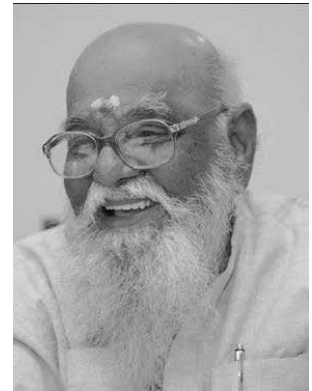


Ethics in Governance*

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Material progress of a nation depends on the rapid development and management of the sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, industry, transport, communication, etc., as well as service sectors such as education, health, etc. But the most important sector of Governance, i. e. the political system and the public administrative apparatus, which in turn consist of political processes, Judiciary, Law and Order, Defense, etc. lagged behind or went down. Though China and India started development together in 1950, China is far ahead of us in every sector and aspect, primarily on account of its better Governance through its single-party political system and its supportive and efficient governmental machinery. India claims that its multi-party democracy is a superior system, and that India is the largest democracy in the world. India's bureaucracy, which was originally meant for conventional public administration, is now being used for development purposes, for which it is not equipped at all. It is blocking progress, rather than supporting, as observed by 200 Directors of Institutes of Management.

India adopted the Parliamentary Democracy system, based on the British Westminster model, which functions well there because Britain is a mono society, where the government does not participate in, or interfere with, economic

and social development. India is a plural society, hopelessly divided along many contours and factors, such as religion, caste, ethnicity, linguism, regionalism etc. In India, government actively participates directly in development as entrepreneur, manager, banker, regulator, controller, etc. In fact, Government is more involved in business management rather than in governance which is the primary function of government. Thus combination of inappropriate political model and administrative systems has retarded our progress.

Further, it has led to innumerable ill-effects, such as political instability, large scale and widespread corruption among politicians and the huge government machinery, increasing violence, degeneration of values, centrifugal forces which may fragment the country, erosion of national unity and pride, linguistic parochialism, persisting poverty and illiteracy for millions, increasing inequality between rich and poor, loss of faith in democracy and government, etc. Solution lies in changing the political model,

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All these negative tendencies and aberrations are not so much due to the innate of citizens, officials in government, politicians in power or managers in business. It is mainly due to the inappropriate governance system, which compel them to misbehave as they do now, discarding principles of ethics, morals and values. It is a tragedy that India has fallen so low in ethics. India is now considered to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world .

At least half of the Government employees come into contact with people, who depend for information, approvals, licenses, permits and hundred other things which government controls. Citizens are also dependent on Municipal Administration, Police, Traffic, Judiciary, Water supply, Power, Transport, etc.

Workers in the productive sector work for 300 days a year and 48 hours a week. But our Government, on whom citizens depend for a variety of things, work only for 200 days (only 36 hours a week) per year, Genuine governance, as per Dharma or Ethics, is serving people.

The fact that Indians can work better is evident from the fact that well managed private companies, such as Tatas, Hindusthan Lever and 500 others operate efficiently with a very high degree of ethical and moral values. All these show the inappropriateness of our governance system. Also, Indians do marvelously well in foreign countries, where they observe rule of law and have a high reputation for integrity and civic consciousness. They do not show the same in India, because of our inappropriate political-administrative system.

This factual situation and anomaly prove that the ambience, environment and the system in India are not conducive for ethical behavior on the part of politicians and public

administrators. Of course, a segment of both are highly dedicated and ethical, though the large majority does not observe Dharma. Any attempt to improve ethics in governance should start with politicians and their parties.

The inappropriateness of the political system is evident from the fact that even officials at low level have to undergo a series of tests and interviews before they get selected. But those who stand for Legislature positions do not require any qualification. Those who vote are largely poor and illiterate who have no clue of whom they are electing and do not know about their competence for the positions. It is also a fact that 30% of Legislators have previous criminal records.

Therefore, the only way by which we can stop the present state of shameful affairs is that the Government should leave these responsibilities to the private sector and not get involved in roles, such as owner, manager and controller of economic development. At the time of Independence, JRD Tata mentioned to Jawaharlal Nehru: "Govern the country and ensure Law and Order. Leave the rest to us", Rajaji also told the Government not to get involved in business.

Since we cannot change the Parliamentary democracy system with multiple parties, most of the ills mentioned above can be eliminated by effecting electoral reforms. Instead of electing individuals, we should go in for electing Parties to power. Thus each party should select three nominees for each Constituency, after taking into account factors, such as religion, caste, language, charisma, popularity, competence, character, public service, etc. They can also include industrialists, businessmen, professionals and experts from various fields. Thus the aggregate of nominees of all the

Constituencies would form a LIST for each Political party. The LIST should be voted on, instead of individuals as at present. Instead of a simple majority, representation to the Parliament and Assembly should be based on proportion of votes polled for each Party. For the Parliament, Parties, getting less than 5% of all India vote, would not be eligible to send nominees to the Parliament, thus eliminating local parties with no all-India interest. Thus we can also avoid the present anomaly of small parties with only local following blocking all India policies. This scheme will also eliminate regionalism. Each Party should send nominees from the LIST, making sure that their nomination represents all India with a place for experts, professionals, business men and others, who in the existing system would never get elected. The present aberrations of coalition parties would go. All India parties will emerge. This scheme would also eliminate linguistic parochialism, regionalism, etc. Thus we would be changing the system, while retaining the essentials of Parliamentary democracy and multiple parties. Ethics would then be possible.

The next reform required is to split the 10 large States into 30 smaller units. Our States are unequal in size and population as well as in development. Large States cannot be easily managed. Smaller States can be managed better. Government would be closer to the people. Central Government can delegate developmental responsibilities to the States, and concentrate on governance of the country. There is now too much of centralization at the Centre. This can be reduced in the proposed set up.

Language is a strong divider of people all over the world. India is really facing a great danger of fragmentation, based on linguistic pride and chauvinism. India can be kept together only by having more than one State speaking the same language. Backward States will get better developmental inputs and would progress faster. Sub-regional identities will get fulfillment. Already there is a demand for formation of small States. Governance will improve substantially. More towns will develop as State capitals.

The third reform required is in administration in order to ensure ethics. First of all, obsolete and archaic procedures, file notings, impersonal character of the Government, etc. should be changed. The Public Administration function for the Government can be continued as at present with simplified rules, regulations and procedures. The development part of the Government should be carried out by a different service, to be called 'India Development Service (IDS)'. Those IAS officers, who are experienced, and show interest in a sector, should be seconded to the IDS. The Government system should be to suit development purposes by giving them more autonomy and powers.

Thus ethics in governance can be achieved by the proposed reforms and inculcation of managerial culture and personal touch in Government. Also, large scale training in managerial culture, together with ethical and moral values, should form an integral part of training and assessment. Therefore, from the point of view of Ethics and Morals, the above reforms are essential.

