairs</li> <li>• N.R. Banerjee (1981): Minorities Welfare &amp; Dev.</li> <li>• T. K. Barman (1978): Jails</li> <li>• K.S. Rajendrakumar (1976): PHE &amp; Excise</li> <li>• Nandita Chatterjee (1980): School Edn</li> <li>• P K Pradhan (1977): UD &amp; MA</li> <li>• M L Meena (1983): Environment</li> <li>• Siddharth (1983): IT &amp; Biotech</li> <li>• D Som (1983): MD, WBIDC</li> <li>• R Ranjit (1996): DM, Jalpaiguri</li> <li>• Anoop Agarwal (1993): DM, East Mid</li> <li>• S K Gupta (1987): Commnr P&amp;RD</li> <li>• Abhijit Choudhury (1994): PD, Sunderbans dev</li> <li>• C R Das (1994): DM, Malda</li> <li>• Subir Bhadra (1993): DM, Murshidabad</li> <li>• Rajiv Dubey (1987): Dy Chairman Haldia</li> <li>• A Subbaih (1992): MD, WBSIDC</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**More ought to follow, sooner the better !**

# Administrative Reorganization to Enrich Democracy in India

Amit Kiran Deb, Chief Secretary

An objective assessment of the democratic scenario in our country will show that the Constitution of India has, no doubt, been able to provide a durable framework for the Governments, political institutions and statutory bodies to function in spite of great social and political upheavals and changes. Since Independence, the country has witnessed several cataclysmic events like the Chinese aggression, four wars with Pakistan, assassination of two Prime Ministers, severe floods, droughts and earthquakes; but the system has withstood all these shocks and emergencies without displaying even the feeblest signs of collapse. It is also true that India has made remarkable progress in several areas like linguistic reorganization of States, conduct of General Elections, development of a robust foreign policy, development of nuclear power, achievements in the field of science and technology and the Green revolution – to mention only a few.

More than fifty-five years have passed since India became a Republic. We now stand at the cross-roads of history. The country's democratic polity has come under severe strain. There are repeated attempts to undermine the political and social institutions; the democratic values are getting eroded and the steel frame is showing signs of cracking. The tradition of single party rule seems to have come to an end and the era of coalition governments has begun. It is widely felt that there is an urgent need to stop further deterioration of the standards of administration and restore the faith and trust of the citizens in our institutions of governance. The nation should therefore take a pledge to return to the "Rule of Law" and re-establish the ethics and healthy norms of our public life.

The task of reorganization for strengthening the democratic values should start at the national level. A vast multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India cannot be governed on the basis of a unilateral process of decision making and by issue of arbitrary and uni-directional fiats. There should be a national consensus on major issues like those pertaining to the country's security, defence and nuclear policies, international trade and commerce and science and technology. All the major political parties including the opposition parties must be taken into confidence by the Government while formulating the national policies as is the practice in Britain and some other western countries. It is imperative that this approach based on "consensus and continuity" should be institutionalized.

While the fiercely independent judiciary of our country acts as an effective check on the arbitrary tendencies of the legislature and the executive, time has come for the Parliament and the State legislatures to re-establish and assert their role as the active promoter of democratic norms and practices. The political parties must observe a self-imposed code of conduct so that politics is kept from aberrations and criminal influences.

The executive in our country is confronted with a wide range of complex problems. These relate to organizational structure, lack of understanding of the Governments' policies particularly at the cutting-edge levels, extensive impact of corruption leading to distortions in the implementation of policies and programmes, lack of accountability and transparency and ineffectiveness of the delivery mechanism. Reform of the system and its reorganization should therefore be comprehensive in order to be purposeful. For bringing back people's confidence in the executive, the ethics of governance and well-established values and norms of an impartial, honest and effective bureaucracy must be restored. The rule and guidelines regulating the bureaucracy must be strictly enforced and institutions of accountability like the Vigilance Commissions should take up their assigned tasks with seriousness and deliver justice quickly. It is true that it is extremely difficult to totally eliminate the all pervading phenomenon of corruption; but sincere attempts must be made to deal with this problem as effectively as possible.

There is also the need to take a fresh and close look at the organizational structure of the Government of India and the State Governments. A thoughtful and comprehensive exercise on reorganization of Ministries and Departments will be required for rational allocation of responsibilities and tasks. Priorities in detail should be determined in respect of policies, programmes, projects and schemes. Proper manpower planning should take into account the need for redesigning recruitment policies with adequate avenues for lateral entry at crucial levels of the hierarchy and provide for guidelines for enhancing performance and strategies for upgrading skills of the personnel at every level. Strengthening of the financial management systems should stress on capacity building and internal audit systems.

In recent years, administration at the district level and below has become extremely complex and with a large number of programmes like PMGSY, RIDF, SSA and rural employment

guarantee scheme involving crores of rupees entrusted to the districts for execution, the district administration across the country is finding it increasingly difficult to implement them in a time-bound manner being handicapped by the shortage of adequately motivated and committed field level functionaries. Decentralisation of powers and functions through the Panchayat Raj institutions and urban self-governing bodies has no doubt brought them into the mainstream of rural and urban governance. However, the dynamics of party politics and delay in decision making seem to impede the efficient and effective functioning of these self-governing institutions. What is urgently required is that these elected representatives should be made to undergo intensive training so that they are adequately sensitized to the needs of the people they have been elected to serve and to instill into them a sense of urgency in the matter of planning and implementing projects and schemes within the scheduled time-frame.

On the issue of accountability and transparency, it will be appropriate to mention the recently promulgated Right to Information Act which aims at curbing the pervasive culture of secrecy that afflicts the country's bureaucracy. If implemented with sincerity and earnestness, the provisions of the Act will go a long way in lifting the veil of confidentiality on the Government's decision-making process.

These are some of the broad ideas on reorganization at the political and administrative levels which need to be seriously considered. Democratic values and institutions can flourish only with the active support and participation of the people at large and the institutions of governance will be self-sustaining if they work for the benefit on the people.

## Dilbert's Law

### Knowledge Vs. Business

Knowledge workers will never make as much money as business executives. Now we have a mathematical proof that explains why this is true:

\* Postulate 1: Knowledge is Power.

\* Postulate 2: Time is Money.

As every body knows	:	$\frac{Work}{Time} = Power$
Since	:	$Knowledge = Power,$ and
		$Time = Money$
we have	:	$\frac{Work}{Money} = Knowledge$
Solving for Money, we get:		$\frac{Work}{Knowledge} = Money$
Thus, as Knowledge approaches zero, Money approaches infinity! - regardless of the amount of Work done.		

**Conclusion:** The Less you Know, the More you Make.

**Note:** It has been speculated that the reason why Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard's math program was because he stumbled upon this proof as an undergraduate, and dedicated the rest of his career to the pursuit of ignorance.

[Source: Hem Pande (1982) & M.V. Rao (1988)]

**A** Yuga back I'd been summarily shunted out of Writers' the day after I signed the last of the bills I'd drafted in the context of the 74th Constitutional Amendment (in West Bengal we don't dilly-dally in copying the American use - and - throw paradigm). The place in which I landed up provided an experience which was jaw-dropping-to put it mildly. Read on to share!

## Who is the Bara Babu?

**Pradip Bhattacharya,**  
Additional Chief Secretary,

Development & Planning Department

Sitting down at my desk in the new office. I opened the *dak* file to find a flaming pink notice staring at me, announcing that as electricity bills of over Rs. 28000/- had not been paid in time, the power supply would be disconnected. Frantic, I called for a vehicle to rush to the electricity supply office.

"Saar, there is no vehicle", stated my orderly blandly. But why? I thought we had several!"  
"Yes, Saar, but as the fuel bills have not been paid for the last three months, the petrol pump has stopped supplies. So the cars are off-road."

Limply I sought to drown my anxiety in the newspaper.

"Saar, there are no newspapers."

I looked at the wall calendar to check if today was a holiday-what was I doing in office in that case anyway?-and found the date in prominent black announcing its uncompromising work-a-day character. Mustering my wits I enquired. "But today is not a holiday. Why is there no newspaper?"

"Saar, the paper-wallah's bills of many thousands of rupees have not been paid for many years. So he has stopped supplies."

By now I had marshalled the facts and unerringly spotted the villain of the piece. The needle of suspicion pointed quiveringly at the chap who prepared bills: the Bill Clerk.

"Bill Clerk ko bulao!" I ordered confidently.

The orderly peon did not stir. He stood there, meditatively scratching the calf of his right leg with the toes of the left.

"Why are you standing here?" I put it to him looking keenly through my spectacles. "I asked you to produce the Bill Clerk"  
"Saar, koi Bill Babu nahi hai, there is no Bill Clerk," he declared. I was flummoxed. "To kaun hai? Who is there? Is

there any other Babu?" I asked. "Baro Babu hai, Saar".

How had I managed to forget that every office is ever blessed with the *Baro Babu*, the Head Clerk, to whom notes are usually marked with that cryptic anagram HC, gleaming with restrained power, like a high-spirited nag champing at the bit. For, his is the hand that rocks the administrative cradle.

"Baro Babu ko bulao!" I ordered smugly and leaned back, steeping my fingers, my eyes shut in preparation for a session of investigation to pin down the culprit responsible for the power being disconnected, cars being off-road and no newspapers to minister to the fevered brain and the soul sore-taxed. So what if load-shedding was endemic? The prospect of fans whirring occasionally was not a prospect to be denied lightly just because the HC had not prepared the bills. But, I mused, why was the powerful potentate stooping to so a menial task as drawing up bills – a chore usually reserved for callow recruits to the lower echelons of the clerical cadre

Having collected my thoughts, when I opened my eyes I was startled to find the peon still standing before me, still scratching what must have been a very itchy calf. My consternation must have been obvious from my mouth hanging open. I did not have to ask the obvious question. He volunteered the explanation: "Saar, Baro Babu nahi hai, the Head Clerk is not there."

Aha! But you said just now that the HC hai" I riposted sharply. If these chaps thought their new boss was soft in the head, they were mistaken. Things were not going to be that easy around here any more. Someone was in charge finally!

"Saar, Baro Babu is in High Court."

*By dint of intensive probing I was able to piece together the scenario. The HC had started a case in the High Court and was busy pursuing it on most working days, giving of himself to the office twice a week to attend to matters he considered urgent in nature.*

So, the HC was in court. But surely there would be other clerks from whom details of the bills could be ascertained? The answer was dismaying: "Saar, koi Babu nahi hai, there are no other clerks"—no upper division clerk, no lower division clerk! As I strove to clutch on to the shreds of my reason and decide whether I dared ask why there were no other clerks, my eagle eye fastened on a shadow lurking outside the frosted glass entrance to my room. "Woh Kaun hai?" I shouted, "Who is there?"



“Sir, I am the Head Clerk”, said an ingratiating smile capped by a bald pate. “Aha! But you can’t be”, I said, shrewdly pinpointing the contradiction. “The HC is in court today.” “But, Sir, I am the real Head Clerk!”

I gasped. Curiouser and curiouser: two HCs—the pretender and the real McCoy. The lurker-behind-the-door carried on: “Sir, you are so vastly experienced in administration. You know all the rules, Sir, So I need hardly remind you that the maximum period of lien on one’s permanent post while on deputation is three years. Sir, I was kept here for ten years. And then, one day, without the least consideration for all the blood, sweat and tears I had shed in service of this office, Sir, I was reverted to my original office. Naturally, Sir, I had to seek the shelter of the High Court against such rank injustice. And then, Sir, the chap junior to me here, a mere Upper Division clerk, who had learnt everything at my knee, called himself the HC and even filed a case in court demanding that they declare him as such!”

The Murky Mystery of the Missing Babu (Baro and others) was at last clear. Till the court pronounced on the status of the rival claimants, the posts of the other clerks could not be filled up. Serendipitously I had come upon that most rare of happenings: an office bereft of that wondrous phenomenon of whom Kipling wrote, “The Babu is a great man and, to respect him, you must see five score or so of him in a room a hundred yards long, bending over ledgers, ledgers and yet more ledgers – silent as the Sphinx and busy as a bee. He is the lubricant of the great machinery whose ways and works cannot be dealt with in a single scrawl.”

Having nothing better to do – the HC not having “put up” anything – I wandered about the building and came across an air-conditioned, glass-panelled room. Squashing my nose against the glass door, I could make out several tables with shrouded upright blocks atop them. My helpful orderly announced this was the Computer Room.

Now computers are something I fancy I understand. So, I dared ask the computer assistants to unlock the room and take off the wrappings. The machines were unshrouded. “Switch them on!” I commanded. The switches were put on. Some monitors blinked; others went on staring darkly at me.

“What’s wrong?” I asked. “Sir, they are full of viruses, we don’t know how to remove them.” “But a couple are showing the correct display. Please make me a graphical display of the number of courses we are running this year.” The silence was deafening. “Don’t you have LOTUS loaded?” I asked.

“Yes Sir. I was the Storekeeper and got promoted to this post, as I was senior-most. *Yeh lotus wotus kya hai*, Sir?”. I turned to the second computer assistant hopefully. “Sir, I was the Xerox operator, next senior-most.” “Is there anyone who knows how to run the machines?” I enquired. “Yes, Sir. But that one is away attending theatre rehearsals and the lady has been away.” “When does the lady get back?” “We don’t know, Sir. She has not been coming for years.”

Intrigued, I made enquiries and found that we paid a computer firm over fifty thousand rupees a year to maintain the computers. Since no one could run them, there were no complaints for the firm to attend to. The missing lady had been on leave for over 800 days so far. Occasionally she dropped by to break a spell of absence that had become noticeably long, collected her pay, and vanished again. Since there was no fully functioning HC, there was no absentee-statement.

I called for a P.A. to dictate my amazing discoveries. “*Saar, P.A. nahi hai*,” informed the orderly. By this time I had got wise to the situation. “Is it that there is no P.A. or is he absent?” I asked, making the point forcefully. “I am supposed to be having two P.A.s you know,” I added, rubbing in my status. The orderly explained that in this office there were no P.A.s at all, only stenos. “All right, then call the senior-most steno.”

Apprehensively, I noticed him shuffling away with reluctance. After some time a lady came in. Through pointed questions I was vastly relieved to find that she was so senior as to be actually drawing pay in the P.A.’s grade. My status was unimpaired! Shutting my eyes contentedly, I leaned back and launched into dictating my horripilating discoveries. After five minutes, pausing at the end of a paragraph, I found to my consternation that she was sitting with a blank face and a finger that neither moved nor wrote.

“What’s the matter?” I asked. “Sir, I am used to taking dictation only from Baro Babu, so I cannot follow your accent or manage your pace”, she answered.

Here was an HC indeed! One who dictated to the only stenographer drawing a P.A.’s pay.

Letting dictation fall by the way, I went round the campus. There was an imposing edifice still incomplete but with no signs of any work in progress. The Caretaker told me that this was to have been completed five years back. Work had stopped a year ago after the agency had received all the funds running to several crores, he whispered.

“Since it has not been handed over to us, I suppose I can’t take a look inside?” I asked. “Oh, but you can, Sir! Since some doors and windows have been stolen, we can get in through the gaps.”

So we climbed in. Large cracks ran diagonally through every wall of the building from top to bottom. The Caretaker took me to another new building. This one had been handed over a few months ago. We entered. Electrical fittings newly installed on the walls and ceilings lay on the floor, broken. Some tube lights dangled precariously from the ceiling. This was the new library, in use as a godown for heaps of broken furniture and torn linen.

What about the old library? The last librarian had left quickly after being mercilessly ragged by the staff. The new one asthmatically wheezed that there was no accession register of books, no catalogue cards, and so it was not possible to ascertain how many books were missing. Whenever anyone left, he took along books he fancied a la Mark Twain. And the library peon was in the habit of staggering in and wagging a drunken finger threateningly at the Librarian should he dare to start cataloguing.

Next, the hostel-of-a-hundred-rooms! I entered through a seven-by-four glass door bereft of glass. The Caretaker explained that a cow had come charging through the corridor and dived swan-like through the glass. Cow pats several days old dotted the corridors – evidence carefully preserved, with six *safai karmacharis* collecting monthly wages. Nearby several healthy cows smugly chewed the cud in the grounds, overgrown with knee-high undergrowth said to be crawling with snakes. Three *malis* were on the payroll. Stray canine population merrily chased one another’s tails along the corridors as chowkidars watched benignly and inmates cowered away.

There being a hostel, some arrangements for feeding the inmates I reasoned, must exist and got a immediate response.

“*Saar*, there is an employees’ co-operative which is bankrupt. They distributed the entire capital among the members as bonus, leaving marketing dues of several lakhs outstanding.”

I noticed a person with a shifty, hangdog look quickly flit by. “Who is that?” I asked. “That is the co-operative member in-charge of marketing, *Saar*. He has to keep a sharp look-out to avoid being beaten up by the creditors.” The co-operative had employed people numbering a round dozen to feed the hungry trainees. While the trainees, fed up with paper-thin slices of fish, found their food elsewhere, the cooperative cooks fattened on free meals besides being paid most considerably

according to government pay-scales. “But why has the audit not remarked on this?” I asked. “Because, *Saar*, the audit parties went back on finding no cash-book kept for the last ten years, ever since the co-operative was set up.” “There must be office-bearers responsible for doing things properly?” “Yes, *Saar*, the two Baro Babus,” “.... Who fight in court but co-operate warmly in co-operative disorder,” I said to myself!

On the way back I noticed a reception desk. I was told that occasionally this was manned by the “Receptionist-cum-telephone operator”, when the telephone functioned. “What happens if she falls ill?” I asked. Silence. My orderly volunteered the information that there was a “PBX-operator-cum-Receptionist”, but since there was no PBX, she had never worked. “Are there any others like this?” I asked in bewilderment. “Yes, *Saar*, there is the Tape-recorder-cum-transcriber. Since nothing is taped, she has never transcribed. There are also ‘Programme Assistants’ who cannot spell their designation.”

Shaken, I came back to my room, collapsed on my chair and found myself staring at a blank grey wall. Turning back I found full-size glass windows looking out on rows of tall, majestic deodars swaying in the wind. Most of the window-handles were broken and the windows were tied to the frames with string. The room was uncomfortably warm. My feet, however, were cold. Investigating the phenomenon, I found one air-conditioner next to my chair blowing cool air onto my toes. The other machine was feebly circulating warm air some distance away. The situation became crystal clear: because one machine was not working, the massive table had been dragged over to the only one that was cooling. After all, retaining one’s cool was far more important than looking out on verdant greenery.

There was an air-conditioning plant for cooling the largest classroom not in operation for many years, because enough water was not available for the cooling tower, the ferrules being jammed. Getting them cleaned would cost about a hundred rupees. As no fans had been installed, that room could only be used in winter. The cooling machines in the other lecture-halls had all been taken away for servicing months ago and never put back, leaving huge gaps in the walls for rain and wind to buffet those within.

“Why couldn’t the firm responsible be contacted?” I asked in irritation. “Because the files are with the *Baro Babu, Saar*”.

I ought to have known better!

## Listen up, Curlilocks!

By: J. Alfred Prufrock ( IAS1989)

**T**arred with the same brush ...Righth, ferry gooth, as Father Huart would say through his smile before he suspended somebody.

This is what India's Instapundit has to say: "The government ... couldn't care less about the bottomline. After all, we pay the bills." Yeah right! (And there should have been a hyphen in 'bottom-line'. Truly. Ask Lynne Truss.)

Generalisations hurt. Granted that a generalisation refers to the majority of the subject-group, the minority who don't fit the description are bound to take offence. There is a rueful acceptance that the criticism of the majority may be warranted; there is also pique at being tarred with the same brush. It can be a disincentive, too. There are days when the minority will think it doesn't really make a difference anyway, since they will still be clubbed with the supposedly non-performing majority. Why bother to produce results when you're regarded as no better than the lowest common denominator?

The "couldn't-care-less" assumption may be misplaced even with regard to the Railways. By all accounts, He of the Silver Semi-Tonsure has actually taken some hard decisions that make good business sense. It's been more than a year since his *khullar* idea and he seems to have moved on (just as he has moved on from "Hema Malini's cheeks", a quote that sticks with him though he said it ten years ago and more). India Today ran a story some months ago on the re-organisation of the Indian Railways and the emphasis on profitability. Their archives are only available to subscribers, so I can't post the link here, but I'm sure some people will remember it. Worth a second look.

I do not hold a brief for either the Indian Railways or the Minister. I do, however, take issue with the general trashing of everything associated with government. Take this assumption that government organisations are not concerned with profits. For over four years, I worked in a Government-owned company that should be an example for turnaround wannabes. This is a company that lost money for almost 30 years. In five years from the mid-90s, a new combination at the top took it (with apologies to Neil Young) "out of the red and into the black".

In the last three fiscals, this company's turnover under a new MD and Chairman has further grown from 70 crore to 200 crore; PBT over the same period has been 42 crore (cumulative). The bottom-line hasn't done too badly, even after the customary cover under Sec 80[1(A)]. Business this year should grow even further. No pink slips, no pumping up revenues through sale of capital assets, just hard-nosed focus on building profit centres and cutting debt. And NPAs have been cut from 57% to 32%. Still a long way from ICICI's claim of 2%, but a pretty steep improvement when one takes into account the legacy of 30 years.

As luck would have it, I now work with another Government body that has – surprise! – not made profits for (wait for it!) 30 years. Yes, *déjà vu* and all that, but I'd like to think that I can apply some learning from the last assignment. We've gone out on a limb and said we'll increase the top-line five-fold (which I think is a braver target than bottom-line growth alone)<sup>[1]</sup>. There will be criticism when it's not achieved, but it's a target set only to expand the vision. Niall Fitzgerald, Chairman of Reuters, said in a recent interview that he's happier with a man who sets his sights on 500 and achieves 400, than with a man who sets a target of 120 and "over-achieves" to 140. Insh'allah, we should achieve 300% top-line. And survive the barracking from well-meaning critics.

The point I'm trying to make (apart from blowing our own trumpet for a bit) is that these examples are now the rule rather than the exception. Even in my State, which is only just emerging from the common perception that it is ideologically mired in the '50s, there are government bodies that have a two-word vision statement and the carte blanche to work on it. Profit + Quality. Makes sense? Only if you believe it, of course. And believe IN it.

<sup>[1]</sup>This was written last November. The top-line has actually grown about 7 times.

### Believing in it ...

So all government bodies are not run on lines acceptable to libertarians. Not all private concerns meet those criteria either. Think of the number of partnership firms and even listed companies that fudge the bottom line, transfer assets to sister concerns for pittances, lack transparency in their accounts and are run by and for coteries. Hell, think of the number of bodies in the public view that fit the same description. Do I need to spell out B – C – C – I?



The key difference, of course, is that every tax-payer is a share-holder in the public sector and therefore entitled to criticise and to demand change. Our forefathers fought for independence on the grounds of self-rule. Would that the salt tax had been a key issue and not a symbol. Would that we had had a Patrick Henry to instill a sense of proprietary pride in the state. “No taxation without representation” has made the majority of the population in the USA co-owners of the state; “I’m a tax-paying citizen” is a statement of proud ownership. Two hundred years of foreign rule, on the other hand, make us view the Indian tax-evader first a nationalist and then a loveable rascal rather than a traitor to the common cause.

The saddest part is when the existence of evaders is used to justify further evasion – “He’s doing it, so why shouldn’t I?” Playground logic. Applicable across the board whether we’re talking about littering or power theft or tax evasion. Think about it. Every time you throw that cigarette packet or gum wrapper or tissue on the street, every time you jump that red light, every time you look the other way when your neighbour runs a line from the street lamp to power his Diwali lights, you’re actually running counter to a set of rules that goes all the way down to a foundation called the Constitution of India.

Extreme reasoning? Perhaps, but how else does one get it across that we’re all in this together? That we work according to laws made by people WE elect. That we can’t expect the government alone to enforce simple rules that we should all live by. Like cleanliness. And orderliness. And paying one’s dues. That we all own the government, so if it doesn’t work, then we’re all responsible to some extent. Another extreme example – if you think the vast majority of politicians are crooks, would you take the trouble to run for public office yourself? Fish or cut bait, my moralising friends.

### *Why won’t you lurrve me ...*

There are countries where corruption is practically unknown. These would also be countries where the crime rate is low, where there is a high level of public ownership of the state and its facilities, where orderliness is high. This does not necessarily mean a low level of individual expression, it just means that such expression occurs within the framework envisaged by law. The Scandinavian countries largely fit this bill.

There are also countries where public order is preserved by force. Think China. Think Singapore. It’s a trade-off. Would you rather sacrifice some of your freedoms for a more ordered life? I wouldn’t. Come to think of it, they’re not doing too good on the corruption count either. And some of them

don’t even publish accounts, so how do we know whether they’re really profitable? Who’s going to ask, anyway, when it could mean the midnight knock?

Yes, we need to point out the errors made by government. Yes, we need to make known, as widely as possible, where public money is going and whom it benefits. Yes, we need to call a spade a bloody shovel. That’s where journalists and bloggers and litigants are performing a public service, more power to their keyboards. Let us also be thankful that in our country, for the most part, they do not need to worry about their futures if they criticise the powers-that-be (did anyone say “Tarun Tejpal”?)

On the other hand, when Nochiketa sings in Bangla about the *shorkaari kormochari* and my friends snigger about it, it doesn’t seem to make sense to get into office on time. When every other film depicts the police as corrupt, does it make the average policeman more determined to prove his honesty or does he happily relax into the mould we’ve created for him? Think it over.

The best piece of legislation I’ve heard about in recent times is one regarding prostitution – the client will finally be held culpable for prostitution and soliciting. Think it over – who are the clients responsible for government inefficiency? The man who cribs about it in the evening over a single malt will be found next morning in the corridors of power, entering some room with an ingratiating grin. And an oblong gift-wrapped package in a paper bag. Think it over.

So, to take it from the top, not all of government sucks.

A lot of it does suck, and needs to be told it sucks. It’s not very smart, however, to say that all of it sucks. You make the parts that do NOT suck that much sadder and less proud. Finally, before telling them that they all suck (or even WHILE telling them) it might Good my lords (and lords you are, for I am paid by you to be your servant), do not assume that all your servants are malingerers or thieves. “He who steals my purse steals trash” etc., So my lords and ladies, if you clothe me in the same knave’s livery,

What do you leave me with? Not my pride, not my reputation, nor yet with much of my good intentions.

Think it over !.



## Contribution of IAS Towards Nation Building

Dr. P. K. Agarwal, Pr. Secretary, P.W.D.

**A**fter the adoption of the Constitution of India, Indian Administrative Service was constituted as an All-India Service to preserve integrity and harmony in the country. The country had great expectations from the IAS as their predecessor ICS have just concluded their gigantic task of integrating the Indian States into the Union of India and have controlled the communal strife

IAS as successor was not far behind and contributed a lot as the country's land revenue service in the implementation of land reforms in fifties under able leaders in the States. The Community Development Programme was adopted in 500 Blocks in the country as model of development at the Centre, they concentrated on development of infrastructure through K industries as per Nehru-Mahalonobis model and started public sector industries or undertakings so that the nascent nation may not be threatened in its march towards progress.

In sixties, after the defeat of India at the hands of the Chinese, IAS helped to develop defence potential of the country and prevented the country going Pakistan way in the hands of army in cooperation with political masters. It then laid down the solid foundation of development through land reforms, Command Development & other models. In some States, the experiment with Panchayat was going on. But the political and local leadership at the various levels could not play their part due to lack of education & technical skill. The Service helped to bring in new technological innovation. As part of this, the green revolution was successfully implemented bringing about self-sufficiency in food grains' production in the country. Scientific research was initiated.

In seventies, under the one man leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi, the steel frame cracked and the idea of committed bureaucracy was introduced. The imposition of emergency was a black chapter in the otherwise clean track record of the Indian bureaucracy. Then, the bureaucracy again regained and stood firm. They concentrated on development of science & technology including nuclear weaponry. The one party leadership gave way to multi-parties leadership which created confusion in bureaucracy.

In eighties, the emphasis was given on poverty alleviation schemes which pumped lot of money which improved the

force of rural India. The IAS also spearheaded the development of Information Technology or Computers single handedly under the leadership of Prime Minister but the Mandal Commission again damaged the steel frame, when some cracks were observed in it on the basis of caste or creed. By this time, political leadership became enlightened and they used bureaucracy as their tool for perpetuation of self interest or their party interests. Thus, corruption also surfaced in the top bureaucracy which was unheard of earlier. However, the bureaucracy continued changing colours as per bottles. In States like West Bengal & Kerala, it performed in the interest of masses uses under able leadership of the Left Front Governments.

During nineties, being fed with politicians, the IAS supported introduction of Panchayati Raj System and promoted it wholeheartedly. During nineties, the I.T. boys and girls went abroad and brought wealth to the country swelling the foreign reserves to the unprecedented level. But it became difficult to manage country's politics. Then bureaucrat like Seshan stood firm like a rock as the Chief Election Commissioner and showed the door to the politics indicating that the national interest is the supreme. The problem of terrorism and separatist agitations in the North Eastern States were constant headache to the bureaucracy, which they have to tackle properly. The IAS have successfully tackled law and order problems and natural disaster, stability in the country. The District Administration headed by an IAS Officer has provided to the country's framework in spite of lack of resources. Many IAS officers have taken up the employment at the international bodies of U.N. and proved as one of the best service in the world. Now under the impact of private sector, the bureaucracy has to play second fiddle preferred to the development of the economy. Public Sector is no longer a reality due to its inefficiency & corruption. I am sure that IAS, as leader of the Indian bureaucracy will come out successfully in their acid test and after playing role of a facilitator to the private sector which is controlling the economy at present. Judiciary and Panchayats are also very powerful. I am sure that IAS will regain their primacy by taking the rein of the country by placing the country among the comity of top four / five fine nations of the world.

**If you have a story, please share it with all**

*Pl. send your contributions and suggestions or comments to [usecywb@indiatimes.com](mailto:usecywb@indiatimes.com) or Fax to 033-2214 4549 / 2214 5300*

# Management of Change and Responsive Administration.

**Naveen Prakash, Executive Director, WBIDC**

## 1. Introduction

Organizations are dynamic beings and are therefore liable to change from time to time. Normally, we refer to change when referring to organization-wide change as opposed to smaller changes such as entry of a new person in organization, modifying a work-procedure etc. Organization change also refers to organization-wide change as response to a whole new set of changes in the external environment – Major changes in government policy, emergence of new technology, emergence of new markets etc. Other examples include major collaborations, adopting new technologies, downsizing, mergers etc.

Technological changes during the last two centuries, for example, have had dramatic impact in the way organizations functioned. According to Economist Joseph Schumpeter, there are fifty-year interregnums, which led to technology waves in the modern history-1780s-1840s-Steam power, 1840s-1890s-Rail, 1890s-1930s-electric power and 1930s-1980s-oil and automobiles. Now the Information Technology represents the Fifth wave. All these technological changes have necessitated major overhaul in organizational structure, organizational processes and functions and also have had tremendous impact on the individual's skills and resources while working out their roles in the organization.

Introduction of liberalization and as a consequence, globalization of Indian economy was a major turning point in the history of the Indian economy. Suddenly from a relatively protected economy, the markets were thrown open for a whole new set of challenges. This also required response by firms whether in the private or the public sector. The role of the government also had to be redefined; from being at the "commanding heights" of the economy to being more of a facilitator for creating right kind of environment for investment both from within and from outside the country. This necessitated bringing in major changes in the way the private as well as government agencies were performing their respective roles.

## 2. Why Organizational change

Changes in organization are not done for the sake of change. It is a strategy to accomplish some overall goal. Usually organizational change is provoked by some major outside driving force e.g. substantial cut in resources, need to address new markets or clients, need to dramatically increase productivity / services etc. Changes are also brought because the organization wants to move on to the next stage in its life cycle; from a reactive entrepreneurial one to a stable organization with long term goals. Some times, a change at the top in itself may bring in major organizational changes. According to Burke and Litwin, Transformational changes occur in an organization as a response to the external environment and directly affects organizational missions and strategy, the organization's leadership and culture. In turn, the transactional factors are affected – structure, systems, management practices and climate. These transformational and transactional factors together affect motivation, which, in turn, affects performance.

The need for liberalizing the Indian economy arose from the fact that with the departure of the cold world era, world markets were becoming integrated and there was a chance that Indian economy would have been left isolated. The decision for such a major shift in the economic policy was based more on pragmatism - to unshackle individual and corporate energy and to leverage our strength in the areas we are strong in – e.g. availability of educated and skilled human resource. Not all the objectives as set out from the liberalization drive have been met and many concurrent problems have crept up on the way. However, if these changes were not brought out in the economic policy, we could have been in splendid economic isolation in the world markets.

## 3. Newly emerging trends in Organizations

Let us start from the way there has been change in the employment scene in the Government sector in the country in the recent years. There has been perceptible shift in the economy to the service sector from 36% in 1980 to 48% in 2004. With the government getting out of non-essential sectors of the economy and divesting businesses, the employment scenario will see a paradigm shift. From government being a major employer, the emphasis is now on 'Smart governance' by use of Information Technology tools rather than on oversized staff. According to National Association of Computer Manufacturers (NASSOCOM), the employment potential in the IT sector is to the tune of 10 million by the year 2008 and this sector is likely to emerge as one of the major employers. Even governments now prefer cyber-savvy persons.

While talking of Organizational change, in the past decade or so, several new concepts have emerged as far as the functioning of the organizations – whether private or government – is concerned. These have major implications for the management of change in an organization. Some of these are discussed as follows:

### ***Information Technology and Internet***

The IT has emerged as a technology, which cuts across all boundaries and areas of work. It also affects every function within an organization and therefore has major impact on the way it is run. Take for example, automobile manufacturing. IT has impact on design, engineering, manufacturing and marketing – i.e. on all aspects of work of an automobile manufacturer. Similarly, the emergence of Internet and concomitant technologies have had tremendous impact on the marketing of services and products, leading to emergence of new selling and marketing medium – the Cyberspace. It has also accorded opportunity to interact and transact real time with a company's suppliers, vendors, service providers and customers. Organizations have to accordingly modify their processes, plans and train personnel to take advantage of the numerous advantages offered by this technology.

### ***Reengineering***

Reengineering involves total re-designing of operations by analyzing various business processes from beginning to end. It uses advanced information technology tools such as EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) to link up various business processes. The idea is to achieve dramatic improvement in critical, contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service and speed.

The first step in reengineering involves rethinking and redefining of the basic mission of the organization and to decide on the future direction and vision for the organization.

### ***Benchmarking***

Benchmarking refers to the process of comparing work and service methods against the best practices and outcomes for the purpose of identifying changes that will result in higher quality output. Benchmarking can be used to set targets that can be pursued, identified and then used as a basis for future action. The benchmarking involves looking both inside and

outside the organization for ways of improvement. The benchmarking process helps in identifying best performing agencies to learn from them. This creates a need for change by showing the organization how processes can be altered to achieve better productivity and efficiency.

### ***TQM and CRM***

The TQM refers to the Total Quality Management which is a Japanese technique employed worldwide now. It is an organizational strategy with accompanying techniques that deliver quality products and service to the consumers. TQM is the way an organization is managed and not just another management technique. Its main objective is to bring a culture of "quality service to the customer and the rest shall follow". Total in TQM refers to the involvement of customers, suppliers as well as support service providers. The TQM recognizes the need to focus on quality of service with no deficit product as also to meeting or bettering customer expectations. CRM or the Customer Relationship Management is a concept of marketing that like TQM has customer orientation at the center. Rather than focusing on the strengths and needs of the organization, the focus here is to maintain a customer orientation and make them central to the scheme of things in the organization.

### ***4. Coping with organizational change***

For the implementation of various strategies as mentioned earlier, what is common among them all is the change they bring in the very thinking within the organization. People, processes, systems – all feel this change. While additional resources can take care of the processes and systems, the most difficult is the change management in case of the personnel within the organization as most of these changes are also accompanied by downsizing, retraining and redefinition of various jobs.

The organizational changes face strong resistance to change. People are afraid of the unknown. Many people think that they are doing fine and do not understand the need for change. Many are cynical about change and do not see much merit in planning for future when the present seems O.K. Often there are conflicting demands placed on employees while planning for change – cut costs but improve efficiency is one most common example. Drastic changes also affect the culture of the organization and the very value and belief of the members in an organization.

Successful change management requires total belief and commitment of the top management in the strategy adopted

for undertaking various measures for the change. There are no half measures here. It also requires clear spelling out of objectives for change. Implementation requires cost and time, both of which are always in short supply in any organization. Another important element is the clear *communication* to various personnel in the organization that the changes are necessary for the organization and that change measures are necessary for bringing desired changes. *Empathy* refers to the acknowledgement of feelings and reactions of those who will be affected by the changes and that their involvement will influence the outcome of the desired change. *Participation* refers to the obtaining of views of the subordinates and their participation and commitment during the change process.

## 5. Responsive Administration

Responsive administration refers to better delivery of public service in the government domain. For a citizen, the most common grievance he has against the government agencies is their non-responsive nature and that for even small work they have to run from pillar to post. What they often encounter is unwarranted delays, harassment, demand for speed money and a general lack of transparency. By its very nature, government is divided into several departments and branches to serve the citizen.

However, for a citizen requiring solution to his requirement, he should be able to approach one single window for answering his queries, for recording his grievance, for submission of

information and for delivery of specific services etc. and that too at his convenience rather than running from one office to the other at considerable expense even for routine jobs. This means that the present systems will have to be reengineered by integrating various off line activities to IT offering various services to the citizens. Going online for various citizen friendly services also means accompanying accountability on the part of those running these activities. However, the electronic environment is value neutral and records are instantly kept which helps in fixing responsibility, better record keeping and quick retrieval of information. At another level, established procedures and systems have to be drastically changed and reengineered to make them suitable for being adopted in the digital environment. This also means that the government functionaries have to be suitably trained and motivated to adopt themselves to the electronic governance. Fears of loss of jobs and redundancy have to be suitably answered. Computer literacy has to be made more widespread – both for the citizens and for the government functionaries. Various government agencies are trying to change the situation through the use of citizen-centric services and by adopting IT and Internet tools. This has also been necessitated by the wide spread IT tools in the public domain and with the spread of IT education in the country. Most of the government agencies are trying to address citizens' needs through varying degrees of computerization and citizen-friendly services witnessed in the adoption of 'citizens' charters' and online information systems. The enactment of the Right to Information Act has also been a major step in this direction in 'demystifying' governance.

## Journey by pvt. airlines for LTC clarified

The Govt. has decided that officers can now fly by pvt. airlines even while availing LTC. This facility will be for those officers entitled for air travel by National carriers by the existing orders.

For non – entitled officers this facility comes with a condition. That is, such an air journey by non- entitled officers between places connected by train may be allowed , provided the re-imbursement of the fare would be restricted to the entitled class by rail other than Rajdhani .

## One day you send a letter to your boss asking for an increase in your salary!

Dear Bo\$\$

In thi\$ life, we all need \$ome thing mo\$t de\$perately. I think you \$hould be under\$tanding of the need\$ of u\$ worker\$ who have given \$o much \$upport including \$weat and \$ervice to your company. I am \$ure you will gue\$\$ hat I mean and re\$pond \$oon.

Your\$ \$incerely,

## The next day, you received this letter of reply:

Oh my dear:

I kNOw you have been working very hard. NOwadays, NOthing much has changed. You must have NOticed that our company is NOt doing NOticeably well as yet.

NOw the newspaper are saying the world's leading ecoNOMists are NOt sure if the United States may go into aNOther recession. After the NOvember presidential elections things may turn bad.

I have NOthing more to add NOw. You kNOW what I mean.

Yours truly, Manager

[(Source: Hem Pande (1982) & M.V.Rao (1988)]