



भारतीय लोक प्रशासन संस्थान

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Building Capacity for Good Governance

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Karnataka Regional Branch

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Virtual Newsletter

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A Note from the Chairman

S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.)

It gives me great pleasure to place before our esteemed readers, the second issue of our **Virtual Newsletter**. From this issue, we carry a feature titled, '**Policy Update**'. This month's Policy Update is on **Mission Karmayogi**, a new national capacity building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants, launched this month by the Government of India. Our **Lead Article** this month, on **Mission Karmayogi**, is by **Shri Amitabha Bhattacharya**, IAS (Retd.) titled, '*Civil Service Needs to Retain its Effectiveness*'. We also carry a report on a Web Talk by one of our members, **Mr. V. Balasubramanian**, IAS (Retd.) on 2nd August 2020 on the topic, "*China's Silk Road Initiative and its Implications for India*". We are delighted that the latest issue of the **Indian Journal of Public Administration** carries a Book Review of our publication, '**Excellence in Administration: Prospects and Perspectives**', edited by our Vice-Chairman, **Shri S.V. Ranganath**, IAS (Retd.), and our Secretary, **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**. The Book Review is reproduced here. The volume has been very ably reviewed by **Prof. Prabhat Kumar Datta**, Hon. Professor at the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata. We are grateful to him for undertaking a very meticulous and comprehensive review of the book.

Esteemed readers are requested to peruse the contents of the newsletter and give a feedback on improving its contents. Ideas and contributions are also welcome.

Policy Update

India Embarks on Landmark Civil Service Capacity-Building Reform

The **Government of India** has unveiled a major reform programme that will radically reshape the way civil servants are trained and developed and create what the country's Home Minister described as a "new work culture". The **Union Cabinet** approved the reform programme – called '*Mission Karmayogi*' or the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) – on 2nd September 2020.

Mission Karmayogi is a government-wide, holistic approach to civil servant training and career development. It will include an annual capacity building plan for all departments with the aim of ensuring efficient service delivery; the setting of benchmarks to encourage and monitor civil servants' development; and a focus on technology-based learning. Ministries will be tasked with 'co-creating a common learning ecosystem' and will be encouraged to break down departmental silos. The programme is designed for civil servants from the rank of Assistant Section Officer to Secretary across all departments, covering 4.6 million government employees. A total of ₹510.86 crore will be spent over a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. The expenditure is partly funded by multilateral assistance to the tune of ₹366 crore.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the reforms will "radically improve" the government's human resource management practices. **Shri Jitendra Singh**, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, said the aim is to continuously build capacity, update the talent pool and provide equal opportunities for the personal and professional growth of officials at all levels. "*Mission Karmayogi* is an endeavour to reincarnate a government servant as an ideal *karmayogito* serve the nation, by enabling him to be creative, to be constructive, to be proactive and technically empowered," he said. The Hindi word *karmayogi* roughly translates as the practice of 'selfless action performed for the benefit of others'. The idea "is also to end the culture of working in the silos" and to "overcome the multiplicity of training curriculum which we have because of the institutions spread all over the country".

The Home Minister **Shri Amit Shah** called the programme a "landmark for the 21st century" that would bring about transformational change in the Civil Service. He said the "comprehensive scheme" would "focus on the individual as well as institutional capacity building", create a new work culture and that its goal-driven nature and focus on continuous training would empower civil servants "to ensure accountability and transparency in the system". He added: "This reform will not only provide a mechanism for government functionaries to improve their own performance but also enable them to fulfil and live up to the aspirations of a 'New India'."

Four new entities will be established to steer the programme: the Prime Minister's Public Human Resources Council; the Capacity Building Commission; a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) that will own and operate associated digital assets, including the soon-to-be-built Integrated Government Online Training – or '*iGOT-Karmayogi*' platform; and a coordination unit, which will be headed by the Cabinet Secretary. The Prime Minister's Public Human Resources Council will be headed by the PM and will comprise ministers, academics, HR practitioners, global thought leaders, and public service officials.

Each department will contribute Rs. 430 per employee as a subscription charge for the SPV, which will be set up as a not-for-profit company and will own and manage the *iGOT-Karmayogi* platform.

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Lead Article

(Courtesy: *The Tribune*, 9th September 2020)

Steel Frame Needs to Retain its Effectiveness

Amitabha Bhattacharya, IAS (Retd.)*



The Centre's decision to introduce *Mission Karmayogi* for all its officials, shorn of hyperbole that accompanied its announcement, merits attention in the context of several reforms undertaken in recent years.

These reforms include lateral entry of fresh talent at the level of Joint Secretary; amendment to the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2018; operationalisation of the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013; and systematic weeding out of officials on grounds of inefficiency and doubtful integrity under Section 56(j) of the Fundamental Rules.

Mission Karmayogi basically seeks to augment the skills of civil servants and aims at upgrading the post-recruitment training mechanism of officers and employees of the Central Government at all levels. The architecture envisages a Human Resource Council chaired by the Prime Minister, a digital platform, *iGOTKarmayogi*, as a launch pad for the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building and a Capacity Building Commission for enabling a comprehensive reform of the capacity-building apparatus at the individual, institutional and process levels. While details are awaited, the architecture looks well thought out. In a country where the training of middle and junior-level employees has always been ignored, a provision of over Rs 500 crore for five years, deserves appreciation.

However, many questions remain. While relevant and continuous training, especially for the cutting-edge civil servants, is important *per se*, much of the success would depend on the design of such training modules. It should be based on large-scale public feedback on the inadequacies of service providers, sectorally disaggregated and on a structured analysis of such 'big data' obtained. Formulating a flagship scheme, largely on impressionistic ideas of senior or retired civil servants and academics, is bound to suffer from serious limitations, especially in a changing scenario.

In other words, has the effectiveness of our civil services in various fields been assessed or measured? Most citizens have an unflattering opinion of our governance system, on the

strength of their personal experience at a government hospital, a transport office, a police station or so. Their perception about government policies made at higher levels is often moulded by media reports that are not always reliable or impartial.

However, there have been serious attempts to measure civil service effectiveness. The *International Civil Service Effectiveness Index* (InCiSE, 2019) had covered 38 countries and ranked them on the basis of a dozen indicators. It seeks to serve both as a performance improvement and an accountability tool. Would it not be worthwhile to identify our own performance parameters, in association with the best expertise globally available, to formulate a system to measure our civil service effectiveness? The proposed '*Annual State of Civil Service*' report may well start measuring and ranking the performance of various sectors accordingly.

Secondly, in the overall context of Civil Service reform, training is a component that is integrally linked with the issues of recruitment of civil servants. Though the higher Civil Services today are more representative of our society due to democratisation of education, are we inducting some of the finest students, now that options are available to the bright ones? Relenting to pressure from powerful lobbies, the upper age limit and number of attempts have been revised from time to time. Does the long-drawn exam, with aspirants spending their productive youth in preparation, encourage merit or sheer tenacity and rote learning? This is largely true for recruitment to Group A,B and C Services.

Thirdly, trainings are normally effective in equipping civil servants with domain and functional competencies. But attitudes are equally important, and making public services more citizen-centric continues to remain a challenge. Common citizens, especially the senior ones, face multiple problems that a sensitive bureaucracy can easily solve. For example, with increasing migration within the country, updating residential address has become necessary, for example, in the electoral photo identity or Aadhaar card or even for opening a bank account. Often, this turns out to be a nightmare. Yet, this can be solved by way of a simple affidavit, or by a self-declaration that can be immediately verified or attested by any local authority.

How the indifferent and obstructionist attitude at operating levels can be changed through training is a moot question.

Lastly, the performance of civil servants is linked with their career progression and the level of their motivation. The idea of aligning work allocation by matching their experience with the requirements of job has largely been on paper. Evidently, political considerations impact transfers and postings at various levels. Moreover, what affects systemic morale down the line is the trend of appointing retired officials in statutory and other important posts. This practice of choosing senior officials for post-retirement 'sinecures' has not done much good, discouraging competent and impartial officers and de-motivating others. Training may enhance the knowledge and skill-set, but is unlikely to motivate to offer the best service, in a climate where loyalty to the political superior is noticeably rewarded.

In his book *Accountability: Angst, Awareness, Action* [Pearson, 2012], Jay P. Desai has shown that on indices such as the *Democracy Index*, *Corruption Perceptions Index* and *Bribe Payers Index*, India ranks rather low. On *Global Competitiveness Index 2010-11*, it was 51st out of 139 countries and on *Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2009*, it ranked 112th out of 213 countries. On the UNDP's *Human Development Index-2019*, we are at the 129th position

out of 189 countries. This is an indictment of our collective performance, even if one questions the methodology and finds that there have been improvements in certain areas. Without undermining the contribution of individual civil servants, it appears that these rankings are not totally out of sync with the public perception of our governmental machinery.

The success of *Mission Karmayogi* would depend on addressing the right questions and seeking to design systems accordingly, to prepare and sensitise the civil servants to make a visible difference to public life. Importantly, its success would inspire the State Governments, where most of the citizen-government interface lies, to undertake Civil Service reforms more purposefully.

**Amitabha Bhattacharya belonged to the 1975 batch of the IAS (AP Cadre). He retired as Principal Adviser in charge of Education and Culture in the Planning Commission, New Delhi. He has also worked with the UNDP and in the private sector. Currently living in Delhi, he writes on issues of public interest for newspapers and journals. 'Uttama Adalitha' is grateful to Shri Bhattacharya for giving us permission to reproduce his article here.*

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Report of Activities

Report of Web Talk

The **Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA**, in collaboration with the **Department of Political Science of Bangalore University** and the **Political Science Collective** organized a Web Talk by **Mr. V. Balasubramanian**, IAS (Retd.) on 2nd August 2020 on the topic, **“China’s Silk Road Initiative and its Implications for India”**.

Mr. Balasubramanian began his talk by going into the background of the ambitious Chinese project. In 2013, President Xi Jinping announced the launching of One-Belt One-Road (OBOR), later renamed as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), to lend for infrastructure projects in all countries on the Silk Land Road and Maritime Silk Road. There are 2,951 projects costing \$ 3.87 trillion involving 2,630 companies in 65 countries. Over 70 countries, including most of EU countries, are participating in this joint venture. Notable exceptions are India, US, Japan, Australia and a few others. The total investment envisaged till 2050 is \$ 40 trillion.

According to Mr. Balasubramanian, such massive investment would give China enormous economic, political and military power over these countries. Additionally, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project of \$ 47 billion with Pakistan to develop its Gwadar port would give China and Pakistan control to Hormuz Sea which is the busy sea route for oil and other strategic products between the West and East. The existing sea route being used by China passes through the risky South China Sea, Pacific Rim, the Strait of Malacca and Sri Lanka, and Chinese ships have to cruise about 10,000 kilometres for reaching its final destination. The Gwadar Port will reduce the sea distance to 2,500 kilometres and land distance for Kashgar to 2,800 kilometres. The CPEC related projects will not only save China time but also millions of dollars.

Mr. Balasubramanian pointed out that in India's neighbourhood, China has been making inroads with Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in economic projects as well as defence projects. From South China Sea to Sudan, China has a strategy of developing naval power in the Indian Ocean, in what is being described as "*String of Pearls*" in Chinese media. In all, as many as 15 ports from Hong Kong to Kenya are being developed by China, surrounding India.

Information from IMF, World Bank and CIA data would show the relatively strong economic position of China, as compared with India. China's share in total world exports was 13% in 2015 while India's share was just 1.7%. China has increased its exports to the world from barely 3% in 1995 to 13% in 2015 and it is the biggest exporter in the world. This also explains its very large Forex Reserves at \$ 3.5 trillion while the second largest is way behind at \$ 1.2 trillion of Japan.

In terms of military power, China is ranked third after the United States and Russia, while India is ranked fourth. However, China holds a clear and overwhelming superiority over India as per '*Global Firepower*' statistics. In terms of respective defence budgets, whereas the figure for China is \$ 155.6 bn., India's figure is US\$ 40 bn.

Moving to the border dispute between India and China, Mr. Balasubramanian stated that China had taken steps to resolve its border disputes with all its neighbours, slowly but steadily, with the exception of India. Though both India and Myanmar inherited the same border situation, China settled its border with Myanmar, more or less on the same McMahon Line, under the 1960 Sino-Myanmar Treaty. Subsequently, China also settled its border disputes with Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, North Korea, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This leaves only the border problem of India and China unresolved.

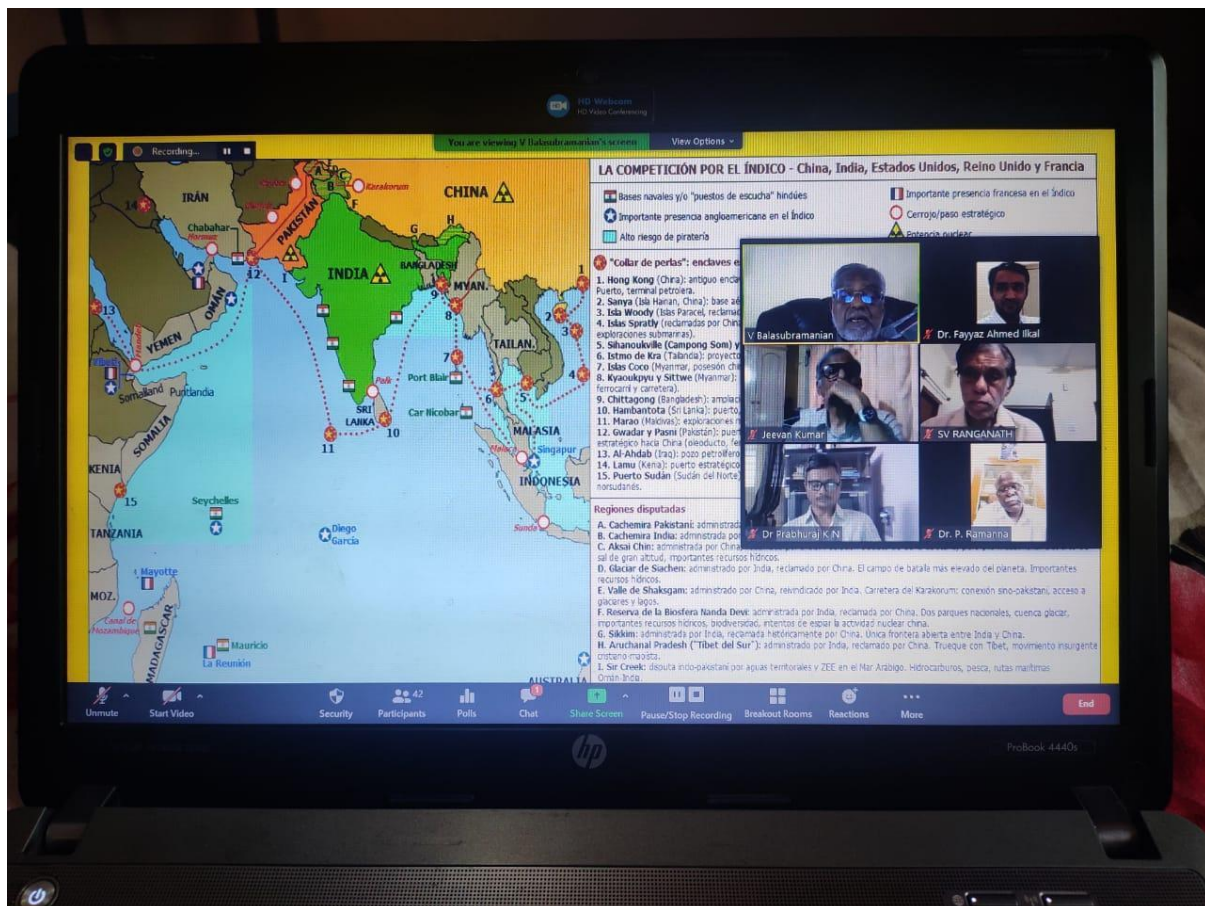
In Mr. Balasubramanian's view, it is both in India's and China's interest to cooperate in as many sectors as possible. India, especially, will gain by negotiations to settle its border problem with China, as China has done with all other of its neighbours. The old 1960 offer of Zhou Enlai to re-negotiate the Aksai Chin, and China would agree for settlement on India's terms in the Eastern sector by adhering to the McMahon Line as far as possible, should be re-opened. India's vital interests in oil, water resources and forests are in the North East compared to Aksai Chin where, as Pandit Nehru said, "not a blade of grass grows". It should be realistically acknowledged that China is an economic and military super-power which India is not.

There is no gain for India in continuing the border problem with China. In any case India cannot afford to open two fronts with China and Pakistan, let alone Nepal, or worse, Bangladesh. India has to settle its dispute with China by mutually acceptable terms of give and take as mooted by Zhou Enlai in 1960. India has to save on its military budget and spend it on education, health and other social sectors to lift its vast number of poor, officially acknowledged as 30% of population. Conflict with China will be a zero-sum game, if not a negative-sum game for India, concluded Mr. Balasubramanian.

Mr. Balasubramanian's web talk was followed by an active discussion on the points raised by him. **Dr. Ramesh** from the Political Science Collective welcomed the participants. **Dr. Surendra Kumar** from the Department of Political Science of Bangalore University introduced the speaker. **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Hon. Professor at the Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University moderated the discussion. **Dr. P. Ramanna**, Chairman of the Department of Political Science, Bangalore University, delivered the vote of thanks. Present on the occasion included **Mr. S. Ramanathan**, IAS (Retd.) and **Mr. S.V. Ranganath**, IAS (Retd.), Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA, respectively, apart from serving and retired Political Science faculty from various Universities in Karnataka and outside.

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A Photograph of the Webinar, depicting one of Mr. V. Balasubramanian's slides and a view of him, along with some of the participants.



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Book Review

S.V. Ranganath and D. Jeevan Kumar (Eds.),
Excellence in Administration: Prospects and Perspectives
 Indian Institute of Public Administration
 Karnataka Regional Branch, Bangalore
 2019, 214 pp., Rs.300.

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The book under review is a felicitation volume brought out at the time of celebration of the 91st birthday of **Shri S. Ramanathan**, IAS (Retd.) who served the Government of Mysore/Karnataka and the Government of India, with distinction, for about 40 years. During his illustrious career, he held many prestigious posts such as Secretary, Department of Development and Cooperation; Community Development Expert with the Government of Afghanistan; Director (Projects), Ministry of Shipping and Transport; Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation; Chairman, International Airports Authority of India; Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers; and Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat, from where he retired from service in 1986. After his retirement, he worked as the Director of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, from 1986 to 1988. The book is a collection of tributes and essays in honour of this ‘outstanding, legendary, remarkable and nonagenarian IAS officer’.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section carries a number of tributes penned by those representing a cross-section of society, who had the privilege of either working with Shri S. Ramanathan or who observed him at close distance. The tributes provide a good glimpse of the person and his contributions. The second section is a collection of articles authored by eminent civil servants, academics and civil society representatives, as a result of which the focus of the articles varies widely, though it remains in consonance with the central theme of the book. There are five pieces of writing in the form of tributes and as many as fifteen scholarly articles. On the basis of themes, the articles included in the volume can be divided into three groups, namely, articles on local governance including the role of civil society organisations in promoting local governance; general issues of public administration; and Karnataka-specific articles.

There are four articles on local governance and development, one of which has been authored by a well-known civil servant, **Dr S.S. Meenakshisundaram**, whose contribution to the theory and practice of rural local governance is widely known and acknowledged. In his article titled ‘*Panchayats and Non-Governmental Organisations: An Evolving Scenario*’, he argues that there is much scope for Panchayats and NGOs to work together as partners, rather than contenders.

In his article, **Dr. S.N. Sangita** has emphasised the significance of local governance in promoting national integration and inclusive development in a pluralist society like India. For him, the interference of higher-level governments is the basic impediment to the effective working of local self-governing institutions. The article authored by **Dr Priyanka Mathur-Velath** deals with citizens’ participation and civil society, which is the core of local governance. The author has tried to throw light on the need for participatory democracy in which different stakeholders like citizens and civil society organisations can articulate their views and keep a watch on the working of the government. There are two more articles dealing with urban issues of governance and development.

Dr A. Ravindra’s article ‘*Competing with World Class Cities*’ focuses on smart cities. The author thinks that 100 cities under the Smart Cities Mission should use the opportunity to turn not just smarter, but more competitive in the global sense and contribute to economic growth.

In 'Behaviour of the Poor: Learning from Karnataka Urban Water and Sanitation Improvement Project', **Arvind Srivastava** has cogently argued that in addressing the issues of the poor in the delivery of services, entry-level integration rather than differentiated treatment is important. Arguing further on this point, he observes that the design of integration policy should incorporate two issues, access and tariff structure. The general articles on public administration provide insights both on theory and practice.

The empirical issues of Public Administration in India have been dealt with by **Y.G. Muralidhran**, **M.R. Sreenivasamurthy** and **Thayyil Sethumadhavan** in their articles, '*Excellence in Public Service Delivery*', '*Equipping Administration for Better Performance*' and '*Approach to Assessing Capability Deficits in Civil Service*' respectively. **Muralidharan** deplores the fall in the quality of public services in the country and the dwindling budgetary allocations for public services. He underscores the need for making use of innovative legal and administrative tools like Citizens' Charter, Right to Information, Right to Public Services and Sevottam, to make public services better, while admitting that the state is under tremendous pressure because of the increasing demands of the people. **M.R. Sreenivasa Murthy's** '*Equipping Administration for Better Performance*' seeks to take stock of the unsatisfactory levels of public services and calls for restructuring of civil services and re-engineering of administrative processes, upgradation of skills, improvement of motivation of the service and providing administrative structures for making things better. **Sethumadhavan** holds the Indian bureaucracy responsible for the poor image it has acquired over the last few years. He accepts the fact that a number of factors, including dwindling strength of the service cadres, frequent changes in the law, coupled with inadequate institutional strengths have put the bureaucracy in a troublesome situation. Despite this, he has blamed the bureaucracy for not being able to make appropriate use of technological and digital developments to optimise their skill and efficiency.

Kathyayini Chamaraj in her contribution titled '*A Framework for Excellence for Social Security Administration*' suggests a comprehensive framework for universal social security for unorganised sectors. The sector has assumed special importance as it has been growing significantly after the adoption of neo-liberal policies. She has criticised the attitude and action of the government towards this Book Review 3 section and has found a couple of faults with the existing Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008. **Madhwaraj** in '*Governance and Good Governance*' has pleaded for effective restructuring of governance and public administration institutions to pave the road for good governance. **Abdul Aziz's** '*Public Policy: Theory and Practice*' has demonstrated how public policymaking has, over the years, become richer by taking inputs from different schools of thought in economics like classical, Keynesian and development economics. Referring to India, he has tried to build up a case for Public Policy for Human Development which has assumed growing importance in the context of unabated social and economic discrimination.

Dr Shalini Rajneesh in her article titled '*Ethical Governance and Society: Social and Cultural Contexts*' has drawn our attention to the need for promoting ethics in governance to ensure stability of society. The author has laid stress on motivation of the human resource, organisational change management, and effective monitoring and evaluation, as necessary ingredients for galvanising the administrative system.

Dr D. Jeevan Kumar's excellent piece, '*Globalisation and Public Administration*' refers to the momentous changes that the study of Public Administration has witnessed in the 21st century not only in the developed capitalist countries of the West but also in many

developing and post-colonial countries. While concentrating on the basic domain of the neo-liberal Public Administration in the developing countries, namely public sector reforms in Public Administration, his three major conclusions merit serious consideration. First, public sector administrative reforms should carefully examine the context and try to learn lessons from the various approaches. Second, public sector reforms should be rooted in the interest of the citizens. The technocratic impetus of the public officials or the self-interested imperatives of the elected officials of the government should not be driving forces. Three, there is a need for following a heterodox approach, rather than the approach for reforms which owe their origin to the developed industrialised countries.

In the category of articles on Karnataka, **S.V. Ranganath** suggests short-term steps to improve governance in the state. His suggestions include *inter alia* rationalisation of the processes and procedures relating to the *Sakala* Act and introduction of better and more comprehensive evaluation methods. The article by **Bipul Bhattacharya** presents highlights of development administration in Karnataka during the fifty years after Integration. Despite Karnataka's remarkable record in the fields of economic growth and Human Development Index, the author does not find much reason to be complacent, as problems like rural-urban gap in prosperity continue to be a matter of concern.

This is an excellent publication where an attempt has been made to put together the perceptions and perspectives of scholars on the one hand, and the long experience of those who have dealt with practical issues of public administration in government on the other. The senior administrators have been able to enrich our store of knowledge by giving inputs which are based on their day-to-day experiences. The book provides useful and rewarding reading not only for the members of the academic community but also for the practitioners and general citizens. A fairly long introduction is one of the most important features of the book. It would have been better, however, if this publication had contained at least one article on the evolving trends of Indian administration since Independence, with special reference to emerging challenges, following the paradigmatic policy shift in the 1990s. The lucid style of writing of all the authors makes reading an enjoyable exercise.

Reviewed by

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IIPA-KRB Virtual Newsletter

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