



## **DISSERTATION ON ROLE OF ETHICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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### **Introduction**

‘Ethics’ is a difficult term to define. The meaning, nature and scope of ethics have expanded in the course of time. ‘Ethics’ is integral to public administration. In public administration, ethics focuses on how the public administrator should question and reflect in order to be able to act responsibly. We cannot simply bifurcate the two by saying that ethics deals with morals and values, while public administration is about actions and decisions. Administering accountability and ethics is a difficult task. The levels of ethics in governance are dependent on the social, economic, political, cultural, legal-judicial and historical contexts of the country. These specific factors influence ethics in public administrative systems.

Administrative Ethics denote the professional code of morality in civil services, constitute the moral fiber of civil servants, regulate the conduct and behavior of different categories of civil servants provide ‘rules of the game’.

### **Ethics: Meaning and Relevance**

‘Ethics’ is a system of accepted beliefs, morals and values, which influence human behavior. More specifically, it is a system based on morals. Thus, ethics is the study of what is morally right, and what is not. The Latin origin of the word ‘ethics’ is ethics that means character. Since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, ‘ethics’ has been accepted as the “Science of morals; the rules of conduct, the science of human duty.” Hence, in common parlance, ethics is treated as moral principles that govern a person’s or a group’s behavior. It includes both the science of the good and the nature of the right.

The ethical concerns of governance have been underscored widely in Indian scriptures and other treatises such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavat Gita, Buddha Charita, Arthashastra, Panchatantra, Manusmriti, Kural, Shukra Niti, Kadambari, Raja Tarangani, and Hitopadesh. At the same time, one cannot ignore the maxims on ethical governance provided by the Chinese philosophers such as Lao Tse, Confucius and Mencius.

In the Western philosophy, there are three eminent schools of ethics. The first, inspired by Aristotle, holds that virtues (such as justice, charity and generosity) are dispositions to act in ways that benefit the possessor of these virtues and the society of which he is a part. The second, subscribed to mainly by Immanuel Kant, makes the concept of duty central to morality: human beings are bound, from a knowledge of their duty as rational beings, to obey the categorical imperative to respect other rational beings with whom they interact. The third is the Utilitarian view point that asserts that the guiding principle of conduct should be the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The Western thought is full of ethical guidelines to rulers, whether in a monarchy or a democracy. These concerns are found in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Penn, John Stuart Mill, Edmund Burke, and others.

Rawls's theory of justice revolves around the adaptation of two fundamental principles of justice, which would, in turn, guarantee a just and morally acceptable society. The first principle guarantees the right of each person to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with liberty of others. The second principle states that social and economic positions are to be “ (a) To everyone's advantage, and (b) Open to all. He introduces a theoretical ‘veil of ignorance’ in which all ‘players’ in the social game would be placed in a situation, which is called the ‘original position’. Having only a general knowledge about the facts of ‘life and society’ each player is to make a ‘rationally’ prudential choice concerning the kind of social institution they would enter into contract with. By denying the players and specific information about themselves it forces them to adopt a generalized point of view that bears a strong resemblance to the moral point of view. This view point revolves around moral conclusions can be reached without abandoning the prudential standpoint and posting a moral outlook merely by pursuing one's own prudential reasoning under certain procedural bargaining.

### **Evolution of Ethical Concern in Public Administration**

It is essential to recognize that the discipline of Public Administration has been broadly influenced in the initial stages of its growth, by Political Science and the science of Management. While the philosophical premises of Public Administration were influenced primarily by Political Science, its technological facet was designed by Management Sciences. The early Political Science was taught as Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, while its current curriculum is the product of secular, practical, empirical and scientific tendencies of

the past century. The American students of Political Science, in the early years of the last century, were dismayed at the inadequacies of the ethical approach in the Gilded age. As a result of their interaction with the German universities and the influence on their thinking by scholars such as J. N. Burgess, E.J. James, A.B. Hart, A.L. Lovell, and F.J. Goodnow, they sought to recreate Political Science as a true science. They became increasingly interested in observing and analyzing 'actual governments'. Natural and Social Science substantially influenced their ideas and approaches.

Later, Logical Positivism of the Austrian School influenced scholars such as Herbert Simon and thus there emerged a booming faith in developing a Science of Politics and a Science of Administration that would be able to 'predict and control' political and administrative life. As Dwight Waldo comments, the old belief that good government was the government of moral men was thus replaced by a morality that was irrelevant and that proper institutions and expert personnel were the determining factors in shaping good government. 'The new amorality became almost a request for professional respect'.

The eminence of Behaviouralism until the mid-1960s further marginalized the ethical issues in the study of Political Science and Public Administration. It was only after the advent of Post-behaviouralism in Political Science and of the accent on New Public Administration in Public Administration that the scientific methods of Behaviouralism and humanistic values struck a homogeneous chord with administration and the dispute between facts and values was resolved substantially.

The current discipline of public administration accords primacy to the 'values' of equity, justice, humanism, human rights, gender equality and compassion. The movement of Good Governance, initiated by the World Bank in 1992, lays stress, inter alia, on the ethical and moral conduct of administrators. While the New Public Management movement is more concerned with administrative effectiveness, the New Public Administration focuses on administrative ethics in its broader manifestation. Both the movements are complementary to each other.

The ideal-type construction of bureaucracy, propounded by Max Weber also highlighted an ethical imperative of bureaucratic behavior. Weber observed: In the rational type, it is a matter of principle that the members of the administrative staff should be completely separated from ownership of the means of production and administration. Officials, employees and workers attached to the administrative staff do not themselves own the non-

human means of production and administration. These exists, furthermore, in principle complete separation of property belonging to the organisation, which is controlled within the sphere of office, and the personal property of the official which is available for his own private uses.

Weber's analysis underscores the need to prevent the misuse of an official position for personal gains. Although his ideal-type construct on bureaucracy is not empirical, yet it has an empirical flavor, for it appears to have taken into account the existential reality of bureaucratic behavior. From a normative angle – knowing that Weber was not normative in his ideal type constructs also, the message is clear: Don't misuse official property for personal benefit.

Most critics of real-world bureaucracies, including Harold Laski, Carl Friedrich, Victor Thompson and Warren Bennis, have criticized bureaucrats for violating the prescribed norms of moral conduct. Even Fred Riggs, while discussing the traits of a prismatic society like 'formalism' and 'nepotism' points out the yawning gap between the 'ideal' and the 'real' in administrative behavior. The deviations from the norms and mores have been too glaring to be ignored. Immoral behavior thus has become an integral component of 'bureau pathology'.

### **Context of Ethics and Significance for Public Administration**

Ethics, whether in an entire society, or in a social sub-system, evolves over a long period of time and is influenced, during its nurturance and growth, by a variety of environmental factors. Administrative ethics is no different. It is the product of several contextual structures and it never ceases to grow and change. Let us now look at some of these contextual factors that influence ethics in the public administrative systems:

#### **The Historical Context**

The history of a country marks a great influence on the ethical character of the governance system. The Spoils System in the USA during the initial phase of the American national vitiated the ethical milieu of the American Public Administration. "To victor belong the spoils" asserted American President Jackson. Things would have continued the same way had not a disgruntled job seeker assassinated President Garfield in 1881. Garfield's assassination spurred the process of civil service reforms in the USA, and the setting up of the US Civil Service Commission in 1883 was the first major step in this direction.

India has witnessed a long history of unethical practices in the governance system. Kautilya's Arthashastra mentions a variety of corrupt practices in which the administrators of those

times indulged themselves. The East India Company too had its share of employees who were criticized even by the British parliamentarians for being corrupt.

The forces of probity and immorality co-exist in all phases of human history. Which forces are stronger depends upon the support these get from the prime actors of politico-administrative system. What is disturbing is that a long legacy of unethical practices in governance is likely to enhance the tolerance level for administrative immorality. In most developing nations having a colonial history, the chasm between the people and the government continues to be wide. In the colonial era, the legitimacy of the governance was not accepted willingly by a majority of population and therefore, true loyalty to the rulers was a rare phenomenon. Although the distance between the governing elite and the citizens has been reduced substantially in the transformed democratic regimes, yet the affinity and trust between the two has not been total even in the new dispensation. Unfortunately, even the ruling elite does not seem to have imbibed the spirit of emotional unity with the citizens. The legacy of competitive collaboration between the people and the administrators continues to exist. The nature of this relationship has an adverse impact on 'administrative ethics'.

### **The Socio-cultural Context**

Values that permeate the social order in a society determine the nature of governance system. The Indian society today seems to prefer wealth to any other value. And in the process of generating wealth, the means-ends debate has been sidelined. Unfortunately, ends have gained supremacy and the means do not command an equal respect. A quest for wealth in itself is not bad. In fact, it is a mark of civilisational progress. What is important is the means employed while being engaged in this quest.

We seem to be living in an economic or commercial society, where uni-dimensional growth of individuals seem to be accepted and even valued, where ends have been subdued by means, and ideals have been submerged under the weight of more practical concerns of economic progress. Can we change this social order? Mahatma Gandhi very much wanted to transform the priority- order of the Indian society, but there were hardly any takers or backers of his radical thinking that was steeped in a strong moral order. To put it bluntly, ever since Gandhi passed away, there has been not a single strong voice in independent India challenging the supremacy of 'teleology and unidimensionalism'. Neither have our family values questioned this unilinear growth of society nor has our educational system made serious efforts to inject morality into the impressionable minds of our youth. We have starkly

failed on these fronts. The need is to evolve fresh perspectives on what kind of the Indians we wish to evolve and how? Till then, efforts will have to be focused on the non-social fronts.

The issues of morality mayor may not be rooted in the religious ethos of a society. Indian religious scriptures do not favour pursuit of wealth through foul means. Interestingly, Thiru Valluvar's Kural, written two thousand years ago in Tamil Nadu, emphasises that earning wealth brings fame, respect and an opportunity to help and serve others, but it should be earned through right means only. Can this dictum form the basis of our socio-moral orientation?

The level of integrity among Protestants and Parsees is believed by some to be relatively higher when compared to other religions and one can find the roots of such integrity in the well-ingrained mores of these religions. Nevertheless, it is only one point of view, as there are several other religious and secular groups, which are known for their high moral conduct. The cultural system of a country, including its religious orientation, appears to have played a significant role in influencing the work ethics of its people. For instance, the stress on hard work, so characteristic of the Protestant ethics, has helped several Christian societies to enhance their per capita productivity. While judaism has valued performance of physical labour by its followers, the Hindu and Islamic societies, on the other hand, have generally considered physical labour to be of lower rank than the mental work.

Work ethics mayor may not be linked with religious moorings. These are subjective issues but make for an interesting study. The family system and the educational system are influential instruments of socialisation and training of the mind in its impressionable years. If the values inculcated through the family and the school have underscored honesty and ethics, the impact on the mind-set of citizens is likely to be highly positive and powerful.

### **Legal-Judicial Context**

The legal system of a country determines considerably the efficacy of the ethical concerns in governance system. A neatly formulated law, with a clear stress on the norms of fair conduct and honesty, is likely to distinguish chaff from grain in the ethical universe. Conversely, nebulous laws, with confusing definition of corruption and its explanations, will only promote corruption for it would not be able to instill the fear of God or fear of law among those violating the laws of the land and mores of the society. Besides, an efficient and effective judiciary with fast-track justice system will prove a roadblock to immorality in

public affairs. Conversely, a slow-moving judiciary, with a concern for letter rather than the spirit of the law, will dither and delay and even help the perpetrators of crimes by giving them leeway through prolonged trials and benefits of doubt.

Likewise, the anti-corruption machinery of the government, with its tangled web of complex procedures, unintendedly grants relief to the accused who are indirectly assisted by dilatory and knotty procedures. In India, there is hardly any effective anti-corruption institution. As we have read in Unit 7 earlier on in this Course, the Lok Pal is yet to be established, Lok Ayuktas are feeble and toothless agencies, while the state vigilance bodies are low-key actors. The consequences are too obvious to warrant any explanation.

### **The Political Context**

The political leadership, whether in power or outside the power-domain, is perhaps the single most potent influence on the mores and values of citizens. The rulers do rule the minds, but in a democracy particularly, all political parties, pressure groups and the media also influence the orientation and attitudes on moral questions. If politicians act as authentic examples of integrity, as happens in the Scandinavian countries, or as examples of gross self-interest, as found in most South Asian countries, the administrative system cannot remain immune to the levels of political morality.

The election system in India is considered to be the biggest propeller to political corruption. Spending millions on the elections 'compels' a candidate to reimburse his expenses through fair or foul means - more foul than fair. While fair has limits, foul has none. It is generally argued that the administrative class - comprising civil servants at higher, middle as well as lower levels - emerges from the society itself. Naturally, therefore, the mores, values and behavioural patterns prevalent in the society are likely to be reflected in the conduct of administrators. To expect that the administrators will be insulated from the orientations and norms evidenced in the society would be grossly unrealistic. The behaviour of politicians has a demonstration effect on civil servants. Besides, the capacity of the less honest political masters to control civil servants is immense. It is ironical that the moral environment in a country like India is designed more by its politicians than by any other social group. The primacy of the political over the rest of systems is too obvious to be ignored. If the media is objective and fearless, its role in preventing corruption can be effective. It can even act as a catalyst to the promotion of ethical behaviour among administrators. Hence, those who own and manage the media should understand their wider social and moral responsibilities. The

trend in this direction is visible now with many television channels regularly airing their 'expose' on malpractices in the system. This role of the media is important if performed with intent of social responsibility rather than sensationalism.

### **The Economic Context**

The level of economic development of a country is likely to have a positive correlation with the level of ethics in the governance system. Even when a causal relation between the two is not envisaged, a correlation cannot be ruled out. A lower level of economic development, when accompanied with inequalities in the economic order, is likely to create a chasm among social classes and groups. The less privileged or more deprived sections of society may get tempted to forsake principles of honest conduct while fulfilling their basic needs of existence and security. Not that the rich will necessarily be more honest (though they can afford to be so), yet what is apprehended is that the poor, while making a living, may find it a compelling necessity to compromise with the principles of integrity.

It is interesting to note that with the advent of liberalising economic regime in developing nations, there is a growing concern about following the norms of integrity in industry, trade, management and the governance system on account of the international pressures for higher level of integrity in the WTO regime. This is what Fred Riggs would call 'exogenous' inducements to administrative change.

### **Code of Morality**

- India has not developed any ethical code for public administrators, there are, what
- Are called, the government servant conduct rules.
- These rules lay down what constitutes misconduct for the public servant.
- It is apparently implied that such misconduct, which is not permitted, is also unethical conduct.

### **Factors Determining Observance of Ethics**

- Precedents and traditions set by ministers and top administrators
- Communication patterns in the administrative system
- Effectiveness of disciplinary action on the civil servants
- Ethical standards & values existing in the society
- Attitude of political bosses towards administration
- Soundness of service conditions of civil servants
- Dynamics of internal relations in the organisation

- Soundness of training programmes organised to promote professional consciousness among administrators
- Attitude of general public towards the administrators.

### **Need for Administrative Ethics**

- To check arbitrary activities of civil servants
- To promote sense of administrative responsibility
- To foster correct relations between citizen and civil servants
- To cultivate high standards of conduct among civil servants
- To preserve and promote public interest
- To facilitate better use of discretion by civil servants
- To improve efficiency in administrative process
- To strengthen the legitimacy & credibility in the system
- To stabilize relations between official & political executives
- To foster & maintain high morals amongst all categories of civil servants.
- Ethics related Issues in Public Administration

An important question arises in connection with the moral obligation of an administrative system. Is the administrative system confined to acting morally in its conduct or does it also share the responsibility of protecting and promoting an ethical order in the larger society? While most of the focus on administrative morality is on the aspect of probity within the administrative system, there is a need to consider the issue of the responsibility of the governance system (of which the administrative system is an integral part) to create and sustain an ethical ambience in the socio-economic system that would nurture and protect the basic moral values. Moral political philosophy assumes that the rulers will not only be moral themselves, but would also be the guardians of morality in a society. Truly, being moral is a prerequisite to being a guardian of wider morality. Both the obligations are intertwined.

It is a truism that the crux of administrative morality is ethical decision-making. The questions of facts and values cannot be separated from ethical decision-making. Thus, the science of administration gets integrated with the ethics of administration. And in this integrated regime, only that empirical concern is valued, which respects the normative concerns in the delivery of administrative services. Which are the essential concerns in regard to administrative ethics? There can be a long list of values that are considered desirable in an administrative action. However, in being selective, one has to focus on the most crucial

values. Let us now concentrate on the values of justice, fairness and objectivity. Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration" (1887), in his inaugural address averred that justice was more important than sympathy. Thus, he placed justice at the top of value-hierarchy in a governance system. Paradoxically, there has been a lot of discussion on the formal-legal aspects of administrative law since then, but very little analysis has been made of the philosophical dimension of administrative justice.

Currently, the notion of ethics has expanded itself to involve all major realms of human existence. Let us attempt to outline certain salient aspects of ethics in public administration. Broadly, they could be summarised as following maxims:

**Maxim of Responsibility and Accountability:** An administrator would not hesitate to accept responsibility for his decision and actions. He would hold himself morally responsible for his actions and for the use of his discretion while making decisions. Moreover, he would be willing to be held accountable to higher authorities of governance and even to the people who are the ultimate beneficiaries of his decisions and actions.

**Maxim of Work Commitment:** An administrator would be committed to his duties and perform his work with involvement, intelligence and dexterity. As Swami Vivekananda observed: "Every duty is holy and devotion to duty is the highest form of worship." This would also entail a respect for time, punctuality and fulfilment of promises made. Work is considered not as a burden but as an opportunity to serve and constructively contribute to society.

**Maxim of Excellence:** An administrator would ensure the highest standards of quality in administrative decisions and action and would not compromise with standards because of convenience or complacency. In a competitive international environment, an administrative system should faithfully adhere to the requisites of Total Quality Management.

**Maxim of Fusion:** An administrator would rationally bring about a fusion of individual, organisational and social goals to help evolve unison of ideals and imbibe in his behaviour a commitment to such a fusion. In situation of conflicting goals, a concern for ethics should govern the choices made.

**Maxim of Responsiveness and Resilience:** An administrator would respond effectively to the demands and challenges from the external as well as internal environment. He would adapt to environmental transformation and yet sustain the ethical norms of conduct. In situations of deviation from the prescribed ethical norms, the administrative system would

show resilience and bounce back into the accepted ethical mould at the earliest opportunity.

**Maxim of Compassion:** An administrator, without violating the prescribed laws and rules, would demonstrate compassion for the poor, the disabled and the weak while using his discretion in making decisions. At least, he would not grant any benefits to the stronger section of society only because they are strong and would not deny the due consideration to the weak, despite their weakness.

**Maxim of National Interest:** Though universalistic in orientation and liberal in outlook, a civil servant, while performing his duties, would keep in view the impact of his action on his nation's strength and prestige. The Japanese, the Koreans, the Germans and the Chinese citizens (including civil servants), while performing their official roles, have at the back of their mind a concern and respect for their nation. This automatically raises the level of service rendered and the products delivered.

**Maxim of Justice:** Those responsible for formulation and execution of policies and decisions of governance would ensure that respect is shown to the principles of equality, equity, fairness, impartiality and objectivity and no special favours are doled out on the criteria of status, position, power, gender, class, caste or wealth.

**Maxim of Transparency:** An administrator will make decisions and implement them in a transparent manner so that those affected by the decisions and those who wish to evaluate their rationale, will be able to understand the reasons behind such decisions and the sources of information on which these decisions were made.

**Maxim of Integrity:** An administrator would undertake an administrative action on the basis of honesty and not use his power, position and discretion to serve his personal interest and the illegitimate interests of other individuals or groups.

The overall objective is to ensure 'Good Governance' with a prime concern for ethical principles, practices, orientations and behaviour. The chief concern while doing so is the positive consequence of administrative action and not just ostensibly rational modes of administrative processes.

### **Nature of Work Ethics in Public Administration**

An important dimension of ethics in public administration is work ethics. It represents a commitment to the fulfilment of one's official responsibilities with a spirit of dedication, involvement and sincerity. It also implies that a government functionary would love his work and not treat it as a burden or a load. And that efficiency, productivity and punctuality will be

the hallmark of his administrative behaviour.

Efficiency has been a constant concern of administrative analysis and good governance. The notion, transcending the Classical School, has permeated the New Public Management philosophy. Efficiency implies doing one's best in one's job, with a concern for maximum possible utilisation of human, material and financial resources and even for time to achieve the prescribed and desired objectives.

Once we agree that work ethics is important to organisational morality and once we accept that sound time management and a respect for punctuality and promptness (as against procrastination) in work disposal is a valued attribute, we should devise strategies for improving work ethics in developing countries including India. A few corrective steps may be considered in this context. There should be prescribed specific norms of productivity and work performance for organisational units and even individuals. A comprehensive and inclusive performance appraisal system should be adopted. This would be feasible only if job is descriptive and role and responsibilities of each position are specified. There should be maximum delegation of powers at every level with a concurrent system of effective monitoring and work audit.

Punctuality and promptness in administrative affairs must be valued and along with the quality of work performed; these should become the criteria for reward and punishment in organisations. The seniors should lead by setting an ethical example. They should motivate their juniors to take initiative, and responsibility, and also be enterprising and efficient. Conversely, those suffering from indolence, indecision, inefficiency and dishonesty should be punished. This would set an example and create a healthy work culture for those who conduct the public business. The same spirit pervades the pronouncements of public leaders at the helm of governments in most nations.

Thus, ethics has regained its status as a distinctive characteristic of Good Governance. The trend is not likely to reverse in the foreseeable future. Hopefully, there would be a greater concern for quality in public affairs and public service, and the movement of Total Quality Management (TQM) will pervade the governmental functioning and influence the performance of governmental structure. Ethics means good service and this maxim applies most to public systems.

Public administration is designed to serve 'public'. By its very nature, it ought to be people-oriented and even people-centred. While bureaucracies are expected to be guided by laws and

rules, it is not necessary to make them mechanistically rule-centric. Public administrative organisations are human organisations and they ought to be humane in their policies, decisions, orientation and behaviour. Being responsive to people's needs enjoins upon civil servants to be responsive to their psychological needs of being cared for, nurtured, and helped. It is in this context that administrators ought to evolve and demonstrate a higher level of emotional as well as spiritual intelligence that would make them empathetic as well sympathetic to feelings of a common person.

Despite all the visible prosperity In India, one cannot ignore massive and deplorable poverty in the country. As long as there is a single poor person in this country, the moral responsibility of administration remains to help him. But the larger issue of empathy and compassion is not confined to demonstrating positive behaviour towards the less-privileged sections of society. It transcends this orientation. In fact, anyone having access to administration should be meted out a treatment of respect. This treatment should not be just ostensible, but real, authentic and profound. Ethical behaviour emanates from a pure and kind heart, and therefore, those who are in the business of serving people should train their heart to be sensitive and compassionation. Compassion involves a sense of empathy. It does not end with pity. It invokes sensibilities to understand and even feel the pain of others and motivates one to be truly helpful in overcoming this pain. Hence, administrative ethics in public affairs envisages that the domain of feelings and the universe of rationality should find a happy blending in thought as well as actions of civil servants.

A positive and healthy approach to services entails courtesy and politeness in administrative behaviour, a desire to help resolve their problems, and satisfy them even when, extra help cannot be rendered and matters have to be disposed off in accordance with the legal and formal requirements of the system. A citizen-centric administration would be strengthened through such an attitude.

Two areas where administrators ought to show an attentive and caring attitude is to provide correct and useful information to clients when they need it and to redress satisfactorily the citizens' grievances. Even when a grievance cannot be redressed, at least a citizen needs be given an explanation as to why it cannot be redressed. What is important is a positive approach in dealing with people and being helpful to them, and not avoiding them or considering them as burdensome. Ethics entails a respectful attitude to the citizens.

### **Towards New Dimensions of Ethics**

Fostering "sunshine" in public administration is one of the finest methods of ensuring higher standards of administrative ethics. Openness is the enemy of corruption. Almost all countries of the world have Freedom of Information or Right to Information Acts. In the V.S., at the federal level, freedom of information and open hearing provisions are an integral part of the Administrative Procedure Act. In India, the Freedom of Information Act of 2002 was redesigned as Right to Information Act, which was enacted in 2005. Besides, a number of state governments including Goa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have enacted legislations that help in securing accountability of public employees through this device.

Legislation alone is not enough. Its enforcement would require a will on the part of the State, willingness on the part of administrators and an initiative coupled with courage on the part of citizens themselves. The State machinery should be ready to punish those civil servants who obstruct the implementation of Right to Information Act. The age-old orientation to treat every information, as 'secret' must give way to greater openness and transparency. This would require a substantial transformation of the mind-sets of administrators in order to reorient the thinking of administration at all levels, more particularly at the cutting-edge level. The movement for the Right to Information cannot succeed unless people themselves become motivated to ask for the fructification of this Right. Even though, it has culminated in the Right to Information Act, there are miles to go before we can ensure its effective implementation. People's groups, such as the one led by Aruna Roy, will have to continue to take initiative on a massive scale. Even the educational system and the media will need to play a purposive role in this realm. In the American system, 'whistle blowing' by public employees is considered as legitimate and statutorily protected. Public employees are expected to use their voice to protest administrative activities that are illegal or immoral. They can even resort to resignations from their positions to give vent to their protests. And these acts are considered moral and appropriate .

In the American federal government, there functions a hotline, called 'Fraud Net', for preventing fraud, waste and abuse. Through this hotline, employees and others can anonymously report instances of misconduct for investigation to the General Accounting Office. Besides, the American public employees enjoy Constitutional protection on speaking out on matters of public concern like dangers to public health or safety.

In Britain, a new appeals procedure for civil servants has come into effect. Under this

procedure, a civil servant could raise concerns, confidentially, with an individual outside his normal hierarchy. When he believes that the response is not satisfactory or reasonable, he may report the matter to the Civil Service Commissioner. The Constitutional Review Commission in India considered the possibility of whistle-blowing a statutory activity, but it was not accepted as a viable choice. The need is to develop a fresh perspective on this issue.

### **Future Perspective of Ethics in Public Administration**

When A.D.Gorwala presented his report on Public Administration in India in 1951, he had emphasised that integrity was one of the cardinal philosophical premises of good administration. It is paradoxical that despite visible decline of moral standards in public life, the mainstream reports on administrative reforms have not focused on ethical issues. Except for the Santhanam Committee report on the Prevention of Corruption in India in 1964 and a specific segmented report on the theme, the Railway Corruption Enquiry Committee by Acharya Kriplani in 1955, there have been no major efforts at recommending strategies for integrating moral values with the administrative system at various levels. True, the ARC report on Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta was published in 1966, but that again was confined to structural changes rather than bringing about a new ethical order in public systems.

In 2005, with the announcement of the intention of appointing a second Administrative Reforms Commission by the Manmohan Singh government, ethical concerns of public services are likely to be accorded a respectable place in the emergent inquiry on administrative reforms in the country. The need is to go beyond the general statements of administrative morality and be more meticulous in recommending modifications in laws, rules, structures and behavioural patterns in the specific context of individual departments or organisations. The issues of ethics in the Police Department, for instance, carries a distinctive character and possible solutions than, say, in the Education Department. This would further require a rigorous modification in the laws and procedures pertaining to specific functional areas.

How is the administrative ethics of the twenty-first century likely to be different from that of the twentieth century? The answer is to be found in the increasing convergence of ethical concerns at the cross-national level. Globalisation of the economic order is likely to pave the way for the globalisation of governance issues. Not that there would be universally uniform configurations of the governance systems, much less the bureaucratic systems. But with the mitigation of chasm among nations in the realm of the goals, philosophy and strategies of

governance, the ethical concerns are likely to transcend international boundaries.

These will reflect the classical concerns of public administration like efficiency, responsibility, accountability and integrity along with the emergent beliefs in equity, justice, openness, compassion, altruism, responsiveness, human rights and human dignity. Hopefully, this would be instrumental to the blossoming of a new citizenship committed to the sustenance of administrative morality. Even for nurturing such a positive citizenship, public administration institution will have to act as facilitators and educators. That is the biggest challenge as well as an opportunity for the administrative system in the times to come.

### **Conclusion**

Ethics is a comprehensive concept, encompassing all facets of administration. Emphasis on moral and ethical norms has been an integral part of our tradition. Though vices of corruption, malpractices and bureau pathologies have slowly crept in our system, the combat measures have not been very effective. Administrative reforms measures have to be holistic enough taking into their purview questions on nature of work ethics, various dimensions of ethics, foci and concerns of ethics and also the nature of obstacles to ethical accountability.

For any governance system to be transparent, accountable, efficient and sensitive, a Code of Ethics in the form of service rules, procedural norms, and administrative strategies the requirement of the day is. It is not possible to bring into force a Code of Ethics if it is self-serving and is subject to constant external interference and manipulation. A certain degree of autonomy is a pre-requisite for any code to be successful. We are witnessing a change in the pattern of authority, obedience and discipline. Moreover, globalisation trends have brought in a kind of universalisation of ethical norms and values. Philosophy of governance has transcended international boundaries. Almost every rung of administration is involved in decision-making. The conflict between individual values, organisational standards and societal norms is clearly visible. Though the code may not reflect a consensus of opinion on ethical issues, it can still provide direction and advice with regard to ethical conduct and assist the administrators in For any governance system to be transparent, accountable, efficient and sensitive, a Code of Ethics in the form of service rules, procedural norms, and administrative strategies the requirement of the day is. It is not possible to bring into force a Code of Ethics if it is self-serving and is subject to constant external interference and manipulation. A certain degree of autonomy is a pre-requisite for any code to be successful.

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