

# **Chapter XVI**

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- (a) Prime Minister's Address to District Collectors, May 20, 2005**
- (b) Presentation made before the Commission by Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup (Metro)**

## **Note I : Highlights of Good Governance**

### **Governance & Good Governance**

*“Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic & social resources for development. Good Governance is synonymous with sound development management.”*

**World Bank and Asian Development Bank**

*“The term governance, as generally used encompasses all aspects of the way a country is governed. ....poor governance is clearly detrimental to economic activity and welfare”*

**IMF**

*“Open democratic and accountable systems of governance, based on respect for human rights and rule of law, are precondition for sustainable development and robust growth.”*

**G8 Final Communiqué**

*“Good Governance is perhaps the single most important factor in ensuring that the objectives of the Tenth Plan are achieved”*

**Tenth Five Year Plan Document**

### **Accountability of the Civil Service:**

- Formulate meaningful and pragmatic Mission statement for each Government Department
- Frame well defined job chart for each and every official along with modalities of delegation of power to lower level functionaries.
- Ensure that delegated powers are exercised
- Reduce levels in the hierarchy, make administration officer-oriented with indication of KPA for each officer so that responsibility can be fixed on an individual
- Instead of post-audit, concurrent audit must be introduced.
- Audit should focus more on the output of a scheme, rather than on processes.
- Citizens charters must be introduced for critical items for all departments in a time bound manner and head of the office must be made accountable for proper implementation of citizen's charters.

### **Redefining Functional Goals:**

- The civil service must shift focus from being a provider and regulator to that of a facilitator
- Functional audit must be conducted for every department.
- Organizational review should also take place for every department.
- Government should immediately outsource certain activities.
- All staff in the department must be trained on priority so that they know the purpose of their jobs in meeting their departments' goals and objectives.
- Merger of schemes that are similar in nature.
- Abolition of schemes that have outlived their utility.

### **Improving Systems and Work Methods:**

- The paper work in government offices should be reduced by abolishing all unnecessary reports and returns, reducing number of circulars.
- The existing system of file movement needs to be thoroughly revamped. Gradually files may have to be replaced by floppies. Until such time, file movement can be monitored on computers.
- The introduction of desk officer system, which has been explained in detail in the chapter on Secretariat Reforms, must be done at the earliest. This would be the first and the most important step to improving systems and work methods in the secretariat.
- All field officers should also follow a similar pattern and reduce file movements to only three or maximum of four levels.

- The number of meetings both at the secretariat and at the field levels must be reduced. This would give more time to officers to go on tour and make inspection where necessary.
- The greater delegation of powers and exercise of delegated powers would ensure that there is much less paper work and less time spent in getting approvals from various levels.
- A lot of extra work is generated in the government because there is inadequate information sharing between the departments. Several other departments also require the information collected by one department in one form. If all departments would put such information databases on the LAN or e-mail it to other secretaries, it may be very useful to them in their policy formulation.
- Apart from reducing the number of forms, each department should also look at the size of the forms. There should be an attempt to simply the forms and returns being used in the government.

### **Rationalisation of Civil Services:**

- In several departments the officers are more than the frontline staff. There is a need to rationalize this distribution and have more workers for service delivery, at field level.
- The location of staff and employees in several departments is skewed. Most of the officers are located in the Capital or in District Headquarters while the need is to have officers at actual implementation/cutting edge level.
- There are several employees to carry out the same task for different departments like in the case of grant of scholarships. If one or two employees could be utilized for this purpose, it would reduce the number of employees required for this purpose.
- Changing the manner of Government functioning by the introduction of Desk Officer, would reduce delays, bring in efficiency and also help in reduction of number of employees.
- Employees are very often recruited at the launch of a new scheme or programme. Merger of similar schemes/programmes would render some staff as surplus who could be redeployed where there is actually work.
- Every department must make a scientific assessment of the total number of direct recruitment vacancies available based on the above principles and only then should the department proceed for filling up the vacancies.
- Utilizing the direct recruitment vacancies for recruitment by promotion would in the long run affect the efficiency of the government.

- For new work entrusted to a department, new sections and posts must not be created, but the work should be entrusted to existing staff.
- Computerization must be introduced in a time-bound manner in all departments so that less people would be recruited for the same work.
- Only computer literate person should be recruited for all categories of post.

### **Review of Performance Appraisal:**

- There should be a different format of Performance Appraisal Reports for officers and staff. For officers, quarterly Participating Assessment and for staff annual Participating assessment should be introduced.
- All levels of officers who have to undertake performance appraisal must be given proper training in how to do the job objectively.
- Counseling may be introduced to those employees who get repeated adverse remarks.
- Action should also be taken against those officers who delay in writing the Performance Appraisal Reports where they are either reporting, reviewing or accepting authorities.
- Performance Appraisal Reports, which are to be approved by the concerned departmental Ministers sometimes, are delayed for several months. A time frame should be fixed for approval of such reports.

### **Human Resource Development Strategy:**

- All training must be made compulsory.
- Employees/officers who do not attend training should not be eligible for increment or promotion.
- Allot higher funds for training.
- Each department must have specified budget for training not just for the technical staff but for all the staff in the department.
- Training should not only include exposure of government employees to departmental practices, work methods, technical skills of a particular department; but must also expose them to personality development, stress and time management, communication skills etc.
- Government employees must be exposed to work in the private sector and they must be taken on field visits.
- Some relationship should be established between the career plan of an employee and the training imparted.

- Employees due for retirement in the next three years need not be deputed for any training, specially training overseas.
- Training on awareness skills must also be given to class IV employees and drivers.
- There should be an annual calendar of training which must be well publicized, and strictly followed.
- In addition to the Training Institutes of the Government, efforts should be made to identify other good training institutions.

### **Transparency and the Right to Information:**

- Amendments be made to the Official Secrets Act and the Civil Services Code of Conduct Rules
- Discretionary powers must be reduced to the minimum, and exercising Discretionary Powers must be transparent.
- Regulatory Authorities should be set up for all public utilities.
- Public should have easy access to government orders, forms etc. They should be made available locally in the post offices, banks, local
- panchayat offices, Block offices, Circle offices fair-price shops etc., besides putting the same in the district website.
- Public Facilitation Centres should be set up in all offices.
- WAN and LAN should be set up at the earliest to enable easy sharing of information within departments and between departments and speedy disposal of grievances.
- Existing rules and procedures should be simplified to make them citizen friendly.
- Each department, especially those with constant public interface, must bring out a compendium of all their relevant forms which the public have to use, so that all the forms are available at a single place. There must be wide dissemination of such information.
- The rules to the Right to Information Act must be framed as expeditiously as possible.
- Delegation of financial power should be on the basis of current prices, and must be reviewed every three years.
- Must have concurrent audit rather than post audit.
- Renewal period for licenses etc. be enhanced, this would reduce transactional cost.

### **Recruitment:**

- Recruitment for all posts must be only meritocratic.
- Selection of APSC Members must be done as recommended by the T.L.Barua Commission.

- Revise cadre and recruitment rules for all departments to have merit based recruitment, and modify qualifications for certain posts.
- Recruitment for certain posts could be on contract basis (peons, drivers)
- Compassionate appointment to be restricted to families of deceased police personnel and insurgency/riot victims.

### **Transfers:**

- Government should enact a legislation on transfers, with clear cut guidelines.
- Action should be taken against those employees who request for transfers based on third party recommendations.
- Employees such as teachers, village mandals, ANMs need not be transferred except under exceptional circumstances.

### **Departmental Enquiries:**

- Relevant rules of departmental enquiries should be amended to provide for a specific mandatory time frame and to reduce discretionary powers.
- It is also necessary to amend the relevant Service Rules to enable the review of integrity and efficiency of officials at any stage during their career and to compulsorily retirement of such officials of doubtful integrity.
- There has to be stricter and compulsory monitoring of the progress of all departmental enquiry cases by the Secretary. This should not be treated as a routine exercise and must be included as an item of review in the monthly Departmental meetings chaired by the Secretaries.
- It is preferable that all departmental enquiries are entrusted to retired government officials on a conditionality that non-completion of the enquiry proceedings as per prescribed time frame would result in non-payment of emoluments.

### **Redressal of Grievances:**

- Fix responsibility for each task, which is possible if the hierarchical levels are reduced.
- Appoint grievance redressal officer for each department and accordingly give publicity.

- Change the language of various application forms to make them citizen friendly.
- Train officials in grievance redressal, courtesy in talking to petitioners.
- All grievances must be computerized.

**Amalgamation of Schemes:**

- Schemes with nominal budget provisions to be merged.
- Schemes which are continuing for the purpose of providing salaries to employees to be abolished.
- Similar schemes to be merged.
- Schemes with less than Rs.5.00 lakh allocation to be merged/discontinued.

## **Note II**

**Accountable and Responsive  
Administration in Assam**

## **Accountable and Responsive Administration in Assam**

Government of Assam has declared its intention to ensure an effective, accountable, honest and transparent administration. This will support the objective of responsive and decentralized service delivery and livelihood support for poor and marginal groups.

There is considerable dissatisfaction of the people, especially poor and vulnerable groups, about the apathy, lack of responsiveness, lack of accountability of public servants and the deterioration in performance of agencies entrusted with law and order, basic services and infrastructure. The time has come for a strong message to be conveyed that administration is for the people and not for the public servants so that efficiency is measured not in terms of what the services purport to offer, but in terms of public satisfaction. Necessary corrective steps have to be taken to arrest the present drift in government and public services and take urgent measures to restore the faith of the people in the fairness and capacity of administration.

### **Government of Assam have been initiating reforms measures for :**

- Making administration accountable and citizen friendly,
- Ensuring transparency and right to information, and
- Taking measures to cleanse and motivate civil services.

By its very nature, structural and regulatory reform is a medium term effort, which calls for sustained support of political leadership and senior bureaucracy. It needs be accompanied by a series of well-monitored short-term actions to improve the quality of administration and make reforms meaningful to the people.

The average citizen deals with the government in its different roles as the service provider, regulator, enforcing authority for law and facilitator of economic activity. In the light of the action plan formulated by the Conference of Chief Ministers in 1997 and the experience of other states, the initiatives for improving the quality of administration and developing a responsive interface with people would include:

- Formulating and operationalizing **Citizens' Charters**, which lay down time limits and standards of services, avenues of prompt grievance redress and access to information and credible monitoring arrangements; and piloting the Charters and establishment of Model offices in selected departments with citizen interface like Deputy Commissioner, Anchal Panchayat, Police Stations, Government

Hospital, Treasury and Transport Office, based on interaction with users;

- Effective and Prompt **Redress of Public Grievances**, following review of existing arrangements and instituting measures for computerized tracking, fixation of responsibility and remedies for performance failure, systemic reforms and effective working of information and facilitation counters in public offices;
- Functional autonomy both to the administrative functionaries and service agencies at divisional and district level, empowerment of elected local bodies and encouragement to public-private partnerships;
- Redesigning the service delivery schemes, ensuring user involvement, reward innovation by officers and to take administration to the people in rural and urban areas
- Review of laws, regulations and procedures, especially those which hamper business activity and the access of poor and marginal groups to livelihood, services and swift and inexpensive justice
- Effective and timely ongoing system for monitoring and evaluation of delivery system run by government, government agencies, private and NGOs with bench marking facility to assess the quality of inputs, services, and timeliness of service delivery.

### **Transparency and Right to Information:**

Secrecy and lack of openness in official transactions generate scope for corruption besides being contrary to the spirit of accountable government. There is a need to ensure easy and widespread access of people to government operations and government decisions and performance of government except to the extent of specifically excluded by law, as envisaged in the Central and state laws for right to information. Electronic governance is seen as not only contributing to greater efficiency of government but also the transparency of its operations and people's empowerment. Three specific measures envisaged in this area are:

- Early operationalization of the state legislation on Right to Information by department-level instructions on suo moto release of information and response to requests for information, effective record management, amendment to laws and rules contrary to the information law and training of information officers;

- Strengthening the functioning of Information and Facilitation Counters and Community Information Centres through process reengineering, computer facilities, connectivity by LAN and WAN and empowerment of counter staff, and
- Piloting process engineering and electronic governance in areas critical for government working and major areas of service delivery such as treasury, employee database, decision making, revenue collection and payment, land records and citizen interface with government including redressal of citizen's grievances.

### **Improving the Performance and Integrity of Public Services:**

A detailed plan for manpower containment, civil service reform and review of regulations should be drawn up after taking into account the recommendations of AARC, views of different departments, Reports of the Hota Committee, Surindernath Committee of Government of India and best practices in other States. The reform areas include secretarial procedures and manuals, recruitment, performance assessment and recognition of good performance, capacity building, promotion, transfer, disciplinary proceedings and weeding out inefficient and dishonest employees. An important area, stressed by the Central Government, is the need to ensure stability of tenure to officials and to insulate the process from extraneous factors, as frequent transfers affect both the motivation of officials and the quality of service delivery.

The diagnosis and fight against corruption includes the review of procurement practices, greater transparency and a variety of reforms in specific areas and sectors with anti-corruption impact. It is possible to consider the adoption of a code of ethics for public services based on Constitutional principles and services to people. Government should immediately review existing vigilance mechanisms including the role and authority of the Vigilance Commissioner and the Lok Ayuktha and consider specific steps for strengthening these institutions, working in concert with the Anti-corruption branch and department-level Chief Vigilance Officers.

**Note III**

Capacity Building for Administrative  
and  
Civil Service Reforms

## **Capacity Building for Administrative and Civil Service Reform**

Civil Service Reform is an important key component for good governance since ability of the Government of Assam to address fiscal reforms and improve the cost effectiveness and equity of service delivery is critically linked with the pace of achieving civil service reform. The Assam Administrative Reforms Commission has now completed the functional review exercises of the select departments conditioned by the information available, and its study for rationalization of civil service rules, structured and restructuring of the government departments.

Government of Assam may consider organising series of structured workshops to initiate the implementation of the recommendations made on the basis of functional study for capacity building in the key departments. This is absolutely necessary to carry forward the reform agenda.

The objectives of the workshop, in the above context would be:

- To involve the counterpart staff staffing in the holistic appreciation of the issues in administrative and civil service reform with reference to the Action Plan on staff Containment and Civil Service Reform, and the decisions on e-governance and employee database.
- To deliberate on the observations, conclusions and recommendations of AARC and make efforts to identify problems and explore solutions for smooth implementation of the reforms programme.
- To build consensus on ‘Change-Action Agenda’ and to work out the sequence of actions starting with the most feasible in each department and in finance and personnel areas.
- To familiarize the participants with various techniques and tools for establishment control and functional review.
- To identify capacity building needs at Secretariat, Directorate and District levels for implementation of the reform programme.

The ADB Project on Governance and Public Resource Management provided a tentative indication of training budget for capacity building to implement the Policy Matrix. ADB had indicated a lump sum provision of \$3.7 million for training activities. ADB has further outlined the following parameters for the training.

The training should target to cover 9500 State Government staff of which the District Disbursing Officers should be completed on priority basis by December 2007 to ensure effective targeting and ensuring sustainability of training efforts. The training activities under the project would require close coordination with Administrative Reforms Commission and the Administrative Reforms & Training Department.

- : The training activity should be clearly linked to supporting the implementation of the actions and achievements summarized in the programme loan policy matrix and/or for **Implementation Government Financial Management Information System (IGFMIS)**.
- : The training activity will be targeted to State Government staff in positions that support the functions directly related to the implementation of the actions and achievements summarized in the programme loan policy matrix and/or to implementation of the IGFMS.
- : Sustainability of training efforts will be a key factor in the design of all training, i.e., optimal use of training of the trainers approaches and local or State Government training institutions.
- : Training requirements are fully coordinated with other State Government training efforts to enable improved overall impact and coverage of State Government training activities and to avoid duplication of efforts.

The Aide Memoir signed by Mission Leader of the Asian Development Bank dated 18-12-04, has detailed the methodology in this regard.

The training programmes envisaged above should be made on the basis of Training Need Assessment, curriculum development training materials and upgrading training infrastructure.

## **Record Note of Discussion on Reforms and Capacity Building**

A meeting was held on February 11, 2005, under the chairmanship of Shri Jatin Hazarika, Chairman AARC, to discuss the action plan for administrative reforms and the formulation of training plan under the ADB project Loan. The following attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Sameer Khare, Commissioner and Secretary, AR&T
2. Mr. Ashish Bhutani, Secretary (FMU), Finance Department
3. Mr. Deepak Sharma, Joint Secretary, Personnel Department
4. Dr. Pachampet Sundaram, Consultant ADB

### **Administrative Reforms:**

The recommendations contained in the Consultant's note on Next Steps for Administrative Reform were generally endorsed. The following areas were decided for further action at the level of AARC and the departments of Finance, AR&T and personnel and different sector departments.

- i. AR&T would pursue all the departments to formulate and publish organizational and job charts as lack of clarity in functions of departments and agencies and individual jobs affected effective and transparent administration. Professional help can be extended for this purpose to departments upon request as this was a vital preliminary step for capacity building;
- ii. All the departments would be requested to set up web sites, if necessary with professional help, and provide updated information and facility for transactions by clients;
- iii. AARC would carry forward the exercise for functional reviews, zero-based functional audit and public expenditure tracking surveys for key departments and agencies as envisaged in the ADB policy matrix;
- iv. AR&T would pursue proposals with finance department for strengthening AARC and AR&T through professional help as envisaged in the consultant's report, and propose allocation from the training budget for this purpose;
- v. AR&T would coordinate departmental plans for developing computer literacy and advanced functional skills, which would be implemented through NIC and other agencies and funded partly through the ADB training budget;
- vi. Finance department would issue comprehensive guidelines regarding the identification and filling of critical vacancies, revised approach to regularization of work-charged and muster

- roll staff and redeployment of surplus staff in different departments;
- vii. Individual departments would work out manpower plans based on the establishment schedule and assessment of optimum size and distribution of staff levels and submit the plans to SLEC;
  - viii. Personnel department would equip itself for supporting SLEC, cadre reviews of ACS and other services, implementing transfer policy, rationalizing recruitment procedures and the simplification of rules;
  - ix. AR&T would pursue the revision of manuals and rules for performance assessment and the rationalization of functions under Rules of Executive Business and publicity to revised rules;
  - x. Finance department would evaluate the pilot exercises on employee database for finance and personnel departments and expand the exercise to all departments by April 2005

### **Training and Capacity Building:**

- i. While finance department would finalise the proposals for the officers in the department and services coming under it, AR&T would coordinate the effort to obtain the proposals from identified departments and training agencies and develop an integrated proposal with guidance from Chairman AARC;
- ii. An empowered group of Chairman AARC, Commissioner AR&T and Secretary FMU could be authorized to select the departments and finalise the training plans and budget with due regard to current initiatives and the goals of the ADB policy matrix under ten subject heads;
- iii. The group would take note of proposals for strengthening AASC, CTI and sector training agencies and the counterpart actions such as filling training-related vacancies, non-Plan budget for training and amending service rules to mandate training before promotion;
- iv. The departments for the first phase could include Finance, Personnel, Secretariat Administration, Health (other than family welfare), Education (excluding elementary teachers but including the education service and staff), Department of Public Enterprises, Industry, PWD, Irrigation, Sales Tax and Tax Administration and Urban Development (especially property tax, valuation and user charges), but a final selection and inter-se priority will be made by the empowered group;
- v. AR&T would consolidate the information on available training funds from different sources and the inventory of ongoing activities in the course of interaction with departments;

- vi. AASC would assist the individual departments in conducting TNA and train the trainers but departments should assume full responsibility for designating training managers and ensuring effective implementation of the training plan with professional help under the budget;
- vii. Besides focused training for the IFMIS and treasury, the budget for the first phase would include the Innovation Support Fund, strengthening of key agencies and the training proposals developed by AASC, CTI, Department of Public Enterprises and sector departments, covering TNA, training plan, study tours, training material, functional manuals, documentation of good practices, faculty and trainer development, training in IT and critical gaps in infrastructure;
- viii. Study tours within or outside the country should be properly structured, based on the study of areas of real utility to individual departments;
- ix. A significant portion of the training budget would be devoted to critical supporting elements of the training activity, such as TNA and training design, curriculum development, training materials, preparation of functional manuals, revision of rules, faculty development and decentralized training based on training of trainers and distance learning;
- x. ADB would be requested to earmark funds from the budget for strengthening AARC, AR&T and FMU and for setting up a flexibly administered Innovation Support Fund for meeting small financing needs for areas like documentation of good practices, organisational charts and process reengineering;
- xi. FMU would coordinate with AR&T for the formulation of proposals to be included in the first phase of the training budget under the Project Loan and communicate the requirement to ADB under this head for the year 2005-06;
- xii. ADB would be requested to consider the sanction of the first phase of the training budget for 2005-06 without waiting for the full elaboration of the training budget under the Project Loan;

## **Note IV**

### **Civil Service Reforms in the State of Assam** (A CONCEPT PAPER)

Developed by M. Ariz Ahammed, IAS Director of Training  
Assam Administrative Staff College in October 2002



## **Civil Service Reforms in the State of Assam**

### **1. Background**

There is a growing gap between the stated and unstated objectives of government. In this regard both the public and the media have been voicing that the bureaucracy has become insensitive and even hostile to the poorer sections of the society with the obsession of rules rather than concern for output; characterized below the expectations. Added to that there is a feeling that there has been an increase in leakages and alienation. Nevertheless it is a fact that there is an erosion of trust on the system. On the other side the civil servants are feeling alienated from the Government with their service conditions, career opportunities and job satisfaction and is conspicuous with the pending of a large number of cases in tribunals and courts for promotions and postings. The results of this scenario are evident with poor human and socio-economic indicators of the nation in general and of the state in particular.

The scenario under the changed environment of globalisation, technological change and decentralization requires committed civil service to take a leap and harness the change, which requires an enabling environment, better service conditions for job satisfaction, expertise and skills for managing change. Hence there is a need to bring in suitable reforms for effective and efficient delivery of programmes, schemes, projects and services to the customers. Reforms-yes! There are many diagnostic studies, reports and recommendations but lack a mechanism to convert such recommendations into action plans and results.

#### **Assam Scenario:**

The Assam state is one of the very important Northeastern states of India bordering Bangladesh, Bhutan and is very close to the doors of South East Asian Countries. The Assam State ranks among the top five states in its development indicators till 60's. However for various reasons the socio-economic development indicators have slid down over the years drastically leaving Assam as one of the most backward states with very poor Human Development Indicators in the country.

The present Government is committed to re-win the past glory of better human-socio-economic indicators with renewed vigor and partnership with the public and civil servants under a vision. The Vision of the state in the Millennium is providing *“every Man, Woman and Child all*

*opportunities for healthy and happy life not just on basic needs and Elimination of Poverty” and “to build a knowledgeable society on the values of hard work, integrity, honesty, secularism, discipline and team work”.* The state Government plans to turn the vision into a reality through **Good Governance** where-in State’s scarce resources are managed competently in manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to Peoples needs i.e., **Reduction of Poverty and Sustainable Development.**

The Government has been taking a number of good governance reforms and initiatives viz., taking the government to peoples door steps in a campaign mode, emphasis on transparency and accountability in day to day administration, decentralization of powers to local bodies. However the past high fiscal deficits continue to haunt the state compelling the state to embark upon a Structural Adjustment Programme.

Currently the Challenges before the Government are improving the poor human development indicators, furthering of democratic decentralization, harnessing the globalisation and technological revolution; facing the market economy and achieving the sustainable fiscal consolidation. In this endeavor the Government can’t be successful in its task unless enabling environment is created and capacity of its instruments i.e., Civil Service are improved for new tasks and environment. The State Government is therefore according very high priority to the reforms in Civil Services for Good governance: to improve the human- socio economic indicators of Health, Education, Social Welfare, Infrastructure and economic sectors.

The Government of Assam has already constituted a number of committees and an Administrative Reforms Commission to study the various critical issues affecting the state- Civil Services and Good Governance and to make appropriate recommendations. This requires proper follow up and expertise to manage change. It is presumed that the implementation of these recommendations will require adequate investment in managing change and in the capacity building of civil services. However given its limited resources it is doubtful of achieving reforms and the ambition of Good Governance for the required skills in near future. **The Government of Assam is therefore keen in the partnership of both the GOI and the International Development Agency (IDA) to bring in civil service reforms for Good governance. Already a similar concept is under implementation in the state of Andhra pradesh.**

## **2. Project Description:**

### **(a) Core Concept:**

To set up and institutionalizing a Think Tank by way of Setting up of a “Centre for good governance” to translate the various studies/ recommendations including of the Cabinet for performance improvement into clear action plans, to support implementation of reform and to provide effective change management interventions to achieve Government Goals and policy priorities.

Besides, the aim of the project is to bring in the suitable reforms in the civil services and systems so that the systems can materialize the vision of the state. An illustrative list of issues for reforms is:

1. Simplifying the Government- the rules and the procedure, re-engineering of business process, single window systems, e-governance etc so to improve the delivery and quality of service at least cost.
2. Human Resource Management viz., Capacity Building, Right sizing of the Government, Manpower planning and outsourcing.
3. Accountable Government viz., Adequate Autonomy and Accountability (Organizational and Individual) in the system, Effective Vigilance System, Transparency etc.
4. Citizen perspective / orientation; Decentralization and Participatory approach involving the stakeholders/users
5. Incorporation of a System of performance Appraisal in the system
6. Financial Management and consolidation
7. Strengthening of civil services on various critical issues viz., Developing healthy Organizational behavior and efficiency; Shared vision for the Future and nurturing innovations; developing team spirit and partnership; enhancing Work Culture and conflict in the stated and unstated agenda of the leadership style; Better Time management: more on constructive works than on ad hoc works
8. Strengthening the Department of Administrative Reforms
9. Building Government Management of Information System

**(b) Objectives**

- First priority is to translate the recommendations of the Assam Administrative Reforms Commission and other reports/ studies of importance having direct bearing on the Human Development in the state into action plans in a collaborative and participative exercise with the line Departments and to over see their implementation ; and then:

- To work for the development of the finest, best, skilled, most responsive and most professional citizen oriented civil service in the state by pursuing civil service reforms.
- To work for translating Government goals, objectives and policy priorities into tangible reform actions in the areas of governance;
- To identify core issues and areas for change which will make the most impact in improving the performance of Government and enable it better to respond to the needs of its customers;
- To work with Government functionaries and other stakeholders to analyse key issues in governance, identify solutions, to plan actions and to support implementations of administrative reform;
- To identify and codify best practice in administrative reform and to support its wider implementation.

**(c) Rationale:**

In the state of Assam the Civil Services comprises of around 450,000 civil servants of five different grades viz.,

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Services</b>
All India Services	All India Services: Indian Administrative Services (IAS) who are around 123 are recruited by the Union public Service Commission
Grade-I	Assam Civil Services (ACS), Assam police Services and other services viz., Commercial taxes, cooperation, excise etc are recruited by the Assam public Service Commission
Grade-II	BDO, Ext. Officers, Junior Engineers, Inspectors etc.
Grade-III	School teachers, Stenos, UDA, LDA etc.
Grade- IV	Peons/Attendants

The success of Government priorities viz., policies, Schemes, Programmes largely depends upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the people i.e., Civil Servants manning in delivering the services. The higher civil service provides the crucial role of advice to the political executive on policy matters. The Civil Service is the cutting edge of the Government and people in service delivery and are critical in successfully implementing the policy matters and monitoring the same.

In Assam the Chief Secretary heads each department. In the Districts the Deputy Commissioner (IAS or ACS) provides leadership to the District civil service.

Situation analysis of the human- socio- economic indicators of the state, fiscal position, Civil service institutions, Constitutional mandate of Decentralization and new economic and information environment reveals that civil service of the state- the instruments of Government initiatives; urgently requires adequate expertise to meet the tasks and change. It is also observed that currently the Government departments are bogged down with the routine matters and are finding it extremely difficult to concentrate on policy issues with citizen focus both because of scarce time and expertise. So is the rationale for a think tank organization- Centre for Good Governance. Besides the project is aimed.

- i. To enable the civil servants to identify themselves with the tasks set as per the Govt. Mission.

### **Human-Socio-economic Indicators of the state.**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Assam</b>	<b>India</b>
Literacy (2001 census)	64.28	65.38
Life Expectancy (at birth)	56.6y	61.1y
Birth rate(000)	27.0	26.1
Death rate	9.7	8.7
Infant Mortality rate(000)	76	70.8
Maternal Mortality rate	409/1 lac	407
Per Capita Net State Domestic product	9612	10067
Population below poverty	40.86	35.97
Per Capita Consumption of Electricity KWH	123.00	360

The above indicators show the weaknesses of the system in materializing the policies, priorities, intentions, schemes of the nation and the state over the last five decades of independent India. Besides all in public perception the government services have become inadequate, costly, delayed and inefficient resulting in the alienation from the public and creation of barriers for Government- public partnership, which is very essential for any Good governance initiatives.

- ii **To harness the New Environment:** India has been a welfare state with the grater role and control of public sector in every sphere of life. However with the accumulating fiscal deficits and the changing global economy, India too joined the structural adjustment programme for

market oriented liberalized economy wherein the Government is taking the role of facilitator in place of controller. Added to all, there is a greater pressure on the /user. The Civil Servants need to be tuned to the changes in the work environment and economic changes. The country's experience with the structural adjustment programme and public sector reforms conspicuously makes a point that unless the instruments of reforms i.e. Civil services are reformed and are provided with expertise the structural adjustment programs cannot be successful.

In addition the civil services and the system are required to be in pace with and harness the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendments emphasizing the decentralization of powers and the changing Political environment and judicial activism.

It is also increasingly established that the information and communication technology has the potential of making the Government responsive, efficient and effective. This clearly makes a point that there is a need for the Government systems to harness the technology for good governance.

### **iii To incorporate the ingredients of Performance and Accountability:**

On critical review of the Civil Services functioning in State; the following points are very conspicuous-

- No Performance Orientation and no Appraisals in their career/ personnel development/ management.
- The Institutional / training capacity is very much limited to all India services and very few Grade I and II services viz., ACS, APS, Health, Agriculture, Revenue, Forest etc.
- Even for the premier ACS- State Civil Service there are no opportunities for formal In-service training in the state currently.
- It is observed that only (approx.) 5% of Civil Servants get pre-service training while the maximum 30% (approx.) gets in –service training.
- The Grade-III civil servants who are the backbone of district administration and Directorates are not given any training both Pre-service and In- service. The result is trial and error learning wasting most resources and compromising the performance.
- Moreover the current capacity building is on traditional lines viz., analysis, clear and cogent drafting, working with the Ministers, Office procedure but not customer service, performance, innovation, computer literacy etc.

- It is also a fact that the corruption has taken deep roots in administration to the extent that it is no longer inviting any social rebuke-which is a clear sign of the morale of civil servants towards their performance and the state.

The scenario clearly reflects that there is not only too much inadequacy of training institutions to most of the Civil Services but also shows that most of the civil servants are not given any opportunity of training in acquiring the basic skills viz., Customer Service, performance etc.

**iv. To build upon what has been done in the state of Assam:**

- ❖ The Government of Assam took active part in drafting the National Training Policy 1996
- ❖ Nov. 1996: Participated in All Chief Secretaries Meet “An Agenda for an Good and Responsive Administration”
- ❖ Took part in 24 may 1997 “ All Chief Ministers Meet” on Good and Responsive Administration.
- ❖ The Assam Administrative Staff College Khanapara Guwahati had successfully completed a project capacity building for Civil Services, Administrative Reforms and Training (1998) sponsored by the UNDP and Department of Personnel and Training Government of India. As a part of the project four studies were conducted on i) Simplified procedures ii) Skills through training iii) Training Need Analysis and (iv) Gender and Civil Services. The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kolkata too provided a consultant report on project.
- ❖ The Government of Assam Constituted a Task Force (1996) to implement the project study reports in three sectors viz., Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Urban development & Industry.
- ❖ Chief Minister’s Action Plan for Good Governance: Citizen Charters, District web sites, Facilitation Centers, Transparency, passing of Right to Information Bill are already in place.
- ❖ Constituted a Committee on Fiscal Reforms 2001 and the report submitted strongly suggested several measures for good governance.
- ❖ The AASC has been chalking out a need based- demand driven training programmes under decentralized strategy for wider outreach.
- ❖ The Government of Assam constituted an Administrative Reforms Commission to study and recommend on the way to improve the Government delivery and is expected to submit its report very soon.

**(a) Areas of Strength**

- The Assam Administrative Staff College -A Premier Resource Center of Training Technology with a sprawling Campus. The center for good Governance can be set up within its campus.
- Inquisitive Civil Servants; Fairly egalitarian Society and Fair Gender equality

### **3. Approach:**

The centre for good governance shall be registered society under the Registration of societies Act. The Director of Training shall be Director of the CGG and the Director General of Training: Assam Administrative Staff College shall be CGG's Director General. One joint Director of training AASC shall be assigned with this job exclusively for the purpose. Additional required manpower for the Center for Good Governance will be recruited as assignments on contract basis/ Consultancies

There shall be a CGG Board comprising the Chief Minister, few Ministers and key Secretaries, as well as external stakeholders. The Board will be closely involved in problem identification, in the development of the programme and in its implementation. Other Ministers and secretaries and also other senior officials, in particular District Commissioners, will be closely involved throughout the work of the CGG. Consultation and participation at Department level will be integrated into the work. Governance reform will only deliver the outcomes sought by Government of Assam of each project undertaken by CGG is approached in a highly participative manner, involving senior managers, senior officials, more junior public servants involved in the delivery of services and key stakeholders. All aspects of the reform process will be undertaken as collaborative and participative exercises, with the individual implementation projects being led by the relevant Secretary or senior manager in Departments, involving the staff who have responsibility for the areas within an implementation team. In general, these officials will be responsible, and accountable, for delivering intended project outputs.

A partnership between the CGG and other parts of Government will be developed to ensure that there is a level of ownership necessary to ensure successful implementation and achievement of the planned improvements. The CGG may provide resources to support the implementation of reform, but the work will be owned, and will by and large be undertaken by implementation teams within departments or at district level. The CGG support will ensure that implementation is coherent and consistent.

There shall be smaller Steering Group from Board Members as an operational management body for the CGG. In addition, a number of work stream subject groups will be constituted, which will also include relevant

secretaries and Heads of Departments, experts in particular subject areas and NGOs and other stake holder organizations.

#### **4. Key outputs/ deliverables:**

- a) Think tank – Institutional Development- for understanding and managing the complex issues of change and reform in the current globalisation and technology era.
- b) Accessibility of Expertise to the line departments on various focus issues.
- c) Improved Human Development Index ranking of the state.
- d) Simplification of Rules and Procedures incorporating the autonomy with accountability.
- e) Capacity Building of Training faculty, civil servants and infrastructure of Departments
- f) Systematic Performance Appraisals of organizations / institutions and civil Servants.
- g) Attitudinal change and Improved Skills among Civil Services
- h) Positive Political environment with commitment and vision.

#### **Desired Impact : Good Governance:**

- Competent management of State's scarce resources in manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to Peoples needs i.e.,

#### **Reduction of Poverty and Sustainable Development : Assam**

- Encompasses: Better Economic and Financial Management; Successful implementation of Govt. Policies and priorities; Strengthening Law and Justice, Human right; Increasing the Public Sector Effectiveness; Anti-Corruption, Market Economy, Improved Human Development Indicators on the long run; Developing a Civil Society.

#### **5. Risks:**

- Lack of political commitment,
- Internal resistance to change, may result in project delays.

#### **6. Stake holders of the Project:**

The internal Stake holders of the Project are: (i) Political Executive of the State (ii) Govt. of Assam Administrative Reforms and Training Dept and the Dept. of Personnel (iii) all Govt. Departments (iv) Centre for Good Governance (v) The Assam Administrative Staff College (vi)

the Civil Servants of All India Services, Grade-1 services who are mainly responsible for policy matters by way of submitting advice to the political executive and the Grade-I, II and III services who are the instruments / executive of the policies in the field and are the cutting edge between the government and the public.

The External stakeholders are the Public, Assam Legislative Assembly, Judiciary, Media, Civil Society, market economy and Human rights organizations.

### **7. Sustainability:**

- Institutional Development of the *Centre for Good Governance* and the Assam Administrative Staff College and linkages with the line Departments.
- The Commitment of the Government both the nodal Department i.e., Dept. of Administrative Reforms and Training and other Departments of the Government
- Visible improvement in the service condition, work environment and job satisfaction of Civil Servants and in the Performance Civil Servants with simplification.
- The commitment and interest of Government Departments for their openness to conduct training needs, interest in the capacity building of Departmental Training Managers to assess the respective department civil servants training needs, design of training and deputing them for training and evaluation etc at through internalization. Enforcement of action plans of (pre- and In-service) Training of their employees, Institutional development of Training etc.
- The Pressure of Civil Society, Legislative Assembly and media

### **8. Government Commitment to the Project:**

The Government of Assam is committed for the partnership with IDA with a logical end towards the set outcomes.

## **Note V : District Administration**

- (a) Prime Ministe’s Address to District Collectors  
May 20, 2005
- (b) A Report by Deputy Commissioner Kamrup Metro  
on Modernisation of District Administration

**Address of Dr. Manmohan Singh**  
Prime Minister of India

at

Collectors' Conference held on May 20, 2005

## **PM's Address at Collector's Conference**

**May 20, 2005  
New Delhi**

“I express my joy to be in your midst and to participate in this interaction with District Collectors assembled from various parts of our country. I have had a chance to sit through the presentation of the results of your deliberations spread over the last few months and I congratulate the Cabinet Secretary, the Personnel Secretary and the Minister, Shri Suresh Pachauri, for the initiative that they have taken. As I listened to some of these presentations, I felt there was indeed a lot of food for thought and I am very happy that our District Collectors are operating on the frontiers of knowledge. That augurs well for the system of administration that we have evolved in our country.

When I was a student some 50 years ago at the University of Cambridge, I had a very distinguished teacher Lord Nicholas Kaldor, a great Economist, he used to insist that there was no technical necessity for any economic or social system to do better than the other. What really made the difference to the functioning of any system is the mindset of those who made the critical decisions of a nation's political, social and economic life, and who are the people who make the critical decisions of our nation's life? Politicians, one has to reckon with, but the 600 odd Collectors who administer the Districts are an important linchpin of that establishment. No system can survive without having an establishment and by establishment, I mean a group of people who have a stake in the long-term well functioning of the system. In a democracy, political masters are selected by the people and in theory, they are the ones who provide us the sense of direction in which our polity ought to evolve. And in a democracy that ought to be the case. But one has to reckon with the fact that all is not well with the way our political system functions.

The Constitution of India and the founding fathers of our Republic set before us lofty ideals and goals. The Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in our Constitution constitute the talisman which should guide our conduct. But we all know that there have been aberrations. Politics in a democracy has to be a purposeful instrument of social change. Politics in a poor country has to mediate between societal tensions, which are built into the body dynamic of a poor society trying to modernise itself. Unfortunately, many a time politics becomes the instrument of self-aggrandisement. And many a time, it ceases to be a purposeful instrument of social change. I am quite sure that these aberrations will give way to better days in the years to come. I do not despair, but one has to reckon with the realities as they exist. During this transition period, that is now on

the horizon, it is the duty of all of you to rise to the occasion, to steer our Republic's ship in the desired direction as laid out in the Directive Principles of State Policy. And that is why I said, if there is an establishment, you are the establishment in this country, you are the only people who have secured tenor and who are, therefore, obliged to take a long term view of the evolution of our polity. Politicians come and go and the way elections come, there is frequent change of political masters, many a time they don't have the occasion to think about the long-term consequences of what they are doing. And as I said, our country will get out of this present transitional phase, but in the meanwhile the ship of the Indian State has to move and has to move forward and more so, because we are operating in a world where human knowledge is increasing at a pace which was unthinkable even two decades ago. Modern science and technology have made it possible as never before in human history that chronic poverty does not have to be the inevitable lot of a majority of human kind. Poverty eradication is a feasible goal provided we make full use of modern science and technology and we evolve the social engineering technology of using that knowledge to achieve the basic purposes for which our polity was founded.

Great importance is attached to the tuning of our Civil Servants. Great importance is attached to ensuring that our civil servants remain faithful to the Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution, that our civil servants operate on the frontiers of knowledge that Constitutional values, the quest for equality – social, economic, political, that the State is an instrument for wiping out tears from the eyes of those who are disenfranchised, who are at the bottom of social and economic ladders, and that there is a commitment to social equity as well as excellence . These have to be the guiding principles, which should guide the conduct of our Civil Services.

All of you have to view yourself as role models. In a poor country like ours, some key decision makers, their conduct, their behaviour has a multiplier effect. And therefore, it is all the more important that our administration should be in the hands of men and women of character, of integrity, of ability who remain steadfast in their commitment to the ideas and ideals enshrined in our Constitution. Over a period of time, there has been growth of fissiparous tendencies in our country. It is partly built into the democratic process. Comparative politics creates tensions as well as it enables processes of mediation to sort out the division of people on the basis of religion, caste, language and State. An All India Service like IAS should never forget that their basic loyalty is to the Union and the Constitution that defines what India should be. As I listened to the presentations, I was impressed that here in this room, we have those, whom

I recall as essential component of the establishment of our society, that their heart and head both are in the right places.

I congratulate the Cabinet Secretary, the Personnel Secretary and Shri Pachauri-ji for having taken this initiative to bring you together, to reflect on processes of change, to reflect on policies, programmes and projects, which have a crucial bearing on the future evolution of our polity. I sincerely hope that with the ideas and ideals which have been projected today, we will work together in months to come to give them practical shape to reform the process of governance in our country. I am, therefore, very heartened to note that inspite of the rough and tumble in the life of an administrator today, you have all retained the analytical ability to understand the problems that lie at the core of your work and come up with possible solutions to improve our system of public administration at the grassroots. This ability to analyse, assess, diagnose and resolve issues and problems in a turbulent and changing world is the fundamental reason why this country needs an All India Service like yours. These are, of course, skills, which are not job of task specific and can be transferred across posts, regions and different levels of Government. The Collector or the District Magistrate remains even today the linchpin of the administrative system in India more than a hundred years after the creation of this Institution by the British and the more I think, whatever may be the view about colonialism, I think, the British Empire was an act of great adventure and enterprise and creativity. The institutions that we have inherited - many of them have served our country well - an All India Civil Service happens to be one of those prized institutions, which I think has been a proud legacy of ours for above a hundred years.

The founding fathers of our Republic were wise men. They recognised the need for an All India Civil Service even though it was a legacy of the British Raj. As Sardar Patel said, “ We will not have a united India if we do not have a good All India Service, which has the independence to speak out its mind and which has a sense of security. I need hardly emphasise that an efficient, disciplined and contented service, assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work is the sine-quo-non of sound administration under a democratic regime even more than an authoritarian rule”. This quote from the great Sardar Patel captures the essence of the values that are critical in your work – being skilled and competent, honest, diligent, efficient, independent and ready to speak out your mind. These are values that we must cherish and they will certainly pay off in the long run, for yourself and the nation. Despite the temporary aberrations here and there, over the years the role of the officers has changed. Indeed, revenue collection is the least important of tasks today. You have become agents of change, of good governance and development administration at the very base of our democratic structure. The insights you gain during your tenure

at the district level stands you in good stead throughout your career because it gives you a first hand experience in dealing with the hopes and aspirations, the lives and livelihoods of our people. The State and Central Governments benefit immensely from this district level administrative experience very early in the lives of our administrators.

At this point, I would like to draw your attention to the changes that are sweeping India and indeed the world as a whole, particularly during the last two decades. We are today living in an increasingly integrated and globalised world. Distance in many ways has lost its old meaning. Distances are shrinking and markets are merging. Competition is the name of the game and the role of the State is being redefined in many sectors. In many manufacturing and service sectors, the Government is moving from being a provider of goods and services to being a regulator and facilitator ensuring fair play and adherence to standards of integrity and efficiency. Increasingly, Government's attention and indeed expenditure pattern is shifting towards the provision of physical and human infrastructure to enable individual players to compete in the evolving enlarged and at times global markets. The Government has also the obligation to ensure that the benefits of growth trickle down to all sections of the society, to ensure that they become equal participants in growth processes. At the same time, the Government has to ensure that those who are adversely affected by the winds of globalisation are able to adjust to new realities and economic opportunities.

In this redefined role of the Government, the cutting edge of a Government's function is at the district and lower levels. I think someone said India lives in States, I could amplify that to say that India lives in districts. Therefore, the provision of education and health facilities for improving human infrastructure, provision of physical infrastructure, improving economic opportunities for marginalised sections of society, preparing the society at large to face the challenge of disasters – natural disaster as well as manmade disasters - and who can forget the role of terrorism in disturbing all civilised societies in the world that we live in. We have to be prepared to meet all this challenges. And these are all functions which are best performed by local bodies and district administrations. As we sit in Delhi and try to design a template for a humane, caring and prosperous India, we are aware of the criticality of your role in this process – your role in ensuring good governance at the grassroots, in promoting innovation, in improving service delivery, in enhancing public private partnerships and in ensuring outlays become outcomes. I believe that unless we reform governance from the village level upwards, there can be no real reform at the National level. And what I heard this morning gives me confidence that we have men and women in

this room who can be trusted to be active agents of improving the quality of our governance in the years to come.

This task of improving the quality of governance at the village and panchayat levels, vests directly in the hands of the elected representatives of the people at the panchayat level and in the hands of Collectors and fellow officials at the district and block levels. The role of the Collector in our system has always been a most critical one. The Collector is an inter-sectoral functionary who is the source of strength of this institution, which stood the test of time. Over the years, the role of the Collector has dramatically changed adding on several development-related responsibilities that do complicate his or her basic regulatory functions. We have also had a major shift in our administration through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which sought to revitalise local bodies and create elected representatives down the line. Though this was expected to whittle down the powers of the Collector, our historical experience is that the role of the Collector has only been transformed into a more powerful one of coordinator, facilitator and a person who is responsible for inter-sectoral coordination of various activities that characterise the work of our grassroot administration. There has been a deepening and broadening of political process in India. It has deepened through Panchayati Raj and broadened through societal actions by NGOs, civil society groups and professional bodies. Today, the test of a good Collector is his ability to work with the people, to inspire them, to realise their latent potential and their latent creativity. It's a job in which human resource management, strategic planning and strategic thinking, financial management all need to come together. Our development experience so far has been that decentralisation is not merely a political imperative but as much a managerial necessity given the large size of population in our States. Even a district in our country is similar to a province in other countries. It is, therefore, a managerial imperative to strengthen the middle management level in our delivery system for effective delivery of public services and this has to be at the level of the Collector.

To my mind what is as important as the skill set of a Collector is the attitude that he brings to bear on his job. We are a country that is characterised by uneven development between regions and between people. The major challenges that you have in most districts is to ensure a general equality of opportunity to all people, removal of mass illiteracy, disease and foster economic growth and development. In order to be ethically neutral in a context of inequality, you have to be partisan – partisan towards the poor, partisan towards the weaker sections, partisan towards minorities, women and SCs and STs and all such disadvantaged people who need support of the Indian State. You operate in a society that has several inherited prejudices built into our social fabric and in this

environment you have to become a beacon of change and lead by example. You should be conscious of the fact that while being sensitive to the imperatives of democracy and majority rule, you must be alert to minority opinion. You must learn not merely to tolerate but respect dissent because your job requirement is that of forging a consensus among contentious claimants. The attitude that you bring to bear as a head of a district is what would be emulated by the people who work with you. I, therefore, appeal to all of you to have an abiding commitment to social equity, particularly for the marginalised sections of society and work to make them genuine partners in process of social and economic change.

It is of course your constitutional duty, your obligation to fight the forces of social and communal divisiveness, of casteism and regionalism and other anti-national forces and tendencies in our body polity. It is my firm belief that what we are experimenting in our country is something unique in the history of the world. Never before has a country of one billion people sought to bring about a social and economic revolution in the framework of an open society committed to protect all fundamental human freedoms, committed to the respect of law and therefore all over the world, people marvel that such a country exists, a country of one billion people trying to seek its salvation, trying to manage processes of social and economic change in the framework of a functioning democracy committed to the rule of law and respect for all fundamental human freedom. I do believe that all societies of the 21st century will be multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic society. So the experiment that is being performed in this ancient land of ours, has great historical significance and I believe if we succeed, we will influence the course of human evolution in this 21st century, which has just begun. Therefore, all of us, howsoever small, are partners in a great enterprise. We are small people thrown up into big chairs. But we are on the threshold of an era of immense opportunities and immense challenges and all stakeholders of our social, economic and political system have to work together to realise our manifest destiny. As I said in particular, I appeal to you all to have an abiding commitment to the pursuit of social equity, concern for the marginalised sections of society and to work, to make them genuine partners in processes of social and economic change.

Your role in the evolving dynamic setting, in which change we must, but must remain committed to the pursuit of excellence and we must harmonise the commitment to the pursuit of excellence, to the pursuit of social equity. This is a sacred duty we all have to perform in the service of the nation and our nationhood and our posterity and our prosperity. Our Constitution is a living guide. It is supreme and you are duty bound to uphold it. The values of our Republic are sacred and we must work together to protect and preserve these values. The more I read the

Constitution, the more I am struck at the great reservoir of wisdom possessed by the founding fathers of our Republic. I think those values have stood the test of time. We are all to work in harmony, in concert, to ensure that this value system continues to guide us all in the 21st century. As I said in the beginning, we are living in a world where human knowledge is increasing at an unprecedented pace. Therefore, we all have to be willing to think new. Your job is precedent and procedure bound but as young men and women working in the 21st century, you have to be sensitive to the fact that you are living in an innovation driven world, in a demanding polity and a plural society. Old solutions may not work. You should be able to provide a leadership in tune with the demands of our time.

I believe all of you have a unique opportunity today in mediating societal action for development. The structures of Panchayati Raj are in place but they need to be infused with new vitality. These organisations enable you to mobilise collective action for development. India's great strategic resource is its people. India has a billion opportunities in its people and you must all see that those opportunities are converted into a permanent advantage for our country. Many of the challenges that you face in your district, be it the education challenge, the water challenge, the health challenge or the employment challenge, the solution may lie in enabling people to handle change and improving service delivery. A Collector therefore can provide a leadership to this task of nation building. As we try to create an environment conducive to creativity and enterprise, your priorities should be clear. We want to make economic reform an inclusive process. Every section of society must be able to benefit from the process of reform. This will mean immediate attention to issues of agriculture, rural development, health, education, infrastructure, focusing in particular, on the weaker sections and ensuring of communal harmony at all costs. Our Government is in the process of finalising a focussed programme called 'Bharat Nirman'. Under 'Bharat Nirman' we have a target of providing 100 per cent connectivity to India's villages through roads, electricity and telecommunication and ensure 100 per cent coverage under safe drinking water supply by the year 2009. In addition, we aim to create one crore hectares of additional irrigation and 60 lakh houses through the Indira Awas Yojana. You are going to be the critical agents for ensuring that the new deal to rural India genuinely transforms rural lives and livelihoods. If Parliament passes the Employment Guarantee Bill, and I believe, it will be passed in the next Session, we will launch a major new initiative of providing a minimum amount of work to all able-bodied persons who are seeking work in rural areas. I invite you to prepare yourselves to meet the challenge of Employment Guarantee Programme. I invite you to work out before hand a shelf of projects and programmes

which will convert this employment guarantee into a major national effort to improve the quality of our physical infrastructure – economic and social infrastructure.

I would request you to ensure that the objectives of ‘Bharat Nirman’ are met and met fully. We are also, as I said, about to legislate an Employment Guarantee Bill which will cast heavy responsibilities on the district administrations. You have the responsibility of preparing a shelf of projects spread over regions likely to be affected by scarcity of work. You have also to ensure proper implementation in the right spirit. Work through contractors and machines sometimes destroys the very purpose of this right. I appeal to you to rise to the challenge of implementing this Act when it becomes a reality. We have similarly targeted programmes of universal elementary education, improvement of rural health through the National Rural Health Mission. I heard some presentations which said that there should be a holistic approach to the management of healthcare facilities at the district level. This National Mission does precisely that. It will enable probably for the first time a holistic view being taken of the key health priorities in each rural district of our country. Universal coverage of mid-day meal, expanded coverage of the ICDS programme, agricultural transformation through the National Horticultural Mission and addressing food security through the Antyodaya Anna Yojana – all of these programmes have adequate funds and they have to be managed at the district level. So, your ability, your motivation will be the most decisive determinant of where India is in the next 10 or 15 years. I would urge you to ensure that the goals of these programmes are fully met in each of your districts.

I have had a chance to understand the problems you perceive in improving the quality and outcome of your work. Some of these are being addressed through Right to Information, the portal just launched and the National Rural Health Mission. The Right to Information is a powerful tool for ensuring good governance through transparency and accountability. You have a critical role in ensuring that the mechanisms are put in place for the full realisation of this right.

I have noted the other issues and I assure you that we will address all these issues. One important issue, which has risen not only today but many times before, is security of tenure of key functionaries of district Collectors, of Superintendents of Police and I do recognise that you are entitled to ask for this. No system of Government can deliver if people can be changed without notice, short tenures do not produce accountable results. I do recognise the difficulty, this is a matter in which the Central Government by itself cannot move, we have to work with the States but I do propose to bring this subject before the National Development Council as an integral

part of improving the quality of our administration making it more transparent and more accountable. If we are going to pursue these goals, it is necessary that our Civil Servants should be entitled to a minimum security of tenure so that they can be judged whether they are equal to the tasks, which have been assigned to them or not. Also I assure you, I learnt a great deal from these new innovative programmes. We have to learn from best practices in various parts of our country. There has to be a networking so that these best practices become infectious, they spread from one part of our country to another and if it is necessary to set up an innovation fund to promote innovation in governance at the grassroots, I am all for it. And I also believe that we must institute a viable system of national awards for rewarding outstanding public service. People talk about the power to do good. Your job situation is so unique in that you have the maximum power to do good in each of the places you work. You should make it an experience worth remembering. We now have much more resources today in our country to change the world around us than we have had ever before. We have an explosion of ideas. We have a society that is becoming increasingly more politicised but also more vigilant. These are opportunities not available to your predecessors. Therefore, be idealistic enough to take up this challenge of building a new India free from the fear of war, want and exploitation. Be innovative enough to look for new opportunities. Be sensitive enough to contribute to creating a just and humane society. Be modest and lead decent but simple lifestyles eschewing conspicuous consumption and extravagant living. Have concern for those who work for you and inspire them through example.

I urge you to combine your commitment to idealism with a passion for excellence. Unless we inculcate this commitment to excellence at the grassroots level, and at the earliest stages in one's career in the Civil Service, it will not be possible to create an environment of growth and development at the national level. As members of the most prestigious of our Civil Services, you must impart this message, of seeking a commitment to quality and excellence in the work we do. Compassion must be combined with competence. That should be the motto of a meritocracy like yours. You have my very best wishes.”

**Modernisation of District Administration:**  
A Report by Kamrup District Administration

Presentation made before the Commission on 6-4-2005 by  
Shri Samir Kumar Sinha, IAS Deputy Commissioner Kamrup (Metro)

## **Modernisation of District Administration:** A Report by Kamrup District Administration

### **Introduction:**

The aim of this report on modernization of district administration is to identify the critical governance related issues through a citizens' frame of reference. Further, it seeks to address these issues and suggest a roadmap for ushering in better governance which would encompass issues like transparency, responsiveness, efficiency, quality etc. in district administration.

The citizens' concerns highlighted in this report have been identified on the basis of interactions with citizens during their visits to government offices, field-tours and inspections by district officers and revenue functionaries. The periodic exercises like the RPRS sessions (citizen-government contact programme of state government of Assam), Rajah Adalats (revenue camps in villages), Gaon Sabhas etc. have also yielded information regarding citizen's expectations from administration.

### **Citizen's Concerns:**

It was discovered that the citizen expects speedy, hassle-free and efficient preferably single-window delivery of government related services.

The concerns of a citizen today, are as follows :

#### **(A) Primary Concerns :**

- a. Quality of services: A citizen expects high standards of quality especially when compared to similar & better services being provided by the private sector though for a higher price. Especially, in case of certain essential services which are of primary concern to the citizens, quality cannot be compromised.
- b. Education: Almost all government schools are plagued by problems such as absenteeism of teachers, poor quality of teaching, poor infrastructure & supporting facilities etc. Even ambitious government schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-day Meal schemes etc. have not yielded the desired results because of these inherent institutional problems.
- c. Health: In government health centers & hospitals the patients despite traveling long distances, wait in long queues and are confronted with absence of the doctors and paramedics,

inadequate stock of medicines, lack of facilities e.g. ambulance etc.

- d. Sanitation & Drinking Water Supply: Especially in the rural areas is a major concern as a preventive measure towards ensuring health and well being of the citizens.
- e. Law & Order and Public Safety: The general public is usually reluctant to approach the police for help because of the low degree of trust that exists between the citizens and the entire police administration.
- f. Employment Opportunities: Although there are numerous schemes for wage and self employment being implemented by the government but the intended benefits have not reached the most deserving people in most cases in the desired way.
- g. Enforcing right over land: The copy of the jamabandi i.e. the Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops is an all important identity paper needed by a farmer to obtain bank loans, settling land disputes etc. A farmer is often subjected to harassment while obtaining a copy of the jamabandi, applying for mutations etc.

**(B) Secondary Concerns:**

- a. Lack of information about the schemes sanctioned for one's area, amount of funds allotted, status of utilization, criteria of beneficiary selection, list of beneficiaries etc.
- b. Lack of awareness and resultant denial of one's entitlement under various government schemes especially social security & employment generation related schemes because of unfair selection of beneficiaries, exploitation by middlemen etc.
- c. Apparent apathy and insensitivity of government apparatus to citizen's problems because of lack of an institutionalized, speedy public grievance redressal mechanism
- d. Corruption, lack of transparency, inconvenience and harassment in dealing with government machinery.
- e. Inordinate delay in processing of petitions, applications etc.
- f. Making frequent trips to government offices for petty jobs like obtaining copy of record of rights, determining status of pending applications, attestation of certificates etc.

**(C) Concerns of Special Interest Groups:**

- a. Senior Citizens: Receiving Old Age Pension timely and regularly.
- b. Unemployed: Access to information regarding self-employment opportunities under the various government schemes.
- c. Women: Access to information about special schemes for their welfare e.g. National Maternity Benefit Scheme, Women SHGs under SGSY etc. & receiving their entitlements under them.
- d. Farmers: Awareness about the special programmes like KCC, crop insurance, agricultural extension etc. and easy availability of a copy of jamabandi for their landholding
- e. Local government representatives: Access to information about funds or food grains allocated to their region under the various projects and schemes such as SGRY, MPLADS, MLALADS etc.
- f. Students: Awareness about courses and scholarship schemes available for them in colleges within as well as outside the state.
- g. Entrepreneurs: Easy and Hassle-free issue of licenses, clearances and payment of taxes & duties.

**Inherent Inadequacies in Administration:**

- Non-availability of adequate and reliable data for planning and monitoring
- Lack of coordination among the various line departments, DC office etc.
- Lack of people's participation & involvement in government programmes and schemes
- Lack of feedback from citizens regarding quality service delivery
- Office Working Environment
  - ✓ Low level of motivation among the employees
  - ✓ Poor facilities
  - ✓ Unsatisfactory level of government-employee related services e.g. implementation of employee welfare schemes (pension, GPF etc.)
  - ✓ Lack of responsiveness towards employees grievances

- Complicated and incomprehensible procedures i.e. rules, regulations and guidelines of government functioning which are beyond the understanding and often beyond the reach of average villager. Because of these the general public is unnecessarily harassed and exploited by government office “babus”
- Lack of professionalism, citizen-focus & discipline among the government servants.

## **Systemic Changes:**

### **A. Government Process Reengineering**

Government Process Re-engineering involves redesign of existing processes in order to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency. It is the prerequisite for ushering in e-governance. Information and communication technologies would lead to improvement in quality of public service delivery only when they are utilized for enabling new processes and not just for automating the existing processes together with their built-in-inefficiencies.

#### **1. Simplification of procedures:**

- Self-attestation: Most of the visits to the government offices are attestation of various kinds of certificates like Caste, Income, Permanent Residence etc. This can be completely done away with by introducing a system of self-attestation along with hefty penalty, incase of falsification of claims.
- Comprehensive classification of rules, guidelines and procedures is necessary for efficient service delivery and better understanding among both the officers and the general public.
- Delegation of adequate powers and responsibilities needs to be done so that unnecessary file movement and resultant delay may be avoided.
- Standardization of application forms & categorization of nature of applications and petitions based on priority and frequency (e.g. issuing coloured forms). High priority applications would be routed through a speedier channel which would bypass routine formalities.
- Codification and classification of common grievances like each petition would be allotted with a unique ID with processing time

mentioned and separate records would be maintained department wise for tracking them.

2. **Single-Window Payment and Delivery systems** : need to be introduced wherein all payments of user charges (telephone, electricity, water supply etc. bills), fees, taxes etc. are made. And these outlets can also be used as nodal points for receiving all kinds of applications, petitions etc. from the citizens.
3. **Improving citizen-government interface** : through mass contact programmes in field on fixed days at fixed places (an annual calendar for the district can be prepared and circulated among the people) for immediate redressal of public grievances by all district heads.
4. **Introducing a feedback mechanism** : wherein the delivery of government services would be judged by the citizens and hence highlight areas for improvement for the administration. Also, the accessibility of the administration can be greatly enhanced by introduction of online discussion forums, direct mail to district officers etc.
5. Taking steps for improving coordination with line departments through better information sharing and eliciting their participation in planning and decision making processes.
6. Preparing Panchayat-wise master list of all schemes needed for the area on a priority basis, from which, execution of the scheme is done depending on availability of fund. This list would help promote transparency in scheme selection & monitoring of fund utilization.

## **B. E-governance:**

E-governance involves utilization of information and communication technologies to further development.

### **Why E-governance?**

- Minimises citizen-government official contact points yet improves accessibility of government at various levels of hierarchy
- More efficient and speedy delivery of government services
- Enhances the accountability of the staff as clear work distribution and monitoring helps in pinpointed fixing of responsibility

- Public Grievance Redressal mechanism wherein, if the concerned application or complaint is pending beyond a fixed deadline then the matter is automatically reported to next higher authority.
- Saves inconvenience of making frequent visits to government offices.
- Brings in openness and transparency as information becomes readily available

On these lines, the following changes may be undertaken for better efficiency and enhanced output i.e. better quality of public service delivery.

**1. Issuing Citizen Card:** A multi-purpose card embedded with a micro-chip containing all citizen-related data relevant for transactions with the government. To begin with, such cards can be issued to the beneficiaries of government schemes and programmes like BPL population, senior citizens (Old Age Pension), Women etc. This will help in beneficiary identification and hassle-free disbursement of their entitlements under the schemes.

**1. Creating Reliable Database:** Data collection from the grassroot level with the help of local revenue administration machinery and continuous updation of database both at the local level and simultaneously at district level needs to be introduced. Data exchange & sharing among the line departments, district office etc. would be necessary for effective planning and monitoring of implementation of schemes.

### **3. Office Computerisation :**

- Networking all branches in DC office and dial up connectivity with the various line departments would help ensure information sharing and facilitate convergence of services and delivery mechanism.
- Management Information and Decision Support System:
- Database of all block and circle-wise information e.g. population, PHCs PDS outlets, Police stations etc.
- Database of schemes implemented, fund sanctioned, beneficiaries under the scheme etc.
- Computerisation of finance & accounts and online tallying with treasury records
- Computerisation of land records along with facility for online mutations
- File & Dak tracking software

- Monitoring pending applications. petitions, complaints etc.
  - Dial up connectivity to CICs at block offices as well as line deptts and hence online updation of district server database
  - Multi-purpose I-cards with microchips containing all employee related information can be used for monitoring attendance
- 4. District Disaster Management System :** can also be upgraded by having GIS supported by the detailed databases e.g. inventory of vehicles, boats etc. available, data related to flood levels in previous years and vulnerable areas, possible locations for relief camps, approximate requirement of relief material etc. This software can be utilized for better disaster preparedness and planning a more organized response to disasters especially the annual floods.
- 5. Land records Computerisation :** is the heart of any e-governance project based in rural areas. A farmer can obtain computerized copy of jamabandi, can apply for mutation through kiosks etc. Also, the database is a rich repository of information relevant for planning purposes.
- 6. E-governance services** would be provided through the front-end available in the local language which would be a hierarchy of service delivery nodes (Facilitation Centre-CICs – Kiosks). Levying nominal user charges for accessing e-governance services would have to be introduced for ensuring revenue generation and financial sustainability of the project. The services that could be provided would be as follows:
- Computerised copy of jamabandi for agriculturists
  - Online submission and tracking of applications (along with, name of officer with whom pending)
  - Online invitation of tenders & transparency in process of selection of suppliers and contractors
  - Complaints and grievances sent online to concerned department, which after a fixed date gets automatically reported to the next higher authority
  - Scheme related information like list of beneficiaries, criteria of selection, ones entitlement under the scheme etc.
  - Facility of direct mail to DC incase of urgent and important matters

**Suggested 3-Tier E-governance Setup:**

The existing facilitation center would be upgraded as single-window delivery point and nodal front end for e-governance services while the DC Office Server would be the supporting back end. The facilitation center to be operated by professionally trained personnel who serve with a client focused attitude such that the citizen experiences an entirely different form of service delivery in government.

Starting rural kiosks on a pilot project basis, to begin with, in certain areas (under the overall guidance & control of local CIC) identified on the basis of general awareness level among people, economic feasibility for the kiosk operator as an entrepreneur etc. In the next phase, depending on the success of this pilot project, similar activities can be replicated in other areas of the district.

Strengthening the Community Information Centers in other areas to act as access points for e-governance services for the citizens.

### **C. Background Changes:**

E-solutions cannot be effective in isolation from other administrative solutions. Hence, they must be supported by certain gradual background changes which would help in ensuring acceptance and sustainability of the larger systemic changes elaborated above.

#### **➤ Change Management:**

- Making the office working environment conducive & productive by providing overtime honorarium, facilities like drinking water, computer, vehicle, canteen, public conveniences etc.

#### **Improving the Work Culture :**

- Motivating staff through frequent staff meetings and emphasizing on values and professional ethics etc.
- Involving them by taking their suggestions & ensuring their active participation and commitment towards the intended change
- Discussing frankly any genuine doubts and apprehensions
- Delegation and decentralization of power and responsibility

#### **Capacity Building:**

- Skill upgradation and training
- Training in basic computer skills for staff

### ➤ **Infrastructure Modernisation:**

- Improving the status of connectivity in terms of physical connectivity i.e. roads etc. as well as electronic and digital connectivity i.e. telephone, internet etc.
- Up gradation of the quality of infrastructure and facilities available at the government educational, health institutions etc.
- Power availability in most interior areas is erratic and hence, needs to be tackled appropriately with the help ASEB. This will help us to cover these areas with respect to starting rural kiosks in the next phase of the modernization project.

### **Nature of Investments and Resources Required for Bringing About Systemic Changes**

An approximate ‘Cost-Benefit Analysis’ exercise would easily prove that the investment in this project would be more than compensated for by the improvement in productivity, efficiency and quality of service delivery.

- The district administration would require technical expertise as far as e-governance & computerization is concerned. The existing technical resources like NIC need to be optimally utilized especially for training and capacity building of the staff. Further, a private player specializing in developing and running e-governance solutions should be roped in for providing the software, its implementation and maintenance.
- The mode of project implementation should be that of ‘Public Private Partnership’ wherein educated unemployed youth can be transformed into entrepreneurs or rural kiosk operators.
  - ⇒ With the help of training and technical support of the private partner and financial support from banks these entrepreneurs can provide e-governance services through the kiosks.
  - ⇒ In order to ensure the financial viability of running the kiosk as a business, other income generating activities like STD/PCO, Xerox, Printing, training etc. would also be coupled with the main function of delivery of e-governance services.
  - ⇒ As a part of the agreement between the three parties involved in the project i.e. the district administration, private player and kiosk operator a revenue sharing arrangement would be worked out. All services would have a nominal fee order to ensure the financial sustainability of the project in the long run.
- There are certain existing schemes under which funds can be availed of and utilized for modernization e.g. Rajiv Gandhi Computer Literacy

Project, Community Information Centers etc. The modernization project can help in synergizing the benefits facilitate convergence of all such schemes.

- Moreover, certain existing schemes are aimed at upgradation of the physical and social infrastructure in especially the rural areas e.g. Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojna, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rural Electrification Programme etc. The effective focused implementation of these schemes in the backward rural areas can prepare them for benefiting from the next phase of the modernization project.