

Ethical Values and Challenges in the Twenty-First Century: New Perspectives in Public Administration in India

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Abstract: Public administration and public policy represent the executive branch of government. It is essentially the study of the mechanisms and provisions related to the effective execution of government activities. Administration is defined as cooperative, human efforts aimed at achieving certain common goals. Public administration is a type of administration that acts as a facilitator within a particular political system. It is the instrument that links policy decisions to the plan for carrying out tasks. The function of public administration is to set objectives and goals, work with the legislature and civil society to gain their support, establish and review organizations, direct and supervise employees, and provide leadership. It is how government objectives and goals are realized. The word “public” associated with public administration gives this branch of study a unique characteristic. This term should generally be understood as government. Therefore, public administration means government administration. It places special emphasis on bureaucracy. This is the meaning of public administration in common parlance. If the word “public” is interpreted broadly, any administration that has a significant impact on the public would fall within the scope of this discipline. Public administration is becoming increasingly complex and specialized due to the increasing importance of government in expanding the functions of bureaucracy.

Keywords: Ethical Values, Governance, Public Administration, Status, Challenges, Indian Civil Service, Value conflict

Introduction

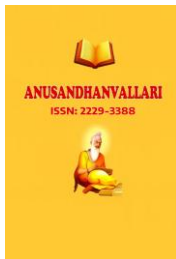
Many sources can be used to study the political institutions and related thinking of ancient India. Among these, the Vedas, Brahmanical texts, Upanishads, Puranas, epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata), Smritis, Buddhist literature, Jain literature, Kautilya’s Arthashastra, Kamandaka’s Nitisastra, Sukraniti, and some literary works are particularly noteworthy.¹

The four Vedas—the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda—are considered India's oldest religious texts. These texts discuss the origin of the state and governance, the nature of governance, the powers of the king, the relationship between the king and his ministers, and the king and his subjects, in various contexts. In fact, all the Vedas are considered reliable sources of information about ancient Indian life. Therefore, information related to contemporary politics can also be gleaned from them.

Prose commentaries on Vedic mantras and Samhitas are presented in the form of Brahmanical texts. Therefore, like the Vedas, Brahmanical texts also offer some indications of political thought. For example, the Shatapatha Brahmana and the Aitareya Brahmana contain ample material of this kind. The Upanishads generally contain a vast repository of spiritual knowledge. However, occasional hints of political thought are also found. For example, the Chandogya Upanishad describes politics as “Kshatriya Vidya” and provides a detailed discussion of it.

The Puranas generally present interesting accounts of the stories of gods and goddesses and incarnations of Vishnu with religious fervour. However, some Puranas also contain accounts of historical figures associated with the Nanda dynasty, Maurya dynasty, and Gupta dynasty. Numerous important political ideas are woven into these.

In the tradition of epics, the Ramayana by Maharishi Valmiki and the Mahabharata by Maharishi Ved Vyas are the most important. The Ramayana provides a detailed portrayal of the ideal person, Rama. The Mahabharata provides



a magnificent account of the Kauravas' and Pandavas' mutual dispute over the right to the throne, and their mutually destructive war. It also highlights the role of Lord Krishna. While both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata contain political ideas interwoven throughout, the Mahabharata's "Shanti Parva" offers a unique exposition of "Rajdharma."

Public administration activities impact every aspect of human life. Information and communication technology has undergone a revolution. A special emphasis is being placed on democratic forms of government, along with increasing social acceptance. The combined effects of these have raised public expectations, leading them to demand the highest levels of ethics, transparency, and accountability from administration. It is now widely accepted that a democracy cannot function smoothly without ethics in public service. Good governance requires ethical, accountable, and transparent governance, as this is the key to the formulation of better public policies. Only when these conditions are met can overall development be ensured in society and the nation. Furthermore, this can also lead to improvements in the functioning of public enterprises. Public administration can only be effective when the relationship between the public and public servants is cooperative. In a good civil society, people's primary concern is how efficient and just their government is. A government can be efficient and just only when all parts of the system adhere to efficiency, ethics, frugality, and fairness. Furthermore, the governance process is crucial. If governance is fair and people-oriented, this also proves the government's justness. While all these conditions are essential for good governance, accountability and sensitivity are also essential in administration. This helps maintain transparency and ensures public participation in governance.

Objectives of Paper

1. To study ethical values in 21st century public administration.
2. To analyse ethical governance challenges in public administration.

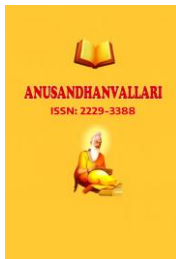
Hypothesis: 1. Ethical values have a positive impact on public administration.

Research Methodology

This research paper uses primary and secondary information. Primary information was obtained through personal contact, questionnaires, and schedules. Secondary information was collected from journals, newspapers, books, and government and non-government published and unpublished reports.

Public Administration in the 21st Century

A disconnect exists between public service and citizens. This is adversely affecting the legitimacy, credibility, and effectiveness of public administration. To bridge this gap between public servants and the public, it is essential to assure citizens that public servants are impartial, honest, efficient, and truthful in their work. Lack of ethics in administration not only reduces its efficiency and effectiveness but also proves detrimental to society in many other ways. This adverse impact can be seen in consequences such as poor governance and the misuse of human and natural resources. Although numerous laws have been enacted to ensure impartiality, honesty, and commitment to work among public servants, there remain many activities within administrative work that cannot be controlled by any formal rule, law, or legislation. Therefore, administrators must be accountable to their conscience and fully understand their duty to public welfare. Additionally, it is essential that there be an "ethical framework" that regulates and guides the conduct of public servants and that the administrative sector also provides for penalties for any misconduct. Here, ethical framework refers to systems and measures that ensure transparency, accountability, and access to information, so that public servants cannot misuse their power and authority. Parliament grants administrators the power to make decisions. This decision-making process must be ideologically grounded and legitimate, ensuring that any decision is clear, accountable, and in the public interest. Ethics in Public Administration: The American Society of Public Administration has presented the following code of ethics for public administrators. Public servants should prioritize public interest over self-interest and operate



government institutions solely for the public good. They should exercise their discretion with public interest in mind. They should oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment and demonstrate a strong interest in affirmative action. Public servants should understand the rights of the public. They should accept the fact that the public should be aware of administrative matters. Furthermore, public servants should strive to participate diligently in government work. It is the duty of public servants to respect the law and the Constitution. They should follow all regulations that determine the responsibilities of government departments, employees, and citizens. Furthermore, public servants also have a duty to respect the principles enshrined in the Constitution and the necessary procedures for equality, integrity, efficiency, representation, and the protection of civil rights. Public servants should make every effort to enhance organizational capacity so that values such as ethics, effectiveness, and efficiency can be adopted in public service. Public servants should strive to develop professional competence. To this end, they should work hard to enhance their personal capacity and efficiency. This will encourage others to improve their efficiency as well.

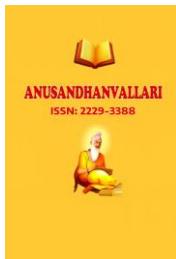
Characteristics of Public Administration in India

- It is the executive branch of government.
- It is concerned with the activities of the state.
- It implements public policies.
- It attempts to realize the aspirations of the public, as expressed and reflected in law.
- Scholars emphasize that public administration should be committed to and dedicated to the public, but the practice of public administration reflects inhumanity and mechanicalness.

Ethics in Public Administration Status

Although awareness of ethics is increasing, the public/ordinary citizen is still not convinced that bureaucratic behaviour has truly improved compared to the past. This may be because leftist schools of thought or institutions in public administration have not yet been able to develop a comprehensive curriculum on ethics that is universally accepted. It is well realised that there is no consensus among the various schools of thought in public administration regarding the formulation of a curriculum for ethics or a universally accepted format and approach for the education system of ethics.

Public administration is a highly complex and demanding discipline. It also has diverse and interesting aspects, encompassing a variety of theories, models, and methodologies borrowed from other sciences. Many scholars have lamented that public administration has been a victim of mismanagement for years. Some have even expressed doubts about whether public administration is truly an independent discipline. However, despite all the criticisms, there is no doubt that public administration courses need reform. In this context, it can be said that if public administration itself is struggling to establish its identity, it is not surprising that ethical standards for public administrators are not ensured. The progress of any nation and society depends on the integrity and dutifulness of the administrative system. For a developing country like India, it is essential that the government machinery adheres to ethical values and fulfils its responsibilities with integrity for the nation's rapid development. This is why public services are called the "steel frame." Ethics in Public Administration: Problems: Ethics in public administration encompasses many things. First, whether philosophy can be the basis of ethics in public administration? After reaching consensus on this issue, another problem arises: which philosophy would be more appropriate to use as the basis of ethics? Related questions also arise, including whether the philosophical ideas of Aristotle and Saint Aquinas can be adopted as the basis of ethics. It is worth noting that Aristotle and Aquinas presented objective rules regarding the external and internal worlds, which hold a very important place in the philosophical world. The question also arises as to how appropriate it would be to adopt the philosophical approach of Plato and the German Idealists. Similarly, other questions are considered, such as: do we all live in a world of our own making, where reality is dictated solely by individual conscience? To what extent is the



interpretation of right and wrong authentic, or is it better to teach ethics from a mixed perspective? In fact, all the examples given above address the problems associated with the teaching of ethics and the implementation of moral values in public administration. In this context, John Rod and Terry Cooper believe that the teaching of ethics within public administration is crucial. However, these scholars believe that if classical or political ethics is not made the foundation of the ethical education system in public administration, it will be very difficult to do justice to ethics. This situation presents a dilemma: if ethics is accepted as a part of philosophy, it will make the ethics curriculum for public administration students a mere formality. On the other hand, if philosophy is not included in ethics education, the students themselves may ultimately receive an incomplete education. Therefore, Rhode has developed an ethical foundation for bureaucracy, based on the US Constitution and the views of its Supreme Court. Rye writes, "The best means of educating bureaucrats on ethics is none other than the views presented by the Supreme Court, which guide and teach bureaucrats how ethical values play a significant and positive role in decision-making, especially in relation to those to whom bureaucrats are accountable." It is worth noting that bureaucrats are primarily concerned with the public. In fact, Rhode discusses the values associated with the American system of governance, which primarily relate to political institutions, the creation of which is shaped by the US Constitution. Rhode believes that the ethical principles underlying the system of governance are reflected in the views presented by the US Supreme Court, which shed light on specific social values. While public administrators can make decisions based on these views and beliefs expressed by the Supreme Court, these views and beliefs are often complex, ambiguous, and uninteresting. Such ideas are not uniform. Therefore, decisions can be made based on them, but they are not necessarily correct. However, the problem is that correct decisions are the central subject of ethics. Again, Rodd's reliance on the Supreme Court's ideas is correct in that they help administrators make decisions based on their own discretion. Such administrative decisions may prove helpful and useful in the United States. However, it is difficult to say whether the ideas presented by the US Supreme Court will also be effective in other countries. This criticism can also be applied to Kant's arguments. Kant argued that merely following the law and accepting the absolute dictates of morality would make a person's action morally right. This is to say that there must be something beyond the ideas and statements made by the US Constitution and the Supreme Court that can guide public administrators in the field of ethics.

Some other authors even believe that classical ethics is now outdated, meaning it is no longer relevant. They also argue that the principles developed in theology are outdated and no longer appropriate to apply, especially for those working in government enterprises. The meanings derived from these principles are so-called ethical principles. These principles are strongly advocated by adolescents when they say, "Everyone does this," meaning they believe in such traditions and beliefs because everyone is practicing them. But assuming this and assuming that everyone is doing this is not correct. However, even if everyone is doing this, it does not mean that what is being done is right. Morality must have a standard by which to determine what is right and what is wrong. It is not correct to declare an action legitimate and moral simply because it is being done. Peter Drucker, famous for his writings on business, believes that there is no difference between private and government administration. Therefore, according to Drucker, there is no point in talking about different ethics for both administrations, that is, different moral values and beliefs. This means that there is no need for separate ethical codes for the administration of private and public enterprises. Drucker believes that regardless of whether the profession is private or public, there is only one ethical code for administrators working in these professions: "not intentionally causing harm to anyone." This is the oath that all officials, whether in government or private enterprises, take. Adopting principles like "not intentionally causing harm to others" is, in effect, following natural law. This is the general moral principle outlined in classical ethics.

Determinants of Ethical values in Public Administration:

- The main determinants of administrative conduct in government enterprises are as follows:

- Within every system of governance, public administration is a part of the political structure. This political structure determines the conduct of public administrators.
- The legal framework also determines the behaviour of administrators.
- The nature of administrative conduct is also determined by administrators themselves and public service employees who serve as government service providers.
- Public service consumers and members of civil society also help determine administrative conduct.
- Firstly, the determinants of ethics in public administration (with which the conduct of a public servant is necessarily linked) include several factors, such as decision-making skills, mental attitudes, virtues, and ethical values associated with civil service.
- Secondly, the structure and scope of the organization are defined by accountability, a system based on cooperation, disagreement, and a participatory process.

Third, within a political management culture, leadership plays a crucial role in developing, maintaining, and adapting a culture of trust. Furthermore, ethical conduct is encouraged within an organization when there is a tradition of educating and emphasizing the personal values of its official employees. The tendency towards ethical conduct in an organization increases when employees adhere to the truth and other employees engage in ethical debates among themselves. Finally, society also has certain expectations from the organization. These expectations include public participation, laws, and government policies. Ethical Issues in the Indian Civil Service: Currently, the Indian Civil Service faces numerous ethical issues, most of which are directly or indirectly related to corruption. Corruption is an unfortunate consequence of the decline in morality. Corruption is the Hindi translation of the English word “corruption.” The English word “debt” is derived from the Greek word “debt,” which means to break or destroy. The English word for ethics is “ethics,” which is derived from the Greek word “debt” which means “born of habit.” Unfortunately, corruption has become a habit, and everyone from high-ranking officials to small businessmen is involved in it. This is seriously affecting the daily lives of ordinary people.

Civil Servants Today Face Numerous Ethical Issues, some of the most Prominent of which include: -

- Unequal distribution and misuse of power and authority
- Lack of accountability.
- Political interference and nepotism
- Lack of integrity
- Delay in action against corrupt employees
- Inadequate protection for whistleblowers
- Lack of a code of ethics for civil servants
- Lack of transparency and sensitivity towards the common man. In this context, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission highlighted the following facts:
- Corruption is a matter of serious concern, especially among high-level bureaucrats. There is a clear lack of accountability and commitment among civil servants to redress public grievances.
- Red tape and unnecessarily complex administrative procedures in the governance system are a serious problem, leading to increasing public hardship.
- Convictions against government servants are rarely possible, and filing complaints against them with higher officials is also futile because they are not interested. This presents a serious challenge for civil servants.
- Many government officials exhibit arrogance or indifference, meaning their behaviour toward the public is inconsistent.
- Untimely and infrequent transfers of government officials and employees have adversely affected their efficiency, leading them to undervalue their responsibilities to their work.



- The nexus between politicians and bureaucracy encourages corruption.
- As a result, administration weakens.

Steps to Enhance Public Administration's Morals and Ethics

Ensuring effective personnel management and developing governance mechanisms are the two main pillars upon which public administration's ethics and values rest.

Managing Civil Services Officials

During the recruitment process, it is important to choose applicants who are suitable for the roles and possess the necessary skills and knowledge.

Candidates' competence and ethical standards, not nepotism and favouritism, should take precedence.

Value-based education and training are essential components of the training process for civil and public servants, in addition to professional training. At the secondary and tertiary levels, the government ought to pay more attention to these two issues.

Government authorities should be required by law to adhere strictly to a code of conduct. A "code of ethics" should replace a "code of conduct" as the primary tenet of public administration.

Punishments and Rewards: The system of punishments should be adhered to to foster public trust in public administration and encourage public officials to uphold ethical standards.

The System for Governing

To establish the accountability of public services, it is necessary to clearly outline the tasks and responsibilities of public personnel.

We must eradicate ambiguity and unnecessary repetition in the public sector.

Attaining common objectives requires effective coordination across all tiers of government organisations' hierarchical structures.

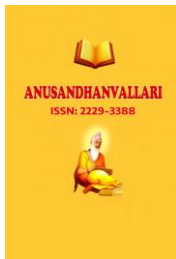
The proper vigilance mechanism and surprise checks by higher authorities are necessary to prevent public servants from abusing their powers. Public officials must be made aware of the consequences through mandatory vigilance awareness programs.

The rule of law states that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law. Everyone in our nation, from elected officials to bureaucrats and public servants, should be subject to the same laws and regulations. Public officials should keep in mind that their job description specifically calls on them to assist the public.

Ensuring accountability, transparency, and responsiveness in public administration is crucial, and it can only be achieved with a carefully crafted Citizen Charter and its successful implementation.

Delivery of Public Services Governments should maintain a system of public service delivery that is both satisfactory and of high quality to ensure the smooth delivery of public services. The effectiveness of the public service system in disseminating government programs to the public should be reviewed regularly.

The public's complaints should be seriously addressed by the government through an efficient system for resolving grievances. Improving the quality of public service delivery should be a satisfactory goal, considering feedback from service users.



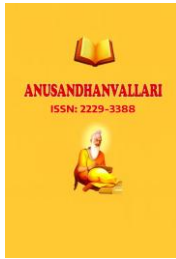
Ethical Value conflict

Not all individuals, groups, or communities share the same values. Similarly, the values of an individual and an organization can also differ. That is, their beliefs and values can differ. Value conflict occurs when an individual's beliefs do not align with those of another individual or organization. This conflict of values can be understood in the context of religious and cultural differences. Furthermore, differences in the upbringing of different individuals also lead to differences in values, which can lead to value conflict. Value-based conflicts are becoming increasingly visible in the formulation of public policies. It is common for government policies designed for the public to generate controversy. These conflicts arise primarily due to value conflicts. The conflict or value conflict here concerns the extent to which public policies are right or wrong, or to what extent these policies are just or discriminatory. Policy decisions made by administrators reflect the choices made by an individual or group of individuals, or their personal interests. Differences in the interests or decisions of two individuals are a result of their adherence to different values and beliefs. Thus, there is competition and conflict among values. Value conflicts can be illustrated by the following examples: Efforts to promote equality of opportunity create conflict between values such as ability, justice, equality, diversity, merit, and individual achievement. Policies related to crime prevention can lead to conflicts between the values of freedom, security, due process, equality, effectiveness, access, and justice. Homeland security policies can lead to conflicts between values such as knowledge generation, information sharing, confidentiality, privacy, civil liberties, individual rights, and security. A framework for ethical conduct: The role of ethics in the lives of civil servants has many dimensions. On the one hand, they are expected to maintain high ethical conduct, while on the other, it outlines the factors related to their performance for which they can be legitimately held accountable. Any framework of ethical conduct applicable to civil servants includes the following:

- Codification of ethical beliefs and behaviours.
- Disclosure of personal interests to avoid conflicts between individual and group interests.
- Creation of a mechanism for implementing the code of ethics.
- Establishing standards based on which a civil servant can be declared fit or unfit.

Conclusion

Public interest here refers to people's interest in public welfare. That is, to what extent they are concerned with public welfare. From the nature of public governance to discussions and debates about democracy, politics, and policy, all topics are centred on ordinary citizens and the issues surrounding them. Indeed, the form and nature of government are extremely broad. It does not differentiate between two citizens; rather, its primary objective is the welfare of all. In this context, the people-oriented nature of administration holds considerable significance in public administration, as an interest in public welfare reflects a moral commitment. Achieving the goals of ethical values is the only way for civilizations and their institutions to succeed. All citizens must come together to make this happen. The public must also see this as their own personal duty, and every man must understand his place in the administrative hierarchy, which he must fulfil by adhering to the highest ethical standards, believing in himself and his abilities, and safeguarding the state's integrity and property. Maintaining moral standards is an obligation that everyone should feel compelled to shoulder. Resilience, optimism, self-discipline, and team spirit are qualities that should be maintained even in the face of adversity. As a legacy, we must work to establish a code of conduct that is humane, reasonable, and applicable to all cultures and times. Consequently, the principles of compassion, gender equality, humanism, equity, and justice should predominate in today's code of professional ethics. Conflicts that arise in the workplace between facts, values, and ethics can be resolved with their assistance in finding a middle ground between administrative and professional ethics.



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