



A Study On Individual Social Responsibility Of Civil Servants In Karnataka

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Abstract:

Because of the British legacy and its influence on contemporary public administration, the civil servants in India lacks Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) in their profession. In this background, this research attempt to study the understanding and practice of ISR by in-service civil servant in Karnataka at their individual and professional level respectively. The nature of the study is descriptive and exploratory. A non-probability sampling technique is adopted. The studies rely on both primary and secondary data. The sample size is 160 consisting of four districts, all level official groups and three types of areas in Karnataka. It used to statistical analysis, such as - percentage analysis and descriptive analysis data interpretation and analysis. The research concludes that, most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka are aware about the concept of ISR. However, it not well practiced in their profession due many reasons. The study received many valuable suggestions to better practice of ISR by civil servants in Karnataka.

Keywords: Individual Social Responsibility, Civil Servant, Public Administration and Karnataka Administration.

1. Introduction

According to Anup Tiwari (2008), "Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) is a moral belief, in which an individual becomes socially responsible or conscious of his/her actions that may affect communities outside his/her immediate circle like family and friends. Being 'socially responsible' is about all individuals behaving ethically and sensitively towards social, economic, and environmental issues; it is about being accountable for our actions. The ISR could be making a donation for significant society causes - social, cultural and ecological or being an active participant in resolving social issues."

The objectives of democratic socialism, the welfare state and economic development gave tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of civil servants (Thompson, 2004.); hence they occupy centre stage to realise these goals. However, there is no substantive provision to make civil servants more sensitive to social issues under their professional framework and the Constitution of India doesn't specify the role of civil servants in this regard. For example, the Indian Civil Service (Conduct) Rules Amendment-2014, asks

civil servants to have social concerns in their profession but does not mention spending on social causes in a personal capacity. The Karnataka State Civil Services Rules (KSCSR) misses this aspect.

The civil servants in Karnataka can work, towards the welfare of others and society by contributing to addressing existing social issues, bringing social change, and empowering the citizens, especially marginalized people as well as spending a part of their earnings for a social cause in the larger interest of society on an individual basis; if the concept of ISR is brought under their professional framework.

2 Research Methodology

In the beginning, the researcher identified the conceptualized the idea of ISR based on secondary data and later, it explored its understanding and practice by in-service civil servants in Karnataka based on primary data. Thus, the researcher adopted methodological triangulation. The study is descriptive, and exploratory in nature. A non-probability sampling technique, that is, stratified and purposive sampling techniques have been applied to collect data. The related the concept of ISR to the civil servants at the two levels, that is – individual level awareness and practice at the professional level. Based on the questionnaire, primary data was collected through face-to-face interview methods and Google Forms. The secondary data have been collected from relevant books, research, theses, journal papers, articles, private publications, newspapers etc. The statistical analysis like percentage analysis and descriptive analysis were used to describe and analyses the data. The total sample size was 160. The specific details of selected area, departments and official groups of the sample are as follows:

Table 1

The Sample from Each District Includes Areas, Departments, and Official Groups of Respondents.

Area	Departments of Karnataka Government				Official Group	Number of Respondents
	Health	Police	Revenue	Local Government		
Village	10	10	10	10	D	40
Taluk	20	20	20	20	B & C	80
District	10	10	10	10	A	40

Total Respondents from each district = 160

3. DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Awareness of ISR Among Civil Servants in Karnataka

As per the 90% of respondents' belief, most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka are familiar with the concept of ISR. The same belief is expressed by – 95% of Group A, 93% of Group B, 84% of Group C and 90% of Group D officers. District-wise, 100% of respondents in Bidar, 76% in Bijapur, 89% in Mysuru and 100% in Bengaluru have the same perception. Overall, 89% of the respondents think that the concept of ISR have an influence on them. Of these, 95%, 93%, 84% and 100% of Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D officials respectively think the same. District-wise, 100% of respondents in Bidar, 76% in Bijapur, 84% in Mysuru, and 100% in Bengaluru opinionated the same.

3.2 Implementation of ISR by Civil Servants in Karnataka

Table 2

Response of Respondents on Implementation ISR by In-Service Civil servants in Karnataka (Data in Percentage).

S. No	Statements Related to Implementation of ISR	Agreement by Respondents
1.	Agreement that most of the civil servants behave with ISR in their official capacity	34
2.	Agreement that most of them do not spend a part of their earnings on social causes	88
3.	Agreement that most of the administrators spend a part of their earnings only for the welfare of their respective community/religion/caste	46
4.	Agreement that most of the administrators spend a part of their earnings for social causes only because it is a means to save their income tax as per the rule	47
5.	Agreement that most of the administrators cannot spend a part of their earnings for social causes due to insufficient pay scale system	74
6.	Agreement that most of the administrators who earn more money through illegal ways or corruption are spending for social causes	53
7.	Agreement that most of the administrators spend a part of their earnings for social causes mainly to build up their social status, but not because they really care for the society	59
8.	Agreement that most of them are aware of existing social ills and practically working to eliminate existing social ills	29
9.	Agreement that most of them are aware of existing social ills but practically do not work to eliminate existing social ills	47
10.	Agreement that most of them are aware of existing social ills and misusing them for their self-interest	25

Source: Primary Data

The understanding of in-service civil servants in Karnataka on various aspects of the implementation of ISR is explained as follows:

A total of 34% of respondents have the understanding that the concept of ISR is being practised in their official capacity by in-service civil servants in Karnataka. Among them, the same understanding is expressed by – 32% of Group A, 20% of Group B, 36% of Group C and 12% of Group D officers. However, 57% of Group C officials perceive that most of the top-level officials behave as per ISR, not the other level officials and 67% of Group B and 33% of Group C officials perceive that most of the other level officials behave as per ISR, not the top-level officials.

District-wise, 40% of respondents in Bidar, 12% in Bijapur, 40% in Mysuru and 8% in Bengaluru have the same opinion. 43% of respondents in Bidar, 27% in Mysuru, and 14% each in Bengaluru and Bijapur perceive that most of the top-level officials behave as per ISR, not the other level officials. 33.3% of respondents each in Bidar, Bijapur and Mysuru and none of the respondents in Bengaluru opinionated that most of the other level officials behave as per ISR, not the top-level officials.

A total of 88% of respondents have the opinion that most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka do not spend a part of their earnings on social causes as per the ISR. Among them, the same opinion is expressed by – 85% of Group A, 81% of Group B, 90% of Group C and 100% of Group D officers. District-wise, 80% of respondents in Bidar, 90% in Bijapur, 90% in Mysuru and 100% in Bengaluru have the same opinion. Just 9% of the respondents perceive that most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka spend a part of their earnings on the same.

Overall 46% of respondents have the opinion that most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka spend a part of their earnings only for the welfare of their respective community or caste. Among them, the same opinion is expressed by – 40% of Group A, 37% of Group B, 55% of Group C and 50% of Group D officers. District-wise, 45% of respondents in Bidar, 40% in Bijapur, 50% in Mysuru and 50% in Bengaluru have the same opinion. However, 35% of Group A, 42% of Group D, 19% of Group C and 20% of Group D officials, have a contradictory opinion, that is, these officers do not spend a part of their earning based on community or caste.

A total of 27% of respondents have the opinion that most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka spend a part of their earnings on social causes only because it is a means to save their income tax as per the rule. Among them, the same opinion is expressed by – 10% of Group A, 44% of Group B, 20% of Group C and 42% of Group D officers. District-wise, 20% of respondents in Bidar, 55% in Bijapur, 10% in Mysuru and 12% in Bengaluru have the same opinion. However, 65% of Group A, 37% of Group B, 35% of Group C and 42% of Group D officials expressed a contradictory opinion, that is, these officers do not spend a part of their earning just to save their tax as per rules.

Overall 74% of respondents have the opinion that most administrators cannot spend a part of their earnings on social causes due to an insufficient pay scale system. The same opinion is expressed by – 60% of Group A, 87% of Group B, and 75% of Group C and Group D officers. District-wise, 85% of respondents in Bidar, 75% in Bijapur, 70% in Mysuru and 50% in Bengaluru have the same opinion. However, 40% of Group A, 06% of Group B, 15% of Group C and 25% of Group D officials; 5% of respondents each in Bidar, 25% of each in Mysuru and Bijapur districts and 50% in Bengaluru, that is, these officers can spend a part of their earning for social causes even they have insufficient pay scale.

Overall 53% of respondents have the opinion that most of the administrators who earn more money through illegal ways or corruption are spending for social causes. The same opinion is expressed by – 50% of Group A, 44% of Group B, 65% of Group C and 50% of Group D officers. District-wise, 50% of respondents in Bidar, 50% in Bijapur, 55% in Mysuru and 62% in Bengaluru have the same opinion.

A total of 59% of respondents have the opinion that most of the administrators spend a part of their earnings for social causes mainly to build up their social status, but not because they really care for society. The same opinion is expressed by – 55% of Group A, 44% of Group B, 70% of Group C and 68% of Group D officers. District-wise, 50% of respondents in Bidar, 60% in Bijapur, 60% in Mysuru and 75% in Bengaluru have the same opinion.

A total of 29% of respondents have the opinion that most of the administrators are aware of existing social ills and practically working to eliminate existing social ills. The same opinion is expressed by – 25% of Group A, 31% of Group B, 30% of Group C and 34% of Group D officers. District-wise, 35% of respondents in Bidar, 25% in Bijapur, 40% in Mysuru and 00% in Bengaluru have the same opinion.

Overall, 47% of respondents have the opinion that most of the administrators are aware of existing social ills but practically do not work to eliminate existing social ills. The same opinion is expressed by – 65% of Group A, 37% of Group B, 40% of Group C and 33% of Group D officers. District-wise, 45% of respondents in Bidar, 55% in Bijapur, 15% in Mysuru and 100% in Bengaluru have the same opinion.

A total of 25% of respondents have the opinion that most of the administrators are aware of existing social ills and misusing them for their self-interest. The same opinion is expressed by – 10% of Group A, 31% of Group B, 30% of Group C and 33% of Group D officers. District-wise, 20% of respondents in Bidar, 20% in Bijapur, 45% in Mysuru and 00% in Bengaluru have the same opinion.

3.3. Suggestions on ISR

The various suggestions given by respondents to bring more qualities of ISR among in-service civil servants in Karnataka are as below:

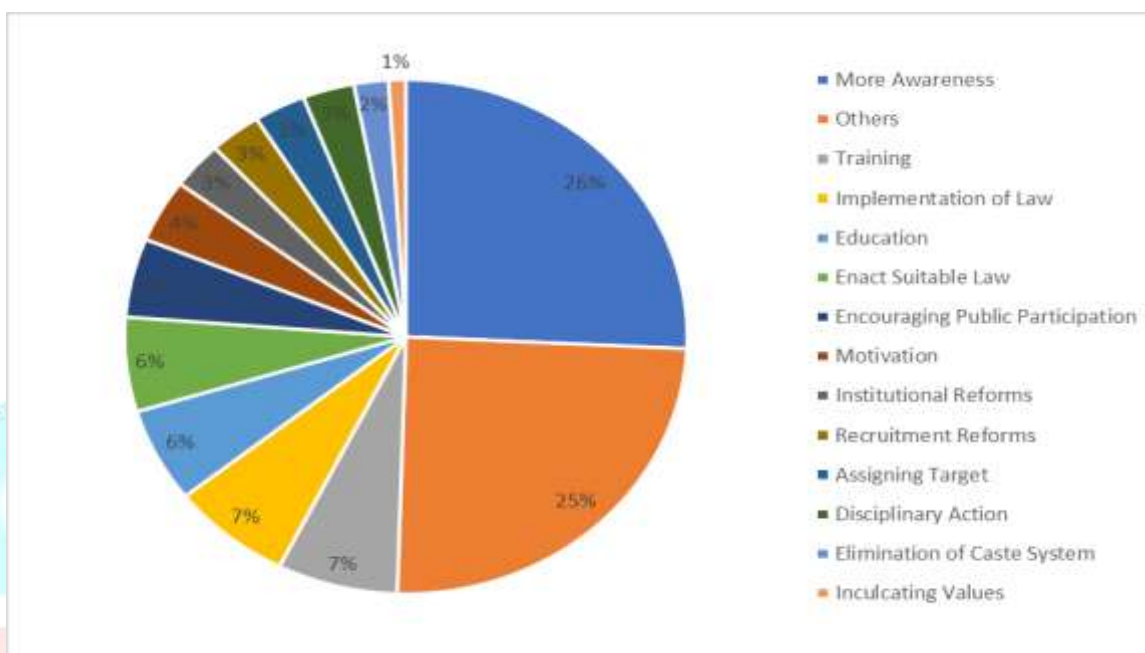


Diagram 1 Illustrates Suggestions Given by Respondents to Bring More ISR Among Civil Servants in Karnataka. Source: Primary Data

In order to inculcate the concept of ISR among in-service civil servants in Karnataka, creating 'more awareness' is suggested by 26% of the total respondents, 'other' by 25%, training by 07% and implementation of laws by 07%. Suggestions such as, - education, enacting suitable laws, encouraging public participation, motivation, institutional reforms, recruitment reforms, assigning targets, disciplinary action, elimination of the caste system and inculcating values are indicated by the fewest number of respondents. The suggestion 'other' includes the subjects like- having individual initiation and zeal, creating a conducive work environment, developing individual capacity, changing the mind of officers, team efforts, ensuring effective coordination between different institutions of the government, developing a good relationship with the public by officials, effective supervision by higher level officials, linking it to the promotion of officers, proper guidance by senior officers, focused observations by officers to prevent social wrongs and following successful models.

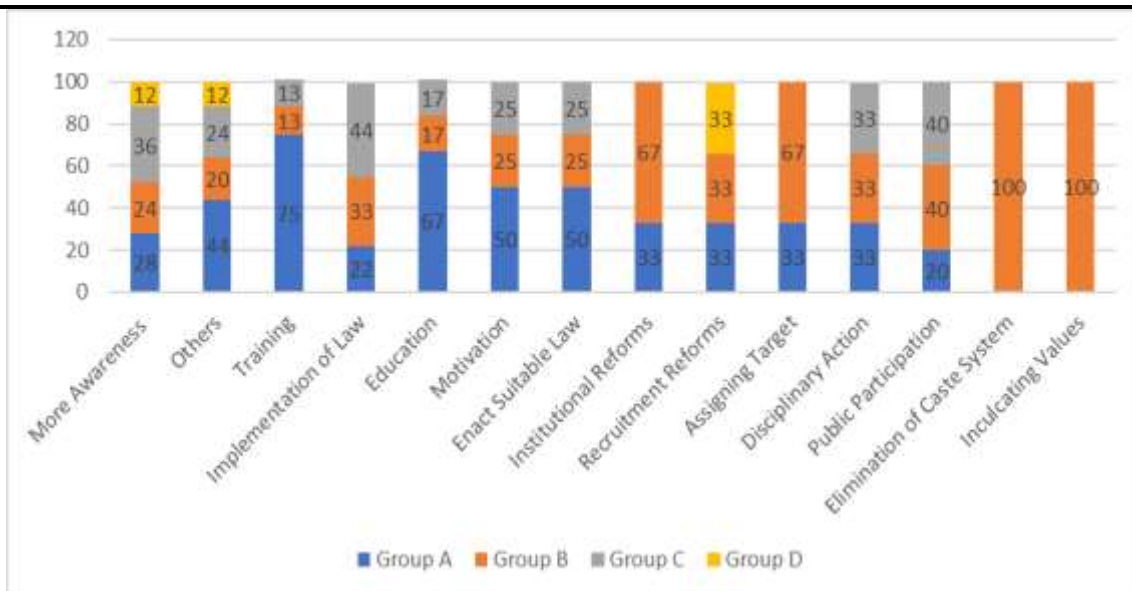


Diagram 2 Illustrates the Suggestions Given by Official Groups (In Percentage) to Bring More ISR Among Civil Servants in Karnataka. Source: Primary Data

On the matter of bringing the concept of ISR among in-service civil servants in Karnataka, 75% of Group A officials suggested training, and education by 67% of Group B, enacting suitable laws by 50% of Group A and 50 % of Group B and Group C, motivation by 50% of Group A and 50 % of Group B and Group C, ‘others’ by 44% of Group A, 44% of Group B and Group C, institutional reforms and assigning target by 100% of Group A and Group B, recruitment reforms and disciplinary action by 66% of Group A and Group B, disciplinary action 33% each from Group A, Group B and Group C, recruitment reforms by 66% of Group A and Group B officials. 100% of Group B officials suggested the elimination of caste system and inculcating values.

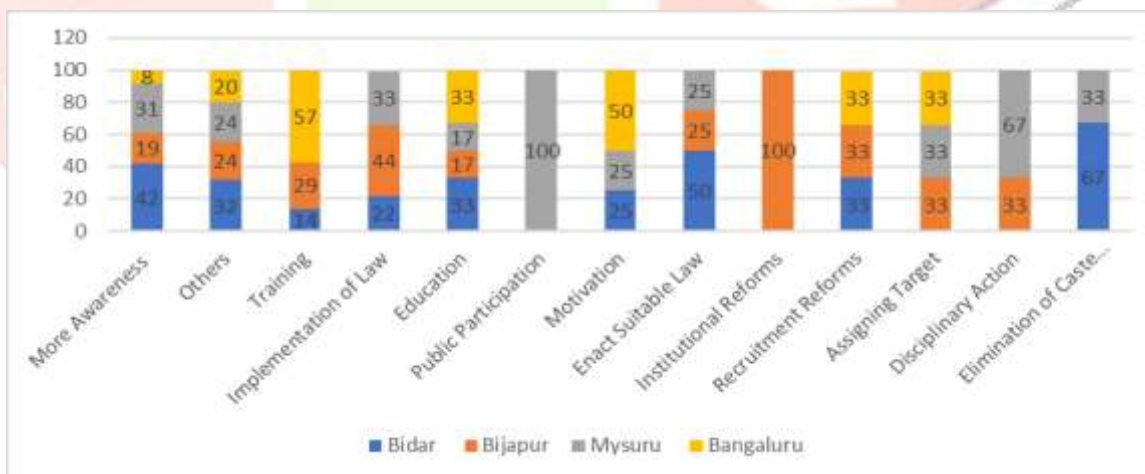


Diagram 3 Illustrates the District-Wise Suggestions Given by Respondents (In Percentage) to Bring ISR Among Civil servants in Karnataka. Source: Primary Data

Concerning the application of the concept of ISR among in-service civil servants in Karnataka, 61% of respondents from Bidar and Bijapur districts and 39% of respondents from Mysuru and Bengaluru districts suggested ‘more awareness’. ‘Others’ suggested by 56% of respondents from Bidar and Bijapur districts and 44% of respondents from Mysuru and Bengaluru districts. 66% of respondents in Bidar and Bijapur districts and 33% in Mysuru district suggested implementation of laws. 75% of respondents in the Bidar and Bijapur districts suggested enacting suitable laws. 100% of respondents in Bijapur suggested institutional reforms and 100% of respondents in Bijapur suggested Encouraging Public Participation. 66% of respondents from Bidar and Bijapur suggested recruitment reforms. 66% of respondents from Mysuru and Bengaluru suggested assigning targets. Disciplinary action is suggested by 67% in Mysuru. Elimination of the caste system is suggested by 67% in Bidar.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Awareness on ISR

The majority of the respondents have agreed that, they not only have awareness of the aspects of ISR, but are also influenced by it. Irrespective of their official group and district respondents from all sections of the sample opinionated the same on concept. This indicates the popularity of ISR's ideals among civil servants in Karnataka, even though it was not a part of British regime for around 250 years. The inherit Bharatiya culture, where it teaches to treat everyone as divine soul; understanding of others situation in social sphere and ethical consciousness of officers could be reasons this magnitude of awareness on ISR among Karnataka's civil servants.

4.2. Implementation

Around one-third of the respondents opinionated that, most of the civil servants behave with ISR in their official capacity. The study shows that only a small fraction of officers do have socially conscious while performing their official actions and the rest of them do not behave sensitively towards social causes, that too being a responsible members of government and society. The majority of the respondents believes that, most civil servants do not spend a part of their earnings on social causes, that too due to an insufficient pay scale system. It means, only a minimal percentage of officers are donating to significant societal causes or being active participants in resolving social issues. It also implies that, most of the officers perceive that, their pay scale system is not satisfactory to making them socially responsible people on the individual ground. However, it is the standard of living and mindset of the individual officers that decide their economic contribution to social causes. There could be some officers who spend a part of their earnings on social issues even if they have a lesser salary and there could be some officers who do not spend a part of their earnings on social issues even if they have a higher salary.

The understanding of around half of the respondents is that those civil servants who are spending a part of their earnings on social causes are doing it so for the welfare of their respective community/religion/caste, to save their income tax as per the rule, to build up their social status, not because they really care for the society and to spend the money earned through illegal ways or corruptions. This suggests that those civil servants who are spending for social causes, not spending it in the larger interests of the society, but rather limited interests like community, religion, and caste, to avoid tax and to build up their social status. It indicates that they do not genuinely concern about the burning social issues and they are spending it for their self-benefits, rather than social-benefit. A minimal number of respondents opinionated that, most civil servants are aware of existing social ills and misusing them for their self-interest. It implies that, only a small percentage of officers are misusing social ills for their self-interest by undermining their social and professional ethics. It supports the assumptions of the Public Choice Theory (William F.S. 2022).

Therefore, as per the understanding of respondents on the implementation of the ISR, it has less or no applicability to the in-service civil servants in Karnataka. There are many reasons for this. First, the British rule rooted the anti-national and anti-social values among the then bureaucracy and it continues to operate even today. Second, neither in the recruitment nor in the promotion of civil servants, the ISR is not a criterion. Third, even the professional code of conduct, such as the Karnataka Civil Service Conduct Rules (KCSCR) does not mention ISR. The ISR emphasise social spending based on universal human values. This implies the significance of the inclusion of the aspect of ISR under the professional framework of public administration in Karnataka.

4.3 Suggestions on ISR

With respect to the implementation of ISR, most of the respondents suggested techniques like – more awareness, other, training, education, and implementation of the law. It implies that, due to a lack of education, training, and awareness of the ISR, the civil servants are not following it. It also implies that, there are certain laws which encourage civil servants as per the values of ISR, but they are not implementing them properly. For instance, the Prevention of Corruption Act-1988, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act-2013, the Dowry Prohibition Act-1961 and the Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act-1994 and other legislations on social issues in India has not given intended results due to effective implementations of these laws. The results indicate that, the civil servants are not discharging their core responsibility, which is the implementation of laws related to ISR enacted by the legislature. Hence, suggestions like training, education and more awareness were found to be relevant here.

The suggestion ‘others’ on ISR indicates the impediments to lack of ISR among the civil servants in Karnataka, such as, not having zeal and capacity to take initiation, lack of conducive environment at the workplace and coordination among different public institutions, absence of good rapport between public and civil servants, ineffective supervision and guidance by higher level officials, not focusing on successful models and not linking the aspects of ISR to the promotion of civil servants. Addressing these issues might have a positive impact on the implementation of ISR by civil servants.

5. Conclusion

The study has explored variables of ISR at individual level (awareness) and professional level (practice) of civil servants in Karnataka. Despite the influence of British legacy on the contemporary public administration in Karnataka, most of the in-service civil servants in Karnataka are well aware of the concept of ISR; but the same is not properly practiced as professionals due to legal hurdles, social issues, and self-interests etc. The study also found practical and valuable suggestions like – more awareness, other, training, education, and implementation of the law to make civil servants in Karnataka to properly practice ISR in their profession.

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