



Faculty Seminar: The Ethos of Public Management: A Reconsideration

Speaker:
Dr Chiranjib Sen

Date / Time:
February 27, 2013 - 2:45pm - 4:15pm

Venue:
Room No. 103, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:

Public Management is under severe criticism. The context of its functioning has changed dramatically under the market paradigm, and the entire profession is in upheaval globally. Most efforts to reform public management typically emphasize improving the skills, and competence of civil servants. This paper focuses on a relatively neglected dimension—the ethos or spirit of public management in a democratic society. This ethos is at the heart of public management as a ‘calling’, and it animates the motivation and purpose of the profession. I argue that this ethos has been severely damaged, and the new implicit models of civil service functioning that being promoted may actually further erode its vitality. It would be difficult to bring about good governance unless the tide is turned. This paper examines (a) the elements of this ethos; (b) the reasons for and the process of its evolution and decline in India in recent decades; and (c) what might be done to reconstruct this ethos in the present context by teachers of public management, by public managers themselves, and by the government via some structural adaptations. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the “International Conference on Contemporary Debates in Public Policy and Management” in IIM Calcutta, in 7-9 February 2013.

A Note on the Speaker:

Prior to joining APF, Chiranjib Sen was Professor of Economics & Social Sciences in the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. He was the founding Chairperson of the Centre for Public Policy (CPP) at IIMB. He has been associated with a number of academic institutions in India and abroad. These include: Professor at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum; Harry Reynolds International Visiting Professor at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; Visiting Scholar, Maxwell School for Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University; Visiting Scholar, Harvard Institute of International Development; and Visiting Professor, Vassar College. He has been an independent Director of Indian Overseas Bank, and was on the board of KIOCL Limited. He was the first Indian to serve as President of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI), which is a network of Indian and Canadian higher education

institutions. He was a member of the Task Force on Faculty Shortage and Design of Performance Appraisal Systems, MHRD, Government of India, 2011.