

## SPEECH OF HON'BLE CHAIRMAN

Respected Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Hon'ble former President of India, Shri V. Narayanasamy, Hon'ble Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension, Hon'ble Members of the Commission, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

2. It is indeed a great honour and privilege that former Hon'ble President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam has agreed to deliver the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPSC Foundation Day lecture on 'Governance'. It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all on this occasion.

3. India is a land of diversity. This diversity spans across culture, tradition, language, geography and the economic conditions of the people. Fulfillment of the basic needs of citizen remains the most important area of governance.

4. The Constitution put the responsibility on State for the welfare of the people. It is the duty of the State to secure to the people of India, living standards ensuring social security through public spending. It is through the members of civil services the programmes and the policies of government are implemented.

5. To my mind, the quality of Governance is determined by the relationship between Policy makers, (the political executive) implementing Bureaucrats and the citizen. The fundamental principle of creating a long lasting relationship, bordering on loyalty, depends on the appreciation of needs and wants of the each organ. Citizen satisfaction must be the touch stone of measurement. In a democracy, the policy makers get input directly from citizen as well as through bureaucracy. The honesty of this relationship is extremely important for right and unbiased policy decision. No link should bring extraneous factors while providing input. A need for imbibing moral values in the public servants is also vital. Good governance largely depends on correct manning of the public services by the people with right attitude and ethics. This is the role the framers of the Constitution envisaged for the Public Service Commissions.

6. Recognizing the role of the civil servants in the changed paradigm, the UPSC have been reviewing its methods and process of recruiting Civil Servants. The scheme of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination has been revised from this year as per the recommendations of an Expert Committee. The changes have been well received as they provide the candidates a level playing field leading to improved quality of selection. Consistent with the need for selecting the right kind of person from huge

pool consisting of multiple languages, creeds, culture and communities, Commission has now constituted a high power Committee to suggest possible changes in the pattern of Civil Services (Main) Examination. I would like to make it very clear that the endeavor of the Commission is to ensure that all the candidates are judged on the basis of in-depth knowledge and understanding rather than information gathered at the last moment.

7. Like the changes made in the Civil Service examination, Commission is also looking at other examinations conducted by it to bring them in tune with the present scenario of country's development and aspiration of people. Similarly, to improve the process of induction of 'State Civil Service' Officers and Non-state 'Civil Service Officers' to All India Service, Commission had recommended an alternative system to the Government (Department of Personnel and Training) which is under its active consideration.

8. Previously, a perception was created that a lot of delay takes place at Commission while the truth was that most of the proposal/cases received by us are half-baked and incomplete without even the basic documents required for examination. To tackle this problem, we have held workshops for the Ministries and Departments to sensitize them about the manner in which proposals are to be sent and the documents that are mandatory. Thereafter, we introduced a Single Window System whereby all the proposals are examined across the table and only complete ones are accepted. This system has been successful and we are in a position now to tender advice within the shortest possible time. To cite an example, the DPC proposals are now finalized in a record time of 43 days as against the normal time of 120 days and the Disciplinary cases are disposed in 2.8 months as against the normal disposal time of 6 months.

9. To improve governance, more and more use of information technology is required and existing procedures need thorough re-engineering. I may inform you that in the Union Public Service Commission there have been a gradual increase in the use of IT in our functions with a view to continuously enhancing system efficiency for better delivery of our responsibilities. Commission has now resorted to receiving applications through on-line mode for all its structured examinations and for direct recruitment selections, this is being introduced in a phased manner.

10. I am of the firm view that in future managing public services in an efficient way and to the satisfaction of citizens shall throw great challenges offering young persons an excitement they are looking for. In a globalised world, full of opportunities, to attract talented persons towards public service, the selection process has to be fast so as not to miss the bright ones to be snatched away by other sectors. Government may use appropriate communication strategy in order to attract the best to the public service.

11. Educational Institutions and Media can play an important role in highlighting the contribution a public servant makes for the welfare of the people of this nation. There are great many public servants whose conduct, working style and commitment has been exemplary. We must respect them and also project them as role models for the benefit of the young aspirant.

12. 'Transparency' plays a key role in good governance. Commission believes that transparency in the functioning of the Organizations and their accountability to discharge constitutional obligations should be complementary and not mutually destructive in nature. Rather harmonization and balance between these two is the need of the day. Hon'ble the Supreme Court of India has stressed on this issue in the case of Central Board of Secondary Education & Anr. Vs Aditya Bandopadhyay & Ors. In Civil Appeal No. 6454 of 2011 and I quote – "The Act seeks to bring about a balance between two conflicting interests, as harmony between them is essential for preserving democracy. One is to bring about transparency and accountability by providing access to information under the control of public authorities. The other is to ensure that the revelation of information in actual practice does not conflict with other public interests which include efficient operation of the governments, optimum use of limited fiscal resources and preservation of confidentiality of sensitive information. Indiscriminate and impartial demands or directions under RTI Act for disclosure of all and sundry information (unrelated to transparency and accountability in the functioning of public authorities and eradication of corruption) would be counter-productive as it will adversely affect the efficiency of the administration and result in the executive getting bogged down with the non-productive work of collecting and furnishing information. The Act should not be allowed to be misused or abused, to become a tool to obstruct the national development and integration, or to destroy peace, tranquility and harmony among its citizens. Nor should it be converted into a tool of oppression or intimidation of honest officials striving to do their duty." Unquote.

13. While the rights of citizens are important and all the efforts are to be made to ensure them, the integrity of processes and time tested procedures of Constitutional bodies as well as their exemplary accountability standards should be taken into account before deciding any issue.

14. For the Commission, every candidate is a potential Public Servant. The Commission ensures that nothing which would have made the candidate suitable has been left out of consideration and no injustice is done to anyone. However, in a competitive examination all cannot be selected and only the best will be successful. Acceptance of this fact will go a long way in ensuring quality selections on time, maintenance of public faith and

reduction in unnecessary litigations arising out of individual interest rather than public interest.

15. Through the National Conference of the Chairpersons of State Public Service Commissions, of which Chairman UPSC is the National Chairman, the best practices and procedures among all the StatePSCs are shared. The main theme of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Conference held at Mumbai has been 'the role of PSCs in meeting the public aspiration and image building'. It is felt that persons of high standing, intellectual ability and impeccable reputation of integrity needs to be considered for manning the Constitutional positions of Chairman/Members of the Public Service Commissions.

16. Special care and considerations are given by the Commission to the needs of the people living in the North East region of the Country. In this regard, we had commissioned a study by IIM, Shillong which inter alia reveals that the overall awareness amongst the youth in the North-eastern region about the Union Public Service Commission is very high. It further reveals that a considerable number (nearly 60%) of applicants visit the website of the Commission which is user friendly. A Workshop on the use of IT for the benefit especially of PSCs of North Eastern Region would be conducted next month at Kolkata.

17. To further the idea of promoting international cooperation, and to learn from each other's expertise and best practices in recruiting public servants and assimilate them while developing the processes of recruitment suited to one's own needs, UPSC had hosted the "Conference of the Chiefs of Public Service Commissions of SAARC countries, in 2010. Commission, have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Public Service Commission of Canada and with Royal Civil Service Commission of the Royal Government of Bhutan in 2011 and another with Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Service Commission of the Government of Afghanistan is on the anvil. A request for long-term cooperation with the Commission has been received from Civil Commission of Mongolia.

18. The glorious past enhances the Commission's responsibility to strive for further betterment. The changing role of Government from a 'controller' to a 'facilitator' demands consequential changes in the role and functions of civil servant. It is the responsibility of UPSC to select such civil servants suitable to the changing times and I would like to assure you on this occasion that all efforts will be made in this direction. Gandhiji's "Suraj" will be achieved if the bright young people selected through Commission find a right environment to work in Civil Service. JAI HIND

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