DEBATES ON ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IN INDIA

TRAINING

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The **State Capacity Initiative** at the Centre for Policy Research is an interdisciplinary research and practice programme focused on addressing the challenges of the 21st-century Indian state. The purpose of this initiative is to place the critical challenges of building state capacity at the heart of the field of policy research in India, where it has always belonged but remains surprisingly marginalised. We therefore start with first principles and ground ourselves in existing realities to deepen and expand the understanding of the challenges and possibilities of building state capacity in a democratic and federal India. Our programme of work focuses on the changing roles of the Indian state: institutional design, implementation and administrative capacity; the challenges of regulatory and fiscal capacity; and the complex and changing relations between society, politics and state capacity in India.

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TRAINING

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1800, the Governor General of India, Lord Wellesley, took up the question of training recruits to the East India Company's Civil Service. His decision was made against the backdrop of the expanding role of the company, which, by the late 18th century, had extended from trading activities to revenue collections, diplomacy, and military service (Cohn, 1987). While civil servants were still known by their commercial titles— Writers, Factors, Junior and Senior Merchants, and were selected by the governing body of the Company, their role had transformed from commercial trading to handling functions which were political, judicial and financial in nature, making way for a colonial civil service. They were no longer expected to simply understand a merchant's accounts and required specialized training to oversee their new responsibilities.

Wellesley proposed setting up a college where writers for any of the three Presidencies would take courses in "Liberal and Oriental studies" before assuming their posts. He was given permission to set up the college for Bengal Presidency Writers at Fort William in Calcutta to train civil servants for three years in "general matters of law and ethics, and in various Indian subjects including languages, history, religion and law" (Gilmour, 2007, p. 81). Later, company Directors also recognised the need to train civil servants and set up a new training college in Haileybury, England in 1809.

The selection criteria for attending Haileybury were particular to the time. The company's directors nominated men who were "high-spirited," "muscular type," a "good example of the English country gentleman," belonging to "worthy families—those that had proved themselves over generations" (Gilmour, 2007, p. 88). The candidates had to pass written and oral exams in history, mathematics, Greek and Roman before being admitted to the college. At Haileybury, the training extended over two years and covered

mathematics and natural philosophy, classical and general literature, law, history, general economy and languages relevant to the candidate's Indian province (Gilmour, 2007, p. 87). Despite the emphasis laid on studying "oriental" and "classical" languages, many officers recall this exercise to be "rather futile"—the rudimentary understanding of the languages they gained during their training was insufficient.

Autobiographical accounts of ICS officers depict a mixed reaction to the education they were receiving at Haileybury. One officer writes, "the level of education was generally low because discipline was lax and most boys were only interested in 'scraping by'"(Gilmour, 2007, p. 93). On the other hand, perhaps the most significant contribution of the institute was that it instilled a sense of esprit de corps in the young recruits. Many officers recount that the time spent at Haileybury was crucial in "developing bonds of comradeship and maintaining an elevated standard of thought and feeling in service as Corps d'elite" (Cohn, 1987, p. 541). This is because Haileybury was geographically isolated—the small student community, with little else to do, spent a lot of time playing sports and socializing. One account notes that "the camaraderie of the river or the cricket pitch or even of the pipe and the tankard of claret allowed men to get to know each other and measure their merits and defects"(Gilmour, 2007, p. 96). These strong bonds between the peer group formed at Haileybury were useful in India where the officers usually found themselves alienated from Indian society. As Bernard Cohn points out, "they needed an understanding of the values and culture of their peers, superiors, and subordinates which the common experience of Haileybury gave them" (Cohn, 1987, p. 545).

In 1853, the Indian Civil Service was made merit-based and opened itself to competition. The following year, the Macaulay Committee decided that successful

candidates would spend two years at approved universities (most chose Oxford). Subsequently, Haileybury was closed as it no longer aligned to this new system of recruitment and training. Probationers had to take two periodical exams and a final one, which together determined the province they were placed in as well as their seniority. Additionally, they had to attend court proceedings and write reports on criminal, civil and police courts. Finally, medical tests and a riding exam was also conducted as part of the process(Gilmour, 2007).

In March 1947, the Interim Government of India opened an IAS training institute in Delhi called Metcalfe house. A competitive exam was held in July 1947 and the first batch of successful candidates began their training at the institute in July 1948. The training syllabus was tailored to reflect India's changed status to a parliamentary democracy, probationers were taught the constitution and the role they were required to play according to it (Maheshwari, 1987, p. 249). Subsequently, the Government opened an IAS staff training college in Shimla in 1956 for training officers of the All India Services and higher central services.

In a move to amalgamate the institutions in Delhi and Shimla, the Government announced the formation of a National Academy of training in 1958 and invited several ministries to contribute towards setting up the foundational course. The First Administrative Reforms Commission (First ARC), like Haileybury, emphasized that "the common foundational course will really be an effective factor in producing an esprit de corps among the Services" (Administrative Reforms Commission, 1969, p. 66) .This wasn't the only colonial legacy of training practices adopted by independent India, the colonial custom of assigning understudy to magistrates as a form of training continued post-independence too. In his memoir, T. S. R. Subramaniam recalled, "British joint magistrates, fresh from Oxford or Cambridge, needed to be broken in before being exposed directly to the wilderness of India… spen[d] initial two or three months living in the household of the collector to absorb the insights and experiences in a cushioned environment"(Subramanian, 2004, p. 144). From his own experience, Subramaniam considered that he learnt much more from being the understudy of a sub-divisional magistrate than at LBSNAA, where he described the atmosphere as being 'semi academic'.

Since Independence, the government's approach to training the IAS has undergone a sea of change.

The IAS has evolved "from being a postcolonial civil service… to one that is rooted in the empirical realities of a developing and resurgent India" (Kiran Aggarwal Committee, 2014, p.1). Training programmes for the IAS have shifted their focus from regulation to socio-economic development in keeping with the new demands faced by governance and administration (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). In spite of these changes, there remain similarities with the colonial civil service. Like the ICS, the IAS is a high-functional generalist service tasked with handling a variety of responsibilities. Reform committees continue to express concerns that trainees do not attach adequate value to the training process (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). Training is still expected to create strong bonds between officers and establish a camaraderie. Most importantly, the central principle remains the same; a merit-based process is used to select young people with little or no experience in governance and place them in positions of great responsibility.

This kind of system inevitably relies heavily on training to impart skills. Better training, both at the formative and mid-career stages, is expected to bridge the "wide chasm between public expectation and service delivery" (Kiran Aggarwal Committee, 2014, p. 3). For this reason, it is vital to examine the history of reform debates and conversations on the subject. Tracing the evolution of these reform threads will better equip us to analyse current and future reform measures by understanding which problems are being addressed and how. To this end, this working paper closely reads the following: the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) reports, Central Pay Commission (CPC) reports, and reports produced by reform commissions like the Alagh Committee, Kiran Aggarwal Committee, Hota Committee, Kothari Committee, Yugandhar Committee, VT Krishnamachari Committee and the Surinder Nath Committee. Apart from this, the working paper also draws on theNational Training Policy, 1996 and2012, and documents on Mission Karmayogi that reflect the government's vision for IAS training.

This paper begins with a short description of the current training format and the IAS ecosystem. This is followed by an analysis of the three streams that dominate reform thinking on IAS training: the strategy, structure and content of training; the role of and need for incentives in training programmes, and the institutional apparatus in place to operationalise training programmes.

2. TRAINING THE IAS: CURRENT FORMAT AND STRUCTURE[1]

The training scheme for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) comprises two major components—Induction Training and Mid-Career Training (MCT) or In-Service Training. The Induction Training for IAS officers is a two-year programme organised immediately after their qualification through the Civil Services Examination (CSE). It has two parts: a short 15 week Foundation Course (FC) and a professional training course for the remainder of the period. The FC is organised at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy for Administration (LBSNAA) and partner institutes and is common to officers of all services recruited through the CSE. The course seeks to equip officers with the skills, knowledge and the temperament required to execute the duties of a civil servant while also developing camaraderie between officers of different services. Officers sit through courses on subjects such as Public Administration, economics, law, the Constitution of India, history and more, and participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities like treks, village visits and sports.

Following this primer in public service, officers of each service undergo specialised professional training organised by a dedicated training institute corresponding to each service (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). The LBSNAA organises this part of the training for the IAS. One session of practical experience or District Training is sandwiched between two phases of classroom learning. Phase-I is for 22 weeks and aims to build an understanding of public systems and their management, focussed on enabling officers to handle assignments in the first ten years of service. It includes a 6-7 week winter study tour or 'Bharat Darshan' to give trainees the chance to experience the country's diversity first-hand. Trainees then spend a year on District Training with their respective state cadres where they are usually attached to a district and are mentored by the District Collector. Officer trainees are expected to 'learn by seeing' through attachments with district-level offices like the Collectorate, Tehsildar and SDM offices, and 'learn by doing' by holding independent charge of subordinate positions like BDPO and Tehsildar. During this period, they also learn the laws, administrative

practices, socio-economic conditions, details regarding programme implementation, history and language of their allotted state. The District Training is followed by a 6-week Phase-II at LBSNAA, which provides trainees the opportunity to reflect, and consolidate learnings from their experiences during the previous two phases. At the end of this Induction Training programme, officer trainees are awarded a Master's Degree in Public Management. Finally, as a conclusion to their induction programme, officers are required to serve a short stint as Assistant Secretaries to experience the nuances of working at the Union Government level.

Later in their careers, officers are required to undergo Mid-Career Training (MCT) to adapt to the changing nature of their job as they rise up within the administrative hierarchy. According to the Second ARC, IAS officers usually play a programme implementation role in the first 8-10 years of their career, a programme formulation role in the next stage, and are primarily concerned with policy formulation towards the latter stages of their career. Each of these roles requires different skill sets and capabilities. Therefore, a system of mandatory MCT was introduced to prepare IAS officers for the changing demands that arise with growing seniority (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). Training programmes under this system covered both general skills such as leadership and ethics, and domain-specific knowledge. This MCT programme is conducted in three phases: a 7 to 8 week-long Phase-III for officers with 7-8 years of seniority, a 4 week-long Phase-IV for officers with 15-16 years of seniority, and a 3 week-long Phase-V for officers with 26-28 years of seniority. These three phases focus on project management and execution, policy formulation and leadership and public policy evaluation, respectively.

3. STRATEGY, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF TRAINING

This section describes the ways in which reform literature has addressed different components of training programme design such as structure, content and curriculum. There is a vast amount of information on these topics across various reform committee reports. For ease of understanding, we have categorised the key ideas into the following buckets: 1. Exams as a site of training. 2. The objectives of training, covering three sub-

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[1] This section outlines the overall structure of training for the IAS and draws information primarily from lbsnaa.gov.in (accessed December 31, 2021). Readers familiar with the structure may choose to skip to the next section on reform debates.

topics: a) Shift from Duties to Competencies; b) Training to mould attitudes and build unity; and c). Training to build expertise and specialisation. This is followed by discussions on 3. Duration and Rigour of Training; 4. Needs Assessment and Evaluation in Training; 5. Professionalisation of Training; and finally, 6. Trainers.

We start the discussion by exploring the civil services entrance exam itself as a site for training civil servants. While formal training only begins after a UPSC aspirant has been selected and joins LBSNAA, informally, training to become a civil servant begins much earlier through the process of studying for the exams. Understanding debates on the content of exams is, therefore, a valuable starting point for a conversation on training.

The exam as a site of training

The core objective of IAS training is to create a cadre of able public administrators. However, the duration of IAS officers' induction training does not allow for a robust grounding in the discipline of Public Administration, and unlike other bureaucracies as in the case of France, civil servants in India do not enter the service with Public Administration degrees (Manoharan et al., 2020; Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). In this context, the Civil Services Examination (CSE) itself can prove to be a critical stage of training because of the rigour with which candidates prepare for the exam.

Reform reports have recognised the need to include the discipline of Public Administration in the compulsory component of the examination curriculum. The Alagh Committee for example, identified that the optional subject papers offered in the Mains exam are poorly aligned with the objectives of the exam by stating that "the focus needs to be on what a candidate needs to know or learn in order to be a successful civil servant" (Alagh Committee, 2001, p. 110). As a remedy, the Committee proposed replacing optional subjects with compulsory multidisciplinary papers having "direct relevance to the higher civil services" (Alagh Committee, p. 111). One of these three newly recommended papers was 'Democratic Governance, Public Systems and Human Rights', indicating the importance given to topics within the Public Administration literature[2] The Second ARC championed the need to formally introduce public policy and public management training in the

higher education curriculum for candidates appearing in the CSE. To this end, the Commission proposed an overhaul of the selection system. It advocated for the establishment of a National Institutes of Public Administration and the introduction of bridge courses in public policy and management to "create a pool of well qualified and informed applicants for the civil services" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 88).

While these are positive developments, analyses of the Public Administration syllabus used for the entrance exams shows that many of the topics are outdated and of low relevance to the Indian context (Roberts & Manoharan, 2019). There is a missed opportunity here to expose aspirants to the latest developments, debates and methods related to their future jobs in the civil service. While there has been strong consensus on the reform measures discussed above, little change has been implemented to create a pool of already well-informed candidates. However, there has been much more active implementation of reform ideas in the formally recognised part of training which begins post selection.

Objectives of training

Focusing on the learner: A shift from duties to competencies

The National Training Policy (NTP) of 1996 emphasised the need to tailor training programmes to suit the intended organisations, cadres and other stakeholders. It argued that training methods should not be based on the priorities and strengths of training institutes, but rather on the profiles and needs of trainees. The NTP of 2012, tasked with defining a long-term vision for training at all levels, discussed the need to shift focus from duties to competencies. The NTP believed that in order to build a strategic human resource management system, "it is essential to match individual competencies with the jobs assigned, and bridge competency gaps for current and future roles through training" (Department of Personnel and Training, 2012, p. 1). As part of this new framework, it also suggested that training be more dynamic and not limited to fixed career stages (Department of Personnel and Training, 2012). The recently launched Mission Karmayogi attempts to realise the NTP's vision of a competency-based framework. To this end, the two primary components

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[2] Later reports like the Baswan Committee Report (2016) also reiterated the need to discontinue the optional component from the Mains examination syllabus (Reddy, 2017).

of the mission—a framework of roles, activities and competencies, and the integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) content marketplace—serve to identify the capabilities required by individual civil servants, as well as address existing gaps in competencies (Department of Personnel and Training, 2020a).

Training to mould attitudes and build unity

In addition to competencies, reform literature also discusses the ways in which training should mould officer trainees. The Fifth CPC recommended that training for higher Civil Services should focus on attitudinal or behavioral change, believing that this could catalyse substantive administrative reform. It was also in favour of exposing probationers to processes and cultures of private firms, both through seminars with corporate leaders and short stints working with such firms (Government of India, 1997). Further, the idea that the Foundation Course should instill an esprit de corps and 'feeling of oneness' among the different organised services has featured prominently. This idea has translated into reform debates on the need for a combined or unified FC across cadres.

As early as 1969, the First ARC discussed the possibility of having a common Foundation Course but worried that it might accentuate inter-service differences rather than reduce them. Therefore, it was decided that separate Foundation Courses be adopted. The First ARC felt that structural reforms to equalise services, such as introducing uniform pay grades, were more likely to "promote real unity in thought and aspiration" (First Administrative Reforms Commission, page number, 1969). Thirty nine years later, the Second ARC contended that a common Foundation Course was necessary since imparting an ethos of public service and explaining government machinery was valuable to all services. It reiterated the Alagh Committee's suggestion that this common programme should be organised at a single institute, such as the LBSNAA (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008; Alagh Committee, 2001). Following decisions made by the government in 2019 based on these recommendations, all candidates recruited through the CSE attended the 2020 FC at LBSNAA.[3]

Training to build expertise and specialisation

Reform conversations on Induction Training and MCT have been dominated by concerns about expertise and specialisation. The RVV Ayyar Committee (2007) proposed that trainees should spend a small period of time during their District Training in a sector or field of their choice as an early step towards building domain expertise. The Kiran Aggarwal Committee (2014) agreed with the need to identify specialisation early and advocated that specialists be identified during the process of induction itself, through a screening of academic credentials and an entry-level test.

Expertise and specialisation receive even more attention in reform conversation about Mid-Career Training. The Alagh Committee stressed the need to encourage officers to specialise by periodically sending them for "specialised training in one of the leading professional institutions" (2001, p. 173). In spite of reform reports recognising this weakness, the Second ARC noted that "mid-term training courses of all durations continue to be rather generic and do not adequately cater to the need for inculcating greater domain knowledge in civil servants" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 135).

Duration of training

Since training requires varied modes of delivery and trainee profiles are constantly changing, the structure and duration of programmes must be modified to keep them relevant and effective. Discussions on these questions have taken different forms for the FC and the MCT. Recent reports debate the need to reduce the duration of the FC and call for an increase of the length and rigour of MCT instead. This indicates a shift in emphasis towards training at strategic mid-career levels.

Discussing the duration of the FC, the Kothari Committee argued that the mandate of the programme necessitated a longer duration of one year. More recent reform reports have grappled with ideas on the length of the Induction Training component. While the Kiran Aggarwal Committee recommends reducing course duration from 103 weeks to 75 weeks citing the "changing profile of entrants, easier access to learning resources, and more dynamic external environment" (2014, p. 29), the Ayyar Committee and Second ARC have both opposed it.

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[3] http://www.uniindia.com/lbsnaa-conducts-combined-foundation-course-for-20-different-services/india/news/2157314.html

Regarding the MCT, reform reports have repeatedly stressed the need to make it more intense and rigorous. The Surinder Nath and Ayyar Committees also echo this view. The Yugandhar Committee presented a framework for a revised and more rigorous MCT programme in 2003. In 2007, these recommendations culminated in the current MCT programme, which is of significantly longer duration—eight weeks of Phase-III, eight weeks of Phase-IV, and four weeks of Phase-V training (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008).

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

The Second ARC emphasised that training programs should "be designed separately for each person and for each job, by taking into account the needs of the job, the existing capabilities of the officer and thus identifying the gaps in his/her knowledge, skills and aptitude for performing the job" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 140). An individual-focusedapproach, however, is not feasible in large and extensive administrative systems like India's. Therefore, the Second ARC proposed a detailed analysis of the training needs for different clusters of jobs and participants to better design training programs. Assessing training needs and evaluating the impact of training are important processes complementary to training and are central to its success.

The idea that job roles must be assessed before the design of training solutions is not a recent addition to the reform conversation. As early as 1996, the NTP had identified the importance of comprehensively understanding training needs. The policy laid out a pre-training plan comprising an analysis of government goals and individual roles, and the development of methods to measure performance. Similarly, the Kiran Aggarwal Committee proposed the introduction of entry-level testing in key disciplines to generate a baseline assessment of key gaps in learning.

As discussed earlier, the NTP 2012 streamlined the reform thinking on needs analysis by approaching it through the lens of 'competencies'. In order to set up a working competency framework, it was essential to identify core and specialised skills relevant to each position in the administration (Department of Personnel and Training, 2012). Through its Framework of Roles, Activities, and Competencies (FRAC) component, Mission Karmayogi lays out a plan of action to operationalise the NTP's vision of institutionalising competency frameworks and competency-based needs

analysis in training. It seeks to link every position in the government with the competencies required to effectively execute responsibilities associated with those positions. To implement this, every department will have to perform an exercise to map capacities linked to each position, and this mapping process will be supervised at the newly instituted FRAC Centre of Excellence. This shift towards competency-based public management in India follows a global trend in New Public Management. Competency modelling has been central to administrative reform ideas globally since the 1990s, and was seen as a tool to catalyse cultural change to build a modern government (Horton, 2000).

The 1996 NTP insisted on having clear Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plans in training programmes. The NTP stressed that good training must meet the objectives of the organisation, as well as training needs of the individual. Training will improve if government departments and organisations use post-programme evaluations effectively to review their training objectives and ensure that they match their changing capacity needs (Department of Personnel & Training, 1996). The Fifth CPC also discussed the need for capacity assessment through entry-level testing and the setting up of better evaluation tools for training. However, as per the Second ARC, it would seem that these recommendations have seen limited implementation. The Second ARC states that the NTP provides a clear roadmap to strengthen training efforts in the government, but "in the absence of a monitoring mechanism, it has not been possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Training Policy" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 138). Most recently, Mission Karmayogi outlines an M&E framework which includes i) an Annual Capacity Building Plan which will compile departmental capacity and building needs; ii) a dashboard measuring departmental progress; iii) third-party assessment frameworks; and iv) an Annual State of the Civil Services Report to capture the overall state of the civil services and not just training needs. Moving forward, it will be important to build on the renewed focus on assessments and evaluation to maximise the benefits that individuals and organisations receive from training programs.

Professionalisation of Training

A more recent strand of reform thinking identifies the need to professionalise training. Reports recommend the integration of training with the attainment of a formal degree or qualification for this process. This

is not only seen as a method to improve the rigour and quality of the training itself, but also to empower officers in their careers and roles.

The Alagh Committee recommended the restructuring of the Induction Training programme into a postgraduate degree programme in Public Policy and Systems Management. It argued that a professional degree would provide officers greater capacity to discharge their responsibilities, as well as the ability to command public respect. Further, the committee believed it would likely empower them to resist political pressure and access alternate career trajectories outside of the Civil Services (Alagh Committee, 2001).

The Second ARC argued that "qualifications in public policy are an important element in developing professionalism among civil servants" but rued the absence of such professional programmes within the country (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 134). At the recruitment stage, the commission stressed on the importance of having a pool of recruits already trained in the basics of Public Administration. The commission envisioned a network of National Institutes of Public Administration running undergraduate courses in Public Administration or Governance that would emerge as the primary source for civil service aspirants. Second, as an extension to the MCT, the Second ARC (2008) emphasised the need to provide officers with more options to enhance their academic qualifications, especially in Public Policy, Management and Administration.Some of these reform inputs proposing formalisation and professionalisation of training have been implemented. In 2015, the Government decided to award a Master's Degree in Public Management to IAS officers on completion of their two year Induction Training program (Gohain, 2015). In 2019, the LBSNAA announced an agreement with IIM Indore to allow civil servants to pursue PhDs at the academy. The erstwhile director of the LBSNAA explained that "civil servants want to take a study break to enhance their skills... we want to be able to provide them with opportunities to pursue research at our institution" (Sharma, 2019, para. 7). Interestingly, reform reports link academic and professional qualifications not just to knowledge or skills, but also to "developing professionalism" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). From a research and reform lens, it is useful to probe this connection—what is professionalism in the service? What does it mean to professionalise training? What benefits do officers gain from formal qualifications? And are there other ways of fulfilling these needs?

Trainers

There are three pertinent issues with regards to a discussion on trainers. First, the imagination of who an ideal trainer is. Second, the training of trainers. And third, incentives that will help attract and retain good trainers. All reform reports suggest that the faculty should be a mix of civil servants and academics. The NTP emphasised the role of civil servants as trainers "to draw on expertise and insight gained by civil servants in the course of their career" (Department of Personnel and Training, 1996, p. vi). The Second ARC, meanwhile, pointed to the importance of "theoretical inputs" alongside practical knowledge, opening up the job of training to academia as well (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 147).

Only one of the two NTPs discussed the need to identify, train and create a cadre of trainers. The NTP 1996 observed that "at present, trainers are picked more by accident than choice" (Department of Personnel and Training, 1996, p. 38). To remedy this, it recommended psychological tests to identify potential trainers who embody the values of civil service. Aside from classroom trainers, reform reports also discussed the role of mentorship from senior officers during the period of district based training. Reports from the First ARC to the Kiran Aggarwal Committee have consistently expressed concern over the quality of mentorship provided to trainees and recommend introducing a structured process to select District Collectors with whom trainees would be attached (Administrative Reforms Commission, 1969; Kiran Aggarwal Committee, 2014; VT Krishnamachari Committee, 1962).

The NTP 1996 pointed to another weakness of the system—once a trainer is identified, their expertise should not be lost in the system when they move from their deputation at the training institute to their line department. It proposed the 'once a trainer, always a trainer' programme, where the trainer will continue to oversee training at the field-level or act as a training manager (Department of Personnel and Training, 1996, p. 38). The policy also recommended setting up a Trainers Staffing Scheme, where the DoPT "shall maintain panels of trainers and potential trainers identified on the basis of a scientific system" (Department of Personnel and Training, 1996, p. vi). Similarly the Kiran Aggarwal Committee identified a need to "position additional subordinate officers (drawn from CSS and state civil services) to discharge

routine administrative functions of the Academy" (Kiran Aggarwal Committee, 2014, p. 37). The committee believed that this would allow the staff to focus more on training rather than administrative functions, which can in turn lead to improved content and delivery.

Most reform committees, however, did not find the incentives for trainers to be sufficient. The Alagh Committee and Kothari Commission noted that emoluments for trainers need to be improved. The latter suggested a 'special pay' for faculty; however, the reports do not delineate a specific pay bracket. Additionally, the NTP 1996 suggested incentives for trainers such as a preferential house allotment scheme, assured admission of children in schools, assured field postings, and preference to be given to trainers for long-term training outside India. NTP 1996 claimed that these incentives "will add additional respectability to the assignment of a resource person" (Department of Personnel and Training, 1996, p. 40).The Kiran Aggarwal Committee stated that the incentive structure laid out by the Sixth Pay Commission for faculty (30 percent basic pay and rent-free housing) is inadequate and needs to be revisited. Additionally, in order to attract faculty from the best national institutes, it recommended hiring on the basis of short-term contracts (of two to three years) or as visiting faculty.
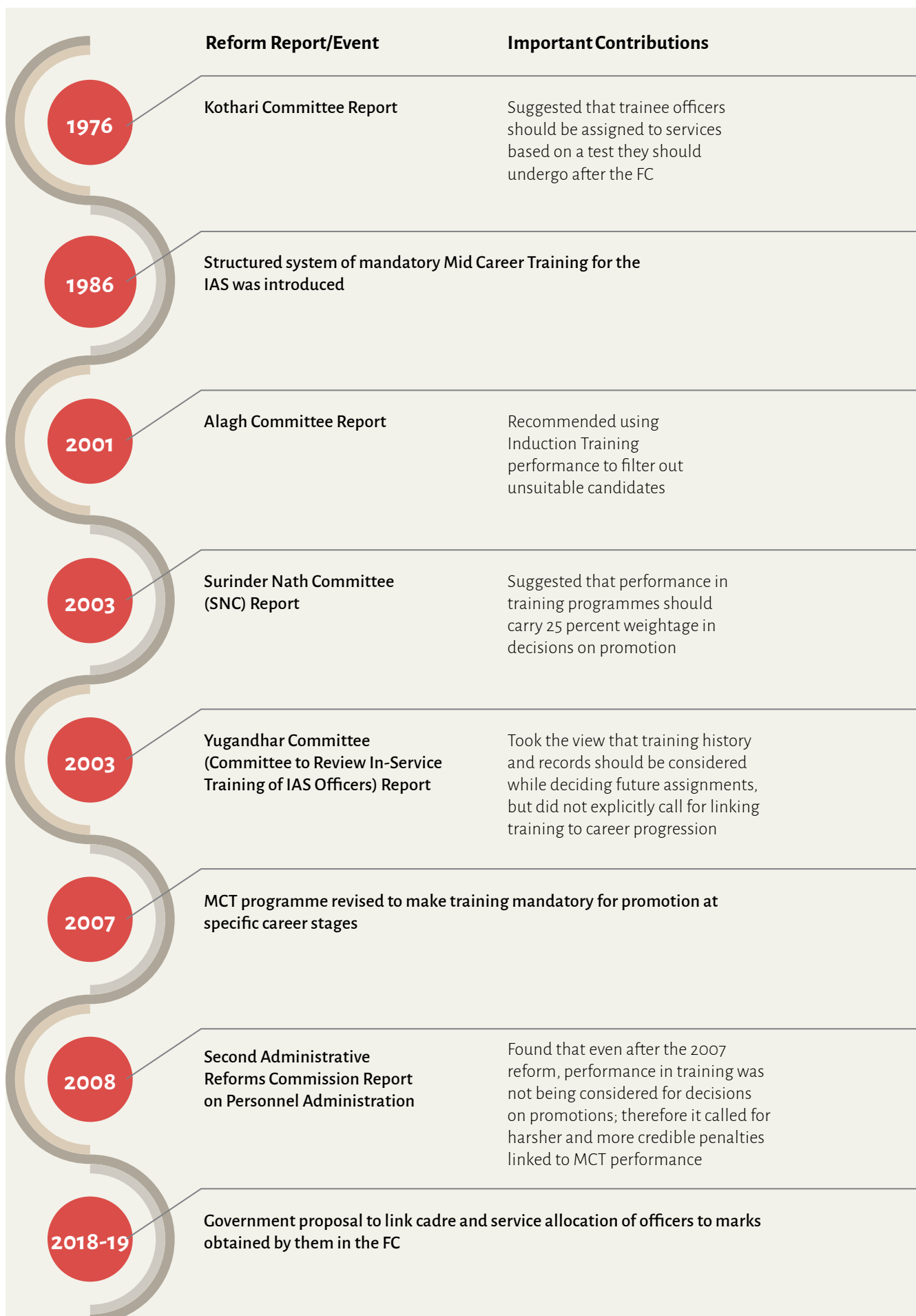
To sum, this section has highlighted the diverse set of reform measures suggested to improve the content, structure and delivery of training. However, one key concern that merits a separate section of its own is on the incentives for trainers themselves. Even well designed training programs can be viewed as an additional burden by trainees who are eager to move to their postings or attend to the urgent requirements of their current roles. Reforms reports have therefore spent considerable time reflecting on incentives for trainees, which we move to next.

4. INCENTIVES FOR TRAINING

Even with a rigorous curriculum and capable institutions, the success of the program depends on whether the trainees take the training seriously. According to reform discourse, a critical reason for poor training outcomes is the inadequate importance given to such programmes by trainee officers and state governments. This lack of sincerity is believed to result in low attendance rates, as well as poor performance in training programmes. For instance, the Second ARC identified that a serious weakness in Induction Training "relates to the [low] value attached to the Foundation Course by trainee officers" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 134). Many officers outside the IAS and the Indian Police Service (IPS) displayed a tendency to skip the FC to retake the examination and complete it only at the end of their Induction Training, while a few services did not even mandate attendance to the FC (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). In the case of MCT, the Fifth CPC report (1997) suggested that officers and their superiors did not accord enough importance to the training due to the absence of integration between training, performance and career development. Officers were often selected for training based not on need, but merely on their availability (Government of India, 1997).

Typically, reform reports have addressed this issue by proposing a variety of incentives to encourage trainees, superior officers and state governments to attach greater value to training programmes. The two most discussed forms of incentivisation are: linking performance in FC and IT to service milestones and linking performance in MCT to career progression. A timeline of key reform ideas and events is presented in Figure 1 and page 11.

Figure 1 A timeline of key reform proposals on incentives for training

	Reform Report/Event	Important Contributions
1976	Kothari Committee Report	Suggested that trainee officers should be assigned to services based on a test they should undergo after the FC
1986	Structured system of mandatory Mid Career Training for the IAS was introduced	
2001	Alagh Committee Report	Recommended using Induction Training performance to filter out unsuitable candidates
2003	Surinder Nath Committee (SNC) Report	Suggested that performance in training programmes should carry 25 percent weightage in decisions on promotion
2003	Yugandhar Committee (Committee to Review In-Service Training of IAS Officers) Report	Took the view that training history and records should be considered while deciding future assignments, but did not explicitly call for linking training to career progression
2007	MCT programme revised to make training mandatory for promotion at specific career stages	
2008	Second Administrative Reforms Commission Report on Personnel Administration	Found that even after the 2007 reform, performance in training was not being considered for decisions on promotions; therefore it called for harsher and more credible penalties linked to MCT performance
2018-19	Government proposal to link cadre and service allocation of officers to marks obtained by them in the FC	

Linking performance in Foundation Course and Induction Training to service milestones

Reform reports have repeatedly debated the merits of linking performance in the FC to service milestones, such as service confirmation, service and cadre allotment and intra-service seniority. For example, both the Alagh and Hota Committees recommended that performance during Induction Training should be used to filter out unsuitable candidates, with the former suggesting that this would send a "clear message to the candidate that the effort to prove suitability for the civil service does not end at the first stage of selection" (Alagh Committee, 2001).

Regarding service and cadre allocation, reform conversations are split on whether these allocations should happen before or after spells of training. The Alagh Committee noted that some services like the IAS and IPS utilized performance measures during training to fix intra-service seniority of Officer Trainees, and suggested that other services should adopt the same practice (2001). The Kothari Commission recommended that trainees should be assigned to services based on a test that officers should undergo after the FC (1976). It argued that "allocating candidates to different services before they join the Foundation Course has not only no advantage, but leads to unhealthy rivalry and complexes" (Kothari Committee, 1976, p. 16). On the other hand, the Kiran Aggarwal Committee recommended that the cadre should be allocated prior to start of the FC, so that this time can be utilised by trainees to acquire proficiency in the state language of the allocated cadre (2014). The government recently proposed a system where cadre and service allocation would be based on the combined score obtained in the Civil Services Examination (CSE) and the Foundation Course (Department of Personnel and Training, 2018).   While this may "stimulate students to do their best," it also carries the risk of "creating a climate of competition detrimental to their training" (Kothari Committee, 1976, p. 117).

Linking Mid-Career Training to career progression

Mandatory Mid-Career Training (MCT) was introduced for the IAS as early as 1986. Reform thinking displays great consensus and clarity on linking training performance to career progression at the mid-career

stage. As a result, reform recommendations on incentivisation of MCT have been implemented, albeit without the expected results.

Both the Fifth CPC (1997) and the Surinder Nath Commission (2003) agreed that training results must be considered in decisions on promotions and deputations. The latter went a step further to suggest that performance in training programmes must carry a 25 percent weightage in deliberations on promotions (Surinder Nath Committee, 2003). These calls for reform indicate that mandatory MCT did not have the intended effect, the reasons for which are explained by the Yugandhar Committee.

The Yugandhar Committee observed and documented practical difficulties in enforcing attendance for training (2003). It argued that the absence of visible penalties had caused a "lack of seriousness amongst the participants" regarding attendance and performance in these programmes (2003, page number). According to the Committee, states are reluctant to send officers for training due to the time and travel costs involved, resulting in the low attendance rates for these programmes (at 50 percent)| The poor quality of training provided is a further disincentive. While one view was that training performance ought to be considered for selection to special assignments and senior positions, another opinion feels that this is not necessary since officers already demonstrated their academic credentials during selection. Deliberating both arguments, the Yugandhar Committee finally recommended that the training history mentioned in the ACR (Annual Confidential Report) should be used to decide future assignments of the officer being evaluated, without explicitly or directly linking training performance to career progression (2003).

In 2007, the government revised the MCT programme by making participation mandatory for further promotion at specific career stages (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). The MCT programme , as discussed earlier, was implemented in three phases, and promotions to specific grades were made conditional to the completion of the corresponding phases. Officers were given a two year window to complete each phase, but cadre controlling authorities continued to face difficulties in temporarily relieving officers from their

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4 https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/jul/26/performance-in-foundation-course-to-determine-civil-services-cadres-2009492.html

5 https://theprint.in/india/governance/ias-ips-ifs-cadres-to-be-allotted-on-basis-of-foundation-course-along-with-upsc-marks/267624/

duties for the training "due to administrative and other exigencies" (Department of Personnel and Training, 2010, para. 3). To resolve this, officers were given three chances to complete each phase. Despite linking training directly to career progression, the Second ARC found that the same problems persisted: "only spareables get trained and not the more important good performers" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 135). For this reason, even after the 2007 reform, performance in training was not considered during evaluation for promotions (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). According to the Second ARC, the only way to overcome this was to impose harsher and more credible penalties while also providing early notice regarding training so as to allow departments to make interim arrangements.

To sum, incentives to increase participation in training have been suggested at two stages—during confirmation and allocation to services, and during promotions while in service. With respect to the FC, the debate on training has focused on the timing of allocation—either before or after the FC. On one hand, allocation before the service can give trainees the necessary time to build skills for their allotted role, but on the other, reform reports have suggested that this lowers incentives to participate fully in the Foundation Course. For MCT training, the key challenge has been both a lack of interest from officers due to perceptions that the quality of training is poor, and reluctance from states in giving time off to officers to attend training programmes. While some flexibility in completion of MCT has eased the tension between work commitments and training needs, a penalty-based approach continues to dominate the conversation on incentives. The recently announced Mission Karmayogi outlines a more flexible and developmental approach to training, including the use of long-term competency development plans and distance learning. This approach might offer a viable alternative to penalties which can often be counterproductive towards achieving outcomes

The next and final section of this working paper shifts focus to the broader institutional context within which training occurs.

There are presently six types of institutional arrangements for organising civil service training. The following classification is quoted from the Second ARC's report:

1   Service-specific lead institutes such as the LBSNAA for the IAS, the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) for the police, Staff College for the IA and AS, the National Academy of Direct Taxes (NADT) for the IRS, etc.

2   General purpose training institutions that are owned or largely funded by the government, such as the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA).

3   General purpose training institutions that are privately-owned, such as the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), etc.

4   Educational institutions that also serve as training institutions as part of their management development activities, such as the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), etc.

5   Sector-specific lead institutions such as the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Central Institute of Road Transport, etc.

6   State-level institutes that are general purpose or sector specific, for example, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA) in Pune, Harish Chandra Mathur Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration (HCM RIPA) in Jaipur and the Centre for Good Governance (CGG) in Hyderabad, etc.

LBSNAA is an apex institution for civil service training, as it is closely associated with the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). However, it has limited control over the other institutes. At the state-level, the Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs) are the apex institutions.

In September 2020, the government launched a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) or "Mission Karmayogi," which proposes to transform the training ecosystem. Mission Karmayogi is centred around a digital content marketplace—the Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT)-Karmayogi platform. It is not yet clear how this new framework will integrate with, and incorporate, the existing system.

5. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE FOR TRAINING

Reform reports have emphasised the importance of setting up an institutional structure that implements and closely monitors training practices. Two key aspects of the training institutional architecture emerge from our analysis of the reform committee reports, namely, the organisational architecture and funding.

Institutional and organisational architecture

Reform reports have repeatedly discussed the importance of institutionalisation of training and have suggested various forms of organisational set ups to implement training in the civil services. The First ARC, highlighting the significance of these debates, asserts that "training will not be effective, and will not receive due attention, unless there is a separate organisation specially charged with this function" (Administrative Reforms Commission, 1969, p. 63).

The First ARC proposes that a Central Training Division be created within the Department of Personnel to operationalise and implement the NTP. Interestingly, it also recommends that training for functional services should be carried out by individual departments or ministries. To implement this decentralised form of training, the Commission suggested that each department or ministry have a "sizeable programme of training, and a separate training cell located in its Chief Personnel Office managed by a Training Coordinator" (Administrative Reforms Commission, 1969, p. 65). The Central Training Division would be responsible for training the coordinators. Most importantly, the commission recommended setting up training institutes for each service if the number of people is sufficient. While subsequent reform reports often discuss the possibility of a central department to implement training, the proposal of a decentralised manner of training by each department has not been mentioned again.

Building on the First ARC, the NTP 1996 recommended establishing a National Training Council headed by the Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, along with representatives of state governments, major departments and ministries, and training institutes (Department of Personnel and Training, 1996). Its role would cover "advising the government on matters related to training policy, training design and programmes, as well as issues concerning their

implementation" (Department of Personnel & Training, 1996, p. 13). Additionally, the NTP envisioned the creation of "training managers" as an "institutionalised arrangement in each organisation for overseeing training function as [an] integral part of the Personnel Management System" (Department of Personnel & Training, 1996, p. 12). They would act as links between the departments or states and training institutions as well as between the departments or states and DoPT. Their role would entail analysing training requirements, designing training programmes and evaluation of training institutes. The DoPT would then act as an apex agency for preparing the NTP and coordinating its implementation.

The Kothari Commission envisioned a different structure—the establishment of a National Academy of Administration with the prime minister as its vice-chancellor, and the cabinet secretary as president (1976). It suggested that the academy be centrally located to make it more accessible to visiting faculty and scholars. The Alagh Commission reiterates the need to set up an apex body to oversee training with a similar organisational set up (2001). It further recommended upgrading training institutes to deemed universities with complete functional and financial autonomy (Alagh Committee, 2001).

The Second ARC, however, goes beyond the establishment of infrastructure and highlights the issue of training quality. It notes "that because of lack of coordination between the various organizations of Government and also between the Union and State Governments, huge amounts of money have been spent on 'brick and mortar' [training] rather than on investing in top class faculty and modern training equipment and material" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, p. 146). To remedy this, the Second ARC makes three recommendations. First, to conduct an evaluation of existing training institutes and their capacity in terms of training to ensure that resources for upgradation should only be provided to those who pass this assessment. This is underpinned by the logic that fewer institutes of the best quality are better than having several with poor standards. Second, the creation of governing councils of national and state administrative training institutions to oversee the selection and upgradation of faculty, quality of academic content and its delivery, and the overall development of the institute. And third, the commission recommended setting up a National Institute of Good Governance by upgrading

one of the existing national or state training institutes. This institute would be responsible for documenting as well as disseminating best practices.

The latest in training reforms, Mission Karmayogi, or the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, has recommended that the DoPT should create four key components in its institutional structure: the Prime Minister's HR Council (PMHRC), an apex body that will provide strategic direction to capacity-building reforms; a Capacity Building Commission to synchronise training standards and to create and supervise a shared pool of faculty and resources across central training institutions; a Cabinet Secretariat Coordination Unit to oversee and monitor implementation of plans; and a Special Purpose Vehicle which would operate iGOT Karmayogi, a digital content marketplace for learning.

In sum, most reports focus on constituting an apex government body which would undertake the task of organising the training and implementing it at a central level. However, while an apex body is crucial in coordinating different training functions, reform reports tend to overlook the pitfalls of centralising responsibility within a single institution. For example, in a study conducted at LBSNAA, a deputy director states, "we are the monopoly service providers so we have no competition. There is lethargy. We are cut off from what the customer wants, i.e. the organization sending them for training. We do not maintain touch with organizations in terms of what is the performance of the trainees, what we have equipped them with and what they are supposed to perform" (Vyas, 2004, p. 297).

Some reports have discussed an alternative, more decentralised form of training. Both the First ARC and the NTP 1996 envisioned that each department or ministry would have its own training wing, which would be managed by training coordinators or managers who would in turn be trained by a central division. On a similar note, reports have also emphasised evaluating and improving the quality of state ATIs. These reforms that bring into conversation the role. of individual departments and state ATIs in the training ecosystem

Figure 3 A timeline of debates on lateral entry

Suggested the establishment of a National Academy of Administration with the prime minister as its vice-chancellor, and the cabinet secretary as president

Kothari Committee Report

Recommended upgrading training institutes to deemed universities with complete functional and financial autonomy

Alagh Committee Report

Recommended establishing four components under DoPT: the Prime Minister's HR Council (PMHRC), a Capacity Building Commission, a Cabinet Secretariat Coordination Unit and a Special Purpose Vehicle which would operate iGOT Karmayogi, a digital content marketplace for learning

Launch of Mission Karmayogi

1969 **1976** **1996** **2001** **2008** **2020**

Administrative Reforms Commission Report on Personnel Administration

Recommended setting up of a Central Training Division under within the Department of Personnel

National Training Policy

Recommended establishing a National Training Council headed by the Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, along with representatives of state governments, major departments and ministries, and training institutes

Second Administrative Reforms Commission Report on Personnel Administration

Suggested setting up a National Institute of Good Governance by upgrading one of the existing national or state training institutes.

can help mitigate the flaws in the system in its current form. The organisation of training in its current form, where each service organises its own training has been critiqued by scholars as potentially leading to compartmentalisation and service exclusiveness. It has been argued that this type of training is "administering cuts across various services, various departments, various levels of administration, this kind of training may distance the IAS from other services and may pose problems for horizontal harmony and coordination"(Maheshwari, 1987, p. 259).

Funding: government-supported versus market-driven models

A crucial part of reform discourse revolves around funding to improve the capacity to train. Reform reports consistently push for an increase in the budget allotted to training. The First ARC collected data on the spending on training and found that it constitutes only 0.4 percent of the wage bill of the Civil Services (1969, p. 63). It further noted that a conference held by the Ministry of Home Affairs with the heads of training institutions and government representatives had decided that a total of 1 percent of the salary bill shall be allocated to the training budget. While the ARC did not insist on this specific percentage of spending, it felt that "a much higher outlay on training than what is now incurred is called for" (1969, p. 63). Similarly, both the National Training Policies recommend an increase in training budget by each department and ministry to 5 percent (1996, page number) and 2.5 percent (2012, page number) of the salary budget.

The Second ARC laid out a different approach to training expenditure. Taking note of the fact that training institutes are inadequately funded, it says that "it would be desirable to encourage these institutions to market their training programmes and charge fees for the programmes they conduct. This would help in creating incentives for an institution to upgrade its training skills and also not be solely dependent on government funding support" (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008, page number). The Commission also warns that while this might be a solution to the problem of inadequate funding, apex institutions should first focus on their primary job of training members of the service rather than focus on commercial training programmes. This shift to a more self-sustaining funding model has been

adopted by Mission Karmayogi, whose budget relies on the acquisition of an annual subscription fee from government employees (Department of Personnel and Training, 2020a, 2020b). Whether a government supported or market-driven model will better serve the purposes of training civil servants is an open question at this point. The success of either eventually depends on whether a pool of committed training institutions will offer courses that civil servants are likely to benefit from. More crucially though, it will depend on whether the institutional architecture and funding models support the development of a robust culture of learning.

6. DISCUSSION

In the best scenario, good training can enhance capacities for improved job performance, impart critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are much needed in the bureaucracy, and give trainees a sense of personal development. In the worst case, it can take the form of ad hoc short courses that trainees only attend reluctantly, gaining little or no value from. This challenge is observed throughout the reforms discourse on training. Unlike many other areas of administrative reform, training is currently seeing an important shift with the launch of Mission Karmayogi. The rigour of competency mapping and coursework made available through the online marketplace will need to be seen once it has been implemented. It is important to use this moment of transition to a new model of training to reflect on past reform debates to ensure that we are truly moving forward. Four key ideas are worth summarising to this end.

First, previous attempts to link training to performance have been challenging because civil servants need to allocate time and get clearance to attend training. In such cases, incentive-linked training can become a burden. The iGOT platform can offer substantial flexibility, but online training requires dedicated time and effort in order to be completed effectively. Further, classroom-based training benefits from mentorship, a space for feedback, peer-learning and networking. The lack of these benefits and the time and effort required in online training, can be demotivating for learners even within the more flexible format. A deeper, systemic shift in favour of a culture of learning, where both the organisation and employees see intrinsic value in growth and capacity building, is critical to address the issue of demotivated learners.

Second, training institutions need to be envisioned and equipped to not only perform essential training-related activities, but also to serve as knowledge hubs and resource centres to solve governance-related problems. As noted by the Second ARC, a significant amount of funds have been invested in creating "brick and mortar" infrastructure for training. Going forward, it would be prudent to also focus on soft infrastructure—such as the development of appropriate incentives for trainers and trainees; the creation of knowledge management systems to document and disseminate the work done by governments; development of partnership management cells to source expertise and share knowledge and best practices; and initiatives to involve citizens through public workshops or internship programmes for college students, among others. The larger vision is to make training institutions spaces where the challenges of public administration are discussed, debated and collectively solved.

Third, the introduction of Mission Karmayogi signals a shift away from performance management towards competency frameworks, which is in keeping with international best practices. By focussing more on what people bring to the job rather than on outputs and results, the competency management approach is more suited to public sector contexts where output is hard to measure (Hondeghem & Vandermeulen, 2000). However, it is important to note that this approach is not a straightforward fix to the complex issues plaguing our training ecosystem. Research on competency modelling has raised concerns relating to conceptual ambiguity and lack of methodological rigour in implementation, and questioned the psychometric quality of the approach (Mills et al., 2020; Stevens, 2013). This change in approach also entails a paradigm shift in Human Resource Management and requires HR professionals to foster new competencies (Hondeghem & Vandermeulen, 2000). Without reforming the HR system that forms the backbone of the competency management approach, implementing this transformation could prove difficult.

Finally, the persistent challenges reported in reform debates and extensive research both indicate that individual-level technical, behavioural and professional training alone cannot build capacity for performance in complex systems. Civil servants work in systems with deeply embedded norms of governance, complex tasks and outcomes, work overload, and different partners such as civil society (Dasgupta & Kapur, 2017; Mangla, 2015; Pritchett, 2014). Norms of hierarchy and bureaucratic processes can stifle innovation even among highly-skilled workers (Aiyar & Bhattacharya, 2016). In short, the culture of the bureaucracy has important implications for the performance of individual civil servants. Going forward, training reform must also focus on the bigger question of how one can build a culture of learning—a culture that allows individuals to perform their best.

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