

सर्वे भवन्तु
सुखिनः ।
सर्वे सन्तु
निरामयाः ॥

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SERVICE ETHICS

Rooted in Wisdom • Driven by Duty • Committed to Bharat

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आचरणम्
न्यायः
लोकहितम्
सेवा
निष्ठा
समत्वम्



INTEGRITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMPASSION

EFFICIENCY

NATION FIRST

— Dr. Harshvardhan Singh —



Indian Knowledge System, Public Administration and Civil Service Ethics





Indian Knowledge System, Public Administration and Civil Service Ethics



Dr. Harshvardhan Singh



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Indian Knowledge System, Public Administration and Civil Service Ethics

First Edition: 2026

ISBN: 978-81-995663-2-3

Author: Dr. Harshvardhan Singh

Publisher: BOOKSKART WORLD

Language: English

Format: Single-component retail product: Digital download and online

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Disclaimer

This book is intended for educational, academic, research, policy-discussion, and reflective study purposes. The views expressed in this book are those of the author. The discussion of Indian Knowledge Systems, public administration, civil service ethics, governance, ancient Indian thought, Kautilya, dharma, seva, rajadharma, nishkama karma, public duty, administrative ethics, constitutional values, and public leadership is presented for academic interpretation and contemporary application.

The book does not claim official endorsement by any government department, civil service body, public administration academy, examination authority, training institution, ministry, commission, university, or statutory agency unless specifically stated. Any references to constitutional provisions, laws, policies, public institutions, administrative practices, survey findings, or classical texts are used for educational and analytical purposes.

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Suggested Citation

Singh, H. (2026). *Indian Knowledge System, public administration and civil service ethics*. BOOKSKART WORLD.

About the Author

Dr. Harshvardhan Singh is an education researcher, psychometrician, author, and policy-oriented academic professional working in the areas of Indian Knowledge Systems, educational research, inclusive education, teacher education, research tool development, public policy, governance studies, ethics, leadership, and value-based education. His academic and professional work focuses on connecting classical Indian knowledge traditions with contemporary challenges in education, administration, citizenship, public leadership, and national development.

His writings frequently engage with themes such as educational measurement, learner diversity, teacher preparation, inclusive education, governance reform, public ethics, research methodology, civilisational knowledge, and policy-relevant academic discourse. Through his books and research-oriented publications, he attempts to build bridges between traditional wisdom and modern institutional needs.

In the present volume, Dr. Singh examines how Indian Knowledge Systems can contribute to public administration and civil service ethics. The book explores the relevance of concepts such as **dharmā**, **seva**, **lok kalyan**, **rajadharma**, **viveka**, **nishkama karma**, **self-control**, **ethical leadership**, and **citizen-centric governance** for contemporary public service. It is written for students, civil service aspirants, researchers, teachers, policy scholars, public administration professionals, and readers interested in the ethical foundations of governance.

Preface

Public administration is not merely a technical process of implementing policies, managing files, enforcing rules, or delivering services. At its deepest level, public administration is a moral responsibility. It involves the use of public authority for public welfare. It requires the administrator to balance law with justice, procedure with compassion, efficiency with equity, and institutional responsibility with human dignity. In a democratic society, civil service ethics becomes the foundation upon which public trust, administrative legitimacy, and good governance are built.

This book, *Indian Knowledge System, Public Administration and Civil Service Ethics*, has been written with the conviction that India's administrative future cannot be understood only through imported bureaucratic frameworks, procedural manuals, institutional rules, and contemporary management theories. These are undoubtedly necessary, but they are not sufficient. A deeper ethical and civilisational foundation is required if public service is to become truly citizen-centric, morally grounded, and socially transformative.

Indian Knowledge Systems offer rich resources for such a foundation. Concepts such as **dharma**, **seva**, **lok kalyan**, **rajadharma**, **nishkama karma**, **viveka**, **satya**, **nyaya**, **self-control**, **kartavya**, and **lokasaṅgraha** provide a value-oriented vocabulary for thinking about public duty. These ideas do not reduce governance to power, control, or compliance. Instead, they present governance as a responsibility directed towards the welfare of people, protection of justice, maintenance of social order, and cultivation of ethical character.

The purpose of this book is not to romanticise the past or to suggest that ancient systems can be copied mechanically into modern democratic administration. The intention is more balanced and academic. The book seeks to identify enduring principles from Indian intellectual traditions and examine how these principles can illuminate contemporary concerns in public administration and civil service ethics. The book therefore moves between classical concepts and present-day governance challenges, between Indian philosophical ideas and modern administrative realities, and between ethical reflection and institutional reform.

The opening chapter introduces Indian perspectives on public service and examines how the ideas of **seva** and **dharma** continue to shape administrative expectations. It discusses public trust, corruption, ethical dilemmas, accountability, transparency, citizen engagement, and the need for reform in Indian public administration. The second chapter explores administrative values in Indian thought and highlights the moral foundations of governance in Indian philosophical traditions. The third chapter turns to Kautilya's administrative system and analyses the continuing relevance of the *Arthashastra* for statecraft, public responsibility, institutional discipline, and administrative accountability.

The fourth chapter examines decision-making and moral dilemmas, with special attention to situations where competing values, incomplete information, institutional pressure, and personal responsibility intersect. The fifth chapter focuses on corruption, greed, and self-control, arguing that anti-corruption frameworks must address both external regulation and inner discipline. The sixth chapter discusses citizen-centric governance and **seva bhava**, emphasising that public administration must ultimately be evaluated by its ability to serve citizens with fairness, dignity, and responsiveness. The seventh chapter presents Indian models of leadership for civil servants, drawing attention to qualities such as **viveka**, **nishkama karma**, **sambhava**, and **dridha sankalpa**. The final chapter examines the application of Indian Knowledge Systems to civil service training and argues for a more culturally rooted, ethically reflective, and context-sensitive approach to capacity building.

This book is especially relevant for civil service aspirants, students of public administration, political science and governance, teachers, researchers, policy scholars, administrators, leadership trainers, and readers interested in Indian Knowledge Systems. It may also be useful for those engaged in ethics training, administrative reforms, value education, teacher education, and public policy studies.

The central argument of the book is simple but significant: ethical governance cannot be built only by multiplying rules, audits, punishments, and compliance mechanisms. These mechanisms are necessary, but they must be supported by inner discipline, moral reasoning, institutional culture, public purpose, and a genuine spirit of service. Civil servants require not only knowledge of law and procedure but also wisdom, courage, restraint, empathy, and responsibility.

In this sense, Indian Knowledge Systems can contribute meaningfully to the future of public administration. They remind us that governance is not only about the state; it is about society. It is not only about authority; it is about duty. It is not only about efficiency; it is about justice. It is not only about career advancement; it is about service.

I hope this book contributes to ongoing discussions on civil service ethics, administrative reform, public leadership, and the contemporary relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems. More importantly, I hope it encourages readers to think of public service as a moral calling rooted in responsibility, humility, and commitment to the common good.

Dr. Harshvardhan Singh

2026

Acknowledgement

I express my sincere gratitude to the Indian intellectual and civilisational traditions that form the philosophical foundation of this book. The ideas of **dharmā, seva, rajadharma, lok kalyan, nishkama karma, viveka, nyaya, self-control**, and **public duty** have shaped Indian reflections on governance and ethical life for centuries. This book is a modest attempt to examine their relevance for contemporary public administration and civil service ethics.

I acknowledge the contribution of classical Indian texts, governance traditions, constitutional values, public administration scholarship, policy literature, and contemporary discussions on civil service reform that have informed the conceptual direction of this work. The book draws inspiration from India's long tradition of viewing public responsibility not merely as administrative power but as ethical service.

I am thankful to the scholars, administrators, teachers, civil service aspirants, policy researchers, and students whose questions and concerns continue to make the subject of governance ethics meaningful and urgent. Their engagement with issues of corruption, accountability, transparency, citizen welfare, leadership, and administrative responsibility has helped shape the practical orientation of this book.

I also acknowledge the role of modern Indian institutions, constitutional democracy, and public service traditions in sustaining the continuing debate on ethical governance. The challenges of public administration are complex, but India's democratic spirit and civilisational resources provide strong foundations for reform, reflection, and renewal.

I express my thanks to **BOOKSKART WORLD**, for publishing this work and supporting the dissemination of academic and policy-oriented writing. I also thank all those who contributed directly or indirectly to the preparation, editing, formatting, review, and publication of this book.

Finally, I dedicate this work to all sincere public servants, teachers, learners, researchers, and citizens who believe that governance must be rooted in integrity, responsibility, compassion, and service to the common good.

Dr. Harshvardhan Singh

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI — Artificial Intelligence

CSTI — Central Secretariat Training Institution

CTA — Centre for Training Authority

CVC — Central Vigilance Commission

IAS — Indian Administrative Service

ICS — Indian Civil Service

IKS — Indian Knowledge System

IT — Information Technology

LBSNAA — Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration

NEP — National Education Policy

PIL — Public Interest Litigation

RTI — Right to Information

SDG — Sustainable Development Goal

UPSC — Union Public Service Commission

Key Indian Knowledge System Terms Used in the Book

Antyodaya — Upliftment of the last person

Artha — Material prosperity, economic order, or means of life

Dharma — Righteous duty, ethical order, moral responsibility

Desha-Kala-Paristhiti — Awareness of place, time, and circumstance

Dridha Sankalpa — Firm resolve or determined commitment

Jagat Hita — Welfare of the world

Kartavya — Duty or obligation

Lok Kalyan — Public welfare or welfare of the people

Lokasaṅgraha — Welfare, protection, or holding together of the world/social order

Nishkama Karma — Selfless action without attachment to personal reward

Nyaya — Justice

Panchakosha — Five-layered model of human development

Rajadharma — Ethical duty of rulers or those in public authority

Rajya — State or political order

Sambhava — Equanimity or balanced disposition

Satya — Truth

Seva — Selfless service

Seva Bhava — Spirit or attitude of service

Svadharma — One's contextual duty or role-based responsibility

Swadhyay — Self-study and reflective learning

Viveka — Discriminative wisdom or ethical discernment

Methodological / Source Note

This book is a conceptual, analytical, and policy-oriented work that examines the relationship between Indian Knowledge Systems, public administration, and civil service ethics. It does not present itself as an empirical survey, field experiment, legal commentary, or official policy manual. Instead, it offers an interpretive and reflective framework for understanding how Indian ethical and philosophical concepts can contribute to contemporary governance and public service.

The discussion draws upon multiple knowledge sources. These include Indian philosophical ideas, classical governance traditions, modern public administration literature, constitutional values, civil service ethics frameworks, public policy debates, survey-based observations, administrative reform discussions, and contemporary concerns related to corruption, accountability, transparency, citizen-centric governance, ethical leadership, and capacity building.

The book uses Indian concepts such as **dharmā, seva, rajadharma, lok kalyan, nishkama karma, viveka, nyaya, kartavya, self-control**, and **lokasaṅgraha** as interpretive tools. These concepts are not used in a narrow theological or sectarian sense. They are discussed as ethical, philosophical, and civilisational resources that can help deepen public reasoning about duty, service, leadership, integrity, restraint, justice, and public welfare.

Classical Indian texts and traditions are approached with academic respect and contemporary relevance. The purpose is not to reproduce ancient administrative systems mechanically, nor to suggest that historical models can be transferred unchanged into modern democratic governance. Rather, the book identifies broad principles and ethical insights that may be adapted to present-day administrative contexts.

The book also engages with modern institutions and frameworks such as constitutional governance, civil service structures, legislative accountability, the Right to Information framework, anti-corruption mechanisms, judicial oversight, citizen participation, digital governance, and civil service training. These are interpreted in relation to ethical concerns and public responsibility.

Where survey findings, policy references, legal provisions, classical quotations, scholarly arguments, or institutional examples are used, they should be verified against original sources during final editing and included in the formal reference list. The final edition should ensure that all direct quotations, statistics, and borrowed frameworks are properly cited.

The language of the book follows Indian/British English usage. Sanskrit and Indian philosophical terms are generally presented in simplified transliteration for readability. A glossary is recommended at the end of the book to support students, civil service aspirants, researchers, and general readers who may not be familiar with these terms.

This book is intended for academic, educational, policy-discussion, and reflective reading. It may be useful for students of public administration, civil service aspirants, teachers, researchers, administrators, ethics trainers, leadership educators, governance scholars, and readers interested in Indian Knowledge Systems and public service.

The central methodological position of the book is that ethical governance requires both institutional reform and moral formation. Rules, laws, audits, vigilance, and accountability systems are necessary, but they become more effective when supported by internalised values, reflective judgement, citizen orientation, public purpose, and a service-centred administrative culture.

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Rooted in Wisdom • Driven by Duty • Committed to Bharat



Indian Knowledge System, Public Administration and Civil Service Ethics examines how India's civilisational wisdom can enrich contemporary public administration, ethical governance, and civil service training. The book connects classical Indian concepts such as *dharma*, *seva*, *rajadharma*, *lok kalyan*, *nishkama karma*, *viveka*, self-control, and *kartavya* with modern concerns of accountability, transparency, public trust, corruption control, citizen-centric governance, ethical leadership, and administrative reform.



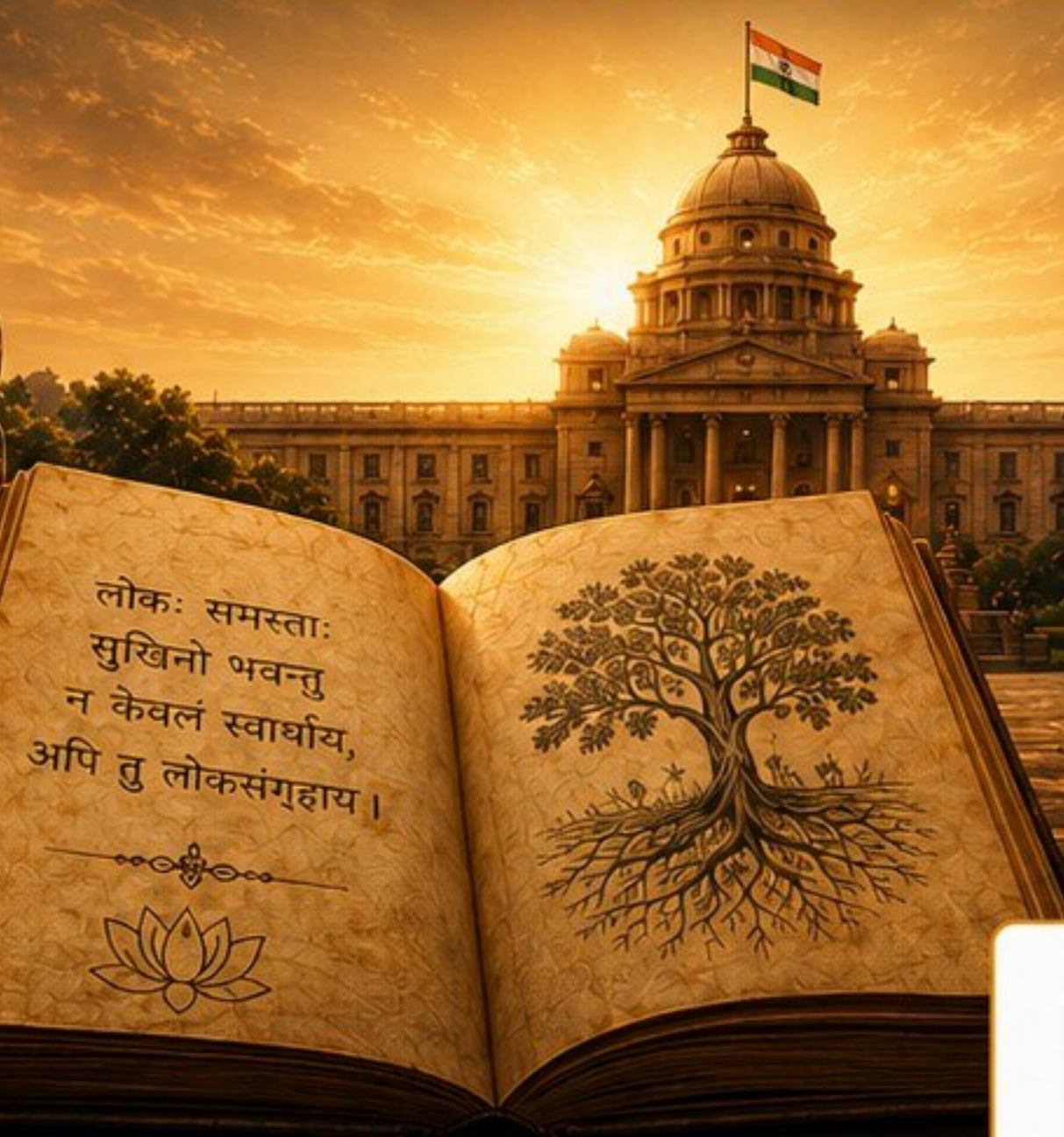
Moving from Indian perspectives on public service to administrative values in Indian thought, Kautilya's administrative system, moral decision-making, corruption and self-control, *seva bhava*, leadership models, and IKS-based civil service training, the book presents a reflective framework for understanding public service as a moral responsibility.



The central argument of the book is that ethical administration cannot depend only on rules, audits, punishments, and compliance procedures. These are necessary, but they must be supported by inner discipline, moral reasoning, institutional culture, public purpose, and a genuine spirit of service.



Written for students, civil service aspirants, researchers, teachers, policy scholars, administrators, leadership trainers, and readers interested in Indian Knowledge Systems, this book offers a culturally rooted and contemporary perspective on public administration and civil service ethics in India.




BOOKSKART WORLD
New Delhi, India
— 2026 —

ISBN 978-81-9956663-2-9



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