

18th National Conference of Chairpersons of State Public Service Commission at Hyderabad, Telangana on 4-5th February, 2016.

Speech by Shri Deepak Gupta, Hon'ble Chairman, Union Public Service Commission and National Chairman of the Conference at the Inaugural Session.

Hon'ble Minister of IT and Panchayati Raj, Telangana, Shri K.T. Rama Raoji,

Hon'ble Chairman of Standing Committee and Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission Shri K.S. Tomarji,

Hon'ble Chairman of Telangana State Public Service Commission Prof. Chakrapani Ghantaji,

Hon'ble Chairpersons and Members of State Public Service Commissions,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome and thank Shri K.T. Rama Rao on my behalf. One can see that there will be many IT initiatives in an area of work. I would also like to thank Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani, Chairman, Telangana Public Service Commission for hosting this Conference in their very first year and for the excellent arrangements and hospitality. I would also like to thank the Hon'ble CM for bringing us to this beautiful and unique place. Already one can think of so many things to promote such culture and environment and India's traditional knowledge which would be so useful for an aging, tiring and stressed world.

Public Service Commissions serve an important responsibility, today more than ever, tasked with ensuring fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment to different public Services. It is in the spirit of ensuring their independence and autonomy that the Constitution of India makes explicit mention of the functions, duties, and responsibilities of Public Service Commissions. I must mention that when I attended the SAARC meeting of Chairpersons, the work and standing of UPSC was greatly appreciated. Let all Commissions rededicate themselves to fulfilling this constitutional responsibility by reinforcing the principles of transparency and accountability, the integrity of the process, complete objectivity and as is often not mentioned, speed of delivery.

The need to recruit the best talent to operate the levers of government remains paramount, even in this age of private sector ascendancy and perhaps even more so because of that. Many years ago Dr. Ambedkar had said that Commissions must select the most efficient and the best. Excellence in public service delivery is the very foundation of good governance. Public administration, both at the policy and implementation levels, remains a complex exercise demanding the finest qualities of head and heart from practitioners. It is our collective responsibility to restate the case for a 'public service imperative' amongst youngsters so that they are encouraged to take up careers in government and in public service. We must explore all avenues to disseminate the message that careers in the public service are professionally fulfilling and contribute vitally to society and country. I hope the heads of our Institutions of higher learning will constantly try to convey this message to their brightest students in all categories.

This occasion gives me the opportunity to share with you some recent successes of UPSC in improving recruitment outcomes across examinations:

- We have been successful in conducting two editions of the Central Medical Services Examination, in 2014 and 2015, as computer based tests, conducted in a single shot across 41 centres covering over 30000 candidates.
- The entire application process is online, catering to more than 3.3 million applicants annually which is rising.
- We have curtailed the examination cycle, from application to declaration of final result, considerably, across examinations, by speeding up some processes as well as by re-engineering others. The results of the Civil Services Examination, 2014 for example, were declared in a record time, just 4 days after the conclusion of interviews. The total time cycle was reduced by 65 days from the previous year. In the Engineering Exam we reduced by 3 months, and in fact Interviews were held twice in 2015.
- Based on a review by an Expert Committee and approval by the Nodal Ministry of Railways, we have announced changes to the scheme and syllabus of the Engineering Services Examination. The details have been placed in the public domain on UPSC website well in advance. To give adequate lead time to aspirants, the changes will be made effective from 2017. This will ensure that the entire process will be completed in the Calendar Year itself. Hopefully, this will encourage more good students to sit for these services.

- We have conducted a review of the scheme and syllabi of other examinations conducted by the Commission. Accordingly, changes have been made to the IES/ ISS Examination and the Geologists Examination, with effect from 2016.
- An Expert Committee has been set up to review the Civil Services Exams system.
- The footprint of the Commission's examinations has increased in 2014 and 2015. We conducted the Civil Services Preliminary Examination, 2015 in 71 cities across India, up from 45 in 2013 and 59 in 2014. Civil Services (Mains) Examination centres have also gone up from 19 to 23.

We live in exciting times. Information and Communication Technologies continue to disruptively transform the social, economic, and political landscape; the digital revolution will have a multiplier effect on India's demographic dividend. As Constitutional bodies dealing with recruitments to the highest echelons of government, it is our responsibility to dovetail ICT into our systems and procedures to derive not only efficiency benefits but also for effective delivery of outcomes. Computer based tests are clearly the way forward. We hope during the Conference to learn more about possible opportunities from experts in the IT Sector.

I referred earlier to speed of delivery. We have undertaken a number of process change initiatives. As a result, in the last year, UPSC has reduced the processing time in number of days from 261 to 209 in Direct Recruitment cases, 62 to 33 in Departmental Promotion Committee cases, 180 to 79 in Deputation cases, 180 to 114 in Disciplinary Cases and 33 to 20 for approval of Recruitment Rule proposals. The Single Window System has also helped.

I have also suggested to the Union Cabinet Secretary to launch a drive for updating Recruitment Rules of all Departments and reduce processing time. All States could do the same.

I will digress a bit. Today, the world needs to move quickly on the path of sustainable development. Every Institution must contribute its little bit. This venue is wonderful example of this. I am happy to tell you in UPSC have reduced our grid electricity consumption by installation of grid connected 100kw solar rooftop in the

Commission's buildings in Dholpur House, the first such project in NDMC area; I was really happy to see the 600KW Solar plant in the campus this morning . We have undertaken an energy efficiency project in our premises by partnering with EESL to convert to LED lighting and high efficiency AC's and Fans. We are installing a sewage treatment plant which will reduce water consumption and help recycle water. And we scored full marks under the Swatch Bharat programme and now, we will see what we can do to have an herbal garden.

UPSC has taken all the actions required of us following our discussion in the conference last year. And we pledge our support for further initiatives which may be identified. I hope our deliberations at this Conference help us in firming up our resolve to face challenges and rededicate ourselves to the higher cause of public service and with these words; I am delighted to inaugurate the Conference.

Jai Hind !