

**Speech of Hon'ble Chairman on the occasion of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day Celebrations on 01.10.2018**

Hon'ble colleague Members of the Commission, Hon'ble former Chairmen and Members of the Commission, officers and staff of the UPSC, Ladies and Gentlemen -

Warm felicitations on the 92<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day of the UPSC.

**2.** I am especially grateful to the former Hon'ble Chairmen and Members of the Commission for gracing this occasion and re-enforcing the foundations of tradition, convention and continuity which have held up this institution as a venerable body, successfully fulfilling its Constitutional mandate. It is your vision, sagacity, hard work and adherence to the highest principles of probity which we look up to as we move ahead to meet the challenges of living up to our primary objective of giving this great country a modern and merit based civil service. The achievements which I shall be enumerating in the course of this address are certainly not those of the present Commission alone. Many of these achievements are the result of steps initiated by some of our former colleagues, which have fructified with the hard and sincere work of the Secretariat's officers and staff.

**3.** I have been with the Commission for over three years now and do feel that it is a great privilege for all of us who get the opportunity to work in the Commission and become a part of this great institution. The sum total of my understanding of this august institution is that our strength lies in the sapience and prudence which Hon'ble Members bring to the Commission by virtue of their rich and diverse professional backgrounds. The acumen and wisdom of all our predecessors has created a rich tradition and given robust practices which have stood the test of time and public enquiry. This institution is strong and free of routine blemishes because all of us are committed to respect each others' vision, thought processes, conviction and engage in free and frank exchange of ideas. This constant dialogue leads to a unique realization that while our individual opinions may be very good, the best decisions emerge only through consensus - following an open discussion. We strive to preserve this tradition.

**4.** Let me start with a review of our functions, i.e. holding examinations, recruitments and deputations, DPCs and of course giving advice on disciplinary cases. Conduct of Examinations is undoubtedly the most sensitive and stressful exercise. Right from the



announcement of opening dates to setting up and printing of question papers, logistics for movement of documents to actual conduct of the exams, to the evaluation process and declaration of the results is a challenging process, where nothing can be left to chance. We of course do this simultaneously for several exams round the year; knowing all the time that there is zero scope for error at any stage. **All our officers and staff bear onerous responsibility but we still strive to reduce the stress for our young candidates, who we know are also under tremendous strain to find their place under the Sun.** Over the years, we have brought an increasing number of exam-related interactions and transactions on-line. We are also moving ahead with shifting from a "pen and paper" mode of examination to a computer-based mode. Apart from **making the examination process more candidate-friendly**, the new systems also serve to cut down the time cycle for each examination. We are looking into **better quality of venues for the examinations and see if we can introduce a system whereby non-serious and under-prepared candidates could be encouraged to withdraw their applications well in time to reduce the logistics required for conducting the examinations.** To take an example on this, our experience with the Civil Services Examination is that roughly 50% of the 10 lakh plus candidates who fill in the application forms for the Preliminary examination actually write the examination. The Commission has to book venues, print papers, hire invigilators and ship the documents for all the 10 lakh applicants – which turns out to be a 50% waste of energy and resources. Our view is that if we are able to work with genuine and serious candidates, we can give them better facilities and make our system more efficient. A start is being made with the Engineering Services Examination, 2019. More examinations will be brought under this arrangement. This is work in progress.

**5. Bearing in mind the aspirations of the youth for better job opportunities, the Commission is now disclosing the scores and ranking of non-recommended candidates in some examinations on its website and further linking it with the "National Career Services" portal of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.** Central Ministries and organizations can, conceivably take advantage of this arrangement wherein candidates who have cleared a rigorous screening process in the Civil Services, Engineering Services or Combined Medical Services Examinations, but could not find a place in the merit list due to constraints of vacancies, can now look forward to being picked up for other Government, public sector or private sector jobs, from the same data base. The measure should obviate the need for conducting of multiple and separate examinations by different organizations for posts with similar entry level qualifications. This will **reduce the stress on young job aspirants** and at the same time



reduce the time taken for recruitment by various bodies. To further help the applicants and make our system more transparent and responsive, a Query Based Marks Information System has been introduced, under which marks are provided to all the interviewed candidates on individual queries, through an interactive portal.

**6.** Living up to its objective of making judicious use of technology, Optical Fiber Cables (OFC) have been laid in the Commission premises. An Online Question Paper Representation portal for single and multiple examinations, a Query based marks information system, Bill Monitoring System for former Hon'ble Chairmen and Members, Venue Management System and e-Appointment under Single Window System have been developed and are in use. Online Servers have been upgraded for hosting increasing number of online applications. The Commission has digitized all its Annual Reports and other important files and documents are also being digitized to free up as much physical space as possible to provide a more clean and healthy working environment. All service books of staff members and officers of the UPSC have now been scanned and uploaded on an E-Service Book Portal. Pension cases are being managed through the "Bhavishya" Web Portal and the online performance appraisal system (SPARROW) has been implemented.

**7.** To preserve and highlight the rich history and heritage of the Commission, we had, as you are aware, established a Museum on the ground floor of the Examination Building. The collection of valuable documents and other archival material has been appreciated by all and the Museum is witnessing a growing number of visitors. In order to take the Museum to a wider population, the UPSC website now hosts a Virtual Tour of this Museum wherein you can navigate through the Museum and see the various items on display. Realizing that serious visitors would like to actually read the material on display, we have now digitized practically all documents on display in the Museum with the expert help of the National Archives of India. These digitized documents have also been placed in the UPSC website and soon will be available as hyperlinked files connected to displayed items in the 360<sup>0</sup> Virtual Tour. We also plan to make these digitized documents available on LED displays in the Museum, so that visitors can go through an entire document, page by page, without having to physically handle the delicate, age-worn papers.

**8.** Lot of improvement has taken place in the infrastructure and all our building are today compliant with Accessible India Campaign norms for differently abled visitors. The cooperation we have received from the CPWD needs to be placed on record. Looking at our requirement for more office space as well as space for holding



examinations and housing our Advisors, we are working on a proposal for adding a modern state of the art examination facility and new Advisor's suites for the UPSC.

**9.** Important as the above developments are, what gives us the greatest pride – and also a sense of heightened responsibility – is the continuing hallowed image of the Commission. The Hon'ble Supreme Court's recent judgement in the Prakash Singh and Others vs. Union of India case regarding the appointment of DGPs of States, entrusting the task of empanelling suitable officers for the post of Heads of Police force in the States and UTs to the UPSC, is a case in point. Hon'ble Rashtrapati Ji, when I called on him on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 referred to this judgement as an indication of the highest trust reposed by the nation in the fairness of procedures followed in the UPSC. On another topical issue, you are all aware of the various views which have been expressed in the media on the Government's proposal for lateral entry into the services. While there have been articles lauding the proposal as well as others critical of the same, one thing which stands out in this public discourse is that everyone has endorsed the role of UPSC in managing a fair, impartial and unbiased selection process, which has withstood the test of time.

**10.** Do we therefore run a perfect system ?

I would say 'No'.

Amongst the challenges we are grappling with, is the question of candidates trying to use unfair means, poor quality of infrastructure at the examination venues, poor quality of invigilation and several logistical issues. As we try to overcome the shortcomings through various approaches, we are also reaching out to Public Service Commissions of other countries to learn from their best practices to overcome the challenges. Our international outreach is not only to share our knowledge with other countries but also to learn how various countries are harnessing technology and adopting other methods to run efficient recruitment systems. We now have MOUs for cooperation with the Public Service Commissions of Mongolia, Bhutan and Mauritius. In the last couple of weeks, we have had delegations from Malaysia and Afghanistan visiting us, where interest has been evinced by the visitors for formalizing their relationship with the UPSC. The Hon'ble Minister for Human Resources of Malaysia is also visiting us next week for exchange of ideas and furthering mutual interaction. Our officers will soon be visiting Paris to learn from the practices of the relevant Public Service institutions in France. We are also establishing dialogues with the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia through

our Ministry of External Affairs and hope to engage with the Public Service institutions of these countries to get an understanding of their modern practices. We have also been holding discussions with select Information Technology firms and leading Human Resource agencies, working in the corporate world, to see if we can incorporate some of their methods into our own procedures to build a more candidate friendly, efficient and robust examination and selection system. Our doors are open for the best ideas.

**11.** Let me conclude by taking you to the main entrance of the iconic Dholpur House - the round building. The bronze Gandhi statue made by one of India's most renowned sculptor, Mr. Ram Sutar, which we now have at the main entrance hall signifies the **ethos of the Civil Services. The message to aspirants is quite simply this : that when you join the civil services, you join to serve the masses. It is expected that you will take decisions which are in the interest of the underprivileged sections of the society. For the senior bureaucrats who visit us for various meetings, the statue is there to remind them of the same principles and additionally, that there is no scope for arrogance and deceit in the process of good governance and that the UPSC expects all visitors to embrace humility and a sense of service to the nation at all times.**

**12.** In the context of 'Gandhi Jayanti' tomorrow, I am reminded of the importance the Father of the Nation attached to silence and introspection. Today I have spoken a lot, but I guess the Mahatma would have agreed that duty comes before self. I like to remain silent and introspect but I have done my duty.

**13.** Allow me to thank you once again for gracing this occasion.  
THANK YOU.

**JAI HIND**