

"A man is
great by
deeds, not by
birth"

-Chanakya

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**Exploring the determinants of integrity in Public Administration – Evidence
from the Indian Administrative Service**

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Abstract

Confucius had famously said, “The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.” Adoption of the New Public Management (NPM) system has led to focus on transparency, efficiency and accountability on the part of the government, trickling right down to the citizens. Integrity of a nation’s administrators has been the focus of practitioners and academicians alike because of rampant corruption being reported in public life through incriminating disclosures, such as the Wikileaks. The thesis of this paper is that the integrity of a bureaucrat/administrator is likely to depend on some personal attributes, such as the experience within the department, the geography in which the officer serves and his/her educational background. India is a unique case to explore this thesis on account of the complexity and the ignominy of faring relatively poor on corruption indices. Using data collected from Indian Administrative Service Officers, we try to explore individual level differences in integrity. We found no statistical evidence for prior education, experience within the department or the geography of service to affect the perceptions of integrity. We posit that this might be the result of rigorous training at the academy, coupled with the social contagion effects, and the results of the network effects, which might act as a mechanism to ensure that the integrity levels are maintained at an individual level. We further argue that corruption is often a result of an interconnected network of other stakeholders in which the IAS as a bureaucrat might have limited ability to intervene.

Keywords:

Integrity, Public Administrators, Social Contagion, Competency, IAS

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