

Core Values and Changing Role of Civil Services in India

October 10, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Civil services in India are guided by enduring core values such as integrity, objectivity, impartiality, and accountability principles that provide ethical governance and sustain public trust. These values form the moral and administrative foundation upon which the Indian state functions. At the same time, the role of civil services has evolved significantly, adapting to the complex challenges of globalization, technological advancement, and socio-economic transformation. In this article, we are going to cover Core Values and the Changing role of Civil Services in India along with their dynamic role in the rapidly changing national and global landscape.

Core Values and Changing Role of Civil Services in India

Civil services in India continue to be the cornerstone of governance, driven by unwavering ethical values and a commitment to public welfare. As India advances towards becoming a global leader, the civil services must uphold integrity, accountability, and empathy while embracing innovation and adaptability.

In an era marked by rapid change, the moral and ethical compass of civil servants remains the guiding light for transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance. Through their dedication and professionalism, civil servants not only uphold the faith of citizens but also play a transformative role in shaping India's socio-economic destiny.

Civil Services in India

The civil services constitute the backbone of India's administrative machinery. They embody the principles of democracy, justice, and equality as enshrined in the Constitution. Acting as the primary instruments for policy implementation and governance, civil servants bridge the gap between the government and citizens, making sure that the benefits of development reach every section of society.

Since independence, the civil services have been entrusted with the dual responsibility of maintaining stability and driving change. They not only uphold the rule of law but also facilitate the socio-economic transformation envisioned in India's developmental goals. To fulfill this mission, civil servants operate under a comprehensive framework of values, ethics, and professionalism, enabling them to serve the nation with efficiency and integrity.

Core Values of Civil Services in India

The functioning of civil services rests upon a strong ethical foundation. These values act as guiding principles for public officials, ensuring that governance remains fair, transparent, and people-centric.

1. Allegiance to the Constitution and the Law

Civil servants must remain steadfastly loyal to the Constitution, which serves as the ultimate guide for all administrative actions. Upholding constitutional principles makes sure that governance remains aligned with democratic ideals, social justice, and the rule of law.

2. Objectivity

Decisions must be evidence-based, rational, and devoid of personal preferences or external influence. Objectivity fosters fairness and equality in policy formulation and implementation.

3. Impartiality and Non-Partisanship

Civil servants are required to remain neutral, serving governments of all political orientations with the same commitment. Merit-based decision-making ensures that governance is insulated from political or personal bias.

4. Honesty and Integrity

Integrity forms the cornerstone of public service. Civil servants must uphold transparency and honesty in their conduct, avoiding misuse of authority or public resources for personal gain.

5. Empathy

An empathetic understanding of the needs of the poor and marginalized enables inclusive and equitable governance. Empathy allows administrators to design and deliver welfare schemes that genuinely uplift vulnerable sections of society.

6. Transparency

Transparent functioning promotes accountability and builds public confidence in institutions. It ensures that citizens can access information about governmental decisions, fostering openness and trust.

7. Commitment to Public Service

A sense of dedication and selflessness defines the true spirit of public service. Civil servants must work towards national development and social welfare, keeping public interest above personal ambition.

8. Probity and Ethical Standards

Upholding probity means maintaining integrity in decision-making and making sure that all administrative actions are guided by moral correctness and ethical judgment.

9. Exemplary Behaviour

Civil servants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity, courtesy, and respect in their dealings with the public, thereby reinforcing the credibility of public institutions.

10. Accountability

Accountability ensures that civil servants remain answerable for their actions and decisions. It promotes transparency, deters corruption, and enhances the quality of governance.

Public Services Code in India

The Public Services Code acts as a moral compass for civil servants, defining the standards of ethical conduct and professionalism expected from them. Public Services Code in India focuses on the following principles:

- Performing duties with honesty, integrity, and impartiality.
- Managing public resources efficiently and responsibly.
- Providing services without discrimination, particularly safeguarding the rights of the poor and marginalized.
- Promoting leadership, teamwork, and mutual respect in public administration.

This code makes sure that public servants act as trustees of public resources and remain committed to democratic ideals and constitutional obligations.

2nd ARC Recommendations on Civil Services Code

Recognizing the need for structured ethical governance, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (**2nd ARC**) proposed a three-tier Civil Services Code framework:

1. **Top Level:** Values and Ethical Standards:

It articulates the broad ethical principles expected from civil servants, including impartiality, accountability, integrity, and dedication to public interest.

2. **Intermediate Level:** Code of Ethics:

It lays down overarching principles that guide the behavior of public servants in various situations, helping

them navigate ethical dilemmas.

3. **Third Level: Code of Conduct:**

This provides specific guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in professional conduct, ensuring consistency and discipline in administrative practices.

These recommendations aim to institutionalize ethical governance and reinforce public trust in administrative institutions.

Changing Role of Civil Services in India

The role of civil services has undergone a paradigm shift, particularly in terms of economic liberalization, globalization, and technological progress.

Pre-Liberalization Era

Before 1991, India's governance structure was characterized by heavy regulation, state control, and bureaucratic rigidity. The "Licence-Permit Raj" stifled economic dynamism and innovation, and the civil services functioned largely as regulatory bodies overseeing public sector dominance.

Post-Liberalization Era

With economic reforms, the role of civil servants transformed from controllers to facilitators of growth and development. The modern civil service now focuses on efficiency, innovation, and citizen-centric governance.

Key areas of transformation include:

- **Facilitating Economic Integration:** Civil services now promote India's participation in global markets, attracting investment and strengthening trade relations.
- **Focusing on Core Governance Functions:** The shift from managing commercial enterprises to delivering essential public services such as education, health, and security has enhanced administrative efficiency.
- **Promoting Market Efficiency:** Bureaucrats ensure fair competition and effective regulation, enabling the private sector to thrive while safeguarding public welfare.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** By simplifying procedures and reducing red tape, civil services have improved India's business climate, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation.
- **Participatory and Digital Governance:** Initiatives like e-Governance, Digital India, and public feedback platforms have empowered citizens and enhanced service delivery transparency.
- **Environmental and Climate Governance:** Civil servants now play a pivotal role in implementing sustainable development policies and addressing climate change challenges.
- **Social Inclusion and Empowerment:** The administrative focus on reducing inequality, empowering women, and uplifting marginalized communities reflects the inclusive spirit of governance.
- **Skill Development and Capacity Building:** Continuous training and modernization of the bureaucracy ensure readiness to tackle emerging global and technological challenges.

Also Check Other Posts

Civil Society	FCRA
India's Ranking in Different Indexes	1st ARC Report

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/core-values-and-changing-role-of-civil-services-in-india/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.