

ROLE OF CIVIL SERVICES IN A DEMOCRACY

Indian state has three typical branches – Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Executive is responsible to Legislature while Legislature is responsible to people.

By Executive here we meant Political Executive – the ministers. Political executives are not permanent, and in Indian scenario, since the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies are elected only for 5 years, there is chance of change in the political executives, every five years.

But there is another line of executives too in India, a permanent one. They are called Civil Servants. Civil Servants are accountable to ministers (political executives).

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDIAN CIVIL SERVICES AND AMERICAN CIVIL SERVICES

Though civil servants are there in almost all countries, the selection and nature of job differs. The main difference between Indian and US system are as below:

- Indian Civil Services are permanent. US Civil Servants in higher echelons change with government (spoils system).
- Indian system is based on merit, judged through competitive exams. US system, at-least in higher civil services, is given as a reward for favors done to the political executives.

Advantages of Indian Civil Services System



1. Chance of nepotism and corruption in spoils system. Indian system is designed to be impartial and permanent.
2. A permanent civil service provides continuity and develops expertise as well as institutional memory for effective policy making.
3. A permanent executive looks at long term social pay-offs. (Political executives often look at short term gains).
4. Brings uniformity in public administration and also acts as a unifying force.
5. A permanent civil service like any other reputable profession is likely to evolve over time an ethical basis for its functioning.

Accountability of a civil servant

- In any democracy, Ministers are responsible to the people through Parliament and therefore the civil servants have to be accountable to the Minister.
- However, an impartial civil service is responsible not only to the government of the day but to the Constitution of the land to which they have taken an oath of loyalty.
- At the same time, implementing the policies of the duly elected government is a core function of civil servants.
- Civil Servants (Eg: Secretaries) have the constitutional mandate to advice the political executives (ministers).

Role of Civil Services in Indian Democracy

- Give advice to political executives.
- Assist the political executive to: (a) Formulate policy (b) Implement policy.

NB: Qualities expected from Civil Servants: Knowledge, experience, understanding of public affairs etc.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Civil Services in India

- In terms of **Articles 53 and 154**, the executive power of the Union and the States vests in the President or Governor directly **or through officers subordinate to him**. These officers constitute the permanent civil service and are governed by Part XIV of the Constitution (Services under the Union and States (Article 308-323)).
- **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules:** Work is allocated among Ministers as per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules.
- **Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules:** The manner in which the officers are required to help the President or Governor to exercise his/her executive functions is governed by the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules.
- Article 308 – Definition of state.
- Article 310 – Tenure of office of persons serving the Union or a State.
- Article 311 – Dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State.
- Article 312 – All India Services.
- Article 313 – Transitional Provisions.

Sample Questions Related to 'Role of Civil Services in a Democracy' : For GS2 or GS4

- Qn 1: A healthy working relationship between Ministers and civil servants is critical for good governance. Comment:

- Qn 2: The phenomenon of 'politicisation of the civil service' is rising in India. Comment.
- Qn 3: The relationship between the Secretary and the Minister should be organic. Comment.

MAINS:

Historical Evolution of Civil Services

- In India, the idea of a systematic public administration system has been in place since ancient times.
- The Mauryan administration employed civil servants in the name of adhyakshas and others. See more on Mauryan administration.
- Chanakya's Arthashastra reveals that the civil servants were recruited on the basis of merit and excellence and that they had a stringent investigation method.
- In the Mughal period, there were state officers who took care of the land revenue system.
- In modern times, the East India Company had a civil service to do their commercial activities.
- The British government in India established the civil services chiefly with the aim of strengthening their control over their Indian possessions.
- In 1800, Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of India from 1798 to 1805, established the College of Fort William where every worker of the Company was sent for a three-year course. They were taught international law, ethics, Indian history and eastern languages, etc.
- The East India Company College was established in Hertfordshire, near London to train members of the civil service.
- In post-independence India, the civil service was reorganised.
- During the British Raj, law and order enforcement, and collection of revenue were the major concerns of civil services officers.
- After independence, when the government assumed the role of a welfare state, civil services acquired an important role in executing national and state policies of welfare and planned development.

Importance of the Civil Services

1. The civil service is present all over India and it thus has a strong binding character.
2. It plays a vital role in effective policy-making and regulation.
3. It offers non-partisan advice to the political leadership of the country, even in the midst of political instability.
4. The service gives effective coordination between the various institutions of governance, and also between different departments, bodies, etc.
5. It offers service delivery and leadership at different levels of administration.

Functions of Civil Services

- **Basis of Government:** There can be no government without administrative machinery.
- **Implementing Laws & Policies:** Civil services are responsible for implementing laws and executing policies framed by the government.
- **Policy Formulation:** The civil service is chiefly responsible for policy formulation as well. The civil service officers advise ministers in this regard and also provides them with facts and ideas.
- **Stabilising Force:** Amidst political instability, the civil service offers stability and permanence. While governments and ministers can come and go, the civil services is a permanent fixture giving the administrative set up a sense of stability and continuity.
- **Instruments of Social Change & Economic Development:** Successful policy implementation will lead to positive changes in the lives of ordinary people. It is only when the promised goods and services reach the intended beneficiaries, a government can call any scheme successful. The task of actualising schemes and policies fall with the officers of the civil services.
- **Welfare Services:** The services offer a variety of welfare schemes such as providing social security, the welfare of weaker and vulnerable sections of society, old-age pensions, poverty alleviation, etc.
- **Developmental Functions:** The services perform a variety of developmental functions like promoting modern techniques in agriculture, promoting the industry, trade, banking functions, bridging the digital divide, etc.
- **Administrative Adjudication:** The civil services also perform quasi-judicial services by settling disputes between the State and the citizens, in the form of tribunals, etc.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Civil Services

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Accountability of a Civil Servant

The civil servants are responsible to the ministers of the departments in which they serve. The ministers are accountable to the people through the Parliament or State Legislatures, and the civil servants are accountable to the ministers. They should ideally serve the elected government of the day, as government policies are the functions of the civil services. However, an impartial civil servant is also accountable to the Constitution of India on which he has taken an oath of allegiance.

Problems Affecting Civil Services Today

- Lack of professionalism and poor capacity building.
- An ineffective incentive system that does not reward the meritorious and upright civil servants.
- Rigid and outmoded rules and procedures that do not allow civil servants to exercise individual judgement and perform efficiently.
- Lack of accountability and transparency procedure, with no adequate protection for whistle-blowers.
- Political interference causing arbitrary transfers, and insecurity in tenures.
- An erosion in ethics and values, which has caused rampant corruption and nepotism.
- Patrimonialism (a form of governance in which all power flows directly from the leader).
- Resistance to change from the civil servants themselves.

How the Indian civil service is different from the American model?

In India, bureaucracy or civil services is permanent and does not change with the government. The recruitment is based on merit and through competitive exams. This is in contrast to the system followed in the US,

where civil servants, especially in the higher echelons, change with the government. This is called the **spoils system** where people who are close to the government of the day get posts.

Key Facts about Democracy in India:

- Democracy in India federal republic.
- Democracy in India is headed by the President as the head of the state and Prime Minister as the head of the government.
- There is a parliamentary form of government at the central level.
- There is a universal adult franchise.

IAS Officer- FUNCTIONS, What it Takes to Become an IAS Officer

A question that most youngsters and students often hear is “What do you want to be in life?” Apart from the usual responses like Doctor, Engineer or Army Officer, a lot of “I want to be an IAS Officer” is heard.

The Indian Administrative Service (**IAS**) is a highly prestigious career option for talented people in India. It is one of the All India Services. IAS officers serve as the permanent bureaucracy of the Executive Branch of the Government of India.

The executive decisions taken by elected bodies of the government are implemented by the Indian Administrative Service and allied services. To become an IAS Officer is definitely a tough task. However, the one who has the grit to achieve the dream of becoming an IAS Officer will definitely make it. No matter, whatever the background of the aspirant is, the interest and hard work pay off and help them achieve their dream of becoming an IAS officer.

Due to the range of responsibilities handled by an IAS officer, the government provides the IAS officers with a lot of discretionary powers as well as privileges.

Apart from this, they enjoy a high social position due to the services they perform for society. IAS officers are able to use their powers and privileges to bring a positive impact on a lot of people’s lives.

How to Become an IAS Officer?

To become an IAS officer, you must clear the civil services exam conducted by the UPSC. This is one of the toughest exams in India, although not impossible to crack. The civil services exam has three stages, each stage eliminating candidates those do not clear it. Starting with about 5 lakh candidates in the first round, only about 700 – 1000 are left with at the end of the final round which is the interview. Among those, only about a hundred can actually get the post of the IAS!

What is the main work of an IAS officer?

- The IAS officer performs a number of varied tasks depending on his/her posting and department.

- Much of the work involves an administrative charge of a district/area/department, policy formulation, policy implementation, heading PSUs, etc.
- An IAS officer can also be sent on missions abroad, or assigned to a department directly under the central government.
- There are provisions to depute IAS officers to private organizations for short tenures as well.

IAS officers' functional roles depend on the type of assignment they get. There are three types of assignments given to them:

1. Field
2. State Secretariat/Public Sector Undertakings
3. Central Secretariat

IAS Officer Power

Powers and Responsibilities of an IAS Officer: An IAS Officer as a civil servant is responsible for the law and order and general administration in the area under his work. Generally, the functions of an IAS officer are as follows:

- The functions and responsibilities of IAS officers change at various points of their career.
- At the beginning of the career, an IAS Officer joins the state administration at the sub-divisional level and as a sub-divisional magistrate looks after general administration and development work as well as law and order in the areas under his/her control.
- The post of the District Officer variously known as District Magistrate, District Collector or Deputy Commissioner is the most esteemed and distinguishable post held by the members of the service.
- At the district level, IAS officers are mainly delegated with district affairs, including implementation of developmental schemes.
- During the normal course of their career, the officers also oblige in the State Secretariat or as Head of Departments or in Public Sector Undertakings.
- To take care of daily affairs of the government including forming and implementing policy after consulting the minister of the concerned ministry.
- Supervision of the implemented policies.
- Travelling to places where the policies are being implemented.
- Responsible for personal supervision for the expenditure of public funds on the implementation of policies as the IAS officers are accountable to the Parliament and State Legislature for any indiscretions that may happen.

- IAS officers at various levels like a joint secretary, deputy secretary make their contributions in the process of policy formulation and decision-making and the final shape of the policy is given or a final decision is taken with the agreement of the minister concerned or the cabinet depending upon the significance the issue.

Laws related to IAS Officer power:

- Code of Criminal Procedure (1973): Sections 107, 108, 109, 110, 133, 144, and 176 list out powers for maintaining law and order given to Magistrates.
- Tenancy Laws define the powers of a collector regarding revenue.
- National Disaster Management Act list out powers of Chief Secretaries and Magistrates while directing disaster relief operations.
- Arms Act, Drug Licenses Act, Essential Commodities Act etc. list out IAS officers' power to enforce regulations in different situations.

These are the main laws that deal with powers of IAS, though there are close to 300 laws which define them on a case to case basis. These rules are also provided in an abridged form in the All India Service Manuals which are updated from time to time by the Department of Personnel and Training.

The service manuals also list out the IAS conduct rules. All civil servants are answerable to state and central legislatures.

What is the salary of an IAS officer?

After the 7th Pay Commission's implementation, civil servants in India get a good take-home pay package.

The basic per month salary of an IAS officer starts at Rs.56,100(TA, DA and HRA are extra) and can go on to reach Rs.2,500,00 for a Cabinet Secretary.

Apart from the decent monthly income, they also get amenities such as good accommodation, official vehicles, household staff, subsidised electricity, water, etc

Life of an IAS Officer

The IAS is a perfect opportunity for people who wish to bring a positive impact on the lives of their fellow citizens. Bringing electricity to the homes of the poor, giving health and sanitation facilities to those who don't have access, making roads to connect remote places can all be just a day in your life as an IAS officer.

Moreover, an IAS officer hobnobs with the who's who of society. At the apex level, you could even be having tea with the Prime Minister on a regular basis!

IAS Officer Training

Candidates who successfully clear the UPSC IAS Exam get the first taste of life as an IAS officer as soon as they join the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) for initial training. The day to day life of an IAS officer during training is very disciplined and starts at 6 am sharp.

The following is the schedule usually followed at LBSNAA:

- 6 am: Morning exercise/horse riding training for 60 minutes
- 7 am to 9 am: Free time for morning activities
- 9:30 am onwards: 8-10 hours of academic activity including lectures, sports and extracurricular activities.

Officer trainees are left free before and after dinner to socialise and prepare for the next day. Outdoor activities such as treks to nearby rural areas to learn to cope with adversity and understand the lifestyle of rural India are an integral part of the training.

The training of IAS officers also includes Bharat Darshan (a study tour of India).

Once a trainee graduates as an IAS officer, their schedule changes according to their allotted post.

A typical day for an officer posted in the field would begin at 9 am and would involve going through various daily reports, supervising various daily tasks of the department or district, visiting different areas to review the implementation of developmental activities and meetings.

These activities can stretch into the late evening and usually end by about 9 pm.

During emergencies such as natural disasters, riots etc. an IAS officer might put in continuous work coordinating response and relief teams well beyond normal duty hours.