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# **POLITICAL NEUTRALITY IS A DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTIC OF INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT**

AUTHORED BY: HARSHI GAUTAM & SRISHTI GUPTA

## **ABSTRACT**

Civil Servants or bureaucrats are officials appointed under the All-India Services Act, 1951, to serve the Central or State Government. Their role is to assist the government in implementing policies, and while performing their duties, they must remain impartial i.e., free from prejudice and non-discriminatory nature while carrying out their responsibilities because their neutral behavior promotes transparency and impartiality. Discussing in regards of both Neutrality and Non-neutrality, former is always desired whereas latter is considered detrimental. In order to retain public trust and faith in their work, civil servants should refrain themselves from getting biased. Political involvement by civil servants is ethically regarded as a partial betrayal of the nation's integrity. Moreover, the regulations formulated for their service does not encourage their participation in political activities. It is necessary for them to be impartial and adhere to the rules and regulations. Non- Politically Neutral Civil Servants receive preferential benefits in their promotions or other career opportunities. Whereas on the other hand neutral civil servants are significant for the society, though their duty is not always easy because they deal with critical issues like job insecurity and their work often gets neglected which can be demotivating. This article adopts a comprehensive perspective, delving into key aspects such as Significance of Political Neutrality, Constitutional and legal Norms ensuring political Neutrality of Civil Servants, and what is ultimately desirable: Neutrality or Non-neutrality.

## **INTRODUCTION**

While addressing one of the sessions of the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel said the following lines to champion the continuance of the pre-independence i.e. British Era Civil Service System:

“It needs hardly to be emphasized that an efficient, disciplined and contented Civil Service, assured of its prospects as a result of its diligent and honest work, is a sine-qua non of sound administration under democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule.”

Firstly, we need to understand what does the term civil servant stands for and complying with the literal meaning, it denotes someone who is assigned to serve the civilians which implies

someone responsible for the service towards people of the society. *Subsection (1) of section 3 of the All-India Services Act, 1951*<sup>1</sup>, says that Central Government after consultation with the Government of the States concerned; framed *The Indian Administrative Service (Recruitment) Rules, 1954*<sup>2</sup>. According to *Section (2) clause (d)* of the Indian Administrative Service (Recruitment) Rules, 1954, a member of the Indian Civil Service means a person who, having been appointed to the civil service under the Crown of India, known as the Indian Civil Service, continues, on and after the commencement of the Constitution to serve under the Government of India or of a State.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, characteristics of Indian Civil Servants refer to the attributes or the essential features that the citizens of that nation desire to have in their officers. Since they are in charge for the betterment and holistic development of the society, their characteristics which are preferable should be associated with their responsibility they hold and the duty they perform. Therefore, this article primarily focuses on the essential characteristics of the bureaucrats which is one of the indispensable virtues for the society as a whole and Political neutrality being one of them.

While enunciating about Political Neutrality, it is necessary to understand that neutrality does not refer to “zero indulgence” in political matters rather it implies a balanced approach or actions on the part of Civil Servants for the political activities going on in order to maintain a fair and just environment. This encompasses supporting the Government to develop and implement policies and follow legal directives from ministers to the finest of their abilities, irrespective of their own political standpoints. In such circumstances they are non-partisan in political matters. In light of these affairs, they are required to treat all political viewpoints equally and without being one-sided. This does not restrain their Right to Freedom of Expression because they are not bound to engage in political activities out of their roles i.e., their neutrality is significant when they are acting as a Civil Servant not when they are acting as a common man, for example: while exercising their Right to Vote. The Vice President once asked the Civil servants to be politically neutral and not so ideologically. They should be propelled by an idealism that keeps them always on the side of the poor and needy sections, who deserve their support the most. Keep meeting people, get feedback from time to time, be

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<sup>1</sup> The All-India Services Act, 1951 (India), 0002 <[www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1363/1/A1951\\_61.pdf](http://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1363/1/A1951_61.pdf)> accessed 6 August 2024.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian Administrative Service (Recruitment) Rules, 1954, 0093 <[https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Revised\\_AIS\\_Rule\\_Vol\\_II\\_IAS\\_Rule\\_03.pdf](https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Revised_AIS_Rule_Vol_II_IAS_Rule_03.pdf)> accessed 7 August 2024.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid* 93.

open, decisive, dynamic, development-oriented.<sup>4</sup> In short, political neutrality serves to promote fairness, integrity, and trust in institutions and individuals that play a predominant role in governance, public discourse, and decision-making procedures.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

Political Neutrality is one of the fundamental principles of a policy-free, unprejudiced and merit-based Civil Service. It is a noteworthy element in fostering transparency, impartiality and stability. The significance of Political Neutrality serves as a central component for upholding democracy and the protection of fundamental rights and freedom.

Politics and policy formulations are separated from administration; therefore, politicians make policy decisions and public servants execute these decisions. Public Servants are appointed and promoted on the basis of their merits, i.e., *under Section 4 of the Indian Administrative Service (Recruitment) Rules, 1954*,<sup>5</sup> method of recruitment of such persons is mentioned which is either by (a) By a competitive examination;<sup>6</sup> (b) By promotion of a [substantive] member of a State Civil Service;<sup>7</sup> [(c) by selection, in special cases from among persons, who hold in a substantive capacity gazetted posts in connection with the affairs of a State and who are not members of a State Civil Service.]<sup>8</sup> rather than of party affiliations or contribution, so they should not engage in partisan political activities and not express publicly their personal views on government policies or administration.<sup>9</sup> This further encourages transparency, equality and fairness and ensures that decisions, policies and actions are made without any prejudice towards any political party or ideology. This capacitates neutrality and impartiality in governance, public-disclosure and decision-making process because the politically neutral behavior of political institutions or organizations attains public trust, faith and confidence in their integrity. The citizens will probably have confidence in the rightfulness and objectivity of the government when they believe that political biases and dishonest leaders are not intimidating them. For the smooth functioning of government trust and faith of people is of paramount importance.

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<sup>4</sup> Press Information Bureau Government of India Vice President's Secretariat (Press Information bureau 2022) <<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1818722>> accessed 9 August 2024.

<sup>5</sup> The Indian Administrative Service (Recruitment) Rules, 1954, 0094 <[https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Revised\\_AIS\\_Rule\\_Vol\\_II\\_IAS\\_Rule\\_03.pdf](https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Revised_AIS_Rule_Vol_II_IAS_Rule_03.pdf)> accessed 7 August 2024.

<sup>6</sup> ibid 94.

<sup>7</sup> ibid 94.

<sup>8</sup> ibid 94.

<sup>9</sup> 'Speaking Truth to Power? The Search for Bureaucratic Independence in Canada' (2005) 55(1) The University of Toronto Law Journal 1, 0006 <[www.jstor.org/stable/4491637](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4491637)> accessed 9 August 2024.

This contributes to firmness within society by curtailing polarisation and division along political lines and empowers for a more conducive environment for constructive dialogue, consensus-building and cooperation among diverse groups with different political interests. Neutrality also assists in the protection of individual rights and freedom by preventing the coercion of political parties on aspects such as Human Rights, Justice and Rule of Law. Since it is necessary to maintain the right balance and protect the civil service so as to prevent abuse of civil service for the party purposes.<sup>10</sup>

The principle of Political Neutrality is often considered as a stamp of authenticity for professionalism and adherence to ethical standards. It emphasizes on the commitment to serve for public interest above partisan concerns. Lastly, Political Neutrality in today's scenario of corrupt and deceitful bureaucrats is crucial for nations to maintain strong political ties and resolve conflicts without being bigoted. In international affairs, it helps countries to abstain from political entanglements in external conflicts and enhances coordination and diplomacy on the global stage.

Considering the case of **Vivek Krishnan vs. The Union of India**<sup>11</sup>, Supreme Court mentioned, there can be no doubt that civil servants should maintain the highest ethical standards of integrity and honesty; political neutrality; fairness and impartiality in the discharge of duties, courtesy, accountability and transparency.<sup>12</sup>

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL NORMS ADVOCATING POLITICAL NEUTRALITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS**

### **Model Code of Conduct**

In Model Code of Conduct, there are certain rules which are needed to be followed by the ruling party once the Model Code of Conduct is applied, such as under Part VII, 6 (a) Ruling party is refrained from laying foundation stone of new project or scheme but on the other hand Civil Servants are allowed to do the same. The rationale behind this is that the political parties are prohibited from introducing new initiatives in order to avoid the public from getting enticed or brainwash to get re-elected in the future which is in itself a non-ethical way. However,

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<sup>10</sup> Political Neutrality in Civil Service Legal Framework and Quality of Implementation (USAID and IRC 2021) 0006 <[https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00Z6WP.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z6WP.pdf)> accessed 12 August 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Vivek Krishna Versus Union of India & Ors., Supreme Court, 18 April 2022, Writ Petition No. 1034/2021, SCC (India) 0020 <[www.sconline.com/Members/SearchResult.aspx](http://www.sconline.com/Members/SearchResult.aspx)> accessed 12 August 2024.

<sup>12</sup> ibid 20.

endowing with an additional advantage to the civil servants; concomitantly, it demonstrates that their disassociation from current politics is held in high esteems with the expectation that their actions will remain politically neutral.

Under the supervision of special instructions regarding Election tours; the ruling government is strictly asked not to appoint Civil Servants for the same. Arrangements regarding meetings of government are to be done by the party members and not by the Civil Servants. This implies that however Civil Servants are there to assist the ruling government but only to a certain extent and not beyond that. They are not designated to assist the Central or State Governments at the time of elections or any specific political party, road-shows or promote a particular political party and neither any political party can employ the Civil Servants for their own benefit or fulfilling their purposes or performing their tasks. This implies that political neutrality is a desired characteristic of the Civil Servants.

#### **All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968**

*The All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968*, govern the conduct of the members of the three All India Services, namely the *Indian Administrative Service (IAS)*, the *Indian Police Service (IPS)*, the *Indian Foreign Service (IFS)*. These rules were framed under the *All-India Services Act, 1951*.<sup>13</sup> These rules are crucial for upholding the professionalism, integrity, neutrality, and impartiality of the All-India Services and ensuring that their members serve the public interest effectively.

Under the *All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968*<sup>14</sup>, Political Neutrality is highlighted to ensure that members of the All-India Services maintain transparency and professionalism in their roles.<sup>15</sup> *Section 5 of Part I* of these rules explicitly address Political Neutrality.<sup>16</sup> *Rule 5*<sup>17</sup> forbids members of the service from taking part in political activities or associating themselves with the political activities of any political party or organisation. Members are not allowed to express any views or opinions in public that indicate support or favouritism for any particular

<sup>13</sup> The All-India Services Act, 1951 (India), <[www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1363/1/A1951\\_61.pdf](http://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1363/1/A1951_61.pdf)> accessed 12 August 2024.

<sup>14</sup> All India Services (conduct) Rule, 1968, <[https://ips.gov.in/ActsRules/Revised\\_AIS\\_Rule\\_Vol\\_I\\_Rule\\_10.pdf](https://ips.gov.in/ActsRules/Revised_AIS_Rule_Vol_I_Rule_10.pdf)> accessed 14 September 2024.

<sup>15</sup> ibid 182.

<sup>16</sup> ibid 184.

<sup>17</sup> Central civil services (conduct) rules, 1964 (India), 0006 <[https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/CCS\\_Conduct\\_Rules\\_1964\\_Updated\\_27Feb15\\_0.pdf](https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/CCS_Conduct_Rules_1964_Updated_27Feb15_0.pdf)> accessed 14 August 2024.

political party or organization. Though the members are allowed to express their opinions in private, but they must ensure that it does not interfere with their duties or exemplifies discriminatory nature towards the discharge of their official responsibilities. The members are not permitted to exhibit any political symbols or emblems on their person, vehicles, or residential premises.<sup>18</sup>

Specifically, Clause XI of the All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 states:

No member of the Service shall, in any radio broadcast, telecast, portal or in any document published anonymously, pseudonymously or in his own name or in the name of any other person or in any communication to the press or in any public utterance, make any statement of fact or opinion – (i) Which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government..."<sup>19</sup>

While this rule explicitly pertains to public statements, the broader principle of maintaining impartiality and avoiding external influence applies to all aspects of an officer's conduct. Bringing political or outside influence to further service interests would likely violate this rule and could result in disciplinary action, including warnings, fines, or even dismissal from service, depending on the severity of the offence. It is essential for members of the All-India Services to uphold the principles of neutrality and professionalism to maintain public trust and ensure effective governance.

## **NET EFFECT OF NEUTRALITY AND NON-NEUTRALITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS**

Upholding the principle of non-neutrality by the civil servants proves deleterious rather than being beneficial. Nevertheless, there are certain instances where it proves to be beneficial, although these situations are finite and can have consequential drawbacks. This might involve raising voice against the discriminatory policies or practices of the government, even if it means challenging the political status quo. Though these circumstances are infrequent, they can necessitate in combating repressive laws and policies, promoting legislative changes, and supporting society-based initiatives for overall improvement.

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<sup>18</sup> ibid 6.

<sup>19</sup> Mohmmad Danish, Govt Urges Employees to Use Social Media Properly (Brighter Kashmir 2024) <[https://brighterkashmir.com/govt-urges-employees-to-use-social-media-properly#google\\_vignette](https://brighterkashmir.com/govt-urges-employees-to-use-social-media-properly#google_vignette)> accessed 15 August 2024.

The civil servants are required to be confident while executing their duty as they work under different political masters, often belonging to various political parties. To ensure that they remain politically neutral, they should not be given any postretirement appointments as members/chairman of statutory commissions, quasi-judicial tribunals, or even in constitutional authorities such as the State Public Service Commission, Union Public Service Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, and Election Commission of India.<sup>20</sup> Non neutrality on the part of civil servants will create friction in their functioning and is an indication of unprofessionalism among colleagues and superiors. To reduce the disagreements and political strife between the bureaucrats, their neutrality is considered to be of vital importance over non-neutrality on various grounds. For instance, the neutral behaviour of civil servants emphasizes on unprejudiced and fair treatment in acting towards the public, irrespective of individual differences and favoritism as it is a necessary requirement for maintaining public trust and faith in administrative institutions and ensuring justified treatment in the court of law. The focal point of civil servants is to serve for public interest and work towards public welfare, instead of aiming at personal or political agendas. Neutrality from Civil Servants will prevent despotic actions based on individual biases or external constraints.

The Civil Service Bureau of Hong Kong issued a Circular No. 8/2002 in June 2002 which elucidates the principles and values that should be upheld by civil servants.

The principles and values include the following:

They include; (i) independence of the courts; (ii) integrity; (iii) accountability for operations; (iv) political blind; (v) bias when performing public assignment and (iv) commitment, professionalism, and effectiveness when performing their duty to the community. The circular makes it clear that every civil servant has a duty in the preservation of the core values of conduct and general responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

Civil servants use neutrality as a way of managing risks. Political leaders also manage to pragmatically implement and deploys IAS and IPS officer in multifaceted position rather than pointing them, especially given the situation with the current system that offers plenty of

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<sup>20</sup> PC Hota, Committee on Civil Service Reforms (Government of India 2004) 0019 <<https://upsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/SI-028-PCHotaComttRpt-2004.pdf>> accessed 16 August 2024.

<sup>21</sup> 'The Principle of Political Neutrality of Civil Servants' (Civil Service Bureau the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, 9 June 2004) <[www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/1672.html](http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/1672.html)> accessed 16 August 2024. (emphasis added)

working options. However, it cannot be disputed that IAS and IPS officers are increasingly finding themselves in hot and political controversies. Products of political correctness are witnessing officers expressing opinions and working in a more verbal fashion, in part due to the availability of social media as opposed to just voicing their views during tea time.<sup>22</sup>

An efficient functioning of governmental institutions depends on civil servants' non-discriminatory nature, upholding the spirit of democracy and encouraging good governance. But these objectives are compromised by their non-neutral behaviour, that also fragments public confidence in the administration. Non-neutrality in the civil service might be perceived as constructive in advancing specific ideas or causes in a few exceptional and rare cases, but it's crucial to weigh the benefits against the hazards and implications for institutional integrity and professional ethical standards within the civil service. Considering the aftermaths of both, Neutrality is always preferred over Non neutrality.

## **ETHICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF NON-NEUTRALITY**

Civil Servants play a significant role in the policy implementation and policy monitoring processes of every country. The head of the country and the council of ministers are elected by the people of that country for a particular term, but the Civil Servants remain constant till their retirement and play a significant role by assisting the council of ministers to achieve a set target. Once any policy is formulated, the function of Civil Servants began, they start discussing on how to execute the same and achieve the goals.

Ethics formulates a structure for accountability between the public and administration. Ethics and values have a pivotal role in the proper functioning of the public administration system. Civil servants are barred from political activism through setting of standards and guidelines through various acts and statutes in order to uphold their non-partisan nature. At the international level, the International Service Commission provides for the code of conduct for the International Civil Service. The independence of international civil servants from any outside control is crucial in order to maintain the neutrality of the international civil services. Their behavior should always conform to this independence. As a measure of recourse to their

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<sup>22</sup> 'An Impartial Civil Service Remains a Dream as Political Wars Suck in Officers' (Times of India, 5 February 2019) <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/an-impartial-civil-service-remains-a-dream-as-political-wars-suck-in-officers/articleshow/67842842.cms>> accessed 19 August 2024.

oath of office, they are prohibited from soliciting or receiving directions from any government, person, or institution other than their organization. Due to the need for independence and neutrality of international civil servants, the right to vote should be preserved and combined with the recognition of the fact that it is inappropriate for representatives of the civil service to engage in political activities, including the campaigns for local or national offices.<sup>23</sup>

Ethically, it is considered inappropriate for civil servants to engage in partisan political activities while performing their official duties. This is because it can undermine public trust on account of impartiality and integrity of the civil service. By adhering to the ethical standards of impartiality, the civil servants prove beneficial for the nation which improves the economic productiveness. By not including the Civil Servants in political undertakings, it will play a predominant role in improving the overall productivity of a country and also to curb corruption which is prevalent in the society.

Constitutionally, the involvement of civil servants in political ventures must adhere to the principles of democratic governance and the prescribed laws. As the Civil servants are appointed on merit-basis, they are expected to perform their duties in association with the features of the constitution, i.e., fundamental rights, social justice, liberty, equality, fraternity etc. and the laws of the nation. When civil servants become involved in political endeavors, there arises concerns regarding the politicization of the civil service, which can weaken public trust due to the non-discriminatory nature and unethical conduct of the government institutions.

According to the Civil Service Bureau of Hong Kong, the principle of political neutrality that civil servants should uphold comprises the following key elements:

All civil servants are non-partisans and they have a duty of allegiance to the Government [a] It means that every civil servant is required to be loyal to the Chief Executive and other principal officials of the time [b] civil servants are also post-policy decision influencers and are expected to provide inputs on the effects of the choices being considered [c], administrative recommendation duty entails making sure that all the ramifications of the policies under

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<sup>23</sup> Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service (International), <<https://icsc.un.org/Resources/General/Publications/standardsE.pdf>> accessed 20 August 2024.

consideration are appreciated and impartial recommendations.<sup>24</sup>

## **FELONIOUS BENEFITS ACCRUED BY NON-POLITICALLY NEUTRAL CIVIL SERVANTS**

Sometimes civil servants engage in political activities and are in favor of a particular political party or and advocate their ideologies which leads the way to numerous unfavorable consequences, particularly for the civil servants and for the society as a whole. There are certain probable felonious benefits that may accrue to non-politically neutral civil servants include:

There is a possibility on the part of civil servants using government resources for political and personal purposes, portraying their non-neutrality by taking undue advantage of their authority to avail the benefits and work for their preferred political group. Non-neutral civil servants may take decisions based on political considerations rather than merit or public interest, not focusing on public welfare accounting for inefficient or ineffective administration as decisions will not be made by expert committees. This can make it difficult to implement policies for the development of public, compromising on important issues leading to gridlock, political polarization and dysfunctioning in government.

Civil servants who align themselves with a particular political party or their ideology may receive preferential treatment in terms of promotions, assignments, or career opportunities that will create an environment where advancement is based on political loyalty rather than merit or performance. This can give them an unfair advantage over others and can be detrimental to the public interest. They can influence government policies and decisions which will further lead to the implementation of policies that are not in the best interest of the public or that are based on political expediency.

Therefore, the politicization of the civil service can pose serious negative consequences, creating hindrances in the effective functioning of the government that will pose a threat to democracy. It is necessary on the part of civil servants to remain politically neutral in order to ensure an equal, fair and impartial execution of government services and to uphold the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Considering **Mukesh Ambani Bomb scare case**, Param Bir Singh has alleged that

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<sup>24</sup> 'The Principle of Political Neutrality of Civil Servants' (Civil Service Bureau the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, 9 June 2004) <[www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/1672.html](http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/1672.html)> accessed 16 August 2024. (emphasis added)

Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh had demanded 100 crore every month from suspended police officer Sachin Vaze.<sup>25</sup> This shows how sometimes political affiliations can prove detrimental to public servants themselves.

Considering the instance for deploying ***Rath Prabhari by government***; however, it has been decided that civil servants will not be deployed in the poll bound states as directed by ECI but this is a temporary relief.<sup>26</sup> Civil servants deployed in other states for the same task are ultimately used by the government in a non-constitutional manner. This shows how the government is targeting the public servants for their own means to achieve their political agendas. This non-neutral nature of Civil Servants is further supporting the exploitation of their power or this diverts their precious time and energy to the tasks which are not ultimately for the benefit of the nation.

## **CHALLENGES FACED BY POLITICALLY NEUTRAL CIVIL SERVANTS**

Neutrality in civil servants is necessary for the effective functioning of the government and maintaining a sound democracy (the three pillars of democracy being: legislature, executive and judiciary) and there is a significant reason to it. The civil service is a part of the executive; the head of the nation is elected by the people for a fixed term whereas civil servants form the permanent part of the executive because they are responsible for implementing the policies and decisions of the government, regardless of their personal political beliefs. The neutral behavior of civil servants ensures that government policies are implemented fairly and their advice is bereft from political bias to serve in the best interest of the people to maintain public trust and faith and plays a chief role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring that the government actions are legal and constitutional. Their role is critical in ensuring that government institutions remain accountable, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the people. But as there are two sides of the same coin, and considering the same, politically neutral civil servants, despite playing a significant role, also face a number of challenges.

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<sup>25</sup> 'Maharashtra Home Minister Sought ₹100 Crore a Month From Sachin Vaze, Says Mumbai Police Ex-Chief' (The Hindu, 20 March 2021) <[www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/minister-demanded-funds-from-officer-says-ex-mumbai-police-chief/article34119604.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/minister-demanded-funds-from-officer-says-ex-mumbai-police-chief/article34119604.ece)> accessed 21 August 2024.

<sup>26</sup> The Wire Staff, 'Rath Prabhari' Move Illegal as It Is Wholesale Politicisation of Civil Services: EAS Sarma' (The Wire) <<https://thewire.in/government/rath-prabhari-illegal-wholesale-politicisation-civil-services-eas-sarma>> accessed 20 August 2024.

The Civil Servants work with complex policies and regulations and are often pressurized by elected officials or authoritative people to make decisions that align with government objectives and which is in their benefit, rather than following the rule of law. There arises conflict of interest such as whether to report misconduct or adhere to political directives making it difficult for civil servants to remain impartial and provide unbiased advice while also navigating political expectations and pressures. During their tenure of service, civil servants are subject to transfers, postings and long work hours which takes a toll on their mental and physical health. At times remaining politically neutral can be challenging, as their actions and decisions may be interpreted as discriminatory and biased by the public or media. Concerns about job security may arise if they are perceived as not aligning with the current political leadership. Their work often goes unnoticed or unappreciated due to their neutral nature, while their counterparts are engaged in corrupt practices which can be demotivating. Increased red-tapism and bureaucratic procedures are time consuming and make it hard to implement change. Certain situations arise when they are at a risk of violence and threats creating hindrances in formulating government policies and delivering services. They need approval from higher authorities depicting their limited autonomy.

Precisely, politically neutral civil servants play a predominant role in upholding the integrity and effectiveness of government policies and schemes, but they have to navigate through various challenges to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

### **NEED TO CHANGE AND TRANSFORM CIVIL SERVICES**

According to former RBI Governor Duvvuri Subbarao civil services in India should be reformed and rejuvenated; the British ‘steel frame’ to govern India has surely rusted. This cannot be done by dumping this rusted frame but by polishing it and making it as brilliant as before. When the IAS was set up soon after the end of British rule with the political class envisioning a civil service different from colonial ICS as a native institution to meet the challenges of post-colonial state-building.<sup>27</sup>

Although IAS officers pioneered this activity, constructing a solid development administration network from scratch, and gaining immense credibility for competence, commitment, and

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<sup>27</sup> ‘Need to Reform and Reinvent Civil Services: Former RBI Governor Duvvuri Subbarao’ (The Economic Time, 6 May 2024) <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/need-to-reform-and-reinvent-civil-services-former-rbi-governor-duvvuri-subbarao/articleshow/109890714.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 24 August 2024.

integrity, the image deteriorated in the subsequent decades. Impartiality political especially in the regeneration from the civil service code of conduct has been some of the most compromised Irukandji which has greatly instigated moral decay within the civil services. One has to distinguish between turning into an instrument of propaganda and advertising a certain accomplishment in order to advance a policy goal. Still, both politicians and civil servants must know this distinction and adhere to it stringently.<sup>28</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In summary, this essay discusses the need and significance of neutrality in Civil Servants. Civil Servants are entrusted with the responsibility of implementing government policies without unfairness and one-sidedness, that ensures fairness, integrity and trust in the government, fostering a conducive environment in upholding democracy. There are multiple legal Norms and Regulation such as Model Code of Conduct and All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 which makes it mandates certain rules and regulations on the conduct and activities of Civil Servants to be neutral. These rules aim to uphold professionalism, integrity, and impartiality in their conduct. Political Neutrality segregates political influence from the bureaucratic work which ensures that decisions are made on merit-basis rather than ideology of any particular party or political organization, safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. Still, they have to face multiple challenges and obstructions which a political neutral civil servant might face such as navigating political pressure, ethical dilemmas and job security concerns. Whereas, Non-Neutral Civil Servants may abuse their power in order to gain preferential treatment which leads to inefficiency in their task, polarization and erosion of public trust. The engagement of Civil Servants in political endeavors must adhere to ethical and constitutional principles, which ensures impartiality, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law.

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*