

Inaugural Speech for NTP for Trainers on Ethics and Values in Public Governance

(06-05-2015 to 08-05-2015)

Good morning to you all and welcome to iCED,

As you are aware this is one of the young institutes in IA&AD, very very young, in fact. We are not even 5 years and in this campus we just completed 2 years this Monday. Well, this institute has a special place not only in IA&AD, but I would say in public life. Why do I say that? I say that because the mandate of this institute comprises something which is unique, which is different and which is traditional yet futuristic. What is traditional yet futuristic? It is our environment. Environment is something, which we neither manufactured nor designed, nor created. It is something which we received in inheritance from our forefathers and generations, to which we have no ownership. We are only trustees. We have no choice but to pass it on to future generations. And in this process, what is our responsibility? Our responsibility is to ensure that we do not degrade the environment. While I talk of physical environmental and how to check the damage to it, what is also important is, the psychological environment which surrounds us, particularly in public life. When I talk of public administration or system of governance, I am reminded of the great grandfather of system of governance in India, Arya Chanakaya, who once said that it is perhaps possible to count the birds in the sky, but it is not possible to watch, how much money can be plundered by dishonest Government Servants. If we have to check it, you have to have a system. You have to have values which are ingrained in their blood, which become the part of their ethos and then only the public governance can be good. There are certain things which differentiate public sector from the private which are those? I am reminded of an offer I had received when I was working as Dy. Secretary in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. The offer was from some big industrial house who wanted me to join them at a very senior position, and amongst the thing on offer, I was to get roughly 5 times more than what I was getting then. They said, you can choose your secretary, if you like you can have your relative as your secretary. You can have a house of your choice. If you like, you can do whatever you want, which comes in the definition of perks in our parlance. I was just thinking if suppose, I were to make a similar offer to somebody to join the Government as Technocrat forget other wings, could I have

allowed that person to have his daughter as his secretary?. This is what differentiates public life from private life.

While the key determinant of success in private sector is profit, when we talk of public life, the benchmark, I am not talking of the determinants of success. I am talking of the minimum benchmark, the minimum benchmark is **ethics**. It is these ethics and values in public life, as we the auditors to the nation, have to not only observe, but to help enforce. Where from do these values and ethics emerge? Answer is simple. We are a country, where people are kings, where people are supreme, and one document which gives us the origin, the source and the destiny of governance is the Constitution of India.

I remembered a very celebrated director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri national Academy of administration, Mr. B N Yugandhar, telling probationers that they should have unflinching allegiance and commitment to the constitution. A bright probationer asked, "Sir, the constitution itself is an evolving document. The Constitution of India provides for amendments into it and the Constitution provides for freedom of opinion/expression, which if assumes the nature of public opinion, can lead to a change in the Constitution itself. Now tell me sir, how I can have an unflinching loyalty to a document which is evolving". The director at that time did not have a straight answer. I would not like to attempt that answer in the inaugural speech. I would leave it to you to ponder over issues like, changes in society, changes in the ways of work and such like things while thinking and dealing with and applying these values in public life.

I find that the faculty for this course has very nicely designed the course structure, which talks of a continuum of traditional to contemporary acts. I suggest you to use these three days as an opportunity to not only learn one way, but perhaps brainstorm and think together on this subject. This is the very very important issue which for us in IA&AD determines what I would like to call as Unique Positioning Proposition. We, in the country, are known for character, we, in the country, are known for truthfulness and we, in the country, are known for our high integrity. These cannot just be words. If they have to be associated with us permanently, people must feel that we embody them. People must perceive that we stand for them and can we expect an auditor in the field to have a particular standard of behavior, unless we set our own examples.

I quote from a book which our prime minister recently presented to some heads of nations, the Bhagvad Geeta. Lord Krishna in this book says “*यद यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्त्वदेवेतरो जनः/ स यत्प्रन्मनाम कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते*” This means, the way a leader behaves or great men behave, others follow. Whatever he/she does, becomes the benchmark of behavior for others”. It is for us, the leaders of training and the leaders of Administration in IA&AD to lay down benchmarks which are exemplary, to lay down benchmarks which stand out and which give us a place of pride.

To help you thinking and learning on these issues, we have two members of faculty who have distinguished themselves with a very in depth kind of study on the matter and they would be with you throughout this course. We have also chosen faculty whom you would be dealing with very very often. Sometimes for seeking sanctions. Sometimes for some other issues. But the reason for getting them here is not to get you sanctions. The reason for getting them here is to let you feel sufficiently informal to interact with them. Let the thinking, let the interchange of idea in this course not be confined to the classrooms. May they extend without being taxing, to your entire stay. Please feel free to interact with the faculty and any of us whenever you feel.

What could be the takeaways from this three days course? The first take away is something which we positively discourage. Two things that we positively discourage in iCED are **Use of non-recyclable plastic-** please avoid use of non-recyclable plastic to the extent possible and **Lack of punctuality.** All sessions must start at the appointed time and you may find that if you are late the door will be closed and you may be denied entry. Please don't come to me then and give me some reason. If it is not possible for you to be present in time for a particular session please inform the faculty in advance and take their permission. Well what are the positive takeaways? Positive takeaways are: the Uniqueness and the ambience of this place. As you have heard or known, we have very good facilities, a lovely sports complex, a swimming pool, a nice table tennis court, badminton court, carom boards, a nice paragola and a walking track and for those of you who may be interested we would also organize a small track to what we call as a biodiversity trail. The hill where we have assisted a lot of plantation. Fond memories of moments that you spend here is something you would certainly love to carry home.

In addition to that I would like to request you to become a part of us, going beyond this course and trying to relate to us in whatever ways you can. How we can do that? We will discuss informally sometimes whenever we have time and any idea, any suggestions you have for improving the infrastructure of this institution, would be most welcome.

With these words, I welcome you all once again and wish you a happy learning experience. Thank you very much