

Make people active agents of transforming India: Vice President tells IAS officers

Vice President's Secretariat

Make people active agents of transforming India: Vice President tells IAS officers**Adopt a more empathetic, responsive and inclusive approach of administration;****Addresses 2016 batch of IAS Officers**

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has asked the IAS officers to look upon people as active agents of transforming India, not merely as 'target groups' or 'beneficiaries' as we used to call them. He was addressing IAS Officers of 2016 batch posted as Assistant Secretaries in Government of India, in New Delhi today. The Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that unless this approach becomes an integral part of our planning and implementation process, the programmes will not succeed. He further asked the young officers to make good use of the opportunity and understand the role of Union government in formulation of policies and programs. You belong to a civil service that was conceived of as a steel frame of our country by the great visionary unifier and the first Home Minister of independent India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, he added.

Saying that streamlining service delivery and effective, transparent, people-centred good governance are the need of the hour, the Vice President stressed on the need to address challenges in delivering basic services to the common man. Aim at greater 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' and build a culture of 'evaluation' and constant 'learning' in our governance systems, he added.

The Vice President asked officers to adopt a more empathetic, responsive and inclusive approach of administration. It should be an approach that cares for women, differently abled, the marginalized and those who have been left out of developmental process, he added.

The Vice President asked officers to view every programme as a "societal mission" and implement them with dedication. There has to be a genuine commitment at all levels of administration to spread the benefits of democratic governance to all sections in society without any discrimination in the spirit of the principle "Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikaas," he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I congratulate all the IAS Officers for your successful completion of IAS probationers training programme and hope you will find the next 13 weeks of deputation to Central Government a useful learning experience.

This exposure is intended to help you to acquire a national perspective.

It is a view from the top.

It is a macro-level view that enables you to appreciate the nuances of policy making in a federal system like ours.

It is helpful to connect with what you learn here with the micro-level implementation at the state level.

It is an opportunity for you to see the role of Union government in formulation of policies and programs.

As an initiator, coordinator and motivator, the Union government ensures that the country as a whole makes progress.

It identifies critical gaps in development and tries, through policies and programmes, to reach out to populations that need greater support. It identifies the national priorities, in consultation with States, and keeping in view India's strengths as well as emerging global opportunities.

Friends,

You are inheritors of an illustrious legacy left behind by a number of Indian civil servants who have served our country well over the last seven decades.

You belong to a civil service that was conceived of as a steel frame of our country by the great visionary unifier and the first Home Minister of independent India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

It would be good to recall his words when he addressed the first batch of IAS officers on 21 April, 1947. Terming the ICS as neither 'Indian' nor 'Civil', Sardar Patel had said:

'....your predecessors were brought up in the traditions in which they felt out of touch and kept themselves aloof from the common run of the people. It will be your bounden duty to treat the common men in India as your own or to put it correctly, to feel yourself to be one of them and amongst them and you will have to learn not to despise or disregard them. In other words, you will have to adapt yourselves to democratic ways of administration....'

This is the first transition we have already made.

We moved away from serving a foreign master to serving the people of independent India.

Over the last seventy years, we have collectively been translating "Swarajya" to "Surajya".

However, we have still a long way to go. The unfinished agenda before us is to reach out to people who have not yet benefited from Swarajya.

Streamlining service delivery and effective, transparent, people-centred good governance are the need of the hour. We are still facing enormous challenges in delivering basic services to the common man.

Illiteracy, ill health, poor quality of education, lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, poor urban planning, inadequate attention to environmental pollution and a host of other issues continue to pose formidable challenges.

We have to gear up the implementation processes so that the intended benefits of the policies and programmes of our government reach the people on time. Good governance should be constantly on our radar screen.

We should aim at greater 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness'. We have to build a culture of 'evaluation' and constant 'learning' in our governance systems.

Friends,

We are living in exciting times. It is a time of seemingly intractable challenges but also of limitless new opportunities.

The Union government has embarked on a new vision for a new India.

It has launched many programmes that focus on key elements of socio-economic development like Swachh Bharat, Smart cities, Skill India, Direct Benefit Transfer, Digital India, AMRUT, PM Awas Yojana and so on.

All these schemes go beyond the conventional delivery mechanisms of development administration. They require a radically different approach that Prime Minister has been repeatedly underlining.

We must, view every programme as a **"societal mission"** catalyzed by the government.

We must look upon people as active agents of transforming India, not merely as 'target groups' or 'beneficiaries' as we used to call them.

Unless this approach becomes an integral part of our planning and implementation process, the programmes will not succeed.

The administration has to adopt a more empathetic, responsive and inclusive approach.

It should be an approach that cares for women, differently abled, the marginalized and those who have been left out of developmental process.

There has to be a genuine commitment at all levels of administration to spread the benefits of democratic governance to all sections in society without any discrimination in the spirit of the principle "Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikaas".

Friends,

Over the last seventy years after our independence, there have been many changes in the world and the country. As a result, you will be working in a different environment as compared to your predecessors.

There are, however, some guiding principles that form the bedrock of the higher civil services in the country.

These essential well springs must not be allowed to dry up.

I shall outline four salient aspects you may like to keep in view: 'empathy', 'efficiency', 'impartiality' and 'incorruptibility'.

The first is '**empathy**'.

I would like all of us to remind ourselves what Mahatma Gandhi ji had advised. He had said that whenever you are in doubt if an action is good or bad, you should put oneself in the situation of the poorest of the poor in the country and see how a particular policy and programme will impact him or her.

This is a timeless talisman that will undoubtedly stand you in good stead when you weigh the pros and cons before taking a decision in your career.

The second principle is '**efficiency**'. As administrators occupying the highest positions of power and authority, you have an onerous responsibility to translate policies into programmes and to implement schemes on ground.

You will be providing that most important link between legislation and implementation.

A policy is only as good as its implementation.

The tardy, inefficient execution of projects and programmes hurt the common people whom we are trying to serve.

The cost and time overruns retard nation's developmental progress.

We must look at the strengths our society offers and how we can build partnerships with civil society and the private sector. We should move away from the traditional paradigm under which government had assumed the role of "Mai-Baap". Now it is time to make it a "Hum-aur-Aap" collaboration and partnership.

The third and the fourth principles – '**impartiality**' and '**incorruptibility**' are contained in Sardar Patel's exhortation:

"Above all I would advise you to maintain to the utmost **impartiality** and **incorruptibility** of administration."

The civil service was created to provide an impartial, inclusive management culture in the country's governance.

This was absolutely necessary in the multi-lingual, multi-religious, pluralistic society that India is.

The civil services were the binding force that are expected to bridge the many 'divides' that India has.

The last principle I would like to underscore is the '**incorruptibility**'.

The words of Sri Sardar Patel again ring so true even 70 years after he made those remarks. He had said:

"Unhappily India today cannot boast of an incorruptible service, but I hope that you who are now starting, as it were, a new generation of Civil Servants, will not be misled by black sheep in the fold, but would render your service without fear or favour and without, any expectation of extraneous rewards. If you serve in the true spirit of service I am sure you will have your best reward."

The 'Iron man' of India had conceived of the 'steel frame'.

All of you are distinguished members of this steel frame. I would urge you all to add lustre to this frame. Make it a stainless steel frame, bright and shining. You have a unique opportunity which comes only to a select few.

You can make a difference in the lives of our people through your work. The country expects you to make the second big transition from being merely "administrators" to "transformational managerial leaders".

I am hopeful that the Prime Minister's call to 'Reform, perform and transform' would inspire you to acquire new competencies, scale new heights in efficiency and help you evolve into transformational leaders.

I wish you all the best!

Jai Hind!"

AKT/BK/RK

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