



Accountability – Its Relevance

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As is known, AAI like any other Central PSE has been established with on government funds. Though, AAI has generated its own revenue to meet its expenditure in diversification and expansion / modernization plans, as no governmental financial support has been solicited other than allocation of additional land requirements and infrastructure loans. It therefore, becomes imperative on part of all the employees and officers responsible for carrying out its activities are held accountable

for their commissions / omissions, particularly those which may result in losses, irregularities and corruption.

Accountability Facets

Before I proceed further with the accountability aspect, it would only be apt if I were to make it clear by highlighting that AAI like the Central PSE's is definitely, on a different footing vis-à-vis the government departments. We at AAI, work with a limited objective keeping in view the socio-economic policies of the government like providing services which indeed not only plays a pivotal role but immensely contributes to the nation's economic growth. Whereas, most of the government departments are primarily concerned with the administrative aspects of governance. Keeping in view this primary difference in the functioning of the AAI / CPSEs and the government departments, the public sector companies are required to perform in such a manner that they are able to sustain themselves financially, which aspect is not strictly applicable to the administrative wings of the government. Thus, when the issue relating to the adherence of rules and regulations in the CPSEs is discussed, it needs to be borne in mind that these are implemented in such a manner that these do not lead to discouraging and demoralizing the employees from taking initiative and decisions to the best of their ability and performing in an efficient and effective manner in the larger interests of the organization.

Of late, it has generally been observed that AAI like any other CPSE which today provide the core services like power, minerals, gas, steel, iron ore etc. to boost the economy, needs to usher in more transparency for which appropriate strategies would have to be evolved. Such a step would undoubtedly, go a long way in keeping the corrupt elements under check / surveillance and also, reducing chances of taking incorrect policy decisions which could be the cause of the projects getting delayed, thus, leading to escalation of costs causing direct losses to the public exchequer. Given the public perception of the CPSE's, it is absolutely necessary and important that the employees responsible for carrying out project related and other sensitive work are made accountable for their actions, particularly which prima-facie indicate mala fide. While implementing the aspect of accountability, we need to understand that it has two components i.e. narrower and broader. Narrower component relates to the adherence of the rules, regulations, instructions and the procedures in force from time to time. The officials responsible for violation of any of these would be held responsible, accountable and answerable for their wrong and incorrect doings/actions. The broader component, primarily deals with the socio-economic objectives of the government. The CPSEs touch the core activities of the economy like manufacture of iron and steel, generation of electricity, mining, oil exploration etc. These services being essential and the performance of the



CPSEs is the key to the success of the economic policies of the government. Not only this, they also have to meet the CSR and social objectives like the rehabilitation of the displaced persons from the areas where the CPSEs are created / established, by establishment of educational institutions etc. The only difficulty is that the officials who manage CPSE are employees of the company and have no personal stake in their running. This is not to say that there are no sincere, honest and hard working officials working in these CPSEs. The success of the Navratna and Mini-Navratna CPSEs are a living 'Testimony' to prove the point. The country certainly feels proud to have such companies (AAI finds its rightful place in these coveted establishments) within the fold of the public sector.

Relevance – AAI Context

Despite the above, we do apprehend that some get tempted to cut corners, which gets manifested in violation of optimum utilisation of the public funds. Considering the ground realities, it is important that the functionaries, at all are held responsible and accountable for their actions. This would only go a long way in assisting MCA which is exercising functional control over AAI to monitor & ascertain that the objectives for which AAI was set up are not lost sight of.

In view of the above, it is important for us to consider as to how to deal with the corruption which is ever raising its head & trying to make inroad in our day to day functioning. Though there are numerous ways to tackle this menace, I intend to dwell upon the three prime possibles:-

(i) Formation of Rules & Regulations

- The rules and regulations ought to be precise with clarity, so that there is no scope for the corrupt elements to find loopholes and take advantage of the complicated/ ambiguous rules and regulations and indulge in malafide acts.
- Appropriate checks & measures be evolved, especially in areas which are prone to corruption and therefore, it is necessary to identify the corruption prone areas.
- Rotation of officials should be done in a scientific manner particularly from sensitive posts after 2-3 years, so that it refrains the employees to develop vested interests.
- The areas of discretion should be reduced to the minimum and patronage of employees at the lower level must be discouraged.

(ii) Agreed List

It is important that those who indulge in corrupt practices and are even suspected of doing so, should find a place in the 'Agreed List' that is drawn every year between the CPSEs and the CBI with a copy to the CVC. There should be a constant monitoring of the activities of the officials who figure in the Agreed Lists. As a matter of fact, their names be put on website. Especially the names of the Charged Officers who are facing either prosecution or departmental action for major penalty proceedings. This would have a deterrent effect on their activities and also, send a loud & clear message to rest of AAI populace. Constant monitoring of the actions of officers working on sensitive posts would also go a long way in controlling this menace. There should be a selective check on the moveable and immovable assets of all the employees, and an effective check in respect of the persons figuring in the 'Agreed List' and the 'List of Officers of Doubtful Integrity'. There should be a constant monitoring of disposal of cases with a view to curbing delays. To ensure efficacy of the system & where necessary action be initiated for premature retirement of ineffective and inefficient employees and also, those habitual offenders featuring in the list of doubtful integrity. However, this should be done in a scientific, transparent manner & without malice / motives attached, so that it does not create a sense of fear among the employees. It is also important to give severe / exemplary punishment to the guilty. It is recommended that except for the cases which are of a criminal nature, all others should be dealt with departmentally and even severest of the penalties like removal or dismissal from service can be imposed, so that such corrupt officials do not make inroads to other organisations & pollute the environment in new organisation.