

CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

My esteemed colleagues in the Commission, former Hon'ble Chairmen & Members, Secretary, Officers , members of staff, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all on the occasion of the 83rd Foundation Day of the Commission. You will also be delighted to know that as a part of the Foundation Day celebrations, from this year onwards, Commission is organizing an Annual Lecture Series by eminent personalities on the theme of "Governance and Public Services". The first lecture of the series is being organized on 12th November 2009 at Vigyan Bhawan. Commission is privileged to have none other than the Hon'ble President of India to deliver the first Lecture.

It is an accepted principle of all Parliamentary democracies that the Civil Services should be impartial, capable of implementing the policies of the elected government irrespective of its political complexion. The experience of the working of the Public Service Commission from 1926 onwards in recruiting and management was of great value to the framers of our Constitution in deciding to have independent Public Service Commissions under the new Constitution. The Union Public Service Commission, along with the Judiciary and the Comptroller and Auditor General, was

looked upon by the authors of the Constitution as a bulwark of democracy. The Commission today occupies a unique position in our Constitutional Scheme for impartial consideration of service matters but has only an advisory role.

Good governance largely depends on the people manning the Public Services and for this, selection of the right person for the right job is very important. Free, fair and impartial selection of personnel for posts in the Govt goes a long way in for instilling confidence among people about the impartiality and neutrality of Civil Servants. The great ideals, principles, absolute impartiality and fairness set by the Commission have made it one of the finest institutions of the post independent era.

Past two decades have witnessed unprecedented changes in the way the governance is delivered. The recruitment policies of the Commission need to be reviewed and revised from time to time to make recruitment process faster and also to ensure induction of the right type of Civil Servants. For this, we need to concentrate on examination reforms and automation of the procedures wherever possible.

On the occasion of 82nd Foundation Day last year, I had mentioned about certain initiatives taken such as Inter-active Voice Response System (IVRS), advanced Computer Training to the officers and staff, expanding the use of Library through a new computer software and introduction of System of Online Application Procedure (SOAP). The IVRS has since become operational. 150 officials have so far been imparted intermediate level computer training on 'Basics of MS Office' through NIIT with the help of NIC. The Branches/Sections have found the training advantageous and useful in improving efficiency in disposal of work and helpful in up-scaling the computer skill of the employees. I suggest that trained officials may now function as mentors to their colleagues in acquiring computer knowledge so that the Sections/Branches may become less dependent on IS Wing in the day to day affairs connected with computer. Our Administration Branch will draw up a time bound programme to implement this.

A new software has been uploaded in the intranet of UPSC through which cataloguing of Hindi Books has been started. Apart from it, the Hon'ble Members and Senior Officers can now access the database of the Library while sitting in the room through

computers. This facility will enable users to borrow from the Library any book of their choice by selecting a book based on subject, author, title, keyword, publisher's details etc. In case, the book is under issue, the user can get it reserved also on a first come first basis.

The Introduction of SOAP is at the final stage and we are expecting it to become operational soon. This is being extended for the Recruitment Branch also and we hope this should be ready within this year.

The performance of the Commission as a whole has been quite good during 2008-09 when compared to the year 2007-08. The efforts of Recruitment Branch have especially been praiseworthy. Recruitment Branch registered an increase of 38% in disposal of recruitment cases and the average time taken for disposal of cases has also come down by 31%.

As all of you know, the Commission has been maintaining a very high degree of equity and fairness in various selections that it makes. This has been possible to a large extent by the collective wisdom that is available to the Commission. I do include in this, the wisdom that we receive through our esteemed Advisers also. It is needless to emphasize that the availability of quality Advisers to

the Commission for its variety of Personality Test Boards and Interview Boards is a crucial factor for maintaining the high standards in the selections. Considering this, Commission has been continuously making efforts to increase the database of the Advisers/Experts. Commission has to depend on the Experts/Advisers and that we treat them with the highest respect which they deserved. I would take this opportunity to request you all to help Commission in increasing the database of Experts/Advisers in various fields. As you all know we already have a prescribed proforma for this purpose and these can be obtained from our Advisers' Cell.

Commission in 2002 had forwarded the recommendations on the Alagh Committee Report but no action has been taken by the Govt. on the same. Considering the changes that had taken place during the interregnum, Commission deliberated the issue in their meetings, and as a forward looking organization in improving the quality of candidates for Civil Service, made recommendations for replacing the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination with a Civil Services Aptitude Test. The Administrative Reforms Commission in

its recommendations has also supported this view. The proposal is under active consideration of the Government. Here, I must express the gratitude of the Commission to five of the Ex. Hon'ble Chairmen for sparing their valuable time and guiding us in formulating the response on the points raised by the Administrative Reforms Commission. Apart from this, another issue, which has been a concern for the Commission, was linkage of UPSC Examinations with Eighth Schedule languages. Commission had been taking up this matter with the Government for a long time and now the Government has come round to Commission's view and has agreed with Commission's recommendation to constitute a single Standing Committee to consider all issues relating to Language Policy for the Commission. Accordingly, Commission has constituted a High Level Standing Committee to examine the modalities for implementing the recommendations of the Parliamentary Resolution on Official Languages in a manner consistent with the high standards of UPSC without compromising the quality and standards of examinations conducted by the Commission. This Committee will inter alia lay down standards to be met for a language to be eligible for inclusion in the examinations conducted by the UPSC.

Our endeavour has always been to bring down the period of examination cycle to the minimum and we are constantly moving towards this end. In the past, the result of the Civil Service Examinations were declared 2 to 6 days before the commencement of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, the result of Civil Services Examination, 2008 were declared as many as 13 days before the commencement of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2009.

The Commission disposed off 1806 RTI applications during 2008-09. We could also effectively handle the increasing number of court cases, which stood at 1466 numbers as on 01.04.2009. I agree that the increasing numbers of Court cases and large number of RTI Applications have added to the work of the Commission. We consider this as a sign of a ripening democracy and take this as an opportunity to showcase our system and procedures which are meant to uphold justice, fairness and equity in a transparent manner.

Transparency in the working helps to reduce the grievances and remove misconceptions of general public against any institution. In spite of the constraints attached with the sensitive nature of work handled by the Commission, it has been our endeavour to bring in as much as transparency possible in our day-

to-day functioning. With this in view, we have enriched our website with more and more and up-to-date information.

Public grievances received through Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring Systems (CPGRAMS) of the Department of AR&PG are being attended to and disposed off systematically. I am glad to note that as on date no public grievances are pending against UPSC. We have been maintaining this position consistently for the last two years. Commission has also constituted a Complaints Committee headed by a lady officer to take up complaints/suggestions received from women employees and to conduct enquiries, etc. So far only two complaints were received which have been disposed of.

Over the years, the workload of the Commission has increased manifold without corresponding increase in the number of staff members. We need to refashion the instruments we have to suit the emerging challenges. "Reforms" and "Automation" are the twin strategy adopted by the Commission to handle this situation. Computerization of maximum possible activities will continue to be a priority area in the functioning of the Commission. Recruitment Rules Branch has taken initiative for developments of new computer software based on visual basic so as to generate error free Recruitment Rules. Administration Branch is also in the process of

installation of 'Leave Software' with the help of NIC to process leave cases.

With a view to showcase it's glorified existence and disseminate the information and records having heritage value Commission is setting up a Museum. The work on this front is in its advanced stage. This has been possible through the untiring efforts put in by the Committee headed by Hon'ble Member Ms. Parveen Talha who is demitting office on 3rd October 2009.

During the last few years of my association with the Commission as both Member and Chairman, I have observed that we have in our staff some excellent creative minds whose creativity has found expressions in the form of literary works, fine arts and performing arts. Our efforts have always been to encourage such talents through various forums like Hindi Diwas, Foundation Day celebrations, etc.

Commission believes in the dictum of a 'healthy mind in a healthy body'. We organized a blood donation camp in the premises of UPSC on 02.03.2009 through the Indian Red Cross Society and 33 officers donated blood. Medical camps are also proposed to be held in the premises of the Commission in the coming months for medical check up of the officers/staff members.

Today, Union Public Service Commission stands out as an Institution of unsullied reputation and fairness. This has created an enormous amount of credibility in the Commission as a protector of Merit. Let us, with a little ingenuity imagination and initiative make it a dynamic institution capable to respond to the new and evolving challenges. On this occasion, I would like to congratulate all officers and staff members of the Commission for their contributions in nourishing this organization to its present glory.

JAI HIND.