



# भारतीय लोक प्रशासन संस्थान

## INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

### Building Capacity for Good Governance

#### Karnataka Regional Branch

**Virtual Newsletter**  
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#### **A Note from the Chairman**

**S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.)**

It gives me great pleasure to place before the esteemed members of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the inaugural issue of our Virtual Newsletter. It is proposed to bring out monthly newsletters, incorporating the activities organized by the Branch, one or two articles relating to matters of Public Policy, Governance and Administration, primarily focused on, but not restricted to Karnataka. The newsletter will also carry Book Reviews on the above matters. Esteemed Members are requested to peruse the contents and give a feedback on improving its contents. Ideas and contributions are also welcome.

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#### **Lead Article**

(Courtesy: CERSSE-JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) 'Karnataka Politics Monitor',  
June-July 2020, Issue 18)

#### **Karnataka: Governance is Crucial**

**A. Ravindra, IAS (Retd.)**

Former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka and  
Chairman, Centre for Sustainable Development, Bengaluru

After receiving applause for its handling of the pandemic crisis in the initial phase, Karnataka has slipped badly. The state is now India's fourth most-affected in terms of COVID-19 cases. Bengaluru, in particular, has witnessed a surge in the number of cases and deaths. Why have things come to such a pass? The explanations given for the deteriorating situation are: Lack of adequate health infrastructure such as beds in hospitals, testing equipment, masks, personal protective gear, etc.; lack of adequate manpower -- doctors and other health workers; inflow of

people from highly infected states and abroad after the first lockdown was lifted and restrictions relaxed; non-observance by many people of government guidelines on wearing masks, maintaining social distance and washing hands frequently; and, deficiencies in the three Ts -- tracing, testing and treatment. While all these may be correct, the question is whether the government could have dealt with the situation more effectively. In other words, has there been a governance failure? In a crisis situation, governance essentially involves organising the resources required to implement a set of measures aimed at providing relief to the people and minimising risk. This is not as easy as it sounds when confronted with a pandemic that has affected the whole world and for which there are no clear solutions. All countries in the world are tackling the problem in their own ways, as are the states in India. Let us see how the situation developed in Karnataka.

In Bengaluru, a 'war room' was set up at BBMP, and in the districts, Deputy Commissioners were made responsible. Each district was assigned to a minister for the purpose of monitoring. At the state level, the responsibility was shared between the Minister for Health and the Minister for Medical Education, with the Chief Minister providing overall leadership. The Cabinet was reviewing the position periodically. This arrangement seemed to work well in the initial stages when the number of cases were low and we were patting ourselves on the back and wondering why states like Maharashtra and Delhi were faring so badly. As the number of cases started mounting, problems multiplied. We discovered that the number of beds in government hospitals was insufficient and then decided to approach private hospitals. It took some time to persuade them to earmark 50 per cent of their beds for COVID-19 patients. Thereafter, the rates had to be negotiated. Some patients, refused admission in one place after another, were running from pillar to post and in the process, some lost their lives. Making arrangements for quarantining, especially for those coming from abroad added to the woes. While those who could afford were lodged in hotels, others were accommodated in places with poor facilities, causing much dissatisfaction. Dealing with migrant workers who lost their jobs posed another kind of problem. First, they were encouraged to go back to their hometowns and villages; a few days later, they were asked to stay back; and some days later, they were again allowed to go. In the midst of all this, health workers decided to go on strike. Doctors serving on temporary basis demanded regularisation, ASHA workers wanted a raise in their wages, and the medical community as a whole was unhappy being denied personal protective equipment (PPEs). When BBMP wanted to recruit new doctors, only 11 turned up for the walk-in interview, reflecting either their disinterest to serve during the prevalence of COVID-19 or their reluctance to serve in the municipal organisation. While appreciating the complex problems to be tackled, it is necessary to take note of the failures. First, the lack of clarity in defining the roles and responsibilities of functionaries at different levels. What exactly is the role of the BBMP 'war room'? A perusal of the related website reveals only the newsletter showing the data pertaining to the number of cases, with details like positive cases, recovered, deaths and some comparative figures with other states. Is the BBMP responsible for all matters relating to COVID-19 in the city? Are there any other agencies generating data? Some experts have questioned the accuracy of government data. For instance, a patient reported dead was listed as having been discharged 11 days later.

Hearing a batch of writ petitions, the High Court observed that BBMP had failed to answer vital questions pertaining to real-time online data on availability of beds, ventilators and the timeline fixed for getting test reports from laboratories; further, it had failed to implement the standard operating procedures (SOP) in containment zones. Secondly, lack of proper communication leads to confusion in the minds of people. Ministers speak in different voices and official spokespersons keep changing. Too many ministers representing Bengaluru may be

adding to the problems of the Chief Minister. During a crisis, what is required is decisiveness, quick implementation and clear channels of communication. Third, we possibly missed the opportunity during the earlier longer lockdowns to prepare ourselves in terms of procurement of materials and mobilising additional manpower. Perhaps, it was presumed that we would not have to sail in boats similar to Delhi and Maharashtra at a later date. Call it complacency or naivete, we are paying the price today. Finally, the government could have benefitted from adopting a decentralised approach in dealing with problems at the ground level. The ward committees could have been involved in executing the containment policies, and resident welfare associations used to provide information about the compliance with government guidelines and to educate people at the grassroots. While waging a war, nothing can be taken for granted. Indeed, we must be prepared for the worst. We set up the first ‘war room’ in the country to fight a mighty but unseen enemy, but we failed to foresee the coming dangers and perhaps declared victory too soon. Let us not forget that in this war, we the people, are also soldiers and must follow the rules of the game in our own interest and in the interest of society.

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## **Report of Activities**

### **Webinar Report**

The **Karnataka Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration**, in collaboration with the **Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CERSSE)** of **JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)**, organized a webinar on the theme, ‘*Citizen-Friendly Administration: Emerging Issues*’ on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The Panellists were the following:

1. **Mr. S. Ramanathan**, IAS (Retd.), Former Secretary to Government of India, and Chairman, Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA;
2. **Dr. A. Ravindra**, IAS (Retd.), Former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka and Chairman, Centre for Sustainable Development, Bengaluru;
3. **Dr. Sandeep Shastri**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Director, CERSSE, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru; and
4. **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Hon. Professor, Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag.

In his Introductory Remarks, **Mr. S. Ramanathan** pointed out that in the recent past, the theme of ‘*Citizen-Friendly Administration*’ has steadily risen to the top of the agenda of governance, not only in India but across the world. ‘*Putting Citizens First*’ is a natural extension of the New Public Management (NPM) initiatives, which seek to better serve citizens as clients and customers. This has led to experimentation and innovations such as *Centrelink* in Australia, the *Common Measurement Tool* in Canada and New Zealand’s *Kiwi Counts*.

According to Mr. Ramanathan, the theme of ‘*Citizen-Friendly Administration*’ has greater resonance today because of the expanding opportunities presented by digital information and communications technology (ICT). It is now conceivable to think not only of Citizen-Oriented Service, but genuinely *Citizen-Informed* and even *Citizen-Designed* interventions that are designed to accommodate the needs of individuals and communities — what some refer to as the ‘individualisation’ of policy and service delivery. Such developments are consistent with the ‘*Public Value*’ perspective which calls on political leaders and civil servants to explore myriad ways to provide services for citizens and communities.

Mr. Ramanathan recalled that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Reforms Commission, headed by Shri M. Veerappa Moily, in its 12<sup>th</sup> Report of February 2009, aptly titled, '*Citizen-Centric Administration: The Heart of Governance*' recommended a Seven-Step Model for Citizen-Centricity:

1. Define all services which you provide and identify your clients;
2. Set standards and norms for each service;
3. Develop capability to meet the set standards;
4. Perform to achieve the standards;
5. Monitor performance against the set standards;
6. Evaluate the impact through an independent mechanism; and
7. Continuous improvement based on monitoring and evaluation of results.

The Commission was of the view that the approach outlined in the model described is quite simple and there should be no difficulty for any organization or any of its units to adopt this approach and make it citizen-centric. The Commission had recommended that the Union Government as well as State Governments should make this model mandatory for all public service organizations.

Notwithstanding efforts in this direction, Mr. Ramanathan raised the following questions for deliberation at the webinar:

1. *Are Westminster governance systems, with their vertical accountabilities and divided responsibilities, necessarily incongruent with a citizen orientation, or can they be made to move faster and further?*
2. *Can governments increase the trust of citizens in government by improving services and better engaging them, or will citizens continue to disengage from government, no matter how much progress is made?*
3. *How can citizen input be meshed with the input that inevitably comes from experts, stakeholders, and government agencies (often other levels of government)?*
4. *Do governments provide what citizens and communities want or need, or do they focus on better providing services that governments have identified in certain ways?*

In Mr. Ramanathan's considered view, making administration *genuinely citizen-friendly* needs to be preceded by the following initiatives:

1. Discovering Citizen Needs and Preferences  
Systematically learning more about the experience of citizens in receiving the services delivered to them, and using that feedback to improve the delivery of those programmes.
2. Engaging Citizens in Policy and Service Design  
Improving how governments engage citizens in the design of policy and service delivery regimes.
3. Improving Administrative Capability  
Developing strategies to improve capacity and capabilities in government.

According to **Dr. A. Ravindra**, Citizen-Friendly Administration assumes special significance in the context of the ongoing crisis of COVID-19. New issues have emerged which deserve the attention of the government as well as all other stakeholders. In his view, the following four issues need to be addressed on priority:

1. **Public Health:** The importance of public health cannot be over-emphasised, especially during outbreak of contagious diseases. Unfortunately, in India, this is a neglected area. A mere 9.6 per cent is the share of public health in the overall health expenditure. This needs to be stepped up so that preventive health care gets the required attention. Public health systems should be strengthened in terms of infrastructure and manpower.
2. **Environment:** Matters relating to the quality of air and water, waste management and traffic congestion are of crucial importance in urban areas. These are closely related to public health and improving the quality of life and need serious attention of state and local governments.
3. **Employment:** The most glaring outcome of COVID-19 pertains to loss of jobs and livelihoods, evident from the mass exodus of migrants from cities. Unemployment in India at 6.2 per cent, is the highest during the last 45 years. We need to think of new modes of creating work especially for the poor.
4. **Innovative Governance:** is the tool for recovery and moving towards people-friendly administration. Digital governance must be more inclusive and reach the rural areas and vulnerable sections. A lot needs to be done to improve transparency by providing timely information to the people. Finally, a more decentralised approach must be adopted by involving people at the grassroots, and other stakeholders, to achieve optimum results. The aim must be to move towards collaborative governance.

An important lesson from COVID-19 is the importance of behavioural change. How to bring about this change will be a challenge to government and civil society organizations, said Dr. Ravindra.

**Dr. Sandeep Shastri's** presentation was based on research that used multi-methods. Essentially based on nationally representative public opinion surveys conducted over time by Lokniti-CSDS, the presentation supplemented the survey findings with in-depth interviews with All-India Service and State Service officers. These in-depth interviews aimed at exploring domains that could not be assessed through survey research on the one hand, and also served to corroborate the findings of survey research on the other.

Dr. Shastri first looked at the level of Citizen Trust in public institutions. What clearly emerged was that institutions like the higher judiciary, army and the Election Commission invoked greater trust as compared to the police, civil service and political parties. This was found to be consistent across a range of surveys. When the matter was discussed with civil servants, many of them did not express too much surprise at the findings. They felt that it was an arduous task to build trust among citizens. Some also felt that this lack of trust was on account of the 'service' factor in civil service having been lost sight of. Others conceded that this lack of trust was not just a perception but a 'ground reality'.

Dr. Shastri went on to argue that the limited trust in the civil service and police reflect the high level of expectations and interactions that common people have with them. In the case of the higher judiciary and army, common people tend to see them from a distance and thus hold them in high trust. He went on to add that in areas where the army is active in maintaining law and order, the trust levels are actually much lower. Even in the case of the judiciary, the trust in the local courts is invariably much lower than trust levels in the Supreme Court. Dr. Shastri left the audience with the question as to whether India was witnessing the emergence of the 'critical citizen'.

While expanding the discussion on trust, Dr. Shastri quoted from the level of trust in the administration that a perception survey indicated. A little less than two-thirds of the respondents had trust in the administration, whereas a little over one-third had little trust. The officers interviewed made the argument that the lack of trust in the administration was often linked to the manner in which officers used their discretionary powers. Others argued that the challenge was much more complex, as the administration has limited resources to cater to very high expectations.

Finally, Dr. Shastri dealt with public perception of corruption in the administration. He pointed out that public opinion is split on the matter with a little over half holding the administration to be corrupt. The politicization of the administration was also discussed in which the point was made by officers that elected representatives are often uncomfortable with efficient officers, as then people would see no need to approach politicians! Officers also felt that fulfilling citizen expectations often required circumventing rules and that there was no appreciation or reward from citizens for hard work and honesty.

**Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar's** presentation, titled, '*From Citizen-Friendly to Citizen-Centric Administration: Moving the Citizen from Periphery to Centre*' was based on the premise that there is clear evidence of deterioration in confidence and trust, on the part of citizens, in public authorities, in most parts of the world, including India. In order to remove the causes behind the increasing 'Trust Deficit' among citizens in Public Administration, Dr. Kumar made out a case for *Moving the Citizen from Periphery to Centre*, through the philosophy and theory of '*New Public Service*' and its concomitant concept of '*Citizen-Centric Administration*'.

According to Dr. Kumar, the New Public Service (NPS) starts with the premise that the focus of Public Administration should be Citizens, Community and Civil Society. In this conception, the primary role of public servants is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests, rather than to control or steer society. The *New Public Service* model approaches Public Administration from the vantage point of democratic theory, premised on the notion of an active and involved citizenship. The role of public officials is to facilitate opportunities for strengthening citizen engagement in finding solutions to societal problems.

Citizen-Centric Administration, in *New Public Service* requires a sound understanding of citizens' expectations, experiences, and key drivers of satisfaction. It requires a theoretical and policy framework that places citizens at the *centre* of decision-making processes, rather than at the periphery. Citizen-centric service delivery indicators focus on the collection of data that can help governments become better at what they do—deliver services to citizens in a responsive and equitable manner. Citizen-Centric Administration calls for Public Administration to establish a two-way relationship with citizens.

The concept of Citizen-Centric Administration contains several elements:

1. Building collaborative relationships with citizens, community and civil society;
2. Encouraging shared responsibilities;
3. Disseminating information to elevate public discourse;
4. Fostering a shared understanding of public issues; and
5. Seeking opportunities to involve citizens in government activities.

According to Dr. Kumar, placing citizens at *centre* of Public Administration requires the following:

1. Accepting the philosophy and theory of ‘*New Public Service*’;
2. Adopting a very different approach to recruitment and professional development; and
3. Instilling a fundamental change in mindset on the part of public officials.

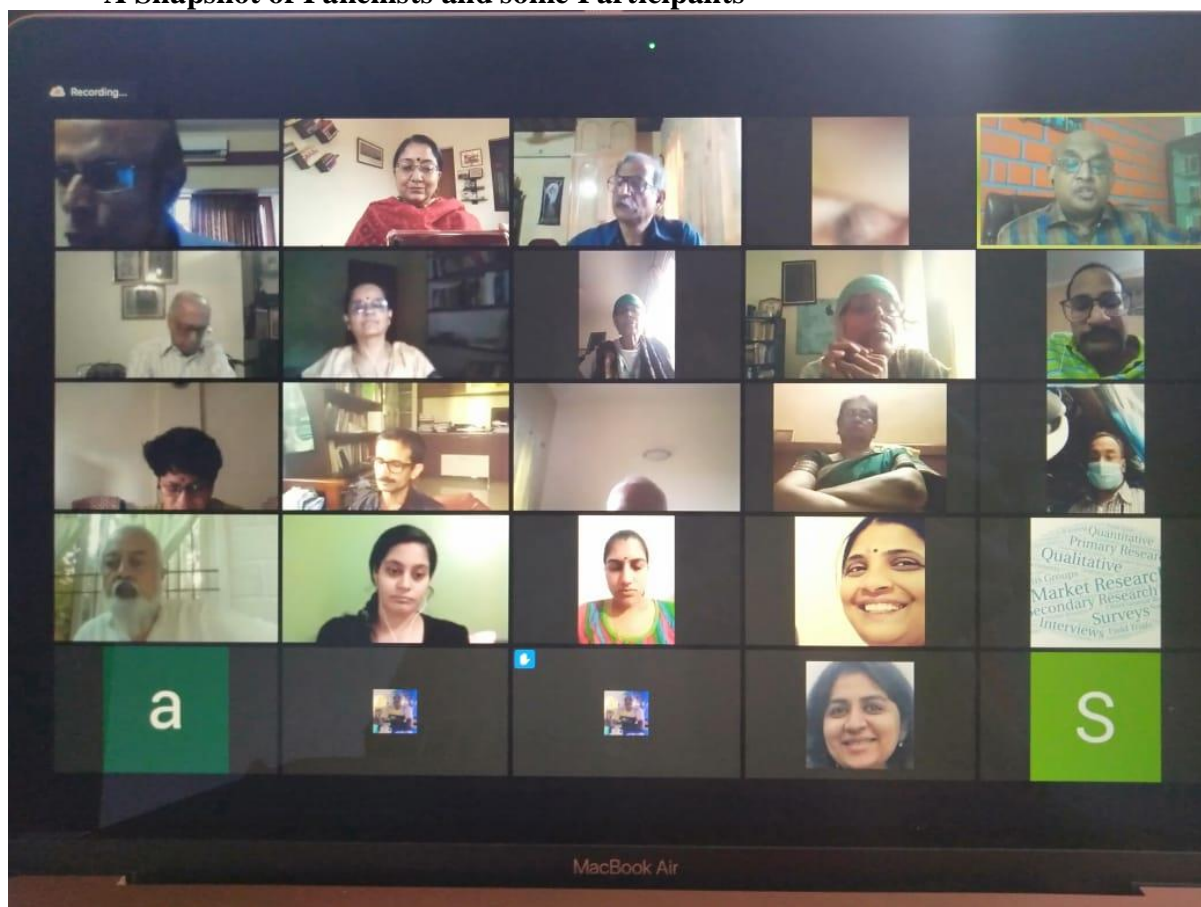
Participants in the webinar included Executive Committee members of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration; Faculty Members, research scholars and other students of Jain (deemed-to-be) University; and other invitees. Following the presentations, pertinent questions relating to the theme of the webinar, were raised and discussed. **Dr. Sandeep Shastri** effectively moderated the programme. **Dr. Priyanca Mathur**, Associate Professor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) welcomed the panellists and invitees. **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Secretary of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA, proposed the vote of thanks.

### Some Photographs of the Webinar

**Mr. S. Ramanathan, Chairman, IIPA-KRB making his presentation**



## A Snapshot of Panellists and some Participants



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### Book Review

#### The Deepening Gaps in Basic Public Services

*The Gated Republic: India's Public Policy Failures and Private Solutions*

Shankkar Aiyar

Harper Collins, ₹699

*Reviewed by*

**Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, IAS**

in '*The Hindu*' dt. August 09, 2020

Eisenhower once remarked that in governance, the urgent is never important, and the important is never urgent. We also often hear that what gets measured gets done. This is only true of some aspects of governance. It ignores the importance of processes. Hence, the popularity of metrics, compliance, and the top 3 vs. bottom 3 style of reviewing. Meanwhile, what can't be easily measured — including the quality of governance itself — gets forgotten.



Shankkar Aiyar’s book begins with a list of water despatches from different parts of India. In Bundelkhand, where summer temperatures go above 45 degrees Celsius, people who “borrow” water must return it within hours — and at twice the borrowed quantity. In Mawsynram, one of the rainiest places on earth, residents are forced to ration water in winter. In major urban centres, municipal corporations issue building clearances without ensuring water supply.

In five swiftly narrated chapters, Aiyar lists the malaise in India’s key public services sectors: water, health, education, power, law and order. Pulling from history, research, committee reports, plan documents, national surveys, and reportage to create his narrative, he shows how India’s privileged classes have exited from the miasma of apathy and failure: with bottled water, tankers, storage tanks, water purifiers, inverters, diesel gensets, private healthcare and private security agencies — while outside the gated communities, those with less privilege must contend with overburdened public service infrastructure, power outages, and vanishing or contaminated groundwater.

### **Lack of Decentralisation**

What has caused these failures? As Aiyar observes, an obvious reason is funding: yet, poor allocations have not always been due to the lack of resources, but their misdirection. Another is the division of power and accountability in the design of programmes, resulting in one-size-fits-all policy interventions that may not fit local requirements. A third reason is the push for short term outcomes — for optics — rather than an investment in long-term processes for community participation, equity and empowerment.

Finally, the most important reason for India’s failures in the provision of public services is incomplete decentralisation. “*Literature on development policies has redefined the last mile of delivery as the first mile of governance,*” notes Aiyar. “*Every country which has delivered on basic public goods and services has done so by empowering local governments.*”

### **The List Goes On**

Drinking water, sanitation, health, education, rural electrification, are all listed under the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution as subjects under the purview of the elected rural local bodies. This would lead to better accountability and locally responsive governance.

Yet in most States, these sectors continue to be under the control of administrative departments at the State level.

When the elites opt out, the voice of the poor is more easily ignored and problems become entrenched. But not always. More sharply than ever before, during the time of COVID, we are seeing how inadequate attention to the public health care system, and to state capacity, can impact all of us.

Gated communities cannot provide sanctuary against the pandemic. Only a well-functioning and well-resourced public health care system can do so. The greatest challenges facing India and the world today — the pandemic, the economic downturn, climate change — offer no easy escape.

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**PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

1. Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections
2. Responsiveness
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness
4. Openness and Transparency
5. Rule of Law
6. Ethical Conduct
7. Competence and Capacity
8. Innovation and Openness to Change
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation
10. Sound Financial Management
11. Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion
12. Accountability

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Feedback/Contributions/Ideas/Book Reviews may kindly be mailed to:  
[jeeves0607@yahoo.com](mailto:jeeves0607@yahoo.com) with a copy to [iipakrb.bangalore@gmail.com](mailto:iipakrb.bangalore@gmail.com)