

Role of Civil Service in a Democracy in India

Civil services play an essential role in the Administration, policy formulation, and implementation of democracy. There are three prominent pillars of democracy: the Legislative, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

The civil service forms an important section of the Executive among these three pillars. The Executive consists of ministers and civil servants. The ministers are temporary in a democracy as they are replaced and reelected after a fixed period of time in a democracy, but the civil servants are Executive permanent part. Thus, civil servants are the Government's subdivisions and expert administrators in democracy.

Importance of Civil Services in Democracy

In a parliamentary democracy like India, the Council of Ministers (CoM), i.e., a Union or a State cabinet, is responsible for the Administration of Government and policymaking. However, it is role of Civil Service in a democracy to advise CoM regarding Administration and carry out the laws made by CoM. The importance of Civil Services in a democracy is as follows-

- Civil Services play a vital role in a policy or law-making process- formulation, execution, monitoring, evaluation, and implement rules and regulations.
- Its all-India character binds states and people together and subdues secessionist and parochial mentality.
- It offers leadership at various levels of administrative and delivery of services.
- Even in political instability, CS provides unbiased advice to the political leadership.
- It effectively coordinates the various institutions, departments, government bodies, etc.

Role of Civil Services in a Democracy

Civil Services forms a basis of Government without which there is no administration. Here functions and role of Civil Services in a democracy are as follows-

- **Implementing Laws and Policies:** Civil services are responsible for enforcing laws and executing policies framed by the Government.
- **Policy Formulation:** They are responsible for policy formulation by advising and providing necessary insights about the pros and cons to the ministers.
- **Welfare Services:** Advice on welfare schemes to be drafted and developed by the Government, including social security (pensions), the welfare of vulnerable sections of society and poverty alleviation, etc.
- **Developmental Functions:** Civil services lay down developmental plans for promoting agriculture on scientific lines, industrial sector, and services sector, including banking and trade functions, improving digital literacy, etc.
- **Stabilizing Force:** Governments are temporary, while civil service is permanent. The civil service offers stability even during political instability, maybe because of emergencies and during the Government's fall. They provide continuity of services to people.
- **Conduct Elections:** The service conducts elections freely and fairly and empowers voters through voter education.

- **Instruments of Social Change & Economic Development:** Civil servants play the role of change agents. The policies, schemes, and plans they advise to the ministers help change people's lives.
- **Administrative Adjudication:** The civil services head the tribunals and quasi-judicial bodies to settle disputes.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Civil Services

Articles 53, 154, 311, and 12 of the Indian Constitution have provisions for the Civil Services in India. These are-

- **Article 53 and 154** of the Constitution of India states that the States' and Union's executive powers vest in the President or the governor or via his subordinate officers. These officers are governed by Part XIV of the Indian Constitution.
- **Article 311-** It has provisions for the dismissal, removal, and reduction in the civil servant rank under the State or a Union.
- **Article 312-** It has provisions for All India Services.
- **Government of India Rules:** This set of rules deals with the approach used by the officers to help the Governor or the President to exert his executive powers.

Issues with Civil Services in a Democracy

Civil services in a democracy like India are facing certain challenges today. Some of the issues with Civil Services in India include the following-

- The second ARC vide 10th Report talked at length about bureaucratic behavior-aloof, uncaring and unresponsive to people.
- They are reluctant to accept the changes in control and accountability and the altered roles and responsibilities as they are habituated to their privileges and prospects and have become ends in themselves.
- They are adapted to command and control approaches rather than addressing the needs and aspirations of the common man.
- Inadequate capacity building and lack of expertise.
- The decline of ethics and values in personal and public life.
- The nexus between civil servants and political executives resulted in rampant corruption and nepotism.
- The unproductive incentive system that does not reward honest and meritorious civil servants and frequent arbitrary transfers affect the morale of the civil services fraternity.
- Strict adherence to rules and procedures led to red tape.
- Lack of accountability and transparency in functioning with no adequate protection for whistle-blowers etc.

Some Recommendations to Reform Civil Services

Sixth Pay Commission recommended the institution of a new performance-based pecuniary benefit, other than regular salary, for government employees to:

- Improve employee motivation.
- Attain higher productivity or output and deliver quality public service.
- Above all, it seeks higher goals of effectiveness and systematic change for responsive governance.

Some experts and committees also recommended the lateral entry into Civil Services that bring in domain experts, like what the NDA government has tried out recently. Later entry is believed to enhance professionalism in Administration.

The second ARC recommended several reforms, includes the following-

- Code of ethics and conduct for civil servants to maintain honesty, integrity, and public spirit.
- Required officers to pursue higher academic qualifications and to write papers for reputed and authoritative journals etc.
- Mid-career training should be provided to develop domain knowledge.

Supreme Court said the Right to Information overrides Official Secrets Act also. Hence ensuring transparent and accountable Administration shall be the bounden duty of Civil Servants. An ethical, dynamic, and professional Civil service is the need of the hour that will transform not only the Indian Administration but the whole of Indian society and economy.

Democracy and Civil Services

The differences between Democracy and Civil Services (Bureaucracy) are as under:

Democracy	Civil Services (Bureaucracy)
A system of Government	A system of Administration
Representatives are elected by People for a fixed tenure.	Officers are selected on merit and hold office till retirement age.
People's representatives make laws	Officers implement those Laws
People are consulted for the enactment of laws	Officers advise and direct the representatives in the policy process- formulation, implementation, and evaluation.
Bound by principles of liberty and equality	Bound by a system of procedure, rules, and hierarchy, etc.