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Title: 'Re-design of All-India Services: Meeting the Challenges of 21st Century Governance.

It is now well recognised that a country's Civil Service forms the back-bone of its Governance structure. The late British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, when talking of the Indian Civil Service called it " the steel frame on which the whole structure of our Government and of our administration in India rests." The statement well captures the centrality and criticality of the role of the Civil Services as a Governance instrument.

In the last three and a half decades, an administrative revolution has been sweeping many parts of the world. Under the rubric of NPM (New Public Management) and Governance, this has resulted in a re-modelling of the administrative apparatus. NPM has used the template of business methods and practices and infused the two into public administration. This has resulted in a reduced space for Government, economy, alternate delivery systems, agencification, managerialism, focus on outcomes, performance management and de-concentration of authority. The Governance initiative, meanwhile, has focused on citizen's voice and accountability, political stability, Rule of Law, ethical conduct, Civil Service effectiveness and regulatory quality.

The winds of change have affected India as well, but more in form than in substance. These are still grave distortions in the configuration and career development of the Civil Services, lack of professionalism, short tenures, political interference, absence of competency frameworks and low motivation. A detailed examination of the Secretariat and District administration reveals several shortcomings, such as a bloated decision-making apparatus, excessive load on the District Collector and lack of trained manpower. While in theory citizen-centric administration is the new mantra, in practice, public service delivery platforms tend to be ineffective or even non-existent.

It is sought to remedy this state of affairs by setting up a Generalist Service with four verticals catering to Infrastructure, Regulatory affairs, Fiscal matters and Development . Further, a Competency Framework has been designed to capture the various skill-sets needed to effectively execute important assignments. It has further been recommended that instead of time-bound promotions, regular examinations be held by a respected body like the UPSC. As regards the re-organisation of the Secretariat, it is suggested that the Desk Officer system be universally adopted and decision-making levels limited to four. Similarly, the District Collector's work-load has been analysed with a view to delegating his non-essential functions. Case Studies on revitalising public service delivery have been presented to make the Indian Civil Services an instrument of 21st –Century Governance.