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## Civil services: It's role in Indian public policy and good governance

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### Abstract

The Indian Civil Services take an integral part in the development of the country's public policy and proper governance. The civil services have, however, transformed from a cornerstone of administrative machinery to respond to the changing needs of society. This article, will examine the import and relevance of a common civil services framework in India, its effects on public policy and its contribution towards good governance. Utilizing structure analysis, the challenges, and prospects ahead, this research emphasizes the criticality of reform and innovation to retain efficiency and inclusivity in the governance.

**Keywords:** Indian civil services, governance, administrative machinery, society

### Introduction

Indian Civil Services conceptualized in the British colonial period have been the spine of India's administrative structure and governance. To safeguard British imperial interests, these services were an integral instrument with which order was maintained, revenue collected, and policy implemented during the colonial period. But this is about the strength of mind they developed despite their colonial origin as they charted out the contours of what would eventually become a robust administrative framework in India. After independence, the Indian Civil Services took on new forms to ensure congruence with the democratic ideals and constitutional principles of the nation (Das, 2017) <sup>[1]</sup>. Several reforms were introduced, which, in addition to recognizing their potential for being agents of change in a developing society, aimed at adapting the services to meet the socio-economic requirements of the country. Today, the civil services are a standard system consisting of All India Services, Central Services, and State Services that primarily serve as an effective instrument of policy formulation, practical implementation, and regulatory functions. It mediates between the political leadership on the one hand and citizens on the other in order to ensure the delivery of governance and public welfare. Over the past couple of years, however, civil services have been assessed for their current relevance and efficiency, primarily regarding how they can meet today's challenges (Chakrabarty, 2006) <sup>[2]</sup>.

Bureaucratic red tape, lack of specialization, and a tendency to resist reform have been hotly debated forums about their effectiveness in an increasingly globalizing and technologically advanced world characterized by complex policy demands. They are expected to do more than the traditional chores of the civil services and meet the rapidly changing challenges like climate change, urbanization, and digital governance. The nature, structure, and multifaceted roles of civil services have been described with the help of the evolution and significance of civil services from a historical point of view and its continuing influence on India's Public policy and governance frameworks. It seeks to identify their contributions and challenges to provide insights into their essential role in shaping the nation's administrative machinery and policies that reflect the aspirations of a dynamic and diverse society. Thus this article seeks to examine the importance and significance of having a common civil service framework in India, and its bearing on public policy formulation with relation to good governance (Sharma, 2019) <sup>[4]</sup>.

### Historical evolution of indian civil services

In the colonial era, the East India Company with an administrative setup based on creating

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offices to serve its imperial interests, laid foundations of modern civil services in India. Finally, this system culminated in the creation of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) in 1858, in large measure to maintain British colonial ends. The ICS had however undergone a profound transformation once India gained independence in 1947, to suit the requirements of another sovereign, democratic nation. Finally, the Indian Administrative, Indian Police and Indian Forest Service, together known as the all India Services, have evolved to be the three services of our State and the

central government. Several committees including the Kothari Commission and the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) have over the years evolved with many reforms intended to make civil services better accountable, transparent and efficient, with it being able to adapt the acumen of modern governance and its roles in facilitating socio economic development (Das, 2017) [1].

### Structure of Indian civil services

Category	Services Included	Primary Functionality
All India Services	Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Indian Police Service (IPS)	Policy implementation at national and state levels
Central Services	Indian Revenue Service (IRS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS)	Management of central government functions
State Services	Provincial Civil Services, State Police Services	Implementation of state policies

### Role of civil services in public policy

Civil services are crucial in guaranteeing the rule of law, holding public officials accountable, taking steps to keep the public in their pockets, creating social justice, and responding to crises appropriately. By following constitutional principles, civil servants maintain law and order and, by doing so, guarantee the impartial governance of the state. Their efforts to implement items like e-governance and the Right to Information (RTI) Act have significantly changed citizen participation and transparency in decision-making mechanisms (Cheruku, 2015) [7]. Another thing that civil servants do is work on social justice by designing and implementing a welfare program that supports social justice and equality. They are first responders during natural disasters and pandemics, and they easily coordinate relief measures. For example, IAS officers worked hard during COVID-19, managing healthcare systems and logistics and proving they can take a crisis in stride with resilience and resourcefulness (Möller & Schierenbeck, 2015) [5].

### Challenges facing civil services

The Indian civil services face several problems that prevent their effectiveness and efficiency. Procedural delays induced by bureaucratic red tape often prevent timely decision-making and policy implementation. Corruption within the system not only erodes the public's faith in civil services but also affirms a reputation for the same, making it a grave issue that needs immediate attention. It is undermined by frequent transfers and undue influence, which makes it politically interfered. Additionally, continuous skill development is required due to technological advancement, which offers one of the biggest skills deficits in this area where civil services often lag (Benbabaali, 2018) [6].

### Proposed reforms for curbing effectiveness

**Merit-Based Recruitment:** To make meritocracy, recruiting processes need to be strengthened by use of advanced testing mechanisms, psychometric evaluations, and regular updates to syllabus and examination pattern. It will help draw in and select the most talented people who can satisfy the needs of contemporary government.

**Performance Appraisal:** But accountability and motivation for delivering on goals have to come through introducing robust performance appraisal systems. Creating linkages between appraisals and measurable outcomes, for example, with key performance indicators (KPIs), will drive a results driven process. Feedback is needed from both peers,

subordinates and citizens, to ensure a complete evaluation of this system.

**Capacity Building:** Officer should be trained in regular and intensive ways with modern governance tools like data analytics, artificial intelligence, etc. for proper handling of public policy management. Forming partnerships with your academic institution and international organizations will help make these programs better through keeping officers updated with practices of the world.

**Devolution of Powers:** Delegating more decision-making authority to panchayats and municipalities will afford them greater power to govern at the local level thereby allowing the burden of running government on higher echolons of the civil services to decrease. The result can be more localized, more effective governance that lends itself to ownership, participation and control by the community over development initiatives.

### Case studies highlighting impact

Kerala is a model governance where governance has been successful with civil services in the improvement of public health and education initiatives. Well trained civil servants are an enabler of the state's focused approach to healthcare resulting in exemplary healthcare metrics and high literacy rates. The road infrastructure change is an example of transformation in Bihar, where efforts of IAS officers can be substantially helpful for state level governance and facilitate economic growth and connectivity. Like Mohalla Clinics in Delhi, the idea of collaborative model in Delhi's civil services and political leadership working together to provide accessible and affordable healthcare to urban populace is a smart solution to government innovation (Das, 2017) [1].

### Future prospects

Civil services will be increasingly crucial as India aspires to be a \$5 trillion economy. These are important to modernize the system: integrating technology, fostering innovation, and a citizen-centric approach. It means that collaboration between civil services and private sectors can further enhance service delivery.

### Conclusion

Today, Indian Civil Services have an importance in the nation's public policy and governance frameworks. However, these challenges can never be counted against them for contribution to nation building. Modernization and reforms in a typical civil services structure is a solution to

meet the present governance requirements and sustainable development and inclusivity (Jain, 2015) <sup>[10]</sup>.

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