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Indian Bureaucracy – Dismantling the Steel Frame

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This is an apocryphal story, even though I got it from a very senior ex-civil servant – Lord Linlithgow was Governor-General and Viceroy to India from 1936 to 1943 and Chairman of a Royal Commission on Agriculture (1926-28) earlier. In 1973, Tamil Nadu constituted a State Administrative Reforms Commission, which also examined existing government positions in the state. It was discovered then that there were positions known as ‘LBAs’ and ‘LBKs’, though no one precisely knew what these job descriptions meant, since vacancies had not been filled up and earlier incumbents were now drawing pensions. The Royal Commission felt Indian cows were not good enough and cattle strains needed improvement through the import of sturdier bulls and using them to impregnate Indian cows. As was common, this recommendation was not implemented until in 1936 when it was announced Linlithgow would become Viceroy. Someone in the Madras Presidency then woke up, realising the incoming Viceroy would be sure to ask about a key recommendation made by a Commission of which he had been Chairman. Creating government jobs was not easy either. Hence, the Viceroy’s name was invoked in the job title to facilitate creation. ‘LBA’ stood for Linlithgow’s Bull Assistant and ‘LBK’ stood for Linlithgow’s Bull Keeper. ‘LBKs’ imported foreign bulls and maintained them. ‘LBAs’ ensured impregnation occurred on time and ensured that ‘LBKs’ did not commit fraud on the exchequer. These posts were abolished in mid-1970s. Apocryphal or not, this beats the story about the British civil service position finally abolished in 1945. It was created in 1803 and a man was asked to stand on the cliffs of Dover, with a spyglass in his hand, to watch out for Napoleon and ring a bell if he saw signs of an invasion.

The steel frame of Indian bureaucracy is much-maligned.¹ This is understandably so, since the practice of this bureaucracy is considerably different from the rational and efficient bureaucracy Max Weber contemplated.² If anything, users of bureaucracy will empathise more with the following quote: “The real spirit of the laws in France is that the bureaucracy

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¹ Though universally used, it is not universally known that the expression “steel frame” originates in a speech made by Prime Minister Lloyd George to the House of Commons in 1922, defending the British civil service in India. “This small nucleus ...of British officials in India...they are the steel frame of the whole structure. I do not care what you build on it – if you take the steel frame out, the fabric will collapse.”

² In particular, Weber’s *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, though originally written in 1922, edited and published in English by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Bedminster Press, New York, 1968, especially Part III, Chapter 6.

of which the late Monsieur de Gournay used to complain so greatly; here the offices, clerks, secretaries, inspectors and *intendants* are not appointed to benefit the public interest, indeed the public interest appears to have been established so that offices might exist.”³ Or for that matter, Joseph Heller’s 1961-novel ‘Catch-22’ or Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn’s ‘Yes Minister’ and ‘Yes Prime Minister’.⁴ There is some cross-country and theoretical literature on bureaucracy.⁵ First, the point is made there is asymmetry of information, so that the political system lacks regulatory information required for effective oversight of bureaucracy. Second, question marks are raised about bureaucratic objective functions so that accountability is to political masters rather than the public at large. Third, this spills over into discretion and consequent rent-seeking and corruption, with a vested interest in favour of preserving the status quo of discretion.

The Indian bureaucracy exhibits much of this malaise. The size of government employment is not that large. On 31 March 2005, total public sector employment was 18 million, divided into 3 million for the central government, 7.2 million for the state governments, 5.7 million for quasi-government and 2 million for local bodies.⁶ With an estimated labour force of 420 million in 2004-05,⁷ government employment thus accounts for 4.1 percent of total employment within the country. This relatively low figure should be borne in mind for several reasons. First, an inordinately large part of the reform discourse gets bogged down in issues pro-urban, pro-organised sector and pro-government at the expense of rural, unorganised and private. Second, any cross-subsidy to government is regressive since it involves transfers from relatively poor to relatively rich and most Pay Commission-type recommendations are transfers because there is not an increase in size of the cake. These resources have opportunity costs and rural social and physical infrastructure will not be built in the process. Third, there are assorted cross-country surveys on governance.⁸ When the Indian government performs badly on these, it is not because of the size of government employment but because of what the government does.⁹ Indeed, if the government performs

³ This quote is from a letter written in July 1765 by Baron von Grimm, cited in *Bureaucracy*, Martin Albrow, Pall Mall Press, London, 1970. Jean Claude Marie Vincent de Gournay coined the expression “bureaumania” for an “illness in France”.

⁴ Humphrey Appleby epitomises perceptions of the bureaucracy. The first (1980) episode of ‘Yes Minister’ was titled ‘Open Government’ and Jim Hacker’s introduction to the bureaucracy was “Well briefly, Sir, I am the Permanent Under Secretary of State, known as the Permanent Secretary. Woolley here is your Principal Private Secretary, I too have a Principal Private Secretary and he is the Principal Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretary. Directly responsible to me are ten Deputy Secretaries, 87 Under Secretaries and 219 Assistant Secretaries. Directly responsible to the Principal Private Secretary are plain Private Secretaries, and the Prime Minister will be appointing two Parliamentary Under Secretaries and you will be appointing your own Parliamentary Private Secretary.”

⁵ See, for example, Neil Garston edited, *Bureaucracy: Three Paradigms*, Kluwer, Boston, 1993.

⁶ *Economic Survey, 2007-08*. This is in the organised sector and 69 percent of employment in the organised sector is public sector employment. Here, quasi-government means the public sector. With a broader definition of quasi-government (such as all those to whom the Pay Commission recommendations eventually apply), the number increases to around 30 million. This is primarily urban. Hence, roughly half of all urban households earn a living off the government, with implications for political economy of reforms and targeting of subsidies, with a pronounced pro-urban bias in the latter. The Expenditure Budget for 2008-09 gives a central government employment figure of 3.4 million in March 2008. Of this, almost half a million is in the Department of Posts and 1.4 million in the Ministry of Railways.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Governance is a term difficult to pin down but that digression is irrelevant for present purposes.

⁹ The World Bank’s governance indicators have six heads – voice and accountability; political stability; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption. The last four have something to do with bureaucracy. India performs relatively better on government effectiveness and rule of law and relatively worse on regulatory quality and control of corruption. The World Bank’s Doing Business indicators document high compliance costs associated with government procedures. In both measures of

its core governance functions efficiently, the number of government employees might well increase. Fourth, the bulk of government jobs are in Grades C and D, though attention usually focuses on the more visible Grades A and B. Grades A and B roughly account for five percent of government jobs.¹⁰ For instance, if an argument is advanced that higher salaries are necessary to retain talent in the public sector and ensure this talent does not migrate to the private sector, that argument can only be valid for a small segment of Grade A individuals, not across the board for all government employees.¹¹ Otherwise, one should end up arguing that since a small segment of the Indian labour force is integrated into the global labour markets, everyone in India should be paid global salaries. To state the obvious, the problem arises because there is no link between pay and performance. Since the marginal product is high in a few instances, it is incorrectly presumed the average product is also high. Fifth, when there are references to surplus within government employment, that surplus is concentrated in Grades C and D and the existence of the surplus has a lot to do with antiquated government procedures.

Procedures bring in administrative law. Administrative law can be defined in various ways but it is essentially about rule-making by the executive,¹² adjudication and enforcement of statutes and regulation. India's administrative law has evolved on common law traditions, supplemented by judicial review over administrative action. Looked at differently, administrative law involves three strands that overlap – interfaces between citizens and government, interfaces between enterprises and government, and intra-government dealings. Procedures complicate all three, contributing to rent-seeking. The second can again be divided into three phases of an enterprise's existence – entry, functioning and exit.¹³ The first involves birth certificates, death certificates, land titles, assorted requirements of establishing one's own identity and issues connected with accessing public services and benefiting from anti-poverty programmes.

Let us take one example to drive home the point about compliance costs. Outside agriculture, the total self-employed population is 92.1 million.¹⁴ Some of these are in relatively high income occupations such as independent professionals (doctors, lawyers, artists and accountants), shop owners in urban areas, rice-mill owners, workshop owners, commission agents, real estate and housing brokers, and owners of small hotels and restaurants. However, others are in relatively low income occupations such as handloom weavers (mostly women), *chikan* workers (mostly women), street vendors, food processors, rickshaw pullers, rag-

economic freedom (Heritage Institute and Wall Street Journal, Fraser Institute), India does not do that well again because of what the government does. Finally, India performs badly on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.

¹⁰ Grade A recruitments are competitive through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), though there are reservations. Grade B recruitments are through the UPSC or the Staff Selection Commissions. Barring Railways, most Grade C recruitments are through the Staff Selection Commissions. Grade D recruitments are usually through employment exchanges.

¹¹ There is also the question of not comparing apples and oranges. Private/public compensation comparisons rarely impute perquisites at market rates and never incorporate premiums for uncertainty. On a base of 1971-72, in 2006-07, per capita emoluments of central public sector enterprise employees increased by 5402.94 percent, while inflation measured by the consumer price index increased by 1385.94 percent. *Economic Survey, 2007-08*.

¹² Though framework legislation that sanctions right to formulate rules, orders and regulations may be statutory. This type of legislation is thus delegated legislation.

¹³ The afore-mentioned World Bank's *Doing Business* database documents problems in these.

¹⁴ *Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihood in the Unorganized Sector*, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, August 2007. This is a 2004-05 figure, based on the NSS (National Sample Survey) large sample, there having been no large sample after that year.

pickers, *beedi* rollers (mostly working out of home), *agarbatti* makers (mostly women), potters and bamboo product makers.¹⁵ Eighty-seven percent of own account enterprises are in rural areas, which is why rural reforms also become important. The average own account enterprise is low on assets and low on value addition. The average value addition is Rs2,175 per month in urban areas and Rs1,167 per month in rural areas.¹⁶ Depending on the family size, this is not enough to ensure livelihood above the poverty line. Of the own account enterprises, 84.9 percent are not registered and this needs to be flagged because registration also brings attendant benefits such as access to credit or government subsidies on marketing and technology. Why are own account enterprises not registered? The answer is not entirely due to a lack of information or the rural concentration problem. Opting out of registration is probably a conscious decision because benefits from registration are not commensurate with the costs. Not only are procedures connected with registration complicated and tiresome, registration brings with it the attendant problem of bribery and rent-seeking from the government machinery. For instance, for rickshaw pullers and street-vendors, studies in many parts of urban India have documented harassment and bribery by municipal authorities and police.¹⁷ Much the same can be said of the citizen-government interface. The simple point is that bribery and rent-seeking are not distributionally neutral. They tend to hurt the relatively poor more than the relatively rich. Reduction in rent-seeking and lower compliance costs hinge on administrative law reform. Civil service reform is not synonymous with administrative law reform, though the latter requires the former. However, administrative law reform goes beyond civil service reform.

Since 1947, there have been several committees/commissions, and assorted reports, on administrative law and civil service reform – the Secretariat Reorganization Committee (1947); the Central Pay Commission (1947); the National Committee (1948); the Economic Committee (1948); Reorganization of the Machinery of Government (1949); Report on Public Administration (1951); Report on Efficient Conduct of State Enterprises (1951); Public Administration in India –Report of A Survey (1953); the Railway Corruption Enquiry Committee (1955); the States Reorganization Commission (1955); Re-examination of India's Administrative System with special reference to Administration of Governments' Industrial and Commercial Enterprises (1956); the Public Service (Qualification to Recruitment) Committee (1956); the Commission of Enquiry on Emoluments and Conditions of Service of Central Government Employees (1957-59); the Congress Parliamentary Party Sub-Committee on State Undertakings (1959); Report on Indian and State Administrative Service and Problems of District Administration (1962); the Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962); the Committee on the Indian Foreign Service (1966); Interim Report of The Administrative Reforms Committee on Problems of Redress of Citizens' Grievances (1966); Report of the Study Team on Relations Between the Press and Administration (1966); several reports of the Administrative Reforms Commission¹⁸ (1967-70); the Third Central Pay Commission (1973); the Committee on Recruitment Policy and Selection Methods (1976); Economic Administrative Reforms Commission (1983); the Committee on Centre State Relations (1988); the Committee to Review the Scheme of the Civil Services Examination (1989); the National Development Council on Austerity (1992); the Fifth Central Pay

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Manushi's work is but one example. See, Madhu Purnima Kishwar, *Deepening Democracy, Challenges of Governance and Globalization in India*, Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹⁸ This was one of the most comprehensive exercises ever undertaken.

Commission (1997);¹⁹ the 10-volume report of the Expenditure Reforms Commission (2000);²⁰ Report of the Committee to Review In-Service Training of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officers (2003); the Surendra Nath Committee Report (2003); the Committee on Civil Service Reforms (2004); the Second Administrative Reforms Commission²¹ (2005 onwards); and the Sixth Pay Commission (2008).²²

Everything that needs to be said in terms of drawing up a reform agenda has already been said several times over. The problem lies with implementation. Issues of downsizing, identifying surplus manpower, retraining, voluntary retirement schemes, contractual appointments, lateral entry, evaluation and vertical mobility keep recurring.²³ However, what are invariably implemented are hikes in salaries and not the rest.²⁴ Indeed, there are legislative constraints. Article 311 of the Constitution is one instance.²⁵ The Prevention of

¹⁹ “The impact of the Fifth Pay Commission and its aftermath on revenue deficits of Center, States and local bodies lends urgency to the need to downsize government,” *Economic Survey*, 1998-99.

²⁰ “In order to bring about fiscal prudence and austerity, government imposed a 10 percent cut across the board in the number of sanctioned posts as on 1st January, 1992. Instructions were also issued in January, 2000 directing a 10 percent reduction in the number of posts created between January, 1992 to December, 1999. The Expenditure Reforms Commission would recommend a further 10 percent cut in the sanctioned strength of staff as on 1.1.2000 to be carried out by each ministry/department by the year 2004- 2005.” In addition, “The Commission has however, taking a total picture recommended, as far as the total number of civilian posts are concerned, a 30 percent across the board cut, over a ten year frame @ 3 percent per annum, roughly equivalent to the number expected to retire each year. As part of the overall package, they have also recommended that all vacant posts, numbering over 3.5 lakh be abolished and, that there should be a total freeze on fresh recruitments in the categories of supporting and auxiliary staff and a reduction in the intake in all services that operate at the level of executives and supervisory staff. The package further includes a statutory ceiling to be enacted on total sanctioned posts in the central government, appropriate packages for compulsory retirement, voluntary retirement, golden hand shake scheme etc.” Both quotes are from the second volume.

²¹ There have been nine reports so far. “In any system, the quality of public servants is critical in determining outcomes. We have well-established procedures for initial recruitment of civil servants in India. However, there is growing concern that our civil services and administration in general have become wooden, inflexible, self-perpetuating, and inward-looking. While the bureaucracy responds to crisis situations with efficacy, colossal tardiness and failure to deal with ‘normal’ situations is evident in most cases. Effective horizontal delegation and a clear system of accountability at every level should be at the heart of our administrative reform.” Quote from an approach paper on reforms in governance and administration, written for the Second Administrative Reforms Commission.

²² “The Commission has recommended several innovative features to ensure better delivery systems in the Government with emphasis on end user satisfaction which is the primary criterion for judging the efficiency of an organization. Introduction of Performance Related Incentive Scheme (PRIS) is a step in this direction. This is not a new concept....The PRIS recommended by this Commission envisages a pecuniary component, over and above the salary, for higher performance that would be judged by improved delivery to the end user by an external independent agency.”

²³ On downsizing, one should be careful with government figures on employment. First, chunks of employment are now shown under autonomous bodies and not under government proper, though little downsizing may actually have occurred. Second, Information technology-usage has rendered several positions obsolete. Third, employment also takes place through contractual means and these are not shown.

²⁴ In terms of nuance, the Fifth Pay Commission had much more to say on downsizing and making government responsive than the Sixth Pay Commission.

²⁵ This sounds fair and innocuous but makes dismissal impossible. “Article 311(1) No person who is a member of a civil service of the Union or an all-India service or a civil service of a State or holds a civil post under the Union or a State shall be dismissed or removed by an authority subordinate to that by which he was appointed. (2) No such person as aforesaid shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an inquiry in which he has been informed of the charges against him and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges.”

Corruption Act is another.²⁶ There are vigilance enquires, Comptroller and Auditor General audits, political interference and assorted other Constitutional requirements.

This should not be taken to mean there have been no improvements since 1991. First, reforms have led to the elimination of shortages,²⁷ reduction in licensing²⁸ and some standardisation and harmonisation, leading to decline in discretion.²⁹ This does not mean that discretion has been eliminated everywhere. In a transitory period of economic reforms, it is possible for discretion to temporarily increase, especially in sectors where private sector licenses are awarded, rather than auctioned out. Sectors where discretion and control mindsets still remain are health, education, several infrastructure areas, services in general, and land use and real estate development. Second, compared to the original draft legislation, the Right to Information (RTI) Act may have had some of its teeth knocked out. However, notwithstanding its warts and blemishes, the RTI has had successes. Third, for both citizens and entrepreneurs, income growth, awareness of rights and competitive climates (where alternative private sector choices are sometimes possible) have led to countervailing pressure, forcing governments to become more responsive. Indeed, the Central RTI Act (2005) was an outcome of such countervailing pressure, with some states having enacted such statutes earlier.³⁰ Fourth, civil society pressure has also meant more intensive scrutiny by media, both print and electronic. However, such civil society pressure tends to be located in certain geographical parts of the country and not elsewhere.³¹ Fifth, there have been successful e-governance initiatives, both G2C and G2B.³² Sixth, decentralisation, participatory governance and third party scrutiny are now accepted as principles, though devolution of funds, functions and functionaries, decentralisation of centrally sponsored schemes and bottom-up planning have fallen short of what was desired, partly because of resistance by the states.³³ Seventh, All India Service Rules have been amended, allowing for a fixed tenure for specific notified posts. It is a separate matter that few notifications have surfaced from the centre as well as the states. And when the centre has indicated a minimum tenure of two years, few states have bothered to implement this. Eighth, moving to the political system, there have been some electoral reforms, with tax incentives to donors and some tightening of anti-defection laws. Ninth, the Election Commission has imposed disclosure norms on candidates. Tenth, there is some discipline on jumbo cabinets since the Council of Ministers is restricted to 15 percent of the strength of the Lok Sabha.³⁴ And eleventh, going back to

²⁶ For instance, Section 13(d)(iii) includes as criminal conduct “while holding office as a public servant obtains for any person any valuable thing or pecuniary advantage without any public interest”. Since public interest is difficult to prove and since any decision leads to a third party benefiting, this makes every public servant risk averse and prone to not taking decisions.

²⁷ Such as telephone and gas connections, or airlines, or even foreign exchange.

²⁸ Such as manufacturing.

²⁹ Such as indirect taxes.

³⁰ The Consumer Protection Act is another example where pressure led to subsequent legislation. Pressure by Public Affair Centre, Bangalore, and citizen report cards led to a decline in corruption in service delivery.

³¹ For instance, there is a clear pro-urban bias.

³² Government to consumer and government to business respectively – income tax, passports, MCA-21, insurance, excise, national citizen database, pensions, banking, land records, road transport, property registration, treasury management, municipalities, panchayats, commercial taxes, police, employment exchanges. There are several public-private partnerships and some actual out-sourcing to private sector has occurred. See, *Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2007-12, Vol.1, Chapter 10, Governance*, Planning Commission, Government of India, 2008. There is also a national e-governance plan.

³³ Mr Rajiv Gandhi’s statement in late 1980s that only 15 paise out of every rupee spent reached target beneficiaries is usually interpreted as 85 percent being swallowed up in leakage and corruption. However, this is not true. Eighty-five percent also includes very high administrative costs of delivery.

³⁴ This has probably contributed to the large number of Commissions, headed by those with Cabinet “rank”.

civil services, since 2006, 21 April has been observed as Civil Service Day. This is more than an empty gesture since awards for excellence in public administration and exchange of best practices have been institutionalised.

However, the key remains civil service reform.³⁵ “A serious effort will have to be made to protect honest civil servants. Protecting the public services from political interference and abuse of power on the part of politicians will involve (i) enforcement of objective and transparent criteria and procedures for appointments and promotions; (ii) definite tenure for civil servants holding senior positions. The abridgement of tenure through transfers should be for objective reasons to be recorded in writing; (iii) Public Service Commissions/ Administrative Tribunals should have a role in monitoring tenure, transfers and promotions; (iv) no civil servant should be suspended without the prior concurrence of the Public Service Commission; (v) rules of business in government should be strictly enforced, particularly the recording of reasoned orders in writing; and (vi) protection for civil servants who expose corrupt practices. An important question today is developing a climate of probity in public life. Codes of ethics, therefore, need to be developed for civil servants and other public functionaries. A number of countries such as the United Kingdom and Spain have developed their code of ethics. The Administrative Reforms Commission has made extensive recommendations on these issues. Some of the values which a civil servant could be mandated to follow are objectivity, integrity, neutrality, dedication to public service, transparency, exemplary conduct, accessibility and efficiency. These values have also been studied in the context of developing an Act for the Civil Services.”³⁶

This is like a motherhood statement and does not mean very much until implementation happens. One should also mention the fairly important issue of whether revenue, magisterial and developmental roles should be segregated. A steel frame erected primarily for the first two functions is not necessarily efficient when focus shifts to the third. However, this big-ticket reform agenda is not only about deconstructing and reinventing the civil service alone. It is also about deconstructing and reinventing the electoral system. The average constituency size in Britain is less than 75,000. It is a completely different proposition if one has to address constituencies that routinely cross three million and even approach three million. Corruption within the political system is linked to electoral reform and electoral funding reform. This is an economic rather than a moral issue. And corruption in the political system spills over into corruption within bureaucracy.

This should not be taken to mean that there have been no positive changes. For instance, given constraints and limitations within the civil service machinery, one should not ask why liberalisation does not occur. Instead, one should ask why reforms that did occur could be pushed through. A useful collation of successes in public service delivery is available.³⁷ These documented cases span a wide variety of sectors – telecommunication liberalisation at the centre, rural marketing and dis-intermediation,³⁸ e-governance,³⁹ property tax registration,⁴⁰ road transport,⁴¹ municipal reform,⁴² urban services,⁴³ education,⁴⁴ health

³⁵ We are ignoring questions of police and judiciary reforms because those raise other issues.

³⁶ *Eleventh Five Year Plan, ibid.*

³⁷ *Reinventing Public Service Delivery in India: Selected Case Studies*, edited by Vikram Chand, Sage Publications, Delhi, 2006.

³⁸ Madhya Pradesh.

³⁹ *Bhoomi* in Karnataka, rural cards in Andhra Pradesh and computerisation of inter-state check-posts in Gujarat are instances.

⁴⁰ Maharashtra and Karnataka.

⁴¹ Karnataka.

services⁴⁵ and Public Distribution System and mid-day meals.⁴⁶ These reforms have required support of the civil service and have indeed been driven by civil service. Arguments that these were driven by specific individuals do not get us very far. Instead, one should ask whether there are generic lessons to be gleaned from these success stories so that successes can be replicated elsewhere.⁴⁷ Are there ideas for systemic reform? From documented cases, lessons can be derived about political support,⁴⁸ managerial autonomy, decentralisation,⁴⁹ civil society pressure,⁵⁰ inter-agency coordination, use of e-governance within the government, stability of tenure and anti-corruption institutions.

The stability of tenure issue has already been flagged. A few more comments are in order about anti-corruption mechanisms in a situation where lists of corrupt IAS officers surface in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, senior civil servants figure in corruption scandals in Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Orissa and an IAS officer's wife in Karnataka launches a website against corruption.⁵¹ The issue is not new at all. "During a debate in Parliament in June 1962, many Members of Parliament expressed concern on the growing menace of corruption in the administration. In pursuance of the reply to the debate given by Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Honourable Minister for Home Affairs, a committee was set-up in order to review the existing instruments for checking corruption in central services and to advise practical steps that should be taken to make anti-corruption measures more effective. The Committee came to be known as the 'Santhanam Committee'. The Committee observed that the major causes of corruption were (i) administrative delays; (ii) governments taking upon themselves more than what they can manage by way of regulatory functions; (iii) the scope for personal discretions in the exercise of powers vested in different categories of government servants; and (iv) cumbersome procedures of dealing with various matters which are of importance to citizens in their day to day affairs."⁵² Even if identification were to be done today, the words used would not change dramatically.

The Santhanam Committee's recommendations led to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) being established in 1964. "In the wake of the directions of the Honourable Supreme Court in 1997, in the Writ Petition filed in public interest by Shri Vineet Narain and others in the Hawala Case, the government promulgated an ordinance in 1998. The Ordinance of 1998 conferred statutory status to the CVC and the powers to exercise superintendence over the functioning of the Delhi Special Police Establishment, and also to review the progress of the investigations pertaining to the alleged offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, conducted by them. ...After the Bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament and, with the assent of the President, the CVC Act, 2003 came into force with effect from 11 September 2003. The Act also amended the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act to give the commonly known principle of 'Single Directive', a legal status which had been struck

⁴² Bangalore, Surat.

⁴³ Hyderabad.

⁴⁴ Madhya Pradesh.

⁴⁵ Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

⁴⁶ Tamil Nadu.

⁴⁷ One learns even more from failed attempts but those are rarely documented.

⁴⁸ This should be interpreted to mean that the political system thought there was an electoral dividend in these reforms.

⁴⁹ This broad-based support for reforms and makes the process bottom-up.

⁵⁰ Afore-mentioned examples such as the Right to Information Act, media, public interest litigation, citizen report cards.

⁵¹ <http://fightcorruption.wikidot.com/>

⁵² Central Vigilance Commission, *Annual Report 2006*, <http://www.cvc.nic.in/ar2006.pdf>

down by the Supreme Court in the Hawala Case. According to this, the Central Bureau of Investigation required the prior approval of the central government to conduct inquiry or investigation against any offence alleged to have been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act by an employee of the level of Joint Secretary and above in the central government or such officers in the government corporations, companies, societies and local authorities owned or controlled by the central government.... Following the murder of Satyendra Dubey and in response to a Public Interest Litigation filed on the subject, the Supreme Court directed the government to designate a suitable machinery to act on the complaints from “whistle blowers” till such time as a suitable legislation was enacted to that effect. In recognition of the faith that the country reposed in the Commission, the central government, while implementing the directive of the Supreme Court, appointed the Commission as the ‘Designated Authority’ for the purpose.”⁵³ One should also mention the Lok Pal system for central government and the Lok Ayukta framework in Karnataka.

The impression one forms is endogenous triggers for change are few. Change has occurred only when exogenous pressure has been brought. With income growth and increased awareness, that is perhaps the main reason why the steel frame will finally buckle.

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⁵³ *Ibid.*