

Speech of Hon'ble Chairman on the occasion of the 92nd 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 92nd 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

