

Non-Technical Summary of working paper

- ⌘ Chopra, Sanjeev, Ram Kumar Kakani and Vishal Gupta, “[Preparing IAS officer trainees for the role of district magistrate: A competency-based approach](#)” (Aug. 2014), Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad Working Paper Series, WP2014-07-02.



Preparing IAS Officers for Competency-based Roles

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Of all tasks of the civilized society in the modern times, perhaps, governance in public spaces is one of the most difficult one, as it has to deal with issues, i.e., political, economic or social, that directly affect the public life of the people that form the society. Good governance is the foundation to build a forward-looking society.

The call for indigenous administrative roles in different sectors of the Indian society is the need of the hour. India has had its first ‘administrator of realism’, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, who described the essence of social accountability as a public official. The foremost element required in the making of an IAS officer is involving a competency based approach in the training module, wherein he/she will be equipped with the knowledge of various roles to be served in the different sectors of governance. During the first 8-10 years of their initial service, the role of a District Magistrate, also simply referred in local parlance as DM or Collector or District Collector or DC (hereon, DM) is an essential one which an IAS officer needs to serve.

On joining their service, an IAS officer undergoes two years of training at India’s apex public administration training institute, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, (LBSNAA). This training is to equip the officers for the first decade of service during which they are also expected to serve as District Magistrates (DM) – a key post as part of managing the country, resulting in a better managed nation. Both, Phase I and Phase II of the professional programmes, include special district training to provide officer trainees with ground level training in district administration which include subordinate positions in the tehsils or blocks.

The working paper “[Preparing IAS officer trainees for the role of district magistrate: A competency-based approach](#)” explains the inclusion of human resource management essentials in the training module of the IAS officer trainees. This indicates that in the making of DM, an IAS Officer needs to have the most essential core competencies that have been grouped in four sets: Ethos, Ethics, Equity and Efficiency. These are regarded as fundamental features of the Indian Civil Service and the pillars of good governance and citizen centric administration. These have been included in the training module of LBSNAA.

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The working paper explains how the implications on the induction training curriculum for the IAS officers are monitored through the results from a combination of questionnaire based survey among IAS officers in order to identify the proficiency levels needed for the most relevant competencies for an effective DM role. It has been analyzed that excellence usually depends on the more deep-seated characteristics of an IAS officer, i.e. motive, trait, aspects of one's social image, social goal. Hence, competencies are best defined as the underlying behavior required for achieving a desired outcome.

Competency-based HRM projects, initiated by the DOPT and GOI in 2011 for the Indian Civil Services, named "Strengthening HRM of Civil Service", is meant to enable civil servants to perform in a more effective manner. The outcome of this initiative is the Civil Services Competency Dictionary which identifies 25 generic competencies across the various roles and positions of civil service employees.

The working research paper focuses on the fact that the chosen competencies will ensure a better human resource management of the Indian public administration. Hence, a more tailor made training pedagogy on these competencies is assured to help in the performance of the IAS officers' service as DM. The emphasis of public administration has to be inclined towards the welfare plans, national reconstruction and development through highly skilled, well-thought and focused mindset, just as this phrase by Abraham Lincoln explains it all – "When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That's my religion".

The paper records all the eight core competencies, i.e., people first, leading others, Integrity, decision making, planning co-ordination and implementation, problem solving, self-awareness and self-control, innovative thinking; that have been studied and mapped in the induction training module to equip IAS Officers with a built-in potential to perform at various levels and in various roles with the required percentage of competency.

The paper also studies that the results of the survey done on the officers show their desire in the 'Problem Solving' competency, resulting in innovative thinking, indicating constructively and professionally taking charge of an adverse situation. Following this, is the need for self-awareness and self-control. Analyzing these requirements, the IAS training curriculum needs to include programmes for IAS officers wherein they can constantly learn through perseverance, time management, right attitude, mental and physical fitness, self-assessment and the right attitude. Further emphasis on the need to develop and nurture this skill as DM lies in the pattern of the training module.

On a broader view, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers occupy a strategic position in Indian public governance system. In the twenty-first century, civil service in India needs to be executed through integrity, equipped with administrative ability and practical wisdom is required for development. The survey does hint that Public administration training academies do seem to be on the right path ... and are striving for this.