Mission Karamyogi – Communication Skills

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Introduction

1.   Civil services are at the epicentre of all government activities and the civil service officers are responsible for policy making and are the executive hand which delivers on ground. The capacity of the Civil services plays a vital role in delivering a wide range of services, ensure implementation of welfare programs and perform core governance functions. The Government recognizing the crucial role of Capacity building of Civil Services, instituted the Mission Karamyogi which marks a signal shift in competency driven training and Human Resource (HR) management of officials by transitioning from a 'rules-based' system to the 'roles-based' system.

2.   Mission Karmayogi is India's first robust mission to reform civil services and empower them to deliver services effectively and efficiently. This is a bold initiative of Government to democratize the training process and put everyone on the even playing field. This mission emphasizes the 'servant' part in the acclaimed civil services. It attempts to address the long pending issues in the existing system, such as complexity and red-tapism, through a capacity-building initiative while working at an individual, institutional and procedural level.

3.   Competency-based HR policy requires assignment of right person to the right role at the right time, thus securing the sustainable competitive advantage for the nation and provides citizen centricity to the service delivery. The planned program aims to create a robust policy framework and provide an institutional structure towards implementation of such HR policy in the Government. The policy framework will also enable adoption of modern technological tools such as a digital platform, artificial intelligence, machine learning and delta analytics for monitoring and evaluation of the entire programme especially quality of the learning content, assessment of user feedback and competency assessment. This approach will break silos in capacity development and democratize knowledge on an equitable basis across civil services.

4.   It has been assessed that approx. 89% of the bureaucrats who are in direct touch with the public receive fragmented and sub-par training. Mission Karmayogi aims to cover 46 lakhs employees of the central government within its purview. The government intends to spend INR 510.86 cr over five years, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2024-25. In addition, external accountability and transparency is also considered crucial for better responsiveness at the individual level. The mission intends to improve information systems, ensure responsibility for inputs and better audit. This mission will publish all budget summarised and track records by each department suo motto and will enable a more robust performance evaluation system.

5.   The National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building has six key pillars. These include: -

(a)   Policy Framework

(b)   Institutional Framework

(c)   Competency Framework

(d)   Digital Learning Framework iGOT-Karmayogi i.e. integrated Government Online Training Karmayogi Platform

(e)   Electronic Human Resource Management System

(f)   Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Basic Features of Mission Karmayogi

6.   The features of Mission Karamyogi includes: -

(a)   <u>Rule based to Role Based Training</u>. In government, every post has an assigned role and each role has activities associated with it. Similarly, each activity needs certain competencies. The mission envisages for a transition from "rule-based" to "role-based" HR management, so that work allocation can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post.

(b)   <u>Professional Growth</u>. Considering the ever-evolving nature of roles, activities and competencies of civil servants, the mission will provide an opportunity for officers to

continuously build and strengthen their behavioral, functional and domain competencies in their self-driven and mandated learning paths. It will also help all civil servants in their professional growth.

(c)   Uniform Training Approach. The mission will harmonise training standards across the country, so that there will be a uniform approach in managing and regulating the capacity building ecosystem on collaborative and co-sharing basis.

(d)   Vision for Future India.   With the fast changing socio-economic and political aspirations of the country, there is a need for accelerating the shifts in the approach to governance and public service delivery. The mission thus aims at building a New India, with its civil servants equipped with right attitude, skills and knowledge.

(e)   On Site Learning.   The key objective of the mission is to democratise learning and enable equitable access to content at the learner's convenience. The mission emphasises on 'On-site learning' to complement the 'Off-site learning'. The present training programs are sporadic, siloed and primarily have offline nature, therefore, government's ability to deliver sophisticated programs and quality training has become limited. Now officers can be trained from best universities/ institutes as per their convenience.

(f)   Adoption of Best Practices.   The mission encourages and collaborates with the best-in-class learning content creators/ providers including public training institutions, universities and individual experts.

(g)   Reducing the Training Cost. The mission will persuade all Central Ministries and departments to give more emphasis on online courses and directly invest their resources towards co-creation and sharing the learning processes through internal and external faculty. It will also help cut down the expenditure on foreign training.

Guiding Principles

7.   The guiding principles of the Mission Karamyogi include: -

(a)   Complement physical capacity building approach with Online Learning.

(b)   Support transition from 'Rules based' to 'Roles based' HR Management. Aligning work allocation of civil servants by matching their competencies to requirements of the post.

(c)   Create an ecosystem of shared training infrastructure including that of learning materials, institutions and personnel.

(d)   Calibrate all Civil Service positions to a Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRACs) approach and to create and deliver learning content relevant to the identified FRACs in every Government entity.

(e)   Enable adoption of modern technological tools such as digital platforms, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Data Analytics.

Institutional Structure for Mission Karmayogi

Digital Learning Framework (iGOT-Karmayogi Platform)

8. It is proposed to build iGOT-Karmayogi as an integral part of the Digital India stack as a tool for capacity building of all government employees. It will provide anytime-anywhere learning to train about 2.0 crores users which was hitherto not achievable through traditional measures. The platform is proposed to evolve into a vibrant and world class marketplace for content modelled on FRACs, supported by a robust e-learning content industry including best-in-class institutions, start-ups and individual resources, where carefully curated and vetted e-learning content will become available as training modules. The appropriate framework to ensure that Capacity Building for future generations of the Civil Servants so that they remain entrenched in the Indian culture and sensibilities and remain connected with their roots while they learn from the best practices across the world will be setup.

9. A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in the form of a not-for-profit company is proposed to be incorporated as a 100% government owned entity for owning, managing, maintaining and improving the digital/e-learning platform, including the IPR of all software, content, process etc. on behalf of Government. A mandatory Subscription Based Revenue Model enabling the participation of all Ministries, departments, entities of the Government of India and willing state Governments has been designed to partly fund the program.

Advantages of the Mission

10. The merits of the mission, so evaluated, include: -

   (a) **Democratized Civil Service**. This is a new National Architecture for Civil Services Capacity Building that will herald into Silo-less Performance.

   (b) **Holistic Approach**. This is a comprehensive reform of capacity building apparatus at individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery.

   (c) **Competency Driven HR Management Policy**. The mission will ensure that right person with right competencies is at the right position.

   (d) **Enhanced Accessibility**. The mission will enable Civil Servants to learn from the best institutions and practices across the world.

(e) **Increased Expertise**.   The mission is Knowledge driven and aims at building competencies to transform Civil Servants into leaders and subject matter experts.

(f) **Better Governance**.   Capacity of Civil Services plays a vital role in performing core governance functions. The mission will help make Civil Servant more efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of the citizen.

(g) **Leads to better Work Culture**. The mission organically links the transformation of work culture and strengthening public institutions through adopting modern technology which lays emphasis on skills.

(h) **Professional Growth**.   It is an opportunity to continuously build and strengthen the Behavioral, Functional and Domain Competencies in their self-driven and mandated learning paths for all civil servants.

(i) **Uniform Approach**.   The mission will enable a uniform approach in managing and regulating the capacity building ecosystem on collaborative and co-sharing basis.

(j) **Reduce Cost of Training**.   Due to emphasis given on continuous online learning and shared ecosystem, it will reduce training costs. Similarly, expenditure on foreign training will also be cut down.

Communication Skills

11.   Communication is inherently an interactive social process that facilitates understanding between individuals. In order to accomplish the organisational goal, it is imperative that the leaders develop social and interpersonal communication skills. In order to optimize influence, good and effective leader must provide purpose, direction and motivation to the subordinates. Communication forms an important component to success in any field. More than the process of exchanging or transferring information in an understandable way, effective communication is a key competency of all civil servants. Effective Communication improves the performance of groups and organizations. These individuals, undergoing training, may not presently be the principal secretaries of various ministries, but they will soon be. They could be part of the system who step forward to mentor less experienced or younger employees, managers who direct successful project teams, who lead divisions and motivate their staff to achieve company goals. It

may be appreciated that through effective communication, leaders lead. Good communication skills enable, foster and create the understanding and trust necessary to encourage others to follow a leader. Without effective communication, a manager accomplishes little and is not an effective leader. In fact, being able to communicate effectively is what allows a manager to move into a leadership position.

12.   The survival of any organised human activity depends largely on man's ability to communicate well with others. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive of an organisation in which individuals operate in isolation. It is important to determine the skills needed to communicate effectively for the benefit of the project. Communication or social skills entail individuals having the ability to interact effectively with clients and other professionals. Any project manager needs to establish cooperative relationships with the project team members to ensure a good climate for communication, identify participants for the project to ensure commitment and adopt an appropriate leadership style.

13.   However, the purpose of communication among civil servants is not simply to exchange information but also to change or influence others so that they perform a desired action to meet the organizational goals. Effective Communication can be used to increase awareness of issues and provide possible solutions and it can help bridge cultural sensitivities and lead to consensus. Being able to communicate effectively is a necessary and vital part of every emergency management professional's job. Finely tuned communication skill is an important tool during the planning phase when educating the staff and public about the reasons for implementing the policies.

14.   Effective communication is essential in any workplace. The average worker spends 50 percent of the day communicating, and one-fourth of all workplace mistakes are the result of poor communication. As management professional, one needs to be a skillful communicator to achieve the objectives. Strong communication skills enable one to engage in collaborative planning and promote safety awareness in the community. Effective communication helps create a common understanding of the situation so the whole community can work together toward achieving the desired results.

Effective Communication Strategies

15.   The effective Communication strategies include the following: -

   (a)   Making eye contact

   (b)   Use attentive body language, sit slightly forward with a relaxed, easy posture

   (c)   Be aware of the gestures

   (d)   Stay on the topic

   (e)   Don't be phony, be your own self

   (f)   Be cultural sensitive

   (g)   Focus on other person

   (h)   Determine what the other person already knows, then fill in the gaps

   (i)   Smile or nod

   (j)   Don't monopolize the conversation

   (k)   Establish rapport

   (l)   Arrange for privacy

   (m)   Create an atmosphere free of distractions and interruptions

   (n)   Be warm and enthusiastic

   (o)   Show interest

   (p)   Look bright and alert

   (q)   Ask open-ended questions

   (r)   Use active listening

16.   Being an effective communicator involves establishing a personal connection with the audience and using basic communication tools to reach that audience. To communicate effectively, it is helpful to understand the basic skills that form the building blocks of effective communication.

How Communication Works

17.   Essentially, communication is the process by which we share information, ideas and intentions with each other. The three most common types of communication includes: -

(a)   **Verbal Communication**.   The way we speak, whether in a formal setting or through a casual conversation.

(b)   **Written Communication**.   Considering how frequently we use emails, text messages and social media to communicate these days, being able to communicate well through writing is a vital skill.

(c)   **Behavioral Communication**.   Sometimes going by the ambiguous moniker "non-verbal communication," this type of communication includes things like gestures, appearance and facial expressions.

Common Communication Mistakes

18.   There are many nuanced ways bad communication can manifest, but here are a few of the most common: -

(a)   **Poor Commitment to Listening**.   Communication is a two-way street, which means being able to listen well is just as important as being able to express effectively. A lack of listening is one of the most communication barriers and it is frequently referred to in the communication strategy.

(b)   **Notably Weak Writing Skills**.   It's not easy to write well, and while one does not need to be a masterful storyteller, one needs to be able to use grammar and vocabulary to successfully communicate via writing.

(c)   **Allowing Persistent Distractions**.   Distractions play a huge part in daily lives. Even if one ignore a phone call, think about how much a ringing phone can distract during the course of discussions.

(d)   **Making Assumptions about Information or Intent**.   When   are trying to explain something you fully understand, it can be easy to omit vital information, because one assumes that the person or people listening are on the same page.

(e)   **Practicing Passive Communication**.   This communication barrier also involves withholding information, though on a more emotional level. A person who practices passive communication will be reluctant to share things that might make them uncomfortable—such as fears, anger, sadness, or jealousy.

Verbal Communication Strategies

19.   The communication strategies we need to practice include: -

(a)   **Practice Active Listening**.   Efforts should be made to simply listen to what the conversation partner is saying. This will help the conversation partner to feel appreciated and respected and will ensure what is said next will be on point and help to move the conversation forward.

(b)   **Remove Distractions**.   Remove all distractions such as twitter account, put the phones on vibration mode or power down the Smart Watch. There can be nothing more distracting in a conversation than that the technology being carried on a person.

(c)   **Recognize and call out your Emotions**.   If any conversation is likely to cause some difficult emotions, it's important to call them out verbally. Attempt to speak with sentences that start with "I feel," to help convey perspective.

(d)   **Prepare for Tricky Conversations**. If there is a tricky conversation, it is always good to practice it with a friend in advance. Try to think of what conversation partner might say, and the best way to respond. When it comes time for the actual conversation, it will show better results.

Written Communication Techniques

20.   Writing does not come easy to everyone, and even if one is a perfect grammarian, it still takes skill and thought to communicate effectively on the page. Some written communication strategies include: -

(a)   **Get Grammar and Mechanics down Pat**. Ensure that the language skills are up to snuff to effectively communicate.

(b)   **Organize and Format Information for Reader**. When writing an email or text message, try to put oneself in the mind of the reader and determine what information they will need. If one needs to convey a lot of info, use headers, numbered lists, bullet points and bolded text to make it easier for people to quickly digest the information they need.

(c)   **Edit and Edit Again**. It's all too easy to write up a quick response to something and hit send without reading it again, but this is a sure fire way to end up sending a messy, confusing bit of written communication. Particularly with longer forms of written communications, be sure to read over text again, not only eliminating typos, but also trimming down wordy phrases.

(d)   **Have an "inbox strategy"**. There are two types of people on Earth: those who have thousands of unread emails, and those who rarely have more than a handful. A disorganized inbox might be make the communication a challenge.. The best place to start is by decluttering—unsubscribe from those ancient mailing lists and put some filters and labels into place to make things easier to track.

(e)   **Ask Questions and Suggest Action**. Unless written communication is just for information, one should try to close out with a question or a prompt for action. Don't expect that reader will know what one wants them to do. It would be better to be politely explicit.

Behavioral Communication Strategies
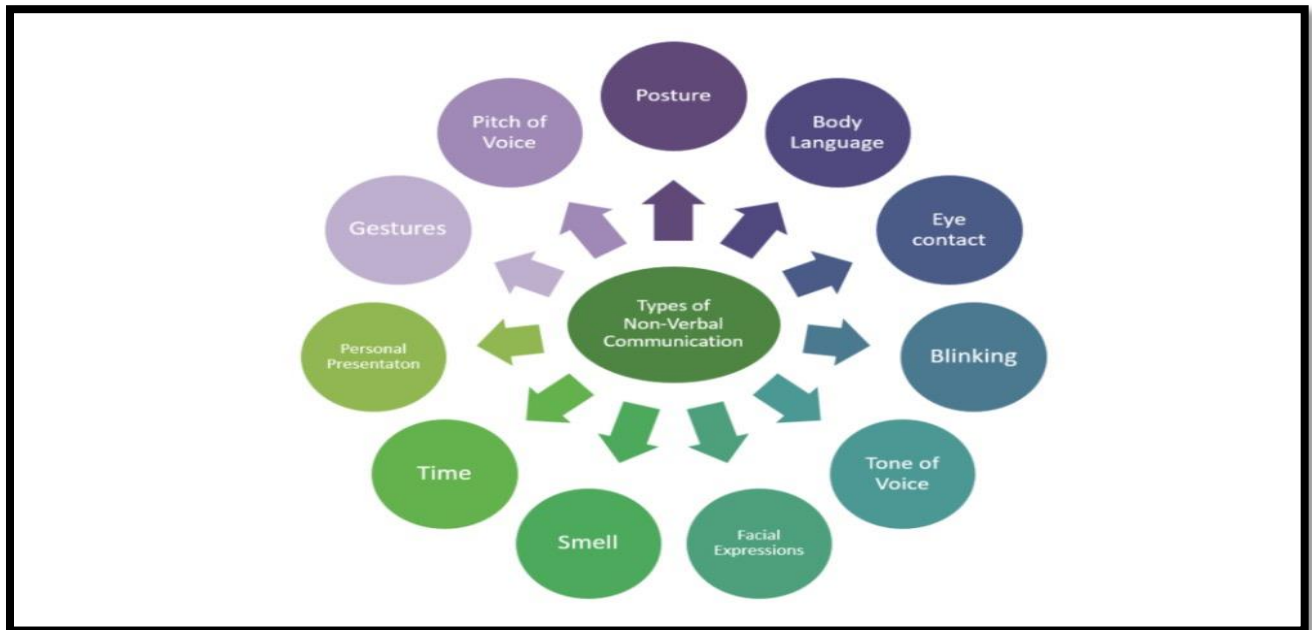
21.   Some behavioral communication strategies include: -

(a)   **Consider One's Appearance**.   Whether or not it's intentional, the way one is presented talks a lot about personality. The clothing which is worn shows that one care. It's not just down to fashion either; personal grooming and hygiene are also forms of subtle communication.

(b)   **Work on Eye Contact**.   Maintaining eye contact during a conversation is a good way to show that one is being heard, which is a core part of effective communication. While it can be uncomfortable for some, the longer one can hold eye contact with someone, the more it will be engaged in an effective way.

(c)   **Record a Conversation with a Friend**.   The   gestures   and   body language used during a conversation are important aspects of non-verbal communication. If one is not sure whether it is being expressed as intended, try to record a conversation with a friend. Post recording, watch the facial expressions, hand gestures and body languages to look for patterns and areas to improve.

(d)   **Improve Posture**.   Slouching in chair or standing with slumped shoulders may be something done sub-consciously, but it can send signals to those around that one may

not want to communicate. On the flip side, standing tall, with shoulders pulled back, sends a message that the listener is alert, attentive and confident.

(e)   **Watch for Non-verbal Cues** Since listening is a big part of effective communication strategies, one should be constantly watching the body language and facial expressions of those one is talking to. By doing this, it will display better understanding about one's own words and actions are coming across as intended and communication strategy can be adjusted as needed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

22.   Given the nature and pace of change in governance, the role and responsibility held by the Government officials is becoming highly complex. Skilled officers are needed for efficient governance. Thus, it is imperative to improve the ability and competency of the officials and that requires officers to be trained adequately in order to upgrade their skills and knowledge based on their job profiles, activities and competencies. The Mission Karmayogi Scheme offers flexible and advanced learning opportunities to a large number of officers. It envisions a blend of both online training and in person training. Officers will have the opportunity to get national/ international exposure to develop in-depth competencies in an array of subjects/ areas along with specific specialized subjects required for their current or future job profiles.

23.   The manager in any organization is trusted by the team and heads the team on a unified path towards their goal. Project team members need to collaborate, share, collate and integrate information and knowledge to realize project objectives. A project manager does not communicate with language only, but also with character, which includes attitude, behavior and personality. Allowing team members to take responsibility for their work and sharing the vision with team members will enhance the formal flow of information in all directions, namely upward, downward, horizontal, diagonal and lateral, resulting in successful feedback and thus a stronger action. Thus, project managers who allow the team to take responsibility for their work will attain an efficient flow of work with effective communication. The results will indicate a people-orientated approach towards the management of a project.

24.   Effective communication can improve relationships at home, work and in social situations by deepening your connections with others and improving teamwork, decision making and problem solving. It enables you to communicate both positive and negative messages without creating conflict or destroying trust. Effective communication combines a set of skills including non-verbal communication, attentive listening, the ability to manage stress in the moment and the capacity to recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you're communicating with. Extensive research has provided insight into the processes of human perception and communication. These insights have led to the development of tools and procedures that increase significantly the effectiveness of that communication significantly.

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