



Reimagining Civil Services Capacity: The Mission *Karmayogi* Framework

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The quality of a nation's governance depends, in no small measure, on the quality of the people who are a part of its institutions. As India advances towards the goal of *Viksit Bharat@2047*, the question of state capacity assumes renewed importance. A country of continental scale, social diversity and rising aspirations cannot be served by administrative systems that remain static while the demands of governance grow more complex. Today's public officials are expected not only to implement rules, but to solve problems, work across sectors, use technology intelligently, respond to citizens with empathy, and deliver outcomes in a fast-changing environment. It is in response to this larger transformation in the nature of governance that Mission *Karmayogi* acquires significance.

Launched as the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building in 2020, Mission *Karmayogi* represents a fundamental shift in how India approaches the development of its public functionaries. Its objective is to make civil servants "future-ready, citizen-centric, and performance-oriented" by moving from a rule-based administrative culture to one grounded in roles and competencies. This is not simply a matter of expanding training opportunities. It is a structural reform that seeks to align the capabilities of the civil service with the needs of a modern developmental state.

The deeper significance of the Mission lies in the framework through which it understands capacity building. Rather than beginning with institutions or courses, it begins with public purpose. Its broad Demand-Design-Delivery architecture reflects this logic and offers a coherent way of linking India's developmental ambitions with the day-to-day capacities of its civil servants.

The first pillar, Demand, captures the capacity needs emerging from the goals of *Viksit Bharat* and from the priorities of States and Union Territories (UTs). This is an important departure from older training approaches, where the supply of courses often preceded a clear articulation of what governance actually required. Mission *Karmayogi* reverses that logic. It starts from the recognition that the nature of public administration is changing. The demands placed on civil servants today are shaped by digital governance, greater citizen demands, the need for interdepartmental coordination, and the expectation that government systems should be both efficient and humane.

These demands do not arise only at the national level. India's federal and diverse administrative landscape means that the capacity needs of one sector, Ministry or State may differ from those of another. Mission *Karmayogi* acknowledges this by creating space for a demand architecture that is

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nationally aligned yet context-sensitive. The growing engagement of States and Union Territories with the Mission is an important indication of this. The signing of 30 Memoranda of Understanding with States and UTs points to the emergence of a broader national consensus around competency-based reform. This suggests that capacity building is no longer being treated as an isolated departmental concern, but as an integral part of governance strategy.

An illustrative example of this shift can be seen in the way States and UTs are beginning to articulate their own reform priorities through the Mission's framework. In one context, the emphasis may be on strengthening local governance and service delivery; in another, the need may lie in improving administrative coordination or digital readiness. The significance of Mission *Karmayogi* is that it offers a common policy language through which these varied demands can be expressed, structured and acted upon.

If Demand identifies what the system needs, Design translates those needs into a capacity-building architecture. This is where Mission *Karmayogi's* shift from rule-based to role-based administration becomes operational. The central instrument of this shift is the Capacity Building Plan (CBP), through which competency requirements and gaps are identified role by role. This marks a decisive policy move. Capacity

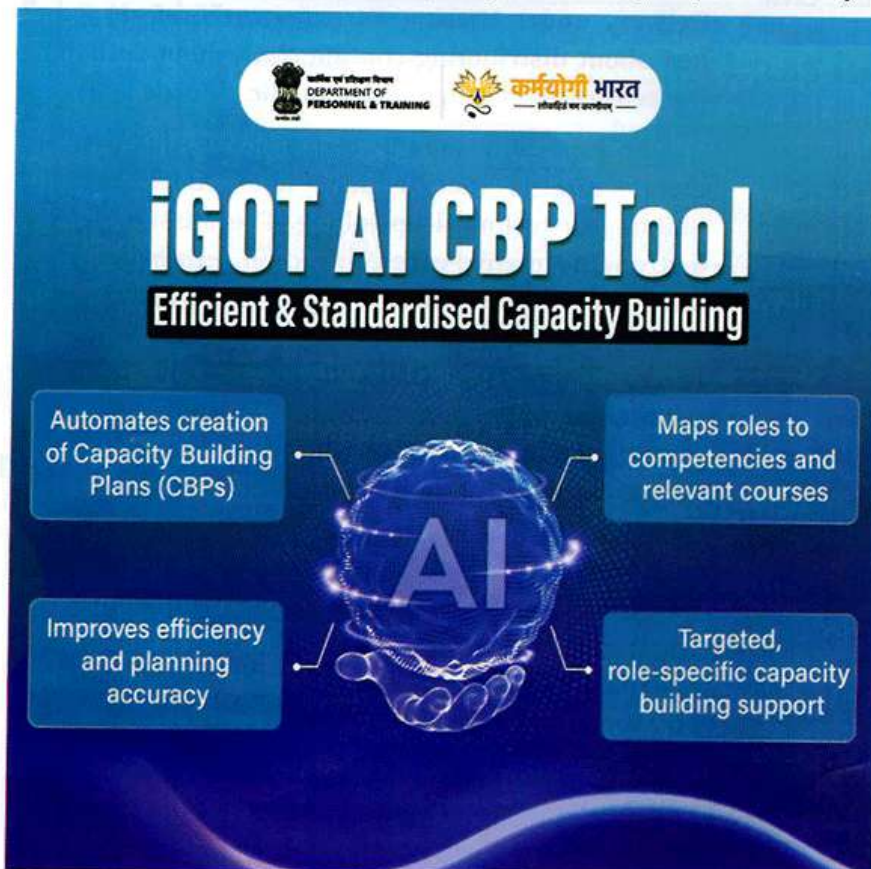
building is no longer viewed as generic exposure to training. It is treated as a systematic exercise in identifying what a particular role requires and how those requirements can be met. As of March 2026, over 100 central Ministries & Departments have prepared their CBPs and more than 20 States & UTs have prepared CBPs covering ~80% of their workforce, supported by AI-enabled tools.

A key enabler of this process is the *Karmayogi* Competency Model (KCM), the first government-wide competency framework for human resources. Defining competencies across the civil services, it provides the conceptual foundation for the role-based approach. Design, therefore, becomes the bridge between public priorities and administrative capability.

This has important implications for the quality of governance. When roles are mapped more clearly and competency gaps are identified more systematically, the state is better positioned to move from broad intentions to effective execution. It also brings a new degree of precision to public human resource development. A finance-related role, a field-level implementation role, and a leadership role may all require different mixes of domain knowledge, behavioural capacity and functional skill. Mission *Karmayogi's* design architecture makes it possible to identify such distinctions and respond to them more effectively.


The design architecture also addresses a critical challenge of scale and diversity. India's civil services comprise officials across multiple levels, with a significant proportion belonging to public officials who are often at the frontline of service delivery. Mission *Karmayogi* seeks to democratise access to capacity building by ensuring that learning opportunities are available across this entire spectrum. This represents a shift from a top-heavy training model to a more inclusive system that recognises the importance of capacity at every level of governance.

The third pillar, Delivery, concerns the effective implementation of these identified needs through a strengthened ecosystem. Here, Mission *Karmayogi* places two institutions at the heart of reform: the civil service training ecosystem and the iGOT *Karmayogi* digital platform.




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India has long had a wide network of training institutions, but the quality and coherence of this ecosystem have varied. Mission *Karmayogi* addresses this through a set of National Standards for Civil Services Training Institutions, which seek to establish a uniform quality framework. As of date, more than 200 civil service training institutes have already been accredited by the Capacity Building Commission. This is a significant achievement because it signals movement towards a more standardised and quality-assured national training architecture. Institutions are being encouraged to improve curriculum quality, pedagogy, assessment methods, technology readiness and broader relevance.

The other major pillar of delivery is the iGOT *Karmayogi* platform, which has become the digital backbone of the Mission. Its scale is itself indicative of the ambition of the reform. The platform has registered over 1.5 crore learners, who are accessing thousands of courses across multiple languages. This scale matters because it transforms the very nature of capacity building. Learning is no longer limited by geography, cadre or the availability of physical training infrastructure. A civil servant in a remote district can access the same platform as a senior official in the Union or State government. The delivery of learning

thus becomes more flexible, inclusive and continuous.

The importance of iGOT, however, lies not merely in numbers. It helps institutionalise a culture of lifelong learning in government. Through its self-paced architecture, integrated course catalogues and India-specific resources such as the *Amrit Gyaan Kosh*, the platform supports a shift from episodic training to continuous capability development. This is reinforced by periodic national initiatives like *Karmayogi Saptah*, which seek to make learning a visible and collective feature of government functioning.

Here, too, a subtle example is instructive. A district official responsible for programme implementation may now access courses not only on administrative procedures but also on ethics, leadership, communication or domain-specific challenges. Similarly, a training institution redesigning its offerings under the

accreditation framework of CBC is no longer merely organising conventional classroom sessions; it is being nudged to become more adaptive, more evidence-based and more responsive to real competency needs. Delivery under Mission *Karmayogi*, therefore, is not just about distributing content. It is about reshaping the ecosystem through which public officials learn.

An especially significant feature of this delivery architecture is that it does not reduce capacity building to technical upskilling. The Mission retains a strong normative core centred on *seva bhav*, ethics and citizen orientation. Programmes such as the *Rashtriya Karmayogi Jan Seva* Programme, which has reached more than 10 Lakh officers, underline the continuing importance of empathy and service in public administration. This is a vital reminder that the future-readiness of the state must not come at the cost of its human character. In fact, the two must reinforce each other. A technologically capable administration that lacks empathy cannot deliver meaningful public trust; equally, a compassionate administration without adequate competence will fall short of expectations. Mission *Karmayogi* attempts to bring these together.

While the Mission's core remains the policy framework of Demand, Design and Delivery, some of its programmatic expressions also illustrate its breadth.

Leadership development initiatives such as DAKSH (Development of Aspiration, Knowledge, Succession and Harmony), and grassroots-oriented pilots such as *Viksit* Panchayat and *Viksit* Urban Local Bodies suggest that the competency-based approach is being extended across levels of governance. The *Viksit* Panchayat pilot in 60 villages across four States is particularly noteworthy because it demonstrates how the same methodology can travel beyond the higher civil services to institutions of local self-government. This broadens the imagination of capacity building from the secretariat to the field, from policy to implementation, and from government headquarters to the last mile.

Taken together, Mission *Karmayogi* marks an important evolution in India's approach to state capability. Through Demand, it ensures that capacity building begins with the goals of national development and the priorities of States and Union Territories. Through Design, it translates these priorities into role-wise competency requirements and gaps

through Capacity Building Plans. Through Delivery, it operationalises these requirements through stronger training institutions and a shared national digital platform. This gives the Mission a systemic coherence that goes beyond the conventional boundaries of training reform.

Its larger significance lies in the principle it affirms: that good governance depends not only on institutions, laws and schemes, but on the continuous development of the people entrusted with public responsibility. In a country seeking to become more prosperous, inclusive and responsive, this principle is of lasting importance. Mission *Karmayogi* recognises that the future of governance will belong to public institutions that can learn, adapt and serve with purpose.

As India moves towards the vision of *Viksit Bharat* 2047, Mission *Karmayogi* will serve as a primary enabler to build a civil service that is more capable in action, more grounded in public purpose, and more responsive to the citizens it serves. □

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