

Administrative Breakdown in Delhi

What is the issue?

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Delhi administration faces a chaos due to a rift between political executive and Chief Secretary.

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What are the duties of a Chief Secretary?

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- The CS is a bureaucrat who is the head of the civil administration in the state or union territory.

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- He represents his own service and all services within the civil administration.

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- His word in sorting out contending arguments and dissension among officers is final.

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- CS has to show leadership while overseeing that public interest is preserved in letter and spirit.

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- It is his duty to run an efficient administration and give the CM fair and impartial advice.

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- Thus for a good reason CS has a commanding presence in the administration.

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What is the role of Chief Secretary in democracy?

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- Democracy and participatory governance is preserved through rule of law and the authority to administer has to be integral to governance.

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- This the reason the symbols of authority is given to every CS, in states and

UTs.

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- In Delhi, the CS has a more challenging role he has to report simultaneously to the CM and the lieutenant governor (LG).

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- He needs to walk a tightrope between the vision and concerns of both, even when they are not always on the same page.

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- CSs face challenges due to immense authority vested on them to organise and get things done.

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- CS's authority will work only as long as both the CM and the LG understand and respect the role of the CS.

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- If that is whittled down, the tremors will be felt across the services and an insult to the CS is seen as an insult to the official brotherhood.

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What are the challenges before CS in UTs?

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- In the states, the CS is invariably the choice of the CM and there is understanding and mutual trust between them.

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- If the CS is unbending or difficult, it is easy to make a change quietly and elegantly.

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- In the UT cadre or the AGMUT cadre as it is officially known, that is not so.

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- By and large, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the authority controlling the cadre serving the NCT of Delhi as well as Goa, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Chandigarh and the Andaman and Nicobar administration, does not stand in the way of the CM having a CS of his choice.

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- The officer knows his career is largely to be decided by the MHA and not by the CM of Delhi or elsewhere.

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- Therefore, it is not necessary for the CS to always find a way to meet the demands of the CM, which is a point of difference with other state cadres.

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- CMs recognise this and make the best use of what they have been given.

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What needs to be done?

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- Delhi government is known for its history of conflict and confrontation with the police and the bureaucracy.

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- Delhi's political administration is embarrassed with the bureaucracy has a result of having to deal with officers who report directly to the Lt. Governor, who is not bound to act on the aid and advice of council of ministers of the state assembly.

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- To feel that this is a restrictive administrative environment and seek greater powers for Delhi under the Constitution is one thing.

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- But until Delhi is a full State, Delhi's administration need to understand that they have to work within the existing institutional arrangement.

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- Proper demand for the constitutional changes to give Delhi full statehood rather than targeting police officers and civil servants is need of the hour.

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Source: The Hindu, Indian Express

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