

Philosophical basis of Governance

Ancient Indian Philosophical Basis

Ancient Indian thought, drawing from scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Kautilya's Arthashastra, emphasizes that power is a trust to be used for the collective good, not personal gain.

- **Dharma (Righteousness and Duty):** This is the cornerstone of Indian governance philosophy. Rulers were expected to follow Raj Dharma, the righteous duty of the king, which meant ensuring justice, fairness, and the well-being of all subjects (Sarvodaya, welfare of all).
- **Kautilya's Arthashastra (Statecraft):** This text emphasizes practical, effective, and ethical administration with a zero-tolerance approach to corruption. Key principles include:
 - **"In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness":** The ruler is a servant of the state and his actions should always prioritize public welfare over personal desires.
 - **Accountability and Discipline:** It prescribes a strict code of conduct for the king and his officials, emphasizing self-control and constant activity for the people's security and welfare.
- **Virtue Ethics:** Ancient philosophy stressed the moral character of rulers. Virtues like honesty, integrity, justice, and compassion were considered essential for a well-functioning society, ensuring trust and cooperation between the ruler and the ruled.
- **Nishkama Karma (Selfless Action):** The Bhagavad Gita advocates performing one's duty without attachment to personal gain, a principle directly applicable to public servants acting solely in the public interest.

Modern Philosophical and Constitutional Basis

Modern Indian governance are rooted in the values enshrined in the Constitution and the ideas of modern leaders like Mahatma Gandhi.

- **Constitutional Values:** The Preamble to the Indian Constitution outlines core values that guide governance: sovereignty, socialism, secularism, democracy, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

- **Rule of Law:** The Constitution establishes a transparent and predictable legal framework that all individuals and institutions, including the government, are accountable to.
- **Justice and Equity:** The aim is to ensure social, economic, and political justice for all, particularly the marginalized, reflecting the influence of traditional Dharma and modern social contract theories.
- **Gandhian Philosophy:** Mahatma Gandhi advocated for Swaraj (self-governance) and Sarvodaya (welfare of all), emphasizing that governance should empower individuals and communities and prioritize the weakest sections of society.

Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

These Western-influenced principles provide a modern ethical framework for public service:

- **Selflessness:** Acting in the public interest, not for personal or partisan gain.
- **Integrity:** Avoiding any position or debt that could compromise official duties.
- **Objectivity:** Making decisions based on merit, evidence, and impartiality.
- **Accountability:** Being answerable for one's decisions and actions to the public.
- **Openness:** Being as transparent as possible in all actions and decisions.
- **Honesty:** Declaring and managing any conflicts of interest.
- **Leadership:** Setting a positive example for others to follow.

Philosophical theories in practice

- **Utilitarianism:** Public actions should aim to create the greatest good for the greatest number of people, a core tenet of public administration's goal of public welfare.
- **Deontology:** Public servants operate under a duty-bound morality, following a set of rules and principles regardless of the outcome.
- **Social Contract:** The relationship between the government and the governed is a social contract, where the administration serves the people in exchange for their support and the legitimacy of the state.

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