

Ethics in Administration

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Abstract

The word ethics is derived from the Greek word "Ethos", which means character. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with human character and conduct. It is a discipline dealing with what is good and bad with moral duty and obligation. Ethics is the embodiment of moral values, which describes what is right and what is wrong in human behaviour and what ought to be. Thus ethics refers to good character, morality and human behaviour considered as desirable by the society. The same action or practice is viewed as ethical and unethical change at times because some values are dropped and some values are added over a period.

Ethical learning from Bhagawad Geeta The work or karmas is driving force of the life and this work has to be ethical. Public servants, who resort to unethical means to grab the immediate results are successful only for short time like Dhuryoddan. Don't be afraid of doing right things in official as well as personal life.

Ethics and values has key role in smooth functioning of public administration system. Values relate to the norms of a culture, he source of values is an issue of substantial continuing debate in ethical philosophy and is similarly challenged in organisational theory. Public values are defined as those values that provide normative consensus about the rights, benefits and prerogatives to which citizens to be entitled. These are the obligations of citizens to society, the state and one another. Values are the principles upon which government and policies must be based (Bozaman, 2007).

Morality refers to the standards of behavior by which people are judged and particularly their relationships with others. Moral standards of behavior vary between groups in a single culture, between cultures and between times. If everyone acts on the basis of his/her own self interest and ignores the wellbeing of others, life would be "Solitary, nasty, brutish and short".

Ethical and moral values contribute to the greatest degree of benefits for the largest number of people while incurring the least amount of damage/harm. Moral and ethical action based on rational decisions, logical consistency and general rights based approaches i.e

individuals have right to autonomy, privacy, dignity, respect, self esteem, authenticities etc. helps to treat people as ends in themselves, not merely as means to an end and to behave with integrity, enacting virtues and values in all that we do.

To eradicate or to heal this situation there is only one way, the implementation of ongoing reforms and the regulation of the legal framework. Both will provide complete transparency of public administration in its administrative activities, competence in managing work, equal treatment of citizens by the law and especially ethics in public relations. The acceptance of taking responsibilities with positive attitude will create stability in the work of administration, making it efficient and resultant.

Keywords: Moral Duty, Obligation, Unethical, Morality, Rational Decisions, Logical Consistency, Autonomy, Self Esteem, Authenticities.

Introduction

"Law is a guiding factor of ethics", but a gap between law and ethics is owing to the process of formation of law. Each individual has a set of norms, beliefs and values that determines his/her moral standards that are based on emotional rather than rational thinking process. Norms, values and beliefs of the individuals in the groups and in society interact with those of others and turn ultimately into ethics. Formation of law is both social as well as political process. Sometimes it is more a political process than a social one. This is the basic reason for the existence of gap between law and ethics. However law is a guiding factor of ethics. Ethics in public service is about the responsibility of practical application of the moral standards in governance. In our democratic nation the major factor that affects our understanding of public service's ethics is amalgamated with the meaning of the political administrative environment that provides the framework for public services and that conditioned its practice. Particularly in countries with new democracies, the existing political environment cannot be marked as the main factor, but as one of the determining factor.

Public administration, not only is not an autonomous body in its work, but it is functioning running and carrying the official duties and related in a pyramidal shape to politics. It has its influence on Good Governance in the country. There are not limited number cases of intervention by the government officials directly in the working management, on the rights and responsibilities that employees or their dependents have been assigned by law. This situation has imposed preferential choices to the detriment of general interest.

Significance of Ethics in Administration

Ethics is the basic principle which directly corresponds to basic human needs. It creates and establishes credibility in the public. It helps and cautioning administrators in taking and implementing better decision. Law with ethics can only protect society.

In this context due to enormously the growing size and role of administration and its impact on the society, the civil servants are expected to set-up high moral standards not only for themselves but also for the society and community at large. Ethical conduct of civil servants has been defined by different thinkers in the following manner

Paul H Appleby preferred the expression ‘morality’ instead of ‘ethics’ argued that morality and administration cannot be separated delineated the following attributes of a moral administrator:

- Sense of responsibility
- Skills in communication and personnel administration
- Ability to cultivate and utilize institutional resources
- Willingness to engage in problem solving
- Ready to work with others as a team
- Personal confidence to initiate new ideas
- Preference to public needs, interests & sensitivities rather than resorting to the use of raw bureaucratic power

‘Problem of ethical conduct of public official arises by virtue of the power and influence that he commands and the commitment that he undertakes of loyal and disinterested service to the public’

The blemish of the administrative system with implication for ethics is structural hierarchies, inefficient processes and lacking strength to control over administrative action. Individual senior officials seem to have influence with too much power and discretion without effective accountability. Administrative procedures are such that routine decisions by front line staff often have to be cleared through the hierarchy. The consequences of these procedures results in delay and frustrations in obtaining decisions and services on time, which partially encourages bribery and petty corruption at the point of service delivery. There is need to simplify systems and procedures in order to remove the unnecessary blockages in organizational systems that create opportunities for bribes to be extracted from the public. Ethics reforms and anti-corruption policies would not be useful if they left in place the restrictive laws and cumbersome processes that produced incentive for bribery and other

unethical practices in the first place (Susan Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Imposing accountability for the exercise of administrative power has become more difficult as public service has continued to grow in size and as their responsibilities have grown in complexity.

Recently we have witnessed news clippings in the News Papers that with Rs. 200 as bribe any person can cross the borders towards India from Bangladesh etc. It is well known fact that synthetic narcotics are entering into the country abundantly and distributed throughout the country only with the support and help of corrupt practices is a known truth.

During colonial period the main purpose and rendering services of civil servants or civil administrators was to pacify the people from Independence Movements if not to crush the Independent thinkers and intimidate the mobs. After success of Independence Movements in principle though there should be transformation in the attitude of most of the civil administrators, the unfortunate entry of colonial psychologies of subject countries into politics and political administration, the basic motive of Independence Movements are crashed resulting **Neo - anti - democratic systems** have developed which were supported by the then colonial countries still our administrative system is not self reliant in its official function unfortunately following their policies and guidelines. The reminiscences in the colonial civil administrators, their subordinators, their disciples and people influenced by colonial administrative tactics have almost destroyed the hopes and aspirations of people for independence, equality and transparency the power began to corrupt. In the name of "**Official Secrecy Act**" maximum percentage of the administrators from civil servants category and people representatives totally curtailed freedom of expression, individual independence and destroyed democratic values totally

The progressive pro - democratic leaders of "**Right to Information Act**" and "**Citizen Charter**", but here also the colonial reminiscences destroying the sincerity of true democrats and the economies of people and people governments where the vote is the sovereign power to construct the administrations of sovereign nations. Here also the culprits began to purchase the weaknesses of common man the voter, again began to exploit to development and resources of countries i.e the peoples wealth. And deposit the same in Western black money heavens, intriguingly developed by the then colonial nations. Here the ethics and morality became total crash only the individual selfishness and the corporate structural benefits dominated the economies of the whole world. For example The Junior Bush administration was full of petroleum corporate people who simply by escalating crude petroleum prices benefitted themselves destroyed the total economic system of the Globe i.e. called and caused the energy crisis in other words World Economic Crisis. But, i name it as

the selfishness of petroleum corporations and their political supporters destroyed the minimum happiness of the common man of the world.

One of the essential characteristics and qualities of public service work in a modern democracy and also one of the political environment's elements is the accentuation of public responsibility. This can be easily expressed in general terms and it seems clear that the forms of accountability are important to any political system, though in practice it is complicated. Accountability of public administration begins with the execution of official duties in strict accordance with the Constitution and the law. Only in these conditions, public administration employees will perform their duties conscientiously and professionally by putting themselves more and better in the service of the community.

The political representatives in the form of political administrators preach us that every citizen must follow the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. As for the biography of Gandhi his personal expenditure never exceeded the per capita income of the nation. In this context it's better to recollect regarding his personal expenditure that he never exceeded his total expenditure on food and non food items are always kept within limits of few annas of income of an average citizen of India. Though he acquired lakhs of rupees in his name in the bank accounts he always remembered that money belongs to public only. Mahatma Gandhi has given a classical and practical example i.e. "**My life is my message**".

After peaceful transition of power from British raj to independent democratic federal government, the administrative system and law were continued as it is. As a result the suppressive nature of in-service employees of their raj continued. The suppressive autocratic behavior of the British rule totally cultivated, habituated by the then government servants, and also continued because the same person in the power. His oppressive characters still appear in many democratic offices. And the people's government not able to change the situation by order, by training or by counselling. The intimidate practices totally disturbed the psychology of the population and the people began to encourage corruption to pacify the stern behavior of government servants. The situation has completely spoiled the ethical basement of the system. The greedy psychology of the human being escalated the corrupt, rude and merciless practices of the administrative missionary.

Even today an honourable citizen doesn't find respect in many government offices. This transformed the entire society into corrupt, unethical and selfish forms. Gradually, as the decades passed the unethical practices becoming the way of life in the society. In present situation people began to think and practice as political leaders and representatives continued the sin to spoil the coming generations, the development of the nation and finally the future

of the nation. As the peoples representatives, bureaucrats, executives, administrators middle men openly colluding themselves to destroy the future of the nation and the democracy leading the nation in dungeon. Now, the people began to believe that without corruption the governments cannot be formed, the elections cannot be won and the political power cannot be attained. This is the ultimate unfortunate legacy Of the raj transformation into unprepared democratic setup.

No administrator or employee or people representatives are not realizing that they are public servants and their bread and butter were purchased only by the people's tax money and in a democracy people are real masters of the system. Every pie paid to them is created by the sweat and toil of the citizen.

Pundit Nehru in his maiden speech to the parliament said that he is a servant of the people of this nation if a Prime Minister accepts his constitutional position in a democracy leader as a servant of the people what is the status of all the remaining administrators to dishonour the dignity of the citizen.

Suggestions

1. Every person who is the part and parcel of administration should learn and practice to honour the citizen first then listen peacefully, carefully and attentively to his problems and try to understand the gravity of the situation and try to solve the problem under the guidance of law.
2. An administrator must always try to interpret, understand and implement the law in a positive way and to the benefit of the society and he must remember that every Policy, Amendment and Act are made and meant for a rightful cause and for the benefit of the people only. And no law is against the welfare of the people, if he cannot understand the atma of the constitution o0r law he must take a better counselling from a social conscious expert. And the administration periodically should conduct counselling classes for the government missionary to implement the better services for a brighter future of the nation. And these people should understand that the overall developed nations can only assure for the better existence, future citizen's i.e our future younger generations together.

Conclusion

Corruption prevalent in the system has affected the observance of ethics badly. Way back in 2000 B.C., Kautilya in his book 'Arthashastra' identified forty different modes of corruption. He also referred to its inevitability and thus remarked, "Just as it is possible not

to taste honey that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a government official not to eat up at least a bit of the king's revenue”

Efforts to identify modes of corruption has been an ongoing exercise, The Central Vigilance Commission has identified 27 modes of corruptions. The following committees significantly contributed in bringing out in open the prevalence of corruption and decline in administrative ethics in:

- India -Bengal Administration Enquiry Committee(1944-45)
- A.D Gorwala's Report on Public Administration(1951)
- Railway Corruption Enquiry Committee(1953-55)
- Santhanam Committee on prevention of Corruption(1962-64)

Values and ethics of Civil service has significant role in healthy functioning of public administration of country. Values are important in giving yardsticks and prescribing how goals must be accomplished. At present its responsibility of Governments there is a need to establish appropriate infrastructure, institutions, and framework to promote values and ethics in public administration. But, it is realized by many thinkers and expertise that there are multiple problems and unethical behaviour in public services and also identified that Public values and ethics are taken into consideration and most of the problems treated as meaningless in public administration if these are not implemented, enforced, coordinated and integrated in public services. Many experts have realized that Ethics is gaining importance in the discourse about governance presently. It is observed that standards in public life are in deteriorating. This raises concern about the costs of misconduct on the part of those who have been entrusted with guarding public interest and resources. It is necessary that public servants must be aware of the basic principles and standards they are expected to apply to their work and where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour lie.

"Corruption is a global threat. It is a serious roadblock to economic development,"
Corruption aggravates inequality, injustice, and undermines stability especially in the
World's most vulnerable regions. - Yury Fedotov, Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

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