



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru

ಭಾರತೀಯ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಡಳಿತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪ್ರಾದೇಶಿಕ ಶಾಖೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು
NEWSLETTER

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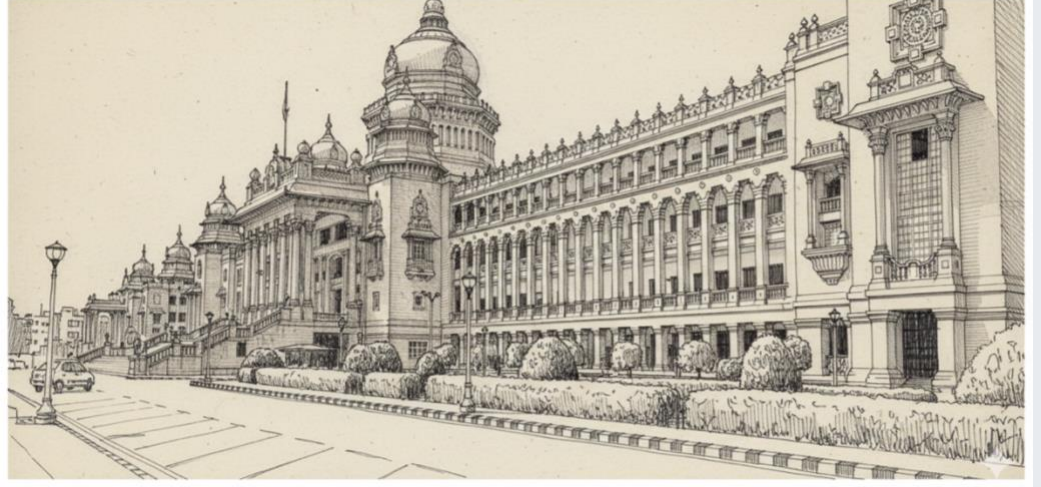


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WHAT'S NEW

LEAD STORY

**KARNATAKA CONSTITUTES
ADMINISTRATIVE
REFORMS
IMPLEMENTATION
COMMITTEE**

LEAD FEATURE

**State Finances 2014-15 to
2024-25**



From the Chief Editor

It gives me great pleasure to place before readers the **August 2026** issue of our newsletter. It is the 73rd issue since we began this initiative.

Our **Lead Story** is on the constitution of the **Administrative Reforms Implementation Committee** by the Government of Karnataka to translate recommendations for administrative reforms into action. Headed by former Chief Secretary **Shri S. V. Ranganath**, the committee brings together senior retired civil servants with wide administrative experience.

Our **Lead Feature** is on **State Finances 2014-15 to 2024-25**. Based on a Decadal Analysis by the **Comptroller & Auditor-General of India, Shri T. Sethumadhavan** and **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar** present the highlights of the report and examine its implications for Karnataka. In their view, Karnataka should adopt a five-part fiscal strategy.

In our section on **Branch Events**, we carry a report on our **Training Programme** for officers of the Karnataka Administrative Service at the Administrative Training Institute at Mysore on 24 July 2026 on **Administrative Reforms**. We also carry a report on the inauguration of the **Smt. Sumithra and Shri S Ramanathan Memorial Auditorium**, constructed with a generous grant by **Shri S Ramanathan, former Chairman Emeritus of the IIPA-KRB**.

In our section on **Karnataka in the News**, we report on two Policy Initiatives of the government: 1. Karnataka has plans to become the First Customer of new technology and innovation; and 2. State sets up Net Zero Task Force to reach Climate Goals.

In our section on **Branch Members' Writings**, we carry links to recent thought-provoking articles by our members in the media.

In our **Book Review** section, we carry **Prof. P.S. Jayaramu's** review of **Prof. Sandeep Shastri's** recent book, *Learning across Continents: My Academic Odyssey*.

Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd.)

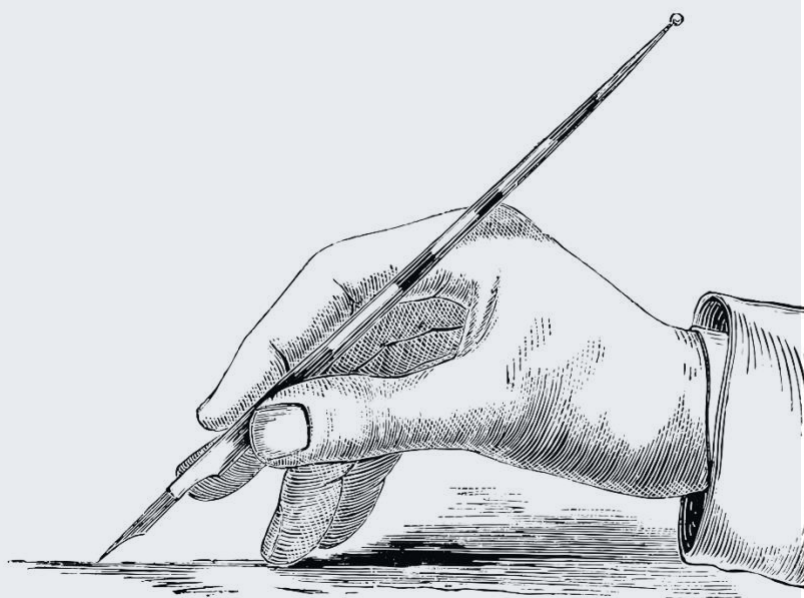
Former Chief Secretary,
Government of Karnataka.
Former Chairman, Karnataka
Administrative Reforms
Commission-2.

Chairperson, Indian Institute of
Public Administration, Karnataka Regional Branch



We end this issue with our column on **Food for Thought**. This time, we present an infographic on **India's Economic Geography**. It is revealing to note that five states—Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, **Karnataka** and Gujarat—together account for **nearly half of India's GDP**.

I add our usual disclaimer here that the views expressed by the contributors in this issue of the **Virtual Newsletter** are personal and *do not represent the views or position of the Editorial Board or the Executive Committee of the Branch*. Do write in, with your responses, views and ideas for improvement of the Newsletter.





Lead Story

KARNATAKA CONSTITUTES ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

High-level Committee to Translate Administrative Reforms to Practice



Top Row: From L to R: Shri S. V. Ranganath, Shri T. M. Vijay Bhaskar, Smt. Vandita Sharma

Bottom Row: From L to R: Shri I.S.N. Prasad, Shri L. K. Atheeq and Shri Harsh Gupta

In a significant institutional initiative, the Government of Karnataka has constituted a six-member **Administrative Reforms Implementation Committee** to advise it on steps for implementation of administrative reforms recommended by the Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission 1 and 2, strengthening capacity of frontline staff and steps to adopt Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies. Headed by former Chief Secretary **Shri S. V. Ranganath**, the committee brings together senior retired civil servants known for their administrative experience and integrity.

Its members are former Chief Secretaries **Shri T. M. Vijay Bhaskar** and **Smt. Vandita Sharma**, former Additional Chief Secretaries **Shri I. S. N. Prasad** and **Shri L. K. Atheeq**, with serving IAS officer **Shri Harsh Gupta** as Secretary. Collectively, they possess experience spanning public finance, urban administration, infrastructure, interdepartmental coordination and policy implementation.

The committee's Terms of Reference give it a role broader than that of a conventional administrative reforms panel. **It is expected to review the implementation of the recommendations of the**

KARC 1 and KARC 2 and other such reports that can have immediate and wide impact on administration and service delivery; suggest steps for their speedy implementation; identify constraints in implementation of any recommendations and recommend suitable modifications and changes in laws and rules where necessary; suggest steps for enhancing capacity and efficiency of frontline staff to respond better to citizens needs and expectations and recommend measures to adopt Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies in public administration in a safe, ethical and effective manner.

Expectations from the committee will understandably be high. The government would expect it to recommend steps to improve the efficiency of the administrative machinery, accelerate decision-making, resolve interdepartmental conflicts and ensure that reforms produce visible results.

Citizens will look for simpler procedures, time-bound delivery of services, reduction of corruption, greater accountability of officials, transparent recruitment, faster grievance redressal and improved urban and rural infrastructure. Bengaluru's mobility, flooding, waste management and infrastructure problems require particular attention, while governance reforms must also reach districts, taluks, municipalities and gram panchayats.

The committee's distinguished composition is undoubtedly a source of confidence. Its success will ultimately be judged not by the number of meetings held or reports produced, but by whether its advice is accepted and implemented. ***Karnataka does not lack administrative knowledge; the persistent difficulty has been converting good recommendations into sustained institutional change.***

The formation of the **Administrative Reforms Implementation Committee** is therefore a welcome beginning. **Its real contribution will lie in helping Karnataka move from episodic problem-solving to coordinated and citizen-centred governance—and from administrative advice to measurable public outcomes.**



Lead Feature

STATE FINANCES - 2014-15 to 2024-25 Decadal Analysis by the Comptroller & Auditor- General of India (CAG) and its Implications for Karnataka

Shri T. Sethumadhavan, IAAS (Retd.)

Former Principal Accountant General, Madhya Pradesh

and

Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar

Hon. Professor

Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development & Panchayat Raj
University, Gadag, Karnataka.

The CAG's report, *State Finances: Decadal Analysis*, examines fiscal trends across all 28 States during 2014-15 to 2024-25. It highlights the growing financial role of the States, while warning that rising committed expenditure, subsidies and debt are reducing their developmental flexibility.

In 2024-25, the combined revenue receipts of the States amounted to ₹40.52 lakh crore. States' Own Tax Revenue contributed 50 per cent, their share in Union taxes 32 per cent, Central grants 10 per cent and non-tax revenue 8 per cent. State GST alone accounted for 43 per cent of States' Own Tax Revenue. **Seven States, including Karnataka, generated 60 per cent or more of their revenue receipts from their own taxes, indicating comparatively strong fiscal autonomy.**

Karnataka's revenue receipts increased by 10.63 per cent, although actual collections remained below budget estimates. Its non-tax revenue rose by 23 per cent, mainly because of a special dividend from State Public Sector Undertakings. Karnataka received 4.36 per cent of total Central grants and assistance, compared with Uttar Pradesh's 12.46 per cent.

The combined expenditure of all States was ₹51.20 lakh crore, equivalent to 15.8 per cent of their combined GSDP. Revenue expenditure formed 83 per cent of total expenditure, leaving a relatively small proportion for capital formation. During the decade, capital expenditure generally remained between 13 and 20 per cent of total spending.

The CAG identifies committed expenditure as a major concern. Salaries, pensions and interest payments accounted for 43.07 per cent of revenue expenditure, while subsidies added another 10.24 per cent. Including salary grants to autonomous bodies, committed expenditure reached 61 per cent of total revenue expenditure, sharply limiting the funds available for development.

The position is particularly significant for Karnataka. Revenue expenditure constituted 81 per cent of its total expenditure. Committed expenditure accounted for 71 per cent of revenue expenditure, while total inflexible expenditure—including the State's contribution to Centrally Sponsored Schemes—absorbed 82 per cent of revenue receipts.

The combined public debt of all States stood at ₹75.52 lakh crore, while total liabilities reached ₹90.5 lakh crore. Public debt amounted to 23.3 per cent of the States' combined GSDP. **Karnataka's public debt was comparatively lower at 18.3 per cent of GSDP, though its total liabilities stood at 23.5 per cent.**

The report's central message is that State finances are increasingly constrained by revenue expenditure, subsidies and committed liabilities. For Karnataka, the challenge is not immediate debt distress, but the shrinking fiscal space available for infrastructure, human development and regional balance. Greater expenditure prioritization, realistic revenue projections, periodic evaluation of subsidies and welfare guarantees, and protection of capital expenditure are therefore essential.

Implications for Karnataka

The CAG's *State Finances 2024-25: Decadal Analysis* presents a mixed picture for Karnataka. The State retains a relatively strong revenue base and a manageable debt ratio, but its fiscal flexibility has narrowed sharply because of growing subsidies, committed expenditure, revenue deficits and the use of borrowings for recurrent expenditure.

1. Karnataka's own-revenue strength is a major advantage

Karnataka is among the seven States where **State Own Tax Revenue accounts for 60 per cent or more of total revenue receipts**. This indicates comparatively high fiscal autonomy and reflects the strength of its economy, especially the services,

information technology, manufacturing, real estate and consumption sectors.

Unlike States heavily dependent on Central transfers, Karnataka has greater capacity to finance its own priorities. This provides some insulation from fluctuations in grants from the Union Government.

However, this advantage should not create complacency. Revenue receipts grew by 10.63 per cent in 2024–25, but actual collections were below the budget estimate. Persistent overestimation of revenue can lead to expenditure commitments that cannot subsequently be financed without additional borrowing.

2. The non-tax revenue increase may not be sustainable

Karnataka's non-tax revenue rose by 23 per cent, largely because of a special dividend from State Public Sector Undertakings. This is welcome, but a one-time or exceptional dividend cannot be treated as a permanent revenue source.

The State must distinguish between:

- Recurring revenue arising from taxes, fees, royalties and user charges; and
- Exceptional receipts arising from dividends, asset sales or accounting adjustments.

Long-term welfare commitments should not be financed through temporary receipts. Karnataka needs a systematic policy for improving returns from State enterprises, revising user charges where appropriate and rationalizing fees without burdening poorer citizens.

3. Karnataka receives a relatively modest share of Central grants

Karnataka received 4.36 per cent of total Central grants and assistance, compared with Uttar Pradesh's 12.46 per cent. Part of this difference is explained by population, income criteria and the design of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Nevertheless, it reinforces Karnataka's long-standing concern that economically stronger and better-performing States may receive proportionately lower fiscal transfers.

For Karnataka, the policy implication is twofold. It must continue to argue for a Finance Commission framework that rewards tax effort, governance performance, demographic achievement and

contribution to national revenues. At the same time, it must strengthen its capacity to prepare projects, meet matching-fund requirements and fully utilize Central schemes.

4. Fiscal space has become severely constrained

The most serious warning is that **inflexible expenditure, including committed expenditure and the State's share of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, absorbed about 82 per cent of revenue receipts**. This means that only a small proportion of the budget remains available for new development programmes, infrastructure and unforeseen needs.

Once salaries, pensions, interest, subsidies and scheme commitments are met, the Government has limited room for discretionary allocation. This weakens the budget's ability to respond to droughts, urban infrastructure deficits, health emergencies, educational requirements or regional imbalances.

Karnataka therefore requires a medium-term expenditure framework extending beyond the annual budget.

5. The Five Guarantees have altered the fiscal structure

The CAG's most politically significant observation is that the Five Guarantee schemes contributed to Karnataka's movement from a revenue-surplus to a revenue-deficit position. According to the figures cited, **62 per cent of State borrowings was used to meet the deficit attributed to the Guarantee Schemes**.

The issue is not whether welfare guarantees are desirable. Schemes supporting women, low-income households, food security, mobility and unemployed graduates generate substantial social benefits. The concern is whether they are:

- **Adequately targeted;**
- **Regularly evaluated;**
- **Protected against duplication and leakage;**
- **Financed through stable revenue; and**
- **Balanced against investment in public infrastructure and services.**

Borrowing for an irrigation project, metro system, hospital or industrial corridor creates an asset and may enlarge future productive capacity. Borrowing to finance recurring transfers creates a repayment obligation without creating a corresponding

financial asset. Continued reliance on debt to finance guarantees could eventually make the schemes themselves fiscally vulnerable.

6. Karnataka has the highest subsidy burden among States

Subsidies accounted for around **14 per cent of Karnataka's expenditure**, the highest among the States. Subsidies are not inherently unproductive. Electricity support, food assistance, transport concessions and social protection advance equity and stimulate demand.

But subsidies must be assessed in terms of their distributional and developmental impact.

Karnataka should undertake a comprehensive **subsidy audit**, classifying subsidies as:

- Merit subsidies with strong social benefits;
- Livelihood and social-protection subsidies;
- Economic or sectoral incentives;
- Poorly targeted or regressive subsidies; and
- Temporary subsidies that have continued without review.

The objective should be rationalization rather than indiscriminate withdrawal.

7. Physical Capital expenditure may be crowded out

Karnataka's revenue expenditure constituted 81 per cent of total expenditure. Revenue expenditure includes expenditure on teachers, doctors and health workers salaries that contribute to development and human capital. Though this broadly follows the national pattern it leaves only a limited share for physical capital formation.

The danger is that welfare expenditure may gradually crowd out investment in roads, irrigation, urban transport, water supply, schools, hospitals, renewable energy and climate resilience. These investments are essential for sustaining Karnataka's future revenue base.

Bengaluru's infrastructure pressures, the development needs of northern Karnataka and the fiscal requirements of rapidly growing cities demand sustained capital expenditure. Karnataka should therefore establish a minimum capital-expenditure commitment and protect major infrastructure projects from year-to-year fiscal compression.

8. Debt remains manageable, but its use matters

Karnataka's public debt was 18.3 per cent of GSDP and total liabilities were 23.5 per cent. These levels appear relatively manageable compared with several other States. The immediate concern is therefore not a debt crisis, but a deterioration in debt quality.

The critical questions are:

- *What proportion of borrowing finances capital assets?*
- *What proportion finances revenue deficits?*
- *Are borrowed funds generating future economic or social returns?*
- *Will interest payments progressively crowd out developmental expenditure?*

A moderate debt ratio can still become problematic when borrowings are repeatedly used for consumption expenditure.

9. Karnataka needs more realistic budgeting

Actual revenue realization falling below budget estimates suggests the need for conservative forecasting. Over-optimistic revenue assumptions allow governments to announce programmes without fully providing for their cost.

Karnataka should publish:

- Realistic revenue projections;
- Scheme-wise medium-term expenditure estimates;
- Statements of outstanding liabilities;
- Expenditure arrears and deferred payments;
- Guarantee-related fiscal risks; and
- Sensitivity analyses showing how slower economic growth would affect the budget.

Greater transparency would enable the legislature and the public to assess the true fiscal cost of government commitments.

10. Welfare and growth must not be treated as opposites

The CAG findings should not be interpreted as an argument for abandoning welfare. Well-designed social transfers improve nutrition, women's mobility, household purchasing power and access to essential services. They also support economic growth.

The real challenge is to create a **sustainable balance** between:

- Present consumption and future investment;

- Universal promises and targeted support;
- Welfare transfers and quality public services;
- Political commitments and fiscal capacity; and
- Bengaluru-led growth and balanced regional development.

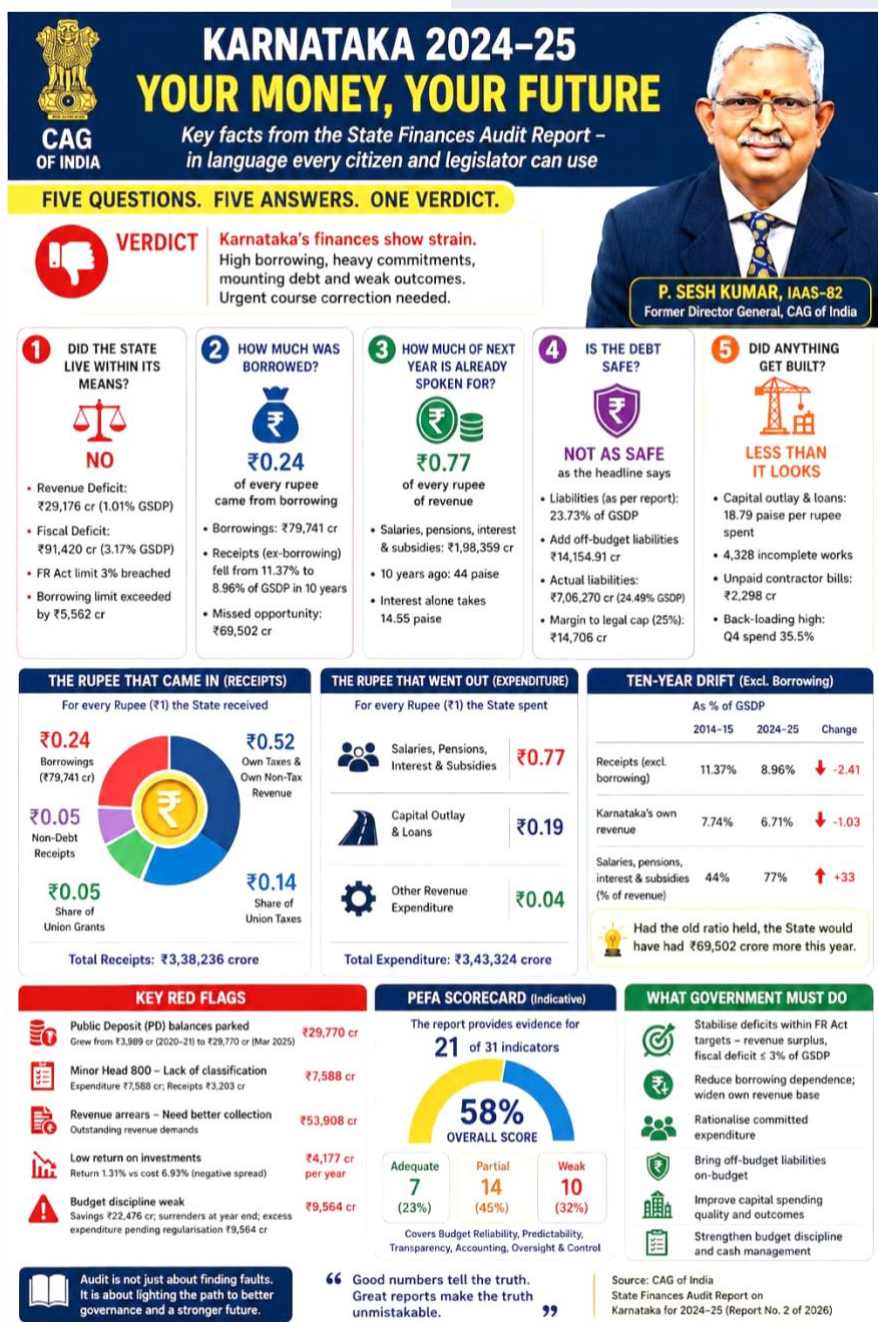
The Way Forward

Karnataka should adopt a five-part fiscal strategy:

1. Undertake independent outcome evaluations of all Guarantee schemes.
2. Ensure that recurring welfare expenditure is financed increasingly from recurring revenue rather than debt.
3. Conduct a comprehensive subsidy and committed-expenditure review.

4. Protect physical capital expenditure through a medium-term fiscal and infrastructure framework.
5. Strengthen tax administration, non-tax revenue and the performance of State public enterprises.

The CAG's decadal analysis does not suggest that Karnataka is fiscally insolvent. It shows something more subtle: *a financially capable State is progressively losing its freedom to choose.* Karnataka's strong economy and revenue base give it an opportunity to correct course. But unless recurrent commitments are aligned with sustainable revenues, the State may find that increasingly large budgets produce increasingly limited room for development.





Branch Events

Branch Activity 1 - INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**Karnataka Regional Branch
Bengaluru**

**Report of One Day Training Programme
for officers of the Karnataka
Administrative Service on “Administrative
Reforms” in ATI, Mysuru**

Branch of IIPA. He hoped that the subjects covered in the programme would help in improving the effectiveness of the officers. He said it would be a welcome break for them from the stress of daily office work.

The following themes were addressed by competent Resource Persons:

1. **Expediting Land Acquisition Cases:** Shri Shivayogi Kalasad, IAS (Retd.)



Above – L to R – Dr. Gayathri Patil, Smt. Sathyashree, Shri T.M.Vijay Bhaskar, Shri Shivayogi Kalasad, Shri Nagaraja.

The Karnataka Regional Branch of IIPA, in collaboration with the Administrative Training Institute, Mysuru organized a one-day Training Programme for officers of the Karnataka Administrative Service on 24th July 2026 on the theme, “Administrative Reforms” at the ATI, Mysuru. A total of 33 KAS Officers working in Mysuru division participated in the programme.

The Training Programme began with a welcome by Smt. Sathyashree, Joint Director, ATI, Mysuru. It was followed by an Introductory Address by Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd.), former Chief Secretary of Karnataka and Chairperson of the Karnataka Regional

2. **Expediting Departmental Inquiries:** Shri S. Ganesh, Guest Faculty, ATI

3. **Data Analytics/ Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Dr. V. Rema, Head, and Dr. Sudarshana, Asso. Professors, Centre of AI for Social Good, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bengaluru

4. **AI Applications for Improved Governance:** Dr. H.M. Shree Vyasa, Director, AIML, Centre for E-Governance, Govt. of Karnataka

The key takeaways from the one-day programme were as follows: **Land Acquisition and AI and Technology in Governance emerged as the most valued and demanded areas**, with many participants requesting longer, hands-on programmes. There was a clear demand for **regular refresher programmes**,

preferably every 6–12 months. Overall satisfaction with the programme was **very high** and there was strong support for expanding similar capacity-building initiatives.

Dr. Gayathri Patil, Deputy Director, ATI proposed a vote of thanks.



*Above
Participants in the Training Programme*



Inauguration of Smt. Sumithra & Shri S. Ramanathan Memorial Auditorium

A **Memorial Auditorium** in the names of **Smt. and Shri S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.)** was inaugurated at **Poornaprajna Education Centre, Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru** on 24 July 2026.

The **Chief Guest** on the occasion was **Dr. C.N. Ashwathnarayan**, Member, Karnataka Legislative Assembly. **Guest of Honour** was **Shri S.V. Ranganath, IAS (Retd.)**, former Chief Secretary of Karnataka. The Auditorium was constructed with the help of a generous grant by Shri S Ramanathan, former Chairman Emeritus of IIPA KRB to the institute.



Below: Shri S.V. Ranganath is seen speaking on the occasion.



DECCAN HERALD
Sunday
July 26, 2026

TOP

State govt plans to be 'first customer' for new technology

New policy aimed at adopting innovations early, says Priyank

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka is working on a new policy under which the government will become the first customer of new technologies and innovations, Information Technology Minister Priyank Kharge said on Saturday.

Priyank said this at a news conference to announce the 14th edition of Bengaluru India Nano, which will be held here from August 3-5.

"We are coming up with a Government First policy," Priyank said. "The idea is to adopt tech and innovations early so that we become one of the most progressive states."

Priyank said the government can become a 'Nano First' buyer, citing examples from the nanotechnology sector.

"There are water quality sensors, smart materials for constructions, nano-enabled forensics and hazardous material detection equipment...the government will need all this," Priyank, also the home minister, said, adding that nanotechnology can help anti-narcotics teams to detect the movement of drugs.

In his previous stint as the rural development & panchayat raj (RDPR) minister, Priyank said he used technology to audit rural roads.

"For rural water supply, we had a grand challenge to solve problems with potability, contamination (chemical and bacterial) and how nanofil-



IT Minister Priyank Kharge at an event to announce the Bengaluru India Nano meet.

PUSH FOR NANOTECHNOLOGY

Priyank Kharge announces 14th edition of Bengaluru India Nano event from August 3-5

■ Minister cites use of nanotech in multiple sectors

■ IT dept to submit Karnataka Nanotechnology Mission plan to CM D K Shivakumar

■ Govt planning to create Nanotechnology Manufacturing Corridor

Karnataka has an appetite for everything when it comes to technology.
Priyank Kharge, IT Minister

ters can be used. Some 80-90 startups participated and we narrowed down to 10 of them. We gave them money. They are now conducting pilots," he explained.

"So, the government can become the first customer provided we follow a thorough and transparent process," Priyank said.

Karnataka, the minister said, has an "appetite for everything" when it comes to technology.

"We run something called e-Kartavya. A traffic constable must check in on time from a designated place. We have already started this. I will know how long that individual is spending at a traffic signal. If that person is 15 minutes late, half of the day's salary is gone," he said.

He added that panchayat de-

velopment officers (PDO) are also similarly geofenced.

Priyank said his department will submit to Chief Minister D K Shivakumar a Karnataka Nanotechnology Mission plan by August or September.

"It will be an all-encompassing vision for research, incubation, skillsets, commercialisation and procurement. The chief minister has asked for this," he said, adding that the upcoming Bengaluru India Nano summit would help frame the plan.

The government is expecting more than 4,000 attendees from over 10 countries.

Priyank said the government is mulling over the creation of a Nanotechnology Manufacturing Corridor.

"We will discuss this at the summit and come up with the blueprint," he said.

DH
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State sets up net zero task force to reach climate goals

'It'll focus on investments & job creation in paths opened by just transition'

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government on Friday set up a task force to accelerate efforts to achieve Net Zero emissions and to guide the state's transition to future-ready, climate-resilient economy.

The State Task Force on Net-Zero will be chaired by the chief minister with retired IAS officer Upendra Tripathy, as vice chairman along with 20 members representing different departments.

The government's move comes at a time when it is grappling with issues related to drought-like conditions and extreme heat attributed to El Nino. In 2023, the conserva-



tive estimate of agriculture and horticulture losses due to drought stood at over Rs 35,000 crore. At the other end, the government has been spending hundreds of crores of rupees for flood damage every year.

The Centre approved the Karnataka's state action plan on climate change (SAPCC) after a three-year wait, in May 2024. The government took initial steps in early 2025 to implement some of the measures and the SAPCC even got a mention in the budget but no progress has been seen since then.

Implementation targets

The task force will focus on the imperatives of deep decarbonisation, net-zero sectoral

road-mapping and structured participation in the carbon markets. The order listed 10 major functions for the task force.

Synthesising the reports and studies related to climate change and net-zero in Karnataka into actionable tasks, coordinate with central, state and local governments to mobilise climate finance, prepare sectoral roadmaps and policies, facilitate convergence among departments, facilitate sustainable climate-finance models, facilitate transfer and scaling of climate technologies, to guide skilling and just-transition initiatives, help the state participate in global carbon markets and explore flagship state projects as models for climate action.

Sources said Tripathy, known for his work in the renewable energy sector and international solar alliance, is expected to boost Karnataka's renewable energy sector. "The task force will lay emphasis on investments and job creation in the new paths opened by just transition," the source added.

Branch Members' Writings in the Media



Dr. A. Ravindra, IAS (Retd.)
Former Chief Secretary of Karnataka

Regional Development, not Greater Bengaluru, is the Real Solution?

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 6 July 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/can-washington-and-beijing-escape-the-thucydides-trap-4022826>



Shri G. Gurucharan, IAS (Retd.)
Director, School of Social Sciences
MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences
Bengaluru

Beyond NEET and Political Spectacle: Why India's Systemic Reforms need Substance over Drama

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 26 July 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/politics-of-spectacle-4087599>

Book Review | Allama Prabhu and the Shaiva Imagination

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 5 July 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/features/books/allama-prabhu-and-the-shaiva-imagination-from-the-edge-of-silence-4060939>



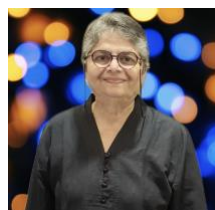
Smt. Uma Mahadevan, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner,
Government of Karnataka

The Odyssey across Ages: How an Ancient Epic continues to Speak to Us

In *The Hindu*, dt. 19 July 2026
<https://www.thehindu.com/books/the-odysseyacross-ages-how-an-ancient-epic-continues-to-speak-to-us/article71085010.ece>

How Karnataka Rewrote the Story of the Village Library

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 11 August 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/how-karnataka-rewrote-the-story-of-the-village-library-4107031>



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander
Freelance Consultant

Preparing learners for a changing world: In the age of AI, what should students learn?

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 21 July 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/education/preparing-learners-for-a-changing-world-in-the-age-of-ai-what-should-students-learn-4081234>

Building influence: from communication to engagement

In *On Think Tank* of 20 July 2026
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/building-influence-from-communication-to-engagement/>



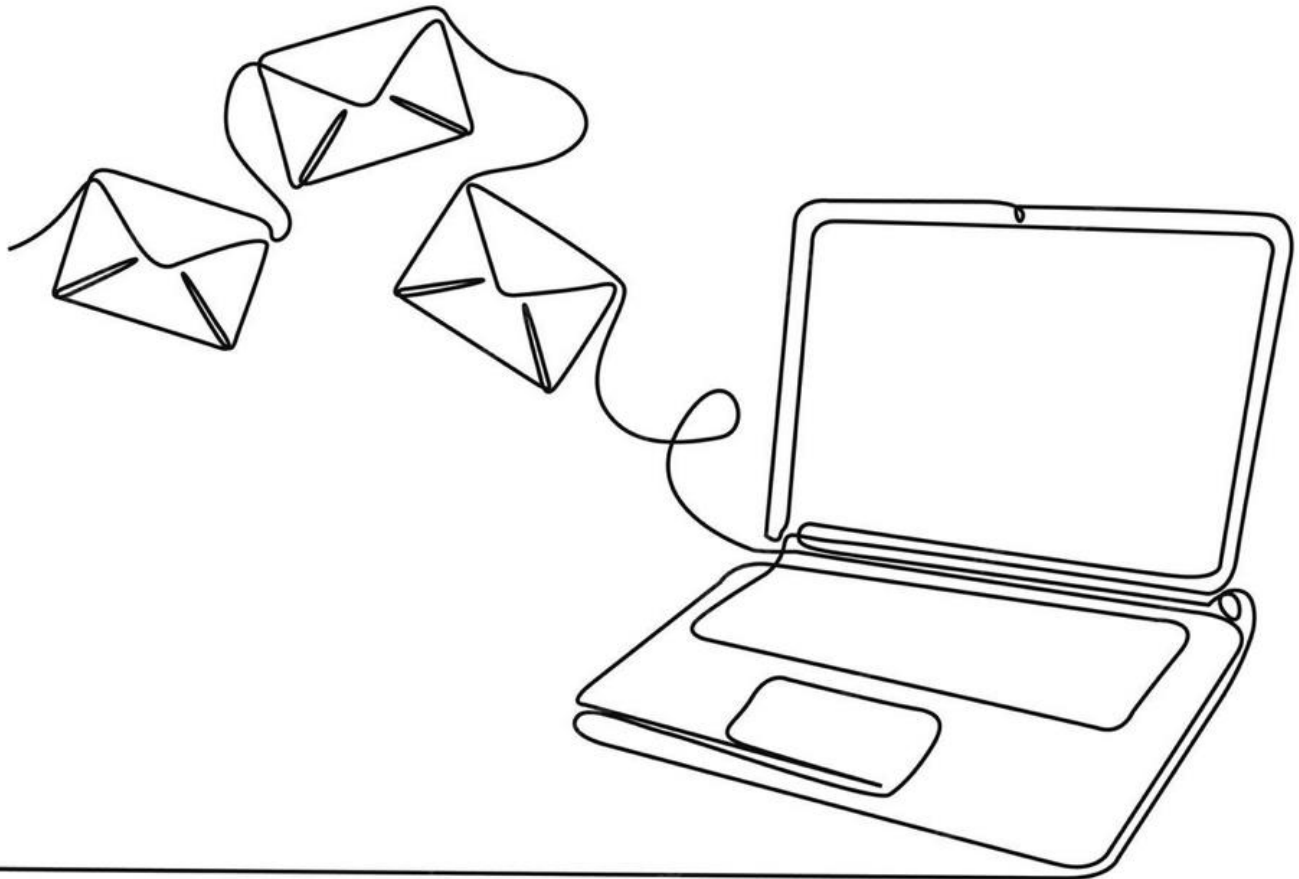
Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar

Hon. Professor
Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development & Panchayat Raj
University, Gadag, Karnataka

Behind India's 'responsible' score

In Deccan Herald dt. 6 July 2026

<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/behind-india-s-responsible-score-4063202>





Book Review

Learning Across Continents: My Academic Odyssey by Sandeep Shastri

Writers Choice Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2026

Page: 158, Price: Rs. 495.



Dr. P. S. Jayaramu

Former Professor of Political Science, Bangalore University and former Senior Fellow, ICSSR, New Delhi

Prof. Sandeep Shastri, who is a well-known academician writing for decades on electoral politics, federal relations and the functioning of India's democratic institutions, has penned a book about his academic assignments across continents from 1993 to 2022. He refers to them as his *academic odyssey*. The book is a result of the copious notes he maintained, something which many academicians, including this reviewer, seldom do. The result is an extremely readable book on the cardinal topics covering his visits, which were predominantly on Constitution drafting, relations between the federal and state governments, challenges in conducting elections and, more importantly, the perspectives he gathered from scholars across continents drawn from the Developed West to the Developing Global South.

In the words of Dr. Rupak Chattopadhyay who has written the Foreword, 'what unites these diverse journeys is Sandeep's belief that democratic federalism and decentralisation are tools for managing diversity, fostering inclusion and enabling responsive governance' as drawn from his comparative surveys like the Global Barometer Survey and the State of Democracy Studies. The book reminds us that 'federalism is not simply a Constitutional solution but a democratic ethic resulting in a willingness to share power, to respect differences, to negotiate rather than dominate and to remain open to learning'. Sanguine feelings of a writer observed more in breach than in reality in a world where even electoral democracies are turning into electoral autocracies, as Prof. Yogendra Yadav reminds us.

True to his belief in federalism as a panacea for national problems, Sandeep Shastri's first visit abroad

was to Salzburg in 1993 as a Fellow at the famous **Salzburg Seminar** on Perspectives on Federalism where European, Canadian US and Indian participants shared their perspectives. The focus was rightly more on the regions than the centre.

The author's visits to the United States began as an **International Visitor** (I.V. Program) under the invitation of the US Government, which was followed by many more visits laid the foundation for forging academic partnerships with focus more on Comparative Democracies. The differences between the Western and Eastern/Third world Democracies were glaring, sadly with not many meeting points. [This reviewer too had the privilege to attend Salzburg Seminar and the I.V. program in the United States, though on different themes relating to International Relations].

In contrast to the developed West which the author covered during his several journeys, his visits to South Sudan brought into sharp focus the problems it faces in Constitution Making and Decentralization. But as the author himself observes, poverty and underdevelopment characterised the nation in general. Sadly, South Sudan remains an authoritarian country even today under the garb of a transitional Presidential 'Republic'.

I must make a reference to the innumerable visits Prof. Shastri made to Myanmar in his capacity as the leading resource person as part of the **Forum of Federation's Capacity Building Programme for Transition to Democratic Decentralization**. He was also a senior adviser to the said Forum. He says that Myanmar had a unique decentralization structure with regions and the states.(p.96) His and others' job was to sensitize the trainers to provide balanced perspectives on critical issues in national development. But the capacity building exercises notwithstanding, Myanmar is still miles away from democracy and genuine decentralization. Of course, Prof. Shastri expresses his disappointment at the 'backsliding' that has occurred there (p.110) and remains hopeful of better days in self-governance at all levels.

Sandeep Shastri's odyssey took him to many countries in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, the Gulf, China, etc. He gained interesting and diverse insights into the functioning of the political systems of those countries. As he says in the end, his voyage of discovery yielded nine key lessons in learning, leading to the realisation that history is not a story of monuments and historical

sites, rather, it is in the cut and thrust of everyday lives of people. (p.150).

As a reviewer, I must say I enjoyed reading the book. I recommend it to fellow academicians and the general readers. But, having said that, I must say that, unfortunately, most of the democratic nations he visited are witnessing a backsliding, which is the

unfortunate 'new normal'. Well, that has nothing to do with Prof. Shastri's scholarship.

A word about the Publishing House. **Writers Choice Publications** Pvt. Ltd. has brought out the book in an elegant and extremely readable manner in the shortest possible time, as I understand. Kudos to them.

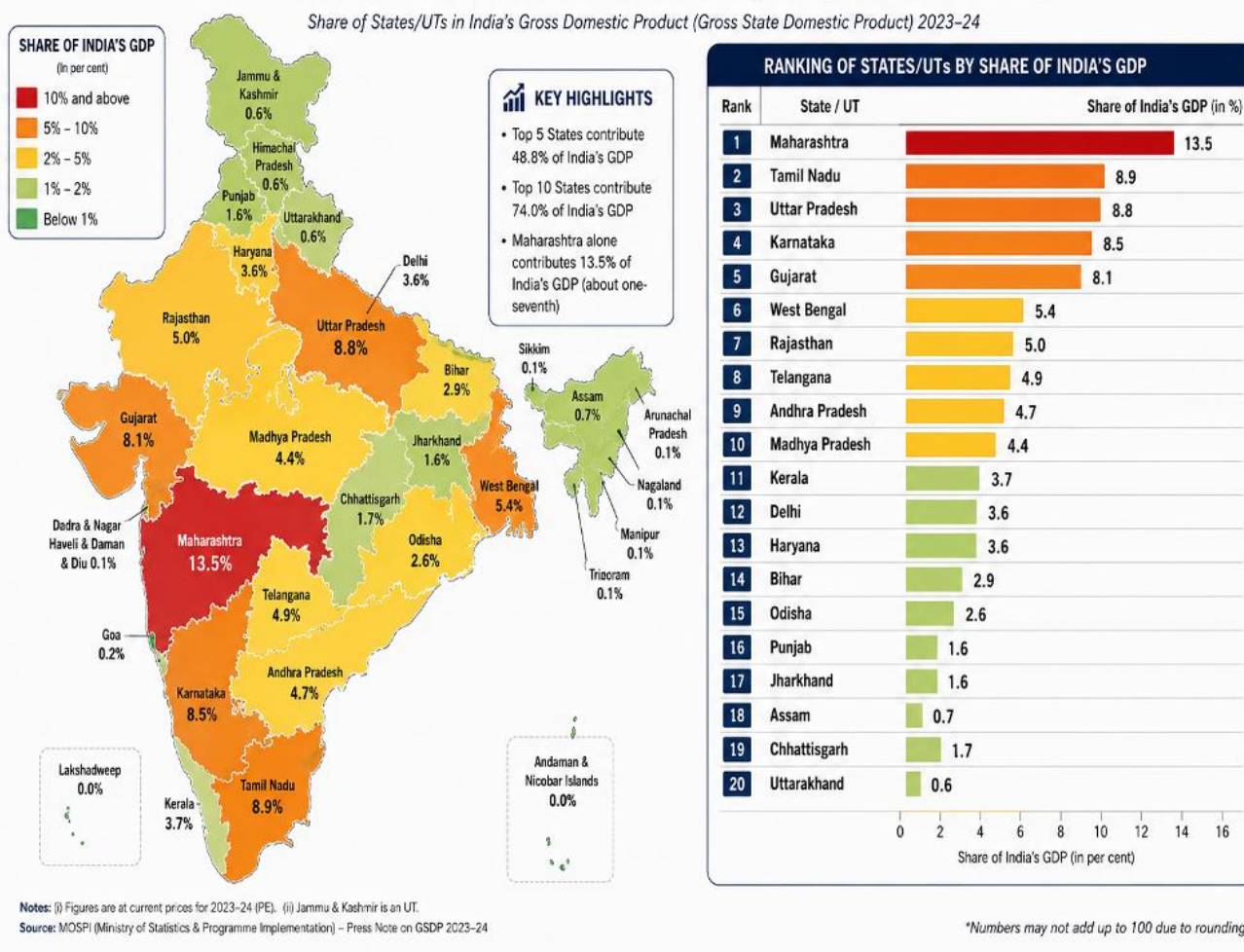




INDIA'S ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

STATE-WISE CONTRIBUTION TO INDIA'S GDP (GSDP) AT CURRENT PRICES

Share of States/UTs in India's Gross Domestic Product (Gross State Domestic Product) 2023–24



A few interesting observations emerge:

- **Maharashtra alone contributes about one-seventh of India's GDP.**
- **The top five states**—Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, **Karnataka** and Gujarat—together account for **nearly half of India's GDP**.
- **Southern and Western states continue to dominate national output because of stronger industrialization, services, manufacturing and exports.**
- Uttar Pradesh's large economy reflects its population size, while **Karnataka's position is driven largely by IT and knowledge industries.**



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