



Speech of The Hon'ble President of India on the occasion of call on by the participants of the 119th Induction Training Programme, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie

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It is a pleasure for me to be among you. I welcome you to Rashtrapati Bhavan and congratulate you on your selection to the IAS.

At Independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, our first Home Minister, realised India could not be integrated and governed unless it had an efficient and professional All India Civil Service. This Civil Service needed to have the necessary job security and safeguards to allow it to offer independent advice to the political executive.

The All India Services have played a significant role in the development of the country and the growth of our economy. Even so, we have to be mindful of the expectations of our young population, and of the poor and marginalised sections of our society.

We cannot ignore that there are often legitimate questions that are asked about the quality of our governance systems and our bureaucratic mechanism.

Sometimes these perceptions may be more adverse than reality warrants. But perceptions do matter.

There is also a perception that, over time, certain officers get identified with one or the other political dispensation or individual. You must guard against this.

The most important challenge before you is to give confidence to the people of India - the people you are mandated to serve - that civil servants are fair, honest, professional and efficient.

As public servants, you need to be role models in your personal conduct. In your professional conduct, honesty and integrity, humility, and sensitivity to the diversity of India and of our society are non-negotiable.

A question that you need to ask yourself is: Whom do you really work for? The usual answer would be that you work for the people of India.

But there are people who need the government and who need your support and service more than the others. These are our fellow citizens who are economically weak, socially disadvantaged and politically under-empowered. Or those who are treated with a disadvantage only because they are women. It is on these groups that you must focus your energies.

Here it is useful to keep in mind Gandhiji's mantra: "Whenever in doubt ... recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him."

Let this be your guiding light.

The civil services have to function within the larger system of political governance. Political leaders are elected to represent the wishes of the people in a democracy, and frame the agenda of the government. Civil servants are to assist the political executive in formulation and implementation of policy.

They must ensure that government policies are formulated in accordance with the law and the spirit of the Constitution. Civil servants must have the courage to provide frank advice, independent and free from bias, to the political executive whom they assist.

For this officers need to encourage professionalism not only in their own working but also in the organisations they lead. They need to be strongly committed to updating their knowledge and skills - as well as building capacity of those who work under them.

The Induction Training Programme is an important milestone as you enter a new phase in your careers. The wider role you will now play in the governance and administration of India calls for realignment of attitudes, refinement of skills and expansion of perspective.

There should be an even greater commitment to rising above caste, community and regional identities. Wherever you may work - irrespective of the district or the state, the Ministry or the Department - you will be contributing to nation building.

The course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration is aimed at providing an all-India perspective. It is planned to develop a sense of awareness and responsibility for working at the next level in the state and Union governments through:

- Imparting multidisciplinary knowledge and skills to function effectively as an administrator
- Instilling the right attitude and approach to understanding the role of the IAS in developing institutions for nation-building; and
- Inculcating a sense of camaraderie and connect with your peers from other parts of the country

I trust the course has been able to achieve its objectives and enhance your skills in the important role you will play in governance.

I wish you a long and fulfilling career in the IAS - and in the service of our nation and our people.

Jai Hind

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