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Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru

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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.V. Ranganath, IAS (Retd.)

Former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka
Chairman, Indian Institute of Public Administration – Karnataka Regional Branch

I am happy to place before our readers the **August 2022** issue of our *Virtual Newsletter*. This is our **25th Issue**, since we began this initiative.

The *Lead Article* in this issue is by **Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**, IAS (Retd.), current **Chairman of Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-2**. While presenting an overview of the work of KARC-2, he outlines the **11 Golden Rules of Administrative Reform**, which form the basis of the three reports submitted by the Commission so far.

In our Feature on *Breaking News*, we carry the creditable story of Karnataka topping the **India Innovation Index-2022 for the third time in a row**. **NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index** ranks States and Union Territories on the basis of innovation capabilities. The report attributes Karnataka's high score to its peak performance in attracting Foreign Direct Investment, and a large number of venture capital deals.

In our section on **Karnataka: Policy Matters**, we report on three matters which hit the headlines last month: (1) *Gujarat and Karnataka best in providing strong ecosystem for Start-Ups*; (2) *Karnataka's Aero Policy to Promote Drones*, which states that the State Government seeks to build Karnataka as Asia's future aerospace hub; and (2) Karnataka to get nation's first R & D Policy soon.

In our section on our **Branch Activities**, we carry a report of the **Special Lecture** delivered by **Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar** on **Administrative Reforms in Karnataka** last month at **BMS College of Law, Bengaluru**. We are delighted that our MOU with BMS College of Law is showing good progress, thanks to its dynamic Principal, **Dr. Anitha D'Souza**.

In our **Books** section, we carry a short report of the memoir of our distinguished EC Member, **Mr. V. Balasubramanian**, IAS (Retd.) titled, '**Fall from Grace**' which was released last month. In the section titled, **Last Word**, we reproduce **Mr. Shashi Tharoor's** thought-provoking article, **In Praise of Gerontocracy**. We end the issue, with our columns on **Miscellany** and **Food for Thought**.

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.

Lead Article

Administrative Reforms in Karnataka

An Overview of the Work of KARC-2



T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd)
Chairman
Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-2

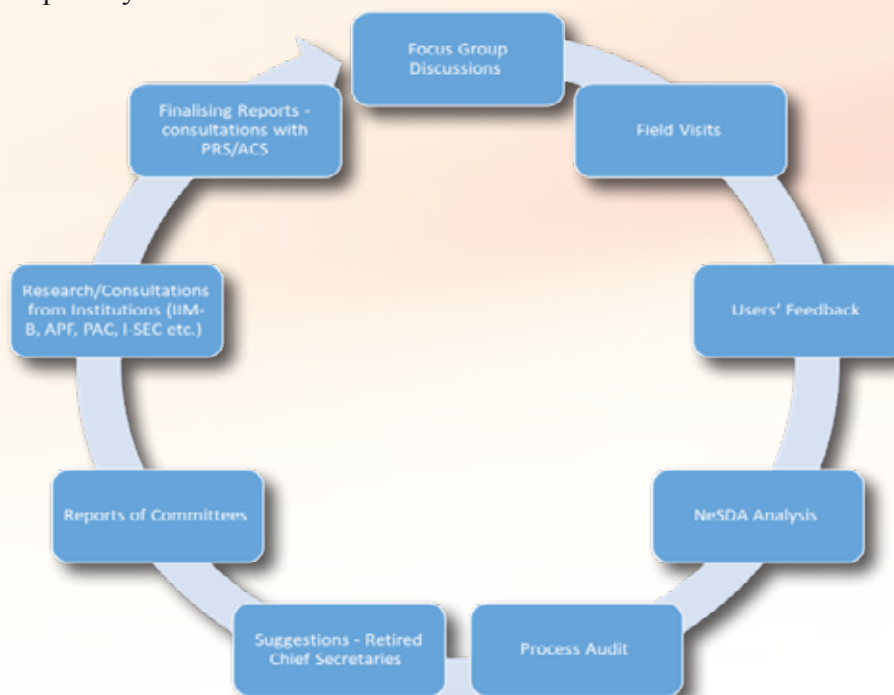


Given the need to comprehensively evaluate the existing governance system and to recommend changes in the administration for creating good governance and a governance system for the coming decades of the 21st century, the Government of Karnataka decided to constitute the **Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-2 (KARC-2)** in January, 2021. I was given the privilege and honour of heading KARC-2.

The **Terms of Reference** of KARC-2 were as follows:

1. Review of implementation of recommendations made by KARC-1;
2. Restructuring of departments, rationalization of staff strength and exploring possibility of merging departments, boards and corporations;
3. To comprehensively study and evaluate governance and recommend appropriate governance and structural reforms to meet the needs of the coming decades.

The **methodology** adopted by KARC-2 is as follows:



The following reports have been submitted by KARC-2 so far. The First Report covering Revenue, Transport and Food and Civil Supplies departments was submitted in July 2021; the Second and Third Reports covering 8 departments were submitted in February 2022.

The Major Recommendations in the three reports have been made, keeping in mind the following **Golden Rules of Administrative Reform**:

1. Delegation of powers to lower levels to reduce time taken for delivering services, reducing workload on senior levels and improving productivity;
2. Use of technology to integrate databases, simplify record keeping, automate processes and reduce transaction times;
3. Simplification of procedures by cutting down unnecessary levels of processing of applications and files;
4. Participation of stakeholders in improving the functioning of frontline institutions for better service delivery;
5. Rationalization and redeployment of staff and institutions based on workload across locations for better efficiency;
6. Cutting wastage of time, money and effort of citizens and staff in delivery of services and running offices;
7. Using performance assessment and appraisal as a tool to improve functioning and effectiveness of staff and departments;
8. Providing realistic amount of funds for office maintenance and contingencies;
9. Revising fees and penalties prescribed in Acts, Rules, and Orders in line with inflation;
10. Ensuring better *Value for Money*; and
11. Improving compliance.

To assist KARC-2 in preparing its reports, studies have been entrusted to reputed institutions, such as the Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru; the Institute of Social and Economic Change; the National Law School of India University; the Centre for Open Data Research; Azim Premji University; Public Affairs Centre;

The studies entrusted to the above include the following:

- Functioning of frontline offices at village, taluk and district level to identify areas for strengthening them and improvement of citizen experience, working conditions and staff productivity.
- Institutions being studied are:
 - Gram Panchayat offices
 - Village Accountant offices
 - Anganwadi Centres
 - ANM Sub-Centres
 - Primary Health Centres
 - Fair Price Shops
 - Raitha Seva Kendras
 - Primary Agriculture Credit Coop Societies
 - Police Stations
- Major Taluk level and district level offices.

The studies entrusted also include the following:

- Analysis of utility of different structures of Para-statal organizations like Corporations, Boards, Authorities, Societies to meet different needs;
- Review of Dispute Resolution Policy and functioning of quasi-judicial Revenue Courts;
- Rejuvenating district, taluk and sub-taluk level training institutes;
- Government litigation in Courts involving two departments Urban Development and Revenue;
- Improving delivery of services in Bengaluru Bruhat Mahanagara Palike frontline offices.

KARC-2 plans to give two more reports covering the remaining departments by the end of its tenure in January, 2023. They will also contain common recommendations for Administrative Reforms. The Fourth Report will cover 12 Departments, while the Fifth Report will cover 16 Departments.

Karnataka - A Pioneer in ease of delivery of Citizen Services in India



Grama One



Sakala



Bapuji Seva Kendra



Atal Jana Snehi Kendra



Seva Sindhu



Karnataka One

Breaking News

NITI Aayog's *India Innovation Index-2022*

Karnataka Tops List for Third Year Running



After first two editions, Karnataka has once again topped the third edition of NITI Aayog's *India Innovation Index-2022*.

The India Innovation Index ranks states and union territories on the basis of innovation capabilities. The first edition was released in October 2019 and second in January 2021.

In the latest edition, Telangana, Haryana and Maharashtra stood second, third and fourth in the list of top states. Manipur topped the 'North East and Hill States' section and Chandigarh topped the 'Union Territory and City States' category.

The report attributed Karnataka's high score to its peak performance in attracting FDI, or Foreign Direct Investment, and a large number of venture capital deals.

"Innovation is the key to sustainable and inclusive growth. It can help us solve the biggest challenges of our times: bringing millions out of poverty, generating livelihood opportunities, and paving the way for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," NITI Aayog member Dr V.K. Saraswat, present at the launch of the report, said.

Examples of the state's performance have been seen in recent months. Ola Electric, a manufacturer of electric two-wheelers based in Bengaluru - said it would invest \$500 million in a battery innovation centre to be set up in the city. The State Bank of India has stated that it would start a separate branch in Karnataka for facilitating the necessary credit facility for start-ups. This will be operational next month.

The **India Innovation Index** is prepared by NITI Aayog and the **Institute for Competitiveness**. It is a comprehensive tool for evaluation and development of the country's innovation ecosystem. The Index ranks States and Union Territories on their innovation performance to encourage healthy competition between them. The number of indicators in the Index have increased from 36 to 66 and are now distributed across 16 sub-pillars and 7 key pillars.

Karnataka: Policy Matters

'Gujarat, Karnataka best in providing strong ecosystem for startups'

NEW DELHI, PTI

Gujarat and Karnataka have been ranked as the best performers in developing startup ecosystems for budding entrepreneurs, according to the ranking of states and Union territories by the department for the promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT).

Among smaller states having a population of less than one crore, Meghalaya has been adjudged as the best performer.

The rankings are based on the initiatives taken to develop the startup ecosystem for promoting budding entrepreneurs. Gujarat was ranked as the best performer for the third time in a row.

The exercise is aimed at supporting states and Union

territories (UTs) in developing their startup ecosystem and learning from each other's best practices.

A total of 24 states and 7 UTs participated in the exercise, which ranked them under five categories—best performers, top performers, leaders, aspiring leaders and emerging startup ecosystems.

DPIIT Secretary Anurag Jain said that the exercise plays a crucial role in easing the business environment for startups in the country.

The states' startup ranking 2021 was released by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal here.

Goyal suggested all the stakeholders aspire to become the number one startup ecosystem in the world from the third position at present.

"Can we look at some district-level competition also," he asked.

On ONDC

On Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), the minister said that in the next five years the initiative would democratise the e-commerce sector.

"Rather than three companies becoming 100 billion or trillion-dollar companies, you will have a 1,000 companies each of a billion-dollar, that is what ONDC has the power to do," he said.

ONDC will not only help domestic retailers "survive the onslaught" of big e-commerce firms but grow their businesses, improve profitability and customer service and become job creators, Goyal added.

At the recently concluded ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva, Goyal said the members of the multi-lateral body managed to agree on prohibiting subsidies for fishermen engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Startups can come up with solutions for Indian fishermen in areas like providing them safety or GPS systems so that they do not enter the waters of Pakistan and Sri Lanka, he said.

Further, the minister announced the mentorship, advisory, assistance, resilience, and growth (MAARG) portal, a tool for startups that can be accessed from every corner of the country to request and connect with a mentor.

Hubballi-Dharwad

State's Aero Policy to Promote Drones

Karnataka government seeks to build state as Asia's future aerospace hub

KR. Balasubramanyam
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Karnataka has sought to include drones as part of its new aerospace and defence policy, as the state government seeks to promote investments in the emerging technology in view of its wider use across sectors.

The draft policy has also mooted sops for fresh investments or expansion of existing units in the aerospace and defence sector in Bengaluru as well, people privy to the discussions told ET.

All recent policies of the state offered incentives and concessions for investments only in regions outside of Bengaluru. The change in stance now shows that the government wants to include the country's technology capital as well for incentives, as it is home to a vibrant defen-

ce and aerospace manufacturing ecosystem and a 1,200-acre cluster is taking shape near the Kempe Gowda international airport. The industries department has finalised the draft in consultation with other departments and has sought the Cabinet's approval.

Karnataka makes up 40% of India's

defence electronics systems and products, industries minister Murugesh R Nirani said. "Our incentive package will give further boost to the sector," he told ET, and added the state had targeted \$6 billion in investments over the next five years.

Changing Dynamics >>> 3

TAKING OFF

KARNATAKA MAKES UP 40% OF INDIA'S DEFENCE ELECTRONICS SYSTEMS AND PRODUCTS



THE GOVT will build Bengaluru, Belagavi, Mysuru, Tumakuru and Chamarajanagara as aerospace and defence hubs over next five years.

THE POLICY will offer a huge land and financial incentive packages for space, defence and aerospace manufacturers and their sub-sectors

FOCUS ON BENGALURU

THE DRAFT policy has mooted sops for fresh investments or expansion of existing units in the aerospace and defence sector in Bengaluru

ALL RECENT policies of the state offered incentives and concessions for investments only in regions outside of Bengaluru

Karnataka to get Nation's first R&D Policy soon

Source: *Deccan Herald*, 6th July 2022

Karnataka is set to become the first state in the country to have an exclusive Research and Development (R&D) Policy. The policy envisages allocating at least 0.1 per cent of its Gross State Domestic Product towards R&D and innovation. Other measures suggested for the policy include allocating a certain percentage of budget allocated to various departments for the research, according to a presentation made to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, during a review of the upcoming policy.

Chief Minister Bommai, who chaired a meeting with the Task Force headed by Prof. Ashok Shettar, Vice-Chancellor of KLE Technological University and senior officials regarding formulation of the new policy, instructed the officials to prepare the necessary systems for effective implementation of the proposed policy. He suggested setting up a state level R&D Council and Foundation as a supplementary initiative for the implementation of the proposed policy. The policy would be cleared after discussing it in the state Cabinet, he said.

IIPA-KRB Activity Report

Special Lecture on '*Administrative Reforms in Karnataka*'

The **Karnataka Regional Branch** of the IIPA, in collaboration with **BMS College of Law**, Bengaluru, organized a **Special Lecture** by the current Chairman of Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-2, **Mr. T. M. Vijay Bhaskar**, IAS (Retd.) on '*Administrative Reforms in Karnataka*' on 1st July 2022 in the premises of the college. Mr. Vijay Bhaskar referred to the conviction of KARC-2 that administrative reforms required a focus on the cutting edge of administration where citizens faced the most problems in getting their work done. Based on studies entrusted to leading institutions in Bengaluru like the IIM-B, NIAS, NLSIU, Vidhi Legal Centre and others, the Commission had already submitted three reports; two more reports are in the pipeline, he said.



(from L to R) are **Mr. T. Sethumadhavan**, EC Member of IIPA-KRB, **Prof. D. Jeevan Kumar**, **Mr. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**, **Prof. Madhwaraj**, Secretary-cum-Treasurer of IIPA-KRB and **Prof. Jonathan Schwartz** of the State University of New York.

Below

Dr. Anitha D’Souza, Principal, BMS College of Law, Bengaluru is seen felicitating **Mr. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**.

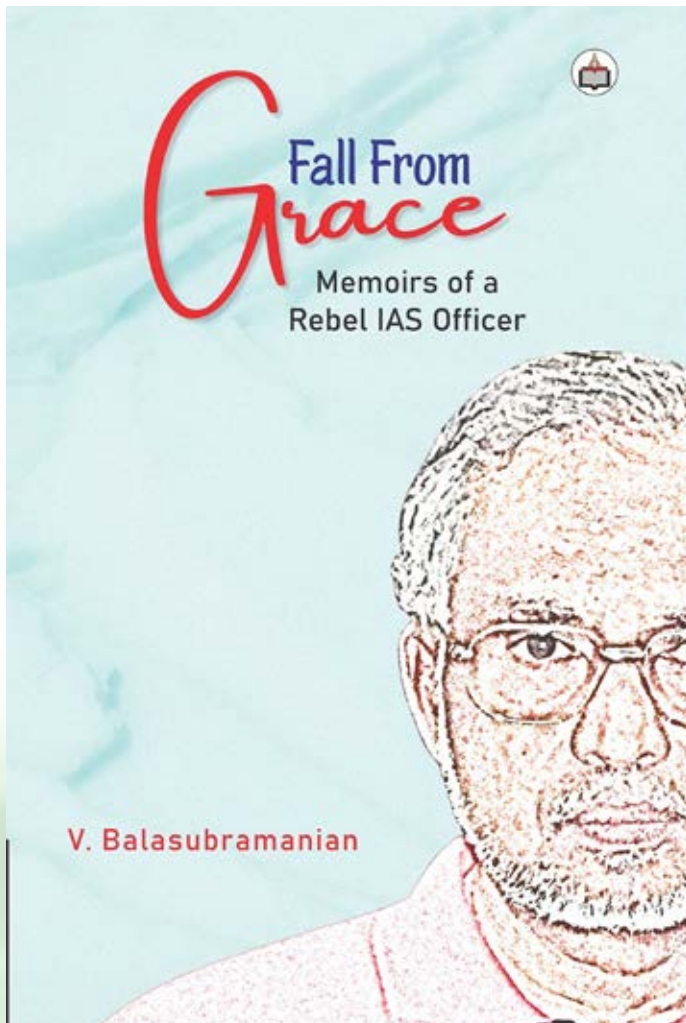


Below

A Section of the Audience. **Dr. Priyanca Mathur**, EC Member, IIPA-KRB (seen at right, front row), with **Dr. Debangana Chatterjee** of Jain University.



Books



The above book, authored by our EC Member, **Mr. V. Balasubramanian**, IAS (Retd.), was released on 30th July 2022 in the premises of the IAS Officers’ Association on Infantry Road, Bengaluru-560001. **Justice Naga Mohan Das**, former Judge of the Hon’ble High Court of Karnataka released the book. Messrs. **Chiranjiv Singh**, IAS (Retd.), **A.T. Ramaswamy** MLA (former Chairman of the Joint Legislature Committee for Prevention of Land Grabbing), **M.K. Bhaskar Rao**, Veteran Journalist, **Sirimane Nagaraj**, Human Rights Activist and **Shri Madana Gopal**, IAS (Retd.) participated in the programme.

“I used the compulsory house arrest of Covid to write my memoirs”, states Mr. V. Balu. *“It is now printed with the title, **Fall from Grace: Memoirs of a Rebel IAS Officer.**”* By way of clarification, he writes: *“The fall is not mine (!) but of bureaucracy, political leadership, media, the Fourth Estate and everyone else, across the board.”*

In his typical, inimitable style, Mr. V. Balu states: “I have written my memoirs not in the customary government circular, soul-killing language but in a breezy style showering both praise and reproach on bureaucrats and leaders as deserved, with even some wicked humour. At 407 pages the book has 181,000 words. It has the added merit, if there is difficulty in your Circadian Rhythm, of inducing deep sleep before you complete two pages!”

Ex-IAS officer's book chronicles corruption at high places

V. Balasubramanian worked under different CMs in a career spanning 36 years

NAGESH PRABHU
BENGALURU

A book by former civil servant V. Balasubramanian, who served during the tenure of different Chief Ministers of Karnataka, seeks to expose corruption in different governments and chronicles the fall in credibility in all branches of the government and the media.

The author of *Fall From Grace: Memoir of a Rebel IAS Officer*, retired as an additional chief secretary after spending over 35 years of service in Karnataka and at the Centre.

Accepted norm

Mr Balasubramanian, who joined service in 1965, narrates how corruption at high places - both in politics and in judiciary - has become the accepted norm which does not attract social ostracism. He records instances of “fall from grace” of political leadership and bureaucracy in the last five decades.

In the 407-page book, he narrates his experience of working under different CMs such as Veerendra Patil, Devaraj Urs, Gundu Rao and Ramakrishna Heggade.

“While all the CMs in Karnataka had been dependent upon Excise and PWD contractors in varying degrees to fund elections, including Devaraj Urs, Veerendra Patil, and Ramakrishna Heggade, they had nevertheless given comparatively clean administration,” he notes.

The author terms ex-Chief Minister S. Bangarappa's period as the “the golden age of corruption in Karnataka” and states that his “innovation was democratic decentralization of corruption in which every department



The cover of the book *Fall From Grace, Memories of a Rebel IAS Officer* by V. Balasubramanian (right). • BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

■ The author calls himself a 'Rebel IAS Officer' and in the work brings out a ring-side view of many administrative decisions taken during different Chief Ministers and chief secretaries of the State.

was given a target” and that some IAS officers “treated it as an honour to be chosen to strengthen the hands of the CM.”

The author calls himself a ‘Rebel IAS Officer’ and in the work brings out a ring-side view of many administrative decisions taken during different CMs and chief secretaries of the State. The author says Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda was “quite affectionate towards officers” and more “humane than even Supreme Court judges” while dealing with the officers when he was CM.

Political incorrectness

Talking of ex-Chief Minister J.H. Patel, Mr. Balasubramanian explains his “knack” for saying politically incorrect things. When women staged a protest during the Miss World contest in Bengaluru, Mr. Patel had infamously said, “Only ugly ones are protesting. All the pretty ones are telling me they support the beauty contest.”

The book explored the shortcomings in the S.M.

Krishna government and the author says that “the misrule of SMK for five years resulted in the BJP emerging as the largest party in the Assembly elections in 2004.”

Retired in 2001, Mr. Balasubramanian served as the Chairman of Task Force for Prevention of Land Grabbing in Karnataka and exposed encroachment of lands by people in high offices. When the government refused to print his report “Greed and Connivance”, he published and distributed it at his own cost. Before bidding adieu to public service in 2013, the author was hauled up by the Privileges Committee of the Karnataka Legislature for contempt. But it was dropped owing to media criticism.

The book published by Delhi-based Authors Press will be released on July 30 by Karnataka High Court's former judge Nagamohan Das at IAS Auditorium, Infantry Road, Bengaluru.

Shorter and long tenures

In Chapter 18 of the book, the author points out that after 1956, the State had 20 CMs in 64 years with an average tenure of three years. The average tenure of 18 CMs was just 30 months. This was in contrast to Tamil Nadu which from 1956 to 2020 had just seven CMs, an average of nine years each.



In praise of gerontocracy

This month, my mother turns 83 (or 84, depending on whether you go by her memory or the possibly inaccurate date on her passport). She is amazingly fit and mentally agile, and at year's end she is travelling with us to the other end of the world for a New Year's reunion of her entire family of descendants— three children, seven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and assorted spouses. It is intended to be a celebration of our togetherness, despite the quirks of geography—among this brood, there are now three nationalities and nine different addresses around the world. But it is also a celebration of her active longevity, because somewhere between 83 and 84, she hits the fabled *sathabhishekam*, when she will have seen a thousand moons orbiting the planet.

(I know many Hindus celebrate the *sathabhishekam* in their 81st year, but they are mathematically challenged. Since you basically witness 12 moon orbits a year, 80 clocks up only 960 moon orbits, and you need the extra three years and four months to reach 1,000. Letters of protest may kindly be addressed to the editor and not to me.)

I was reflecting on this when I came across a study from the *New England Journal of Medicine* (2018) that found that the most productive age in a human's life is not your 20s or 30s, but 60 to 70. And, the study confirms that the second most productive age is between 70 and 80 and the third most productive decade is 50 to 60.

What is going on here? Is this another disinformation campaign by the oldies among us, trying to vindicate their creaking joints, swollen knees, aching backs and greying hair by purveying fake news about their superiority to the fit, energetic, six-pack-sporting, young whippersnappers who are actually producing everything that matters in the world?

Not quite. Consider the evidence: The average age of a Nobel Prize winner is 62. The average age of a CEO in a Fortune 500 company is 63. The average age of popes is 76. And, in India, the average age of the cabinet is 60. Our prime minister, at 69, is a mere juvenile compared with some of his predecessors, such as Morarji Desai, who became PM at 81,

or even the much-maligned Jawaharlal Nehru, who died in office at 74.

Looking back at my own life, next month I will publish my 20th book. Ten of those have seen the light of print since after my 50th birthday. There is little doubt that I have been more productive in my sixth and now seventh decade than in my (at least partially) misspent youth.

There is a logical reason for this. It is true that when you are young you are still feeling your way, acquiring the skills you need and laying the foundations of your future achievements. Most of our 20s and 30s are spent on romance, on wooing our future partner, and in creating and bringing up our family. The responsibility of making a living, of educating our children, and of taking care of our parents is a time-consuming one that inevitably distracts us from a single-minded focus on professional accomplishment.

In other words, most people's social and personal circumstances mean that their lives are so designed that the best years of their existence are between 60 and 80. That is the age when they have acquired whatever skills they are likely to acquire, have made (and learned from) their mistakes, and can focus on sharpening and deploying those skills. Thanks to modern medicine, most people are able to remain reasonably healthy past 60 and, even if physically slower, remain capable of top-quality intellectual performance. It is an age when there are fewer distractions. It is the time when you can do your best work.

This is why it is a crying shame that the arbitrary tyranny of retirement age deprives so many offices of performers at their peak. While most western countries have increased their retirement ages to 65 and 70 (and the US has outlawed compulsory retirement altogether), we are still letting people go when they could be making a major difference. In Kerala, government employees still retire at 56. (Politicians, of course, never retire. They just fade away.)

So, if you are turning 60, don't give up: remember the best years of your life lie ahead!

editor@theweek.in

Miscellany

Source: *Deccan Herald*, dt. 4th July 2022

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Haunting legacy of DC bungalows

However modern, today's buildings cannot match the grandeur of the old bungalows

H K SHIVANANDA

Though the power has waned over the years, deputy commissioner/collector, DC for short, continues to hold sway. S/he is the the eyes and ears of any government and remains *Primus Inter Pares* amongst officials at district level. The official residence a DC occupies is typically big, in the middle of a sprawling land. DC Bungalows have always been the envy of other officers.

The bungalows have undergone changes inside, to suit the requirements of successive occupants, but the outer grandeur remains. While many have had to give up the space around them, DC BUNGALOWs are an important landmark even now.

Each of these Bungalow has its own story to tell and interesting anecdotes emerge both on the building and its occupants. In many places like Hassan,

Kolar, Chitradurga, and Dharwad, DC Bungalows are in the heart of the town and others stand grand away from town.

In Karwar, located on a hilltop, overlooking the Arabian sea, the bungalow has a beauty of its own. But, beware. Wild animals, including tigers, seem to have wandered inside, may be to monitor the DC's work! Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's elder brother was a District Judge here in 1882 and the poet spent some time here when he was 22 years old.

In Mangalore, though inside the town, the verandah of the Bungalow gives an excellent view of the Arabian Sea at a distance. Sir Thomas Munro, who became Governor of Madras Presidency later, was the first Collector here in 1799 and subsequently had longer innings in a much bigger DC Bungalow at Bellary. In Tumkur located in Sira Road on outskirts, the basement of the mansion was home to many snakes.

Jnanapith recipient and the father of short stories in Kannada, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar was a DC in Chikkamagalur. A panoramic view of the Bababudagiri range perhaps inspired many of his works. H L Nagegowda, another

well known Kannada writer, also a DC in Chikkamagalur, may have drawn similar inspiration.

In district headquarters like Bidar, Bijapur and Gulbarga, palaces of the erstwhile rulers and heritage buildings serve either as DC Office or quarters.

As an assistant commissioner Bagalkot in 1964, I have myself seen a portion of DC Bungalow at Bijapur being used as a godown! Bijapur faced severe famine in 1964 and the imported American wheat was transported in huge quantities from FCI Godowns in Hyderabad to Bijapur for distribution in fair price shops. As there was a shortage of godown space, Maharudraiya, my boss and the then DC Bijapur, gave the entire ground floor of the bngalow to store the wheat.

The DC Bungalow of Mysore is a beautiful building with a big compound, in an excellent location next to the State Guest House. But it fell into bad times in the 50s after a grown up daughter of a DC committed suicide there. Subsequent office bearers and their families were reluctant to occupy the premises. It took a strong Muslim Officer from Hyderabad Karnataka to dispel this fear! No complaints heard thereafter.



Miscellany

Source: *Deccan Herald*, dt. 1st August 2022

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The 'dosai' dilemma

Amidst a sea of change flooding Bengaluru, VB retains its old charm

D V GURUPRASAD

When I was a student of National College, Basavanagudi, in 1968, we had unlimited options for our lunch or snacks. Vid-yarthi Bhavan (VB), with its signature dish *Benne Masale Dosai*, was the most favoured one. As VB always used to be crowded and with the limited time we had, eating there was a challenge.

Never the one to give up, I learnt the art of grabbing a table in the face of stiff competition. In one quick glance at the 16 odd tables, my friend and I would zero-in on the one about to get vacated.

Once marked, we would dash towards that table even as the customer was getting his bill. This involved mastering the skill of literally elbowing out our competitors. This ability to fix the goal and the skill to reach it, stood me in

good stead when I appeared for the Civil Services exams later. Needless to say, I have used the elbow skill many times after joining the Police.

Eternally short of cash, we would order by-two masala. And wait salivating. Whenever a waiter appeared balancing a dozen plates of hot *dosais* like a circus artiste, we hoped one of it would be ours. But at VB we had to wait. Its strict policy of first-come-first-serve, made us develop patience which too helped me in my police job.

The crisp *dosai* filled with *aloo palya* and a dollop of Mandya butter, about to be flooded by the watery chutney, was quietly devoured. We washed it down with a glass of water, as we didn't have money to buy by-two coffee.

On each steel tumbler in VB there was an engraving, 'stolen from Vidyarthi Bhavan'. We found it funny then, but later as a cop, I felt it was a great idea to prevent theft. Along with the bill, the waiter would present squarely cut pieces of newspaper to wipe our oily fingers. And if this didn't work, there was a piece

of detergent soap kept on the wash basin. But like Lady Macbeth, I discovered all the soaps of India cannot sweeten my little hand (of the *dosai* flavour) and gave it a go by.

My first re-visit to VB, after college, was with my friend YNK, a famous journalist and a fellow foodie. Nothing had changed. YNK introduced me to *saagu masale dosai* which I found it to be tastier than the *palya dosai*.

Whenever I visited VB, I would be in a Hamletian dilemma: *palya dosai* or *saagu dosai*? Someone suggested eating both. But I couldn't. So I alternated between the two.

Soon the owner became a friend and my problem was solved. The cook filled my *dosai* with both *palya* and *saagu*, and this is the type of *dosai* I have been eating there.

In the past 55 years nothing much has changed at VB. I have taken four generations of my family there. I visit VB as it remains a symbol of good 'ole' Bengaluru, and reminds me of my youthful days rekindling fond memories.



Important Announcement from IIPA, New Delhi



भारतीय लोक प्रशासन संस्थान

इन्द्रप्रस्थ एस्टेट, रिंग रोड, नई दिल्ली-110002

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
INDRAPRASTHA ESTATE, RING ROAD, NEW DELHI-110002 (INDIA)

Admn./M/4(1)/2022

July 26, 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Executive Council in its meeting held on 5th July, 2022 has approved the following Topics/Theme as under:

(a) Annual Essay Prize Competition, 2022

- (i) Socio-economic Changes in Post Pandemic period
- (ii) Fourth Industrial Revolution and Governance
- (iii) Evolving Role of Women in Leadership and Society

(b) Theme of the Members' Annual Conference 2022

India Emerging as a Global Leader

It is requested to kindly note the above for information and further necessary action by the Branches.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Amitabh Ranjan)
Registrar

Chairmen and Hony. Secretaries of the Regional and Local Branches

Food for Thought



IIPA-KRB Virtual Newsletter

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