Lessons from NITI Aayog

What is the issue?

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NITI Aayog’s framed new recruitment rules for senior people (Additional and Joint Secretary rank).

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What is the present recruitment model?

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- The human capital for Government must focus on four key areas to make it a high-performance organisation.
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- **On fresher hiring** for central government officers in the IAS, IPS, RBI, etc, is probably better than any private sector management trainee programme because of the high quality and quantity of applicants, the UPSC’s institutional integrity, starting compensation, process rigour, etc.
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- **On leadership**, organisation whose leadership pipeline depends on a line (seniority) or a monopoly (only staffed by insiders) cannot be effective; such leadership selection needs thoughtful design, pathways to top jobs for young insiders, lateral entry at scale, specialisation opportunities by tenure and training for insiders.
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- **On work culture,** the obvious downside of poor role models, excessive political interference and the lack of accountability in government is poor work culture around punctuality, hard work, integrity, etc.
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- A more important victim has been collaboration. The government is organised vertically but important horizontal problems like urbanisation and industrialisation seem unsolvable because of the lack of teamwork across departments.
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- Finally, any organisation that does not punish its poor performers

punishes its high performers.
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What are the key lessons from NITI aayog?

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- The new recruitment rules of NITI Aayog are thoughtful.
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- Their hiring context is different from large frontline government organisation.
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- They create a level playing field for outsiders and insiders and confront issues like cost-to-government, promotion, equivalence, employment contract format, etc.
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- Their five-year contract, extendable by two years, should become standard for all senior positions.
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- Honest and competent civil servants must initiate human capital reform as their contribution to creating a high-performing Indian state that does fewer things but does them better.
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- India is on the move and if self-healing is delayed further, it will be imposed from the outside. Civil service reform is inevitable, unstoppable and overdue.
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Source: Indian Express

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