



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru

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Virtual Newsletter

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Views expressed by the contributors are personal and do not represent the views or position of the Editorial Board or the Executive Committee of the Branch.

Chief Editor



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A Note from the Chief Editor



S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.)

Chairman

Indian Institute of Public Administration
Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru

I am happy to place before our readers the **October 2021** issue of our *Virtual Newsletter*. This is our **15th issue**, since we began this initiative. The discerning reader of the issue may notice an icon on the front page, just beneath the picture of the **Vidhana Soudha** in Bengaluru which is the seat of the Government of Karnataka. A double click on this icon will open a video revealing some facts about this iconic building, courtesy *Metro Saga*.

This being the month of October, we fondly remember **Mahatma Gandhi** in our own way. The *Lead Article*, “**Gandhi’s Enlightened Views on Religion, Patriotism and Nationalism**”, has been written for us by Ambassador (Retd.) **Mr. P.A. Nazareth**. Courtesy **Bangalore International Centre**, we carry a video compilation of a series of talks on **Gandhi** titled, *Reflections on Gandhi on his 152nd Birth Anniversary*.

We bring you a report of the **Virtual Book Discussion** on **Mr. P.A. Nazareth’s** autobiography, *A Ringside Seat to History* which was jointly organized by us, in association with **Bangalore University Political Science Alumni Association (BUPSAA)** and **Political Science Collective**. Mr. Nazareth’s autobiography has been reviewed by our Editor, **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**.

We also carry a report of the **Prelude Conference** on *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan*, organized by us in collaboration with **JAIN (Deemed-to-be) University**.

In our section on *Audit Matters in Karnataka*, **Mr. T. Sethumadhavan, IA&AS (Rtd.)** writes on the just-released **CAG Report, Management of Storm Water in Bengaluru Urban Area**.

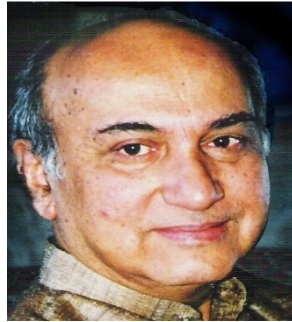
I wish to add a disclaimer here that the views expressed by the contributors in this issue are personal and *do not represent the views or position of the Editorial Board or the Executive Committee of the Branch*.

Do write in, with your responses, views and ideas for improvement of the Newsletter.

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Lead Article

Gandhi's Enlightened Views on Religion, Patriotism and Nationalism



Pascal Alan Nazareth
Author of 'Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership' &
'Gandhi: The Soul Force Warrior' books

Gandhi's fundamental contribution in the field of religion was to give primacy to Truth and rationality, rather than conformity to traditional practices. In fact, he made Truth the basis of all morality by declaring: "*I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality*".

Though a deeply devout Hindu, Gandhi's basic approach to religion was 'sarvadharmasambhav' (equal respect for all religions). For him, all religions had equal status and were different paths to the same goal of achieving union with the Divine. His religion was that "*which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, binds one indissolubly to the truth within and ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which leaves the soul restless until it has found itself*". He affirmed, "*For me different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden or branches of the same majestic tree*".

At his prayer meetings, there were readings from all the holy books. His favorite hymn began with the line "*He alone is a true devotee of God who understands the pains and sufferings of others*".

For him "*The hands that serve are holier than the lips that pray*". His religion essentially was a deeply spiritualized humanism.

He affirmed, "*Independent India as conceived by me will have all Indians belonging to different religions, living in perfect friendship*".

In 1931, he wrote in Young India: "*It has been said that Swaraj will be the rule of the majority community, i.e., the Hindus...If this were to be true, I for one would refuse to call it Swaraj and would fight it with all the strength at my command, For, to me, Hind Swaraj is the rule of all the people and the rule of justice.*"

On January 23, 1948, just a week before his assassination, he declared, "*It would spell the ruin of both the Hindu religion and the majority community if the latter, in the intoxication of power, entertains the belief that it can crush the minority community and establish a purely Hindu Rashtra*".

Lauding this enlightened approach, Fischer wrote, *“Mahatma Gandhi, a supremely devout Hindu, was incapable of discriminating against anyone on account of religion, race, caste, colour or anything. His contribution to the equality of untouchables and to the education of a new generation which was Indian, instead of Hindu or Moslem or Parsee or Christian, has world significance.”*

Gandhi’s great respect for the Koran is revealed in his following affirmations:

“I have read the Koran more than once. My religion enables me, obliges me, to imbibe all that is good in all the great religions of the earth. I have come to the conclusion that the teaching of the Koran is essentially in favour of non-violence. It holds that non-violence is better than violence. Non-violence is enjoined as a duty, violence is permitted only where necessary.”

“Islam’s distinctive contribution to India’s national culture is unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those within its fold.”

Gandhi’s reverence for Christ is embodied in his following statements:

- *“What does Jesus mean to me? To me, he was one of the greatest teachers humanity has ever had.”*
- *“Jesus was the most active resister known perhaps to history. His was non-violence par excellence”.*
- *“Jesus expressed as no other could, the spirit and will of God. It is in this sense that I see him and recognize him as the Son of God. And because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendence to which I have alluded, I believe that He belongs not solely to Christianity but to the entire world, to all races and people.”.*

C.F. Andrews, who describes Gandhi’s Satyagraha as “Corporate Moral Resistance” has affirmed, “Perhaps it would be true to say that since the days of the early Christian Church, no such effective acts of passive resistance have been organized as those which Mahatma Gandhi inspired.”

Gandhi’s patriotism and nationalism were equally enlightened and in accord with the ancient Indian maxim ‘*Udara charita nam tu vasudaiva kudumbakam*’ (for the broad minded, all mankind is one family). He did not regard India as a nation in the narrow sense; it was a civilization with special spiritual qualities and a duty to serve humanity. He wrote:

“I live for India’s freedom and would die for it. But my patriotism is not exclusive. It is calculated to benefit all in the true sense of the word. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the world... For me, patriotism is the same as humanity. It is not exclusive. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India”.

“My nationalism includes the love of all nations of the earth, irrespective of creed ... It is not nationalism that is evil; it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each one wants to profit at the expense and on the ruin of the other. Indian nationalism has, I hope, struck a different path to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large”.

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Reflections on Gandhi on his 152nd Birth Anniversary

Courtesy: Bangalore International Centre



Bangalore International Centre throws back to the several expert speakers hosted on the BIC platform, beginning with **Mr. K. Jairaj**, IAS (Retd.), who spoke of the revolutionary personality, the "Father of the Nation" / the "Imperfect Mahatma", who left a permanent imprint on the history and future of the nation and the world.



IIPA-Karnataka Regional Branch Activities

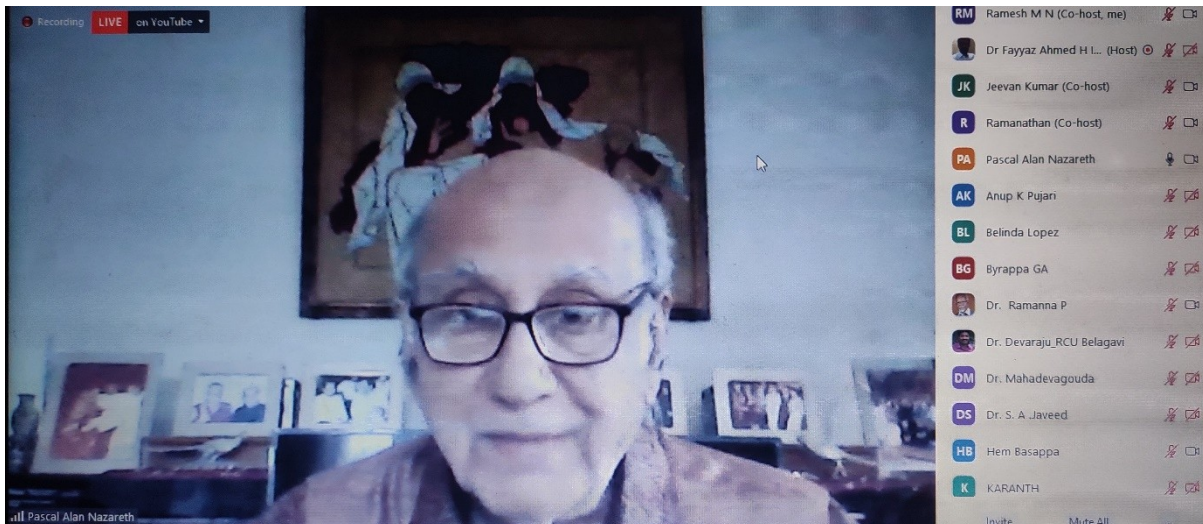
Report of Virtual Book Discussion

The **Karnataka Regional Branch** of the **Indian Institute of Public Administration**, in association with **Bangalore University Political Science Alumni Association (BUPSAA)** and **Political Science Collective**, organized a **Virtual Book Discussion** on 11th September 2021, on the autobiography of retired Ambassador and diplomat, **Mr. Pascal Alan Nazareth**, titled, *A Ringside Seat to History* (Konark Publishers, New Delhi & Seattle, 2020). Speaking on the occasion, the author stated that the book was written so as to help interested readers get an understanding of the many challenges faced by a diplomat. In his 35-year career in the Indian Foreign Service, Mr. Nazareth said he had witnessed numerous historical events, some inspiring and elevating and others, brutal and shocking, at close proximity.

The event was chaired by **Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar**, former diplomat and Union Minister. Referring to the highlights in Mr. Nazareth's career, Mr. Aiyar stated that the era in which he himself and the author had the privilege of serving in, seems to be over, with the advent of ethnic nationalism. This needs to be checked, and the normative values that the country stood for, are in need of revival. In his Introductory Remarks, **Mr. S. Ramanathan**, IAS (Retd.), Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA, appreciated Mr. Nazareth's dedication to India's civilizational, moral and humanitarian values while representing the country abroad, and stated that his career showed how much an active and imaginative diplomat can achieve, in areas ranging from trade and commerce, to music, art and culture.

Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar, Secretary of the Branch welcomed the guests and participants. **Dr. M.N. Ramesh**, Gen. Secretary, BUPSAA proposed a vote of thanks. **Dr. S.Y. Surendra Kumar**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Bangalore University introduced the dignitaries and anchored the event.

Seen below is **Mr. P.A. Nazareth**, speaking at the virtual event.



YouTube Video
Courtesy: Bangalore International Centre



[A Ringside Seat to History](#)

[YouTube · Bangalore International Centre](#)

[12-Nov-2020](#)

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Report of IIPA-KRB Prelude Conference

JAIN (Deemed-to-be) University and the **Karnataka Regional Branch** of the **Indian Institute of Public Administration** came together to organize a **Virtual Prelude Conference** on the theme of the IIPA Annual Conference-2021, “*Atmanirbhar Bharat – Opportunities and Challenges*” on 29th September 2021. **Prof. (Dr.) Raj Singh**, Vice-Chancellor of JAIN University made the **Lead Presentation**, where he referred to the various dimensions of the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan* of the GOI, the evolving eco-system under which it is operating and the need for developing a Skill-Entrepreneurship-Innovation Zone (SEIZ) in every University. He identified five current issues that needed to be addressed: Governance and Policy; Cost Competitiveness; Skill Upgradation; Lack of Research Focus; and Financing. Quoting Maharishi Patanjali, Dr. Singh said that the lofty objectives behind the programme do provide the inspiration to galvanize the eco-system.

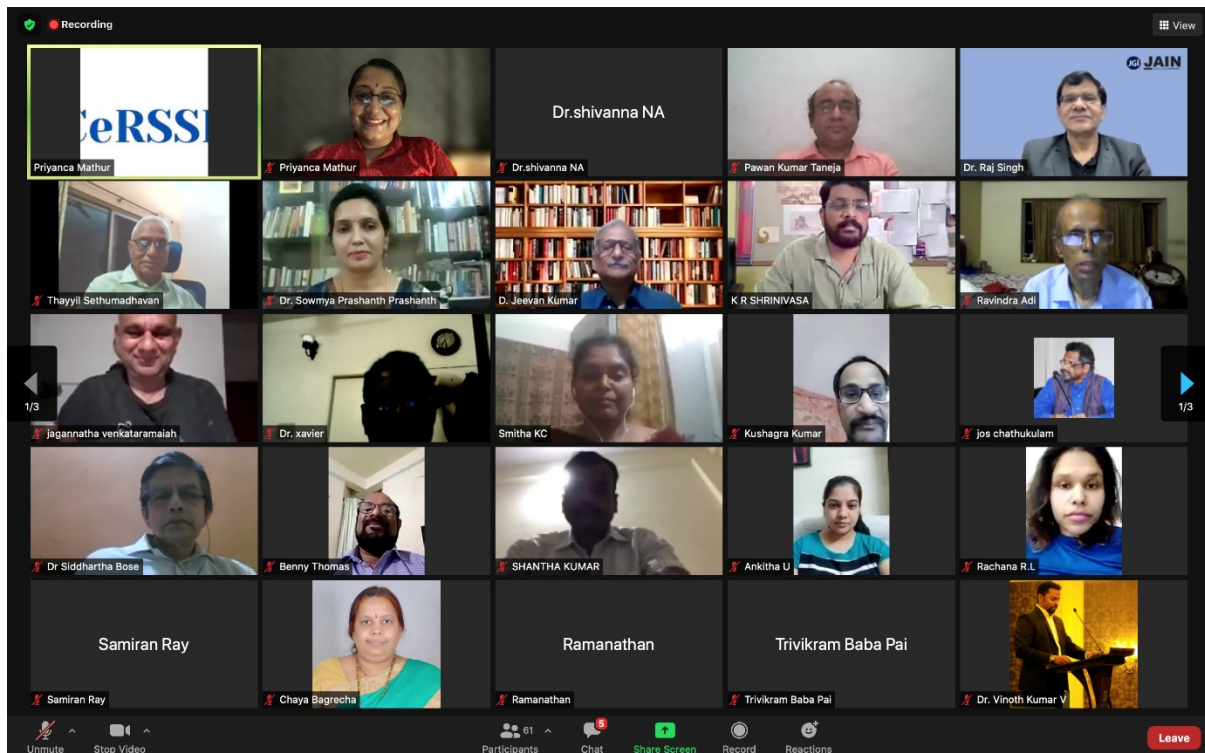
Dr. Sowmya Prashanth from the Faculty of Economics of Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag looked at the concepts of *Swadeshi* and *Self-Reliance* in *Atmanirbhar Bharat*. Her major findings were as follows: *Atmanirbhar Bharat* is akin to ‘*Poorna Swaraj*’; the five pillars of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* are akin to Gandhi’s Constructive Programme; the scheme comes within the ambit of Gandhi’s vision; strengthening of the Indian economy would simultaneously strengthen the village economy; the scheme focuses on technology-driven and not technology-dependent systems; and there is a co-existence of cottage industries with big industries. However, its success would depend on factors like ensuring self-reliant, holistic and sustainable development, creating a conducive environment for *Ease of Doing Business*, focusing on bilateral trade agreements, stimulating innovation, research and development, respecting competitive federalism, creation of infrastructure, and by ensuring the required cultural shift.

Dr. Pawan Kumar Taneja, Faculty at the IIPA, New Delhi, and the author of the Theme Paper on the subject, was the **Guest of Honour** at the Prelude Conference. He said the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan* has been announced at a time when the world is talking of

self-reliance, against the background of the backlash of China's model and hyper-globalization hurting domestic economies. The scheme needs to be understood in terms of the concentric circles of *Reform – Perform – Transform – Zero Defect – Zero Effect*. The government has a big role to play in terms of regulating market failure and maintaining the macro-economic balance. Two big challenges were those of employability and skill development, he concluded.

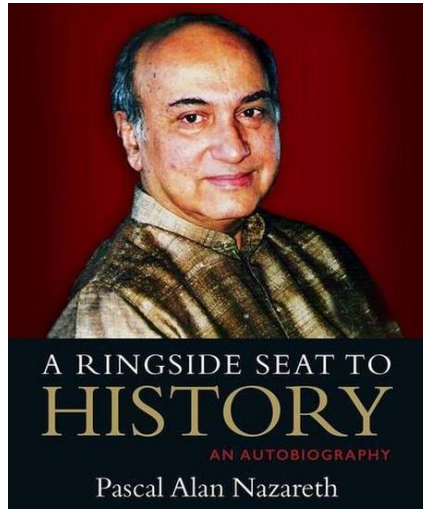
In the discussion which followed, **Dr. A. Ravindra**, IAS (Retd.), former Chief Secretary of Karnataka referred to a few Big Questions that needed to be addressed: *Can globalization be wished away? How easy is it to restrict consumption in a market economy? And can rural-urban migration be prevented?* According to **Mr. Trivikram Pai**, Ancient and Medieval India is a treasure house of knowledge in Public Governance and Administration, which Mahatma Gandhi had utmost regard for, and which has been acknowledged by global icons like Peter Drucker and Albert Einstein. This needs to be at the forefront of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*. Others who participated in the discussion included **Prof. Jos Chathukulam** and **Mr. Jagannatha Venkataramaiah**.

Mr. S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.), Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA was in the chair. **Dr. Priyanca Mathur**, Asso. Professor at JAIN University welcomed and introduced the speakers, and ably anchored the event. **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Secretary of IIPA-KRB proposed a vote of thanks.



Book Review
D. Jeevan Kumar

Lessons and Take-Aways for Civil Servants



Konark Publishers, New Delhi & Seattle, 2020
Pp. 256. Price: Rs.800 (HB)

For a book which almost did not get published for its absence of “*spicy political narratives and back-stabbings in history and diplomacy*”, ***A Ringside Seat to History*** has received laudatory pre-publication praise as well as very appreciative post-publication reviews.

According to **Lord Bhikhu Parekh**, the book “*reveals an honest, self-critical and intrepid person prepared to stand up for principles that define his moral identity.*” In the words of **Gita Dharampal-Frick**, “*Ambassador Nazareth’s riveting narrative, extending over eight decades and spanning five continents, presents the reader with a deeply insightful tour d’horizon of tumultuous events in the second half of the twentieth century. Exercising the craft of diplomacy in masterly fashion, he is a ‘man of all seasons’, at home and in the world.*”

T. P. Sreenivasan writes: “*Ambassador Nazareth modestly calls his autobiographical masterpiece ‘A Ringside Seat to History’, but his narrative clearly indicates he was not merely a witness to history, but often its maker. He was very much the mover, a summiteer not a Sherpa, and also a soft power warrior. His post-retirement evangelism of Mahatma Gandhi is a continuation of his diplomacy which stressed India’s heritage of non-violence and universal brotherhood.*”

In the words of **Vivek Katju**, “*Pascal Alan Nazareth’s autobiography bears testimony to his qualities of head and heart which have enabled him to navigate life’s journey with equanimity, humanism and deep faith. Above all what comes through is his firm commitment to the nation and its traditional culture of inclusivity... Above all Nazareth captures the atmosphere of a diplomat’s life in different assignments in different corners of the world and how opportunities can be positively utilised in the highly competitive field of inter-state*

relations. This involves imagination and initiative and grinding work, not champagne and caviar as Nazareth shows.”

Gaurav Saini states that the book *“captures the author’s humanism, unbending commitment to honest conduct in public service, perceptible ingenuity at problem solving and undying regard for Gandhian ideals...There are many facets to this book, but perhaps the most important one is the author himself. His life and the way he lived it, has lessons for all. It will soothe those who today are dismayed by a slow erosion of Gandhian values from Indian society and India’s foreign policy. It will educate those who wish to one day become a part of the Indian Foreign Service. Finally, it will inspire others who wish to know what it means to serve a nation, without being constrained by myopic views of nationalism.”*

As the above reviews point out, Mr. Nazareth’s autobiography contains a plethora of lessons and take-aways for civil servants. In each of his postings in different corners of the world, and in the midst of enormous challenges and daunting situations, the diplomat reveals intrepid qualities of head, heart, and presence of mind. As well as that of impeccable integrity. Some of these anecdotes are worth recalling.

A notable highlight of Mr. Nazareth’s tenure as India’s Consul-General in New York was his very unusual instruction to consular section officers that *“whenever any person was greatly upset because of a visa or passport delayed or denied, he/she should be sent to me. This had a salutary effect. The upset person was pleasantly surprised to be dealt with by the CG himself and the latter learnt the root cause of his/her problem and could rectify it.”* (p.177)

Another notable incident was when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited New York in June 1988 to address the UN General Assembly’s Special Session on Disarmament. Prior to his visit, his Principal Security Officer who was reviewing the security arrangements, took strong objection to the designation of a Sikh officer as the Chief Security Officer of the PM, and wished him to be removed. Mr. Nazareth’s response here is worth quoting: *“Please give this to me in writing. If and when you do so, I will go on leave, for if an able and upright Sikh Deputy Consul-General cannot be trusted, a Christian Consul-General might also be a grave security risk.”* (Pp.180-81).

On another occasion, this time as the Indian Ambassador in Egypt, at a conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at Cairo in July-August 1990, Mr. Nazareth was able to prevent Pakistan from bringing up Kashmir as a Human Rights issue there. To the Saudi Foreign Minister’s question, *“If India has such a strong case on Kashmir, why does it not hold a plebiscite there?”*, Mr. Nazareth’s riposte which appeared in the local press was described as *‘a perfectly-timed ballistic strike’*: *“The Saudi Foreign Minister should practice what he preaches and ensure an election is held in his own country!”* (p.187)

The impeccable integrity of this diplomat also needs to be highlighted. Towards the fag end of his career, Mr. Nazareth wished to make changes in his travel itinerary from Mexico to India. Rather than take the approved route via New York and London, he chose a different route to New Delhi and Bangalore. He writes: *“I sought and secured prior approval of MEA and paid the additional cost of this itinerary over that of the approved route.”* (p.217, emphasis added). I am not sure how many civil servants would have done that!

Mr. Nazareth’s post-retirement years have been devoted to reviving and diffusing Gandhian ideals of *satya, ahimsa, sarva dharma sama bhava* and *sarvodaya*. The formation of

Sarvodaya International Trust, with its Regional Chapters, and his two books on Gandhi, namely, *Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership* (2006) and *Gandhi: The Soul Force Warrior* (2018) have won national and international acclaim. Mr. Nazareth's life and mission stand testimony to a famous exhortation of Mahatma Gandhi: "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history." Personalities like Mr. Alan Nazareth do not occupy "ringside seats to history". They make and alter history, in their own way!

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Audit Matters – Karnataka



Management of Storm Water in Bengaluru Urban Area (Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG): No.2 of the Year 2021: Government of Karnataka)



Thayyil Sethumadhavan, IA&AS (Rtd.)

The CAG's Report on "Management of Storm Water (SW) in Bengaluru Urban Area" starts with a truism: "The city of Bengaluru is a victim of a paradoxical situation: urban flooding on one hand and depletion of water table levels on the other". According to a study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) cited in the Report, Bengaluru was, in the 1800s, a "city of lakes" with as many as 1452 water bodies with a total storage capacity of 35 TMC which came down to a meager 194 water bodies in 2016 with a total storage capacity of only 5 TMC, which has since dwindled to an appalling 1.27 TMC, owing to silting¹.

¹ *Frequent Floods in Bangalore: Causes and Remedial Measures*: ENVIS Technical Report 123, Environmental Information System, Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

The **CAG** conducted the **Performance Audit** of SWM in Bengaluru keeping in mind the” *rapid increase in the frequency of flooding in the city over the years leading to destruction of roads, traffic congestions, and extensive damage to public property*’ and the increasing public health concerns attributable to environmental squalor. The Performance Audit focused on the design, agility and adaptability of the infrastructure for the management of SW in Bengaluru in its broad sense and has resulted in a very professional and objective report. The Report is replete with charts, diagrams and photographs of SWDs in various states of disruption, and reads more like a consultant’s report than a routine audit report. It also contains a wealth of information and data which will be extremely useful to policy makers and administrators concerned, apart from to all those interested in the affairs of Bengaluru.

The **Performance Audit** covers the five-year period from 2013-14 to 2017-18 and looks at SW as a *‘critical natural resource’* worthy of conservation. As part of the exercise, auditors carried out an independent study of the long-term changes in the land-use patterns of Bengaluru over time, utilizing geospatial inputs and technical support from ISRO² to identify details of changes across specific time periods which affected groundwater recharge and simultaneous variations in SWD infrastructure. The patterns emerging from the study are imprinted in the report distinctly and graphically.

A surfeit of extremely useful and practical findings derived from the **Performance Audit** have been included in the report, followed by a large number of recommendations for implementation. Some are detailed below:

- Variations in land use³ with large scale encroachments of lakes and drains led to severe depletion of natural drainage systems;
- Decreases in vegetation cover and open spaces and the increases in built- up area resulted in loss of interconnectivity between water bodies impacting effective recharge of ground water and increase in run-off of SW;
- Out of 210 lakes under BBMP, 18 (with 254 acres area) were ‘disused lakes’ rendering them targets for potential encroachment;
- *A robust policy governing SWM is yet to be evolved*; so much so, only 60 per cent of the properties under BBMP has so far adopted the mandatory RWH⁴ structures;
- There are significant differences between the Revised Master Plan (RMP) of Drains, 2015 prepared by BDA and the Master Plan of Drains (MPD) prepared by BBMP; including, but not confined to, identification and classification of drains etc. Absence of a comprehensive inventory of drains with required details led to lack of clarity of critical issues including the extent of buffer zones to be maintained, which, in turn, resulted in disorderly maintenance of drains and laying of utility lines across the SWDs.
- BBMP is yet to have a comprehensive DPR for improvements of SWDs; the revised DPR now in use is deficient in many respects.

² Regional Remote Sensing Centre: South, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)

³ The Report includes photos of *Kamakshipalaya Lake* converted as a sports ground, and *Dasarahalli Tank* converted as Ambedkar stadium, as classic examples.

⁴ Rain Water Harvesting

- Some works undertaken under the JNNURM had to be abandoned due to non-availability of land for construction of drains, poor contract performance etc. with consequent failure to claim financial assistance worth Rs. 84 crores under the scheme.
- Auditors noticed several lapses in the contract management by BBMP such as multiple agencies entrusted with works with likely payment issues, not invoking the ‘Risk and Cost’ clauses in contracts etc. resulting in undue benefit of Rs. 35.3 crores to the contractors concerned.
- BBMP is yet to prepare the required SWD Manual specifying the factors to be taken into account including the provisions of IRC⁵ and NDMA⁶.
- A major issue discussed in the Report is *the ubiquitous flow of sewage water (estimated at 780 MLD) into the drains*⁷ which, among other things, precluded the construction of Ground Water Recharge Structures. Joint inspections carried out by auditors along with the officials of BBMP revealed the existence of sewage lines at various locales in SWDs, which is also a health hazard. Besides, the team also observed omissions to interconnect water bodies and drains and linkages between drains which are presented in the Report with telling photos. Auditors also noted that action to remove encroachments in more than 700 identified cases was pending.
- Another disturbing feature noticed by the Auditors is the lack of public awareness about the importance and the need to maintain proper SWD infrastructure care; woefully, a campaign for the purpose is yet to be launched.

Tailpiece

Many shortcomings brought out in the Audit Report could be traced to lack of coordination between the agencies involved in planning, design, construction and management of SWDs. We are all privy to instances where no sooner than the BBMP lays a *pucca* road, another utility provider, be it BWSSB or BESCO or Telecom, digs up the newly paved road to lay its own sewerage pipes, cables or whatever. The Audit Report cites a classic case where the AEE, SWD, R.R. Nagar filed an FIR on 22nd October 2020 against his counterpart in BWSSB, Banagiri Sub-Division, alleging that the latter dug up the concrete road laid by the BBMP, without getting the required permission and carried out unscientific work which led to flooding of the road and the collapse of a retaining wall with damage to the road. So much for inter-agency coordination!

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⁵ Indian Road Congress

⁶ National Disaster Management Authority

⁷ In fact, the Government also, in its responses to the audit findings, attributed this as a main cause for its inability to take up many activities including ground water recharge structures, restoring interconnectivity among water bodies and drains etc. It is a conundrum, where to begin?

Food for Thought



7 DEADLY *Social Sins*

POLITICS WITHOUT PRINCIPLE



WEALTH WITHOUT WORK



COMMERCE WITHOUT MORALITY



PLEASURE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE



EDUCATION WITHOUT CHARACTER



SCIENCE WITHOUT HUMANITY

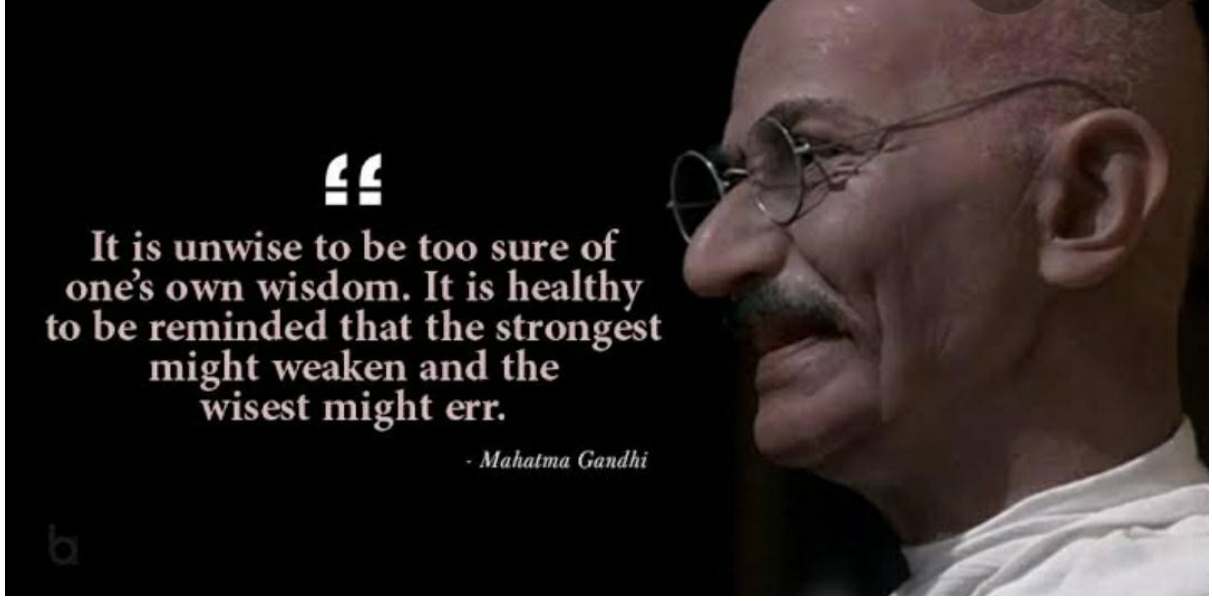


WORSHIP WITHOUT SACRIFICE



-Gandhi

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IIPA-KRB Virtual Newsletter

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