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Strategies for Reorienting District Training Programme of IAS Officer Trainees towards Vikshit Bharat: An Innovative Study

Abstract

The Indian Administrative Service has played a decisive role in nation-making through ensuring its sustained economic growth over the decades, strengthening its federal structure and fostering its democratic spirit. To impart such skills and attitude which can contribute to their administrative efficiency and career enhancement, training becomes necessary for proper induction of new recruits into the service. Although an elaborate five-phased training course is in place for IAS officer trainees, there is an increasing need felt to make the training course more practical, and need based. Hence, the Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended increasing the tenure of village visit component of district training programme from one week to three weeks. The study shows that approx. 74.5% officers are outsiders to the allotted cadre as opposed to 25.5% officers who are insiders. This shows more officers need to get accustomed to the prevailing local culture. Hence, increasing stay of officers in rural/backward areas would facilitate greater understanding of the local ethos, thus impacting policy decisions taken by them in later years of their career. Therefore this study aims to assess the impact of this revamped district training programme on the performance of civil servants towards making a Vikshit Bharat by 2047.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Inclusive Growth, Need-Based Training, People-Friendly Officers, Rural Governance, Vikshit Bharat etc.

Introduction

The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) has played a decisive role in nation-making through ensuring its sustained economic growth over the decades, strengthening its federal structure and fostering its democratic spirit. Just like the “Steel Frame of India” as envisioned by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the IAS has helped to maintain the unity and integrity of the country. The role of bureaucracy, nowadays, is becoming very crucial as now the government is looking to reduce its role to just “regulator, mediator, underwriter, provider of services, promoter of national standards of decent living and economic and social diagnostician and repairman.”

Every year, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) recruits about 180 new entrants (UPSC, 2023) to the post of IAS through the three-staged Civil Services Examination (CSE). The most important function of Civil Services, particularly the IAS, is in transformation of policies from on paper to grass root level.

Decision-making at higher levels is influenced by several factors that necessitate the use of brains without being influenced by prejudice. To impart such skills and attitude which can contribute to their administrative efficiency and career enhancement, training becomes necessary for the proper induction of new recruits into the service. “Training is a compound of several distinct elements. In one sense, training means the imparting of knowledge of facts and their interrelations, knowledge essentially of a specialised or professional nature. In another sense, training involves the teaching of techniques which require the coordinate handling of tools, appliances, physical faculties, along with ideas... In still another sense, training entails the formation of mental and physical habit patterns to ensure that the same stimuli would always produce the same automatic responses. Finally, training implies what the good gardener does to the growing sampling.”(Bapat, 1955)

Literature Review

A large number of studies have been carried out on the different aspects of the civil services. But very few studies have been conducted on the training aspects of the civil servants. In the study of Gupta (1970), it was found that i) role of public officials, especially in developing countries, is crucial in their socio-economic progress. Hence, the necessity of a sound personnel system with regards to recruitment and training is a sine qua non for efficient public delivery; ii) with the paradigm shift in India's socio-political environment, the officers of IAS, a product of the colonial rule, must have a reoriented outlook. Patriotism and not bossism, responsiveness and not authoritarianism, efficiency and not paternalism are the new demands which must be fulfilled by the training of civil servants; iii) although training is provided to officers belonging to different forms of civil services, there is an increasing need felt to make the training course more practical, need based and job oriented instead of just being academic, theoretical and classroom based and iv) India requires multifaceted institutional, procedural and functional reforms with regards to civil services, even though it may not be a permanent reform as reforms can never reach a stage of finality.

In the study of Khan (1998), it was found that i) with the rise of the welfare state, bureaucracy has acquired new importance in the mission of national building in a democratic setting with active involvement of citizens. Thus, to meet the new role, civil services have to acquire new knowledge and skills and altogether a new attitude and capability to handle the complex problems; ii) unless the whole nation is taken together, the dream of overall development of India cannot be achieved. Hence, several developmental projects have been launched by the government to improve the standard of living of the entire population, particularly the poor and marginalised sections; iii) the perspective of development, especially in an economy like India where almost 66% of the population depends on agriculture and lives in rural areas, lies not only in hastening the process of technology innovation and its adaptation in industry but in a more wholesome approach which, in the present context, would involve the assimilation of our rural subsystem to the urban mainstream. Such a process, it is believed, would essentially involve a change in the structural pattern of Indian society and shift people's personal obligation from market determined priorities to socially determined basic needs; iv) a country cannot realise the set goals of development programmes unless it manages to recruit trained professionals to execute them. So far as professionalism is concerned, it includes two main attributes - skills in one's job as a result of training and sustained experience, and the fundamental knowledge and deep familiarity with a subject that enable a man to move with ease among its concepts. In the rising debate of the day, the slogan among the public services seems to be either professionalise or perish; v) indeed, meeting the future challenges squarely enough will be an impossible exercise for status quoist service with only traditional or conventional skills available with them. In order to meet the challenges of development a comprehensive training policy should be evolved which should outline the scope of all training activities, approaches to training needs, assessment of the priorities and financing arrangements, the role and functions of different categories of training institutions and mechanism for coordinating their works, linkage of training to career planning and development and guidelines for the monitoring and evaluation of training; vi) a rigorous evaluation of training programmes in the context of organizational and environmental framework has been lacking in most of the

training efforts. Coupled with that has been the absence of systematic monitoring and follow up of the effects of training on one's career development or performance on the job.

In the study of Singh (2006), it was found that i) training institutions are assuming greater responsibility for supervising training in the field and changing the context of government functions undertaken to promote socio-economic development at a fast pace. The imperative of modern-day civil services training is not only to improve efficiency in work through technical knowledge and skill but also to create positive attitude towards job and empathy for people to be served; ii) introduction of NPM (New Public Management)¹ and e-governance as part of administrative reforms has resulted in efficient service delivery by civil servants in a post-globalised world; iii) in India, civil servants need to acknowledge active participation of people to facilitate smooth public services delivery. For this, collaborating with NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) in matters of policy implementation becomes important. Globalization also favours the extensive role of the NGOS for total development of the backward communities. Hence civil servants should be trained not to look down upon people as mere passive beneficiaries but as equal partners in development process; iv) civil service reforms must be aimed at improving transparency accountability, honest, efficiency and sensitivity in public administration at all levels; v) the challenges faced by the government are not only to sustain and accelerate the pace of development but also to introduce policies that remove regional and sectoral disparities. Training programmes of civil servants must also acknowledge these demands and hence be modified accordingly.

Objectives

The objectives of the study have been conceived in the following manner:

- i) To assess the exact manner in which proposed changes are to affect the district training of Officer Trainees
- ii) To analyze the rationale due to which this revamped programme should be implemented to the immediate effect.
- iii) To identify and examine whether the proposed change is in line with the previous training policies and recommendations of various commissions related to civil service reforms in India.
- iv) To scrutinize the prospects of implementing this decision on some of India's growth attributes like balanced regional development, inclusive growth and rural development.
- v) To study how the proposed training pattern can be a facilitator towards making of Vikshit Bharat by 2047.

Methodology

Training and development in Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to a system of educating employees within a concern. It includes various tools, instructions, and activities designed to improve employee performance. It's an opportunity for employees to increase their knowledge and upgrade their skills (Workhuman, 2022). Training helps the people to

¹ It refers to a body of managerial or ideological thought which is based on ideas generated in the private sector and imported into the public sector. (Hood, 1991) This reform aims at greater economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

feel that they are part of the concern and they start feeling satisfaction. That because they know how to work there confidence in the service environment also increases. Innovation skills will also start increasing because of the knowledge which they have gathered. (Ahmad et al, 2014)

The present study is based on secondary data as collected from different government portals, research articles published in journals, newspaper reports, reports of national and global think tanks, index prepared by global think tanks and reports of various commissions appointed by the government. A qualitative analysis of these secondary data has been undertaken in this study. Here, in order to explore the problem, a simple statistical method like percentage has been adopted.

Analysis & Findings

I. Induction Training Programme: The training of this premier civil service has historically been accorded high priority by the government. Officers upon entry are trained for a period of two years at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie where the training follows the ubiquitous “sandwich” pattern, i.e. institutional training is interspersed by field training. The present structure of training based on two-years Induction Training and the “sandwich” pattern referred to above, has been in operation since 1969. Since 1959, the training of IAS officers has been conducted at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie. Prior to that, it was done at the IAS Training School at Metcalfe House, Delhi.(Aggarwal Committee Report, 2014)

LBSNAA’s induction training for the direct recruits consists of the following phases (LBSNAA, 2016):

1. Foundation Course: This course is for Officer Trainees (OTs) of the All India Services viz. the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service & the Indian Forests Service; the Indian Foreign Service and various Central Services (Group-‘A’). Run once a year usually from September to December, it marks the commencement of training of candidates selected by the UPSC. At current levels of recruitment, some 650 plus candidates drawn from across the above services undergo the Foundation Course (FC) each year at LBSNAA and partner institutions. As the OTs are fresh entrants, the focus is on familiarizing them with the environment of political, economic, social and administrative issues through a well-defined syllabus. This equips them with requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes to shoulder the responsibilities of a public service officer. The *raison d’etre* of a common FC is to instil a shared understanding of government and build camaraderie among the civil services for smoother conduct of the affairs of the government.

2. IAS Professional Course, Phase-I: Soon after the completion of FC, the OTs graduate to Phase-I training. This course imparts rigorous training to the OTs in a wide range of subjects to enable them to handle varied assignments that they would hold in the first ten years of their service. Emphasis is on understanding of public systems and their management. Starting in December, it runs up to May of the next year and comprises Academic instruction (12 weeks); Winter Study Tour or Bharat Darshan (7 weeks) and 1 week of Block Leave.

3. District Training: The OTs undergo a one-year district training in their allotted State cadres. This period combines ‘Learning by Seeing’ and ‘Learning by Doing’ as they also handle independent charges during this period. The key elements of District Training are a combination of the following:

3.1 Institutional Training at ATI : An important aspect of district training is the institutional training at the state Administrative Training Institute. The duration of this training is subject to considerable spatial variation across state cadres and ranges from 3 weeks to 12 weeks.

3.2 Attachments in the District: A principal cornerstone of district training has been “learning by seeing”. Subsequently, around 25-30 weeks are allocated for a series of attachments with district-level offices. This is generally prescribed by the State Government under the supervision of the District Collector who plays an important mentoring role during district training. The principal offices and officers, where trainees are attached, include Collectorate, Zila Parishad, Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and Tahsildar offices, subordinate revenue officials, Superintendent of Police (SP), District & Session Judge, District Forest Officer(DFO), Chief Minister’s Office(CMO), Engineers of the line departments, Municipal Corporation/ Council, Block Development cum Panchayat Officer (BDPO) etc.

3.3 Independent charges: Another important cornerstone of district training is the maxim “learning by doing”. Trainees are expected to hold independent charges of subordinate positions as a sequel to their attachments in the district. Trainees are given two to three independent charges, viz. that of BDPO (ranging anywhere between 4 to 8 weeks), Tehsildar (ranging again from 4 to 8 weeks), and in some cases those of Executive Officer of a Municipal Council and even that of SDM.

3.4 Attachment at State Secretariat: OTs normally visit the State Secretariat for calling on senior dignitaries and officials of the State Government. This is usually for a period of around one week. They are attached to various Secretaries to obtain an exposure to the working dynamics of the State Government at the headquarters.

4. IAS Professional Course, Phase-II: The course content is designed to consolidate the learnings and for assimilating the district experiences gained by the trainees in one year. It allows for sharing of experiences of good administrative practices, enabling them to articulate the strengths and weaknesses of our administration and governance. This prepares them for problems and situations they will face in the initial years of their career. Commencing in the third week of May, it concludes in June. The Officer Trainees also go on a week-long Foreign Study Tour (FST) to understand best practices overseas. In return, they write a paper highlighting the administrative practices that they found interesting and those that can be adapted or replicated in the Indian context. LBSNAA awards a Masters’ Degree in Public

Management (recognized by the Jawaharlal Nehru University) to IAS Officer Trainees undergoing a two-year long induction training programme, consisting of both academic inputs and field work.

5. Assistant Secretary-ship: The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) is entrusted with the implementation of Assistant Secretary Training Programme to provide exposure to the young IAS officers to Government of India functioning at early stage(s) in their career on completion of their phase II Training at LBSNAA, Mussoorie. The Assistant Secretaries are posted for a total period of 13 weeks in Union Ministries and Departments in New Delhi after completion of their Phase-II training at LBSNAA, Mussoorie. The high point of this is the presentations made by the new entrants before the Prime Minister of India. (DoPT Training Division, 2022)

II. Rethinking District Training Programme – Observations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee : Within the 53 weeks district training programme of the Officer Trainees, one week was allocated for ‘village visit’, i.e., for staying in tribal belts, remote villages and inaccessible areas. OTs are taken to rural areas and are exposed to the realities and complexities of rural life. The officers are expected to gain a first-hand understanding of various programmes/schemes during the course of their stay in the villages. Simultaneously, the trainees look to learn from initiatives and best practices that have succeeded opportunities that have been utilized and interventions that have worked. They submit a report on villages visited by them covering various aspects like poverty, inequality of opportunities and lack of access to various facilities in rural areas. During this period, trainee IAS officers work closely with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in those villages, Anganwadi workers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), social health workers, teachers and other field-level functionaries of various departments. (NewsNCR, 2022). The villages visit aims at achieving the following:

- i) Assess the socio-economic-political dynamics that exist in a village;
- ii) Recognize the importance of the need to learn from the villagers in evolving people based solutions to local problems;
- iii) Evaluate the spatial and temporal changes that have occurred in the village in terms of quality of life resulting from Governmental and non-Governmental interventions.
- iv) Evaluate the working of various village level institutions, formal and informal, in terms of participation and effectiveness;
- v) Organize a cleanliness drive under “Swachh Bharat Mission” with the help of villagers and the district administration; and
- vi) Understand and analyse the problems faced by the rural people especially the marginalized sections such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, physically challenged old, poor, landless and women. (LBSNAA, 2016)

In its 112th report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice has recommended that the duration of village visit should be increased from

one week to three weeks. (Times of India, 2022) “The Committee is of the considered view that LBSNAA needs to re-orient its training programme to make young civil servants sensitive to the needs of the general public, especially the marginalized and the vulnerable. LBSNAA needs to integrate classroom based theoretical training with experiential training in real settings. During the course of training, LBSNAA may assign young officer trainees to tribal hamlets, remote villages, areas with harsh terrains and difficult conditions for two-three weeks, completely disconnected from mundane life and 58 enable them to get first-hand experience about the challenges faced by these groups of people on day-to-basis. The Committee is confident that this change will go a long way in bridging the gap between the Government and the governed.”(Parliamentary Standing Committee Report, 2022) Based on this recommendation, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has informed the Committee that LBSNAA is considering the option of increasing the tenure of village stay module, as a part of District Training Programme, to three weeks.

Rationale behind this recommendation is that by staying in tribal hamlets, remote villages in difficult terrains, OTs can obtain first-hand knowledge about the perspectives and roles of various field-level functionaries and make them aware of the problems and lifestyle of those villagers and people living in difficult conditions. In this way, the new officers can be sensitised to the needs of the common people and their problems, especially towards such sections who have not been able to join the mainstream.

III. Findings on the proposed district training programme: The revamped district training programme, with increased tenure of “village visit” module, can have an impact on the quality of Indian administration in the following manner:-

- i) Allocations of state cadres to the recruited IAS officers depend on the number of Insider/Outsider vacancies in the respective cadres. Generally, the number of outsider vacancies in a state cadre is far more than the number of insider vacancies. Table 1 indicates the number of officers recruited as insider/outsider to the state cadre in the past five years :

Table 1: Percentage of insider and outsider officers to the allotted state cadre in past 5 years

| Year of recruitment of the IAS Batch | No. of Officers who are insiders to the allotted cadre | No. of Officers who are outsiders to the allotted cadre | Total no. of Officers |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| 2019 | 47 (26.1%) | 133 (73.9%) | 180 |
| 2020 | 45 (25.1%) | 134 (74.9%) | 179 |
| 2021 | 47 (26.2%) | 132 (73.8%) | 179 |
| 2022 | 50 (27.8%) | 130 (72.2%) | 180 |
| 2023 | 40 (22.1%) | 141 (77.9%) | 181 |

(Source: <https://www.cseplus.nic.in>)

This shows that approx. 74.5% officers are outsiders to the allotted cadre as opposed to 25.5% officers who are insiders. This indicates that more officers need to get accustomed to the prevailing local culture, socio-economic patterns of a state. Hence, increasing the stay of officers in rural/tribal/backward areas facilitate more exposure to the working of functionaries/implementation of schemes/understanding local problems and far greater understanding of the local ethos, which would impact policy decisions taken by them in later years of their career.

- ii) According to the National Training Policy of 2012, “the objective of training will be to develop a professional, impartial and efficient civil service that is responsive to the needs of the citizens. In doing so, care will be taken to emphasize the development of proper ethics, commitment to work and empathy for the vulnerable sections. The success of training will lie in actual improvement in the performance of civil servants.” Hence, this move is in line with this objective, with an attempt to make civil servants sensitive to the needs of the general public, especially the marginalised and vulnerable.
- iii) During the village stay module, the officers learn to cope with conditions of adversity, bad weather, insufficient accommodation and limited access to food, which would help inculcate the values of ability, anonymity and austerity, in line with the motto of LBSNAA, which is “Sheelam Param Bhushanam.”(i.e., Humility is the best embellishment)
- iv) The Government of India has launched the “Mission Karmayogi- National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building” in 2020 with the aim to create a competent and future-ready civil service working towards effective public service delivery and an Atmanirbhar Bharat². This revamped district training programme, thus, is in harmony with the vision of Mission Karmayogi.
- v) The Parliamentary Standing Committee, in its report, had mentioned the need to integrate classroom-based theoretical training with experiential training in real settings. “The newer generation of IAS officers, on the one hand, are expected to administer in a neo-liberal regulatory framework that is far different (and arguably more challenging) from the older “Licence-Permit Raj”; on the other, they are required to be far more “inclusive” in their orientation to work in tandem with an expanded and empowered set of stakeholders. This would point towards the need to usher in concomitant changes in the training curricula to ensure more effective capacity-building of young civil servants to handle these “demand-side” challenges.” (Aggarwal Committee Report, 2014) This decision, thus, is a right step towards aligning training of civil servants with the ground realities of the day.
- vi) The modified district training programme, after implementation, would surely mould officers in the frame of ‘field level officers’ and not ‘ivory tower’ policy planners, thereby bridging the gap between the government and the governed. It would sensitise young entrants to IAS and develop empathy towards hardships faced by common man in day-to-day struggle.
- vii) As per the Economic Survey 2022-23, 65% of India’s population lives in rural areas. Hence, focusing on rural development is of paramount importance. Visits and stay in backward villages help to understand and appreciate the realities of rural life.
- viii) Our country is called India and Bharat in different languages but metaphorically, they refer to different aspects of the country’s society and economy. India can refer to the well-off, English-speaking educated class and the big cities where this class lives, while Bharat is the hinterland, the small towns and villages where income and education levels are comparatively lower as well as civic amenities and infrastructure are poor. (The Economic Times, 2024) Levelling the gaps between India and Bharat through inclusive growth would require civil servants who are well-aware of the ground realities, local demands and regional aspirations.

² Also known as Self Reliant India campaign, was launched in 2020 to make the country and its citizens self-reliant in all senses. It is based on five pillars of Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand. (Invest India, 2024)

- ix) India is the 5th largest economy in the world now. By 2047, India is poised to be US\$ 30trillion economy with all the attributes of a developed nation. The period from 2022 (i.e., 75th year of India's independence) to 2047 (i.e., 100th year of Indian independence) has been highlighted by the Government of India as Amrit Kaal- which is a period of great significance as the government aspires to make India transition from a developing country to a developed nation (i.e. Vikshit Bharat) in 2047. The path to become a developed nation necessitates balancing regional growth, bridging rural-urban divide, bringing the marginalised into the mainstream through a transformative governance agenda steered by proactive and steadfast leadership. Civil servants, after undergoing through the reoriented district training programme as a part of their induction training, can surely fulfil the dream of Vikshit Bharat. (Vikshit Bharat Public Discussion Note, 2023)
- x) Although India still continues to live in its villages, its urban population is rapidly increasing. "India is at present 35% urban, which is expected to go to 53% by 2047. And our urban population is about to get doubled with about 400 million more population going into our cities. So, for us the future of urbanization and future of India's prosperity hinges on what happens in the city and how well we manage our urbanization process, whether it leads to a sprawling of cities or a well-organized city." (NYC, 2023) Rapid urbanisation has been one of the primary instruments behind sustained long-term economic growth of countries like the USA and China. Therefore, cities as 'engines of growth' require broad based urban development (NITI Aayog and ADB Report, 2022) - which may be compromised by increased focus on rural governance as indicated by the proposed changes.
- xi) The annual growth rate of migration to urban areas for work has doubled between 2001 and 2011 (4.5% per annum) as compared to 1990 to 2001 (2.4% per annum). (Source: Census of India, 2011) However, urban infrastructure remains poor, it is unable to sustain the increasing population. City roads, water supply and sewerage systems, affordable housing, rental housing, health and education infrastructure, as well as recreational facilities, need to be seriously invested in so that people are willing to come and live a decent life in urban settlements, irrespective of their level of earnings. (Jha, 2023) Hence, with economic gravity shifting towards cities, the current system of training should be reoriented to focus relatively more on managing urban areas. (NITI Aayog Report, 2018)
- xii) The present era, marked by advancements in Big Data³ and rapid proliferation of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), e-governance can be the solution to rural problems, like the Digital Agriculture Mission, e-NAM (Electronic National Agriculture Market) in agriculture, geotagging of assets constructed under MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act) to ensure efficiency, grievance redressal system through use of mobile governance (eg. Mygov app) etc. Due to this, civil servants need not be present physically for three weeks to perceive the problems and solve the grievances of rural people.

Conclusion

Despite the mounting need to vigorously pursue urban governance, achieving the goals of balanced regional growth and sustainable development would be unfulfilled without focusing

³ It refers to extremely large and diverse collections of structured, unstructured and semistructured data that continues to grow exponentially over time. (Google Cloud, 2024) Can be used by government for crime prevention, smart city initiative, detection of outbreak of infectious disease, emergency response and so on.

on rural development. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission, in its 6th report titled “Local Governance: An inspiring journey into the future” has mentioned that “Rural development supports urban development and vice versa. This interaction between urban and rural growth and sustainability is particularly critical for our future.” An issue of poverty, unemployment, economic growth and social development needs the rural governance to work in tandem with the urban administration. Again, in this era of Big Data, e-governance and use of cutting-edge technologies, it is true that “introduction of sophisticated technology alone would not make the administration people-friendly unless higher civil servants have a proactive attitude and reach out to the common people. They must spend much more time in field visits, inspections, tours and night halts in remote and rural areas.”(Hota Committee Report, 2004). The NITI Aayog (National Institute for Transforming India), in its “India@75” report published 2018, has also highlighted the need for a reformed system of training as part of civil services reforms to deliver public services up to the last mile in an effective and efficient manner. SolAbility, a sustainability think-tank and management consultancy, has released “Global Governance Index 2023”⁴, in which India ranked 91 out of 180 countries. One of the reasons is “a truism that the developments in our political and socio-economic environment have far outpaced the incremental changes introduced in Induction Training over time. The salience of these external changes for the training system of higher civil servants deserves to be appreciated in a more nuanced manner.” (Aggarwal Committee Report, 2014) To improve the performance of Indian bureaucracy in order to achieve good governance, bringing in reforms in accordance with the needs of the present time is absolutely necessary. If the needs and desires of the rural people would reach the Government through the bureaucrats, only then can India aspire to become a \$7 trillion economy by 2030. In conclusion, the importance of creating empathetic civil servants sensitised through training can be understood through the help of Gandhiji’s talisman, “Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts melt away.”(Gandhi, 1948)

Limitations of the Study

Following parameters limit the scope of this study:

- i) The proposed change in district training programme is yet to be implemented. Hence, primary data from field level could not be collected and secondary data had to be used in this study.
- ii) It is not possible to compare the expected impact of this programme with the real impact.

⁴ This index evaluates the performance of a country’s regulatory framework and infrastructure environment to facilitate sustainable competitiveness, based on 33 quantitative indicators. It does not assess the quality of regulatory frameworks itself – only the qualitative outcomes. (SolAbility, 2023)

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