



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru**

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**Virtual Newsletter**

ವಿಧುನ್ಯಾನ್ ಸುದ್ದಿಪತ್ರ

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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

My **New Year** greetings to all our readers.

I am happy to place before our readers the **January 2022** issue of our *Virtual Newsletter*. This is our **18<sup>th</sup>** issue, since we began this initiative.

The **Lead Article**, this time, is by **Mr. Thayyil Sethumadhavan**, IAAS (Rtd.) on *Financial Accountability and Public Auditing*. It is based on a lecture delivered by him at Azim Premji University recently.

In our **Policy Matters - Karnataka** section, we reproduce two Lead Articles which appeared last month in *Deccan Herald*, Bengaluru, penned by two of Karnataka's distinguished retired civil servants, **Dr. A. Ravindra**, IAS (Retd.) and **Mr. V. Balasubramanian**, IAS (Retd.). Dr. Ravindra's article is titled, "*Wake-Up Call for Karnataka as it slips in Development*". Mr. V. Balu's article is on **Corruption in Karnataka**. Both are extremely thought-provoking articles. The links to both articles are given, for the benefit of those who may not have read them.

We then carry reports of two of our activities held during the month of **December 2021**: (1) A **National Webinar** on '*New Education Policy 2020 – Transforming Education*' which was held under the patronage of the **IIPA, New Delhi**, and (2) An online **Certificate Course in Public Policy**, which was very efficiently conducted by the **Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education of Jain (Deemed-to-be) University**, under the able leadership of **Dr. Priyanca Mathur**.

We have a new column titled, *Reminiscences*, where we feature **Mr. Thayyil Sethumadhavan**'s interesting article, titled, "*How to be a Good Administrator*" which appeared in *The Hindu* last month.

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**

### **Financial Accountability and Public Auditing**



**Mr. Thayyil Sethumadhavan, IAAS (Rtd.)**  
Formerly Principal Accountant General, Madhya Pradesh

A recent newspaper report<sup>1</sup> mentioned that the Karnataka Contractors' Association had addressed the Prime Minister to complain that they are forced to pay as much as 30 percent of the value of contracts to politicians (and another 6 to 7 percent to officials to get their bills passed); but it did not evoke any surprise. The Prime Minister himself had, the report mentioned, while addressing an election rally in Karnataka some years ago, named the then ruling government, which is in opposition now, a 10 per cent government. The only significance is that on this occasion, the contractors, who are privy to the corrupt practice, have, themselves, come up as whistleblowers.

Corruption is nothing new to the country. Starting from the well-known Santhanam Committee Report of the sixties, allegations of political as well as bureaucratic corruption have resonated all over the country. The despicable condition of infrastructure, roads in particular, around us will provide tell-tale evidence to the Contractors' allegation, as if proof were needed. In that background, "financial accountability" in public administration may seem to be a chimera!!

#### ***Constitutional Provisions for Financial Accountability***

The Indian Constitution which is normative as well as procedural emphasizes the concept of separation of powers (a basic feature of the Constitution) to ensure that each limb of the State acts within its allocated powers, and functions as a device for checks and balances against misuse of authority by any organ of the State. The Constitution basically stresses on political accountability, but also provides the framework for, inter alia, financial accountability by defining the procedure in financial matters including the grant of required financial powers to the Executive. For instance, Article 112 establishes the requirement of Annual Financial Statements<sup>2</sup>, and lays down the procedure for raising Demands for Grants and Appropriation Bills which sanction withdrawal of money by the Executive. Parliament<sup>3</sup> thereby exercises the authority to sanction withdrawal of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India while any withdrawal from the Contingency Fund will have to be got regularized through Supplementary Demands. Similar enabling provisions detail the process for raising revenue,

<sup>1</sup> DHNS, 12 Nov. 2021 *The Hindu*, 23 Nov. 2021

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution uses the term '*Annual Financial Statements*' for 'Budget'.

<sup>3</sup> Legislative Assemblies in the case of States and Union Territories with Legislatures.

the basic assumption being that 'there is no taxation without representation'. The process established in the Constitution for financial accountability is elaborate and in tune with democratic principles.

### ***Financial Control and Accountability at the Level of Executive***

Finance Ministry<sup>4</sup> is the custodian of all government funds and is responsible to ensure proper financial control and accountability. General Financial Rules (GFR) issued by the Department of Expenditure<sup>5</sup> provide detailed guidelines for financial management by Ministries and Departments and government entities under them. Over time, the Finance Ministry has finetuned the Integrated Financial System in all Ministries and effects its control through the offices of Financial Advisers working in each Ministry or Group of Ministries. The Secretary of the Ministry is the Chief Accounting Authority and the FA reports to the Departmental Secretary as well as to the Finance Ministry (where the Secretary, Expenditure coordinates the activities of the FAs). Where there are wide disagreements of views with the concerned Ministries or Department concerned, FAs have the freedom to take the matters to the Finance Ministry for advice.

One of the important features of a sound accountability set-up is the internal control mechanism. The Pay & Accounts Officers who work under the Controllers of Accounts (COA) in Ministries exercise pre-checks before making payments to ensure that not only the claims are in accordance with rules and regulations, but also that there are approved budget provisions to meet the demands. The COAs also carry out internal audit of the financial transactions in the Ministries under the guidance of the FAs. The Controller General of Accounts (CGA) under the Ministry of Finance maintains the accounts of the Central Government, reports the trend of receipts and expenditure for ensuring control, and is tasked with the management of internal audit.

### ***Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003***

It was the European Union which established guidelines for the first time to contain the fiscal deficit of its member countries in an attempt to maintain the stability of Euro; the EU reckoned that the optimum sustainable fiscal deficit would be 3 per cent each year. Many countries including India found these guidelines useful to follow in their own financial aspirations. FRBM Act proposed to institutionalize financial discipline and restrict the country's fiscal deficits to defined sustainable level with a view to moving towards a balanced budget. Unfortunately, we are far from arriving at the ideal of 3 per cent for the Union; if we reckon the fiscal deficits of States also, the annual fiscal deficits would be enormous. But the Act has not lost its relevance as a normative regulation.

### ***Parliamentary Control of Financial Accountability***

The Parliament relies on the reports submitted by the CAG to satisfy itself that the Executive has acted within its approved confines. The Constitution has accordingly created the institution of CAG<sup>6</sup>, and broadly defined the duties and powers of the CAG. The law relating

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<sup>4</sup> Finance Departments in States.

<sup>5</sup> Finance Ministry has 5 Departments under it, of which the Department of Expenditure is entrusted with the responsibility to allocate, monitor and control the expenditures by various Ministries and subordinate offices.

<sup>6</sup> Art.148 to 151 of the Constitution.

to the duties and powers of CAG was framed in 1971 through the CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971 (DPC ACT) at a time when public auditing was still at an evolving stage. The Act, has over time, become inadequate to meet the increasing challenges and ethos of public auditing, but remains the mainstay of parliamentary financial control.

Public auditing in India is multidimensional; it covers the Union, States and Union Territories as also the local bodies. The CAG is also entrusted with the audit of Public Sector Undertakings (except those specifically excluded by law) and Autonomous Bodies. CAG also audits certain new instruments of public finance such as Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and even private corporates to the extent public revenues are involved.

Parliament (and state Legislatures) examines the reports of the CAG through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) which examine the concerned officials and make recommendations on the audit findings to the Parliament. The means of these Committees has been playing a crucial role in ensuring parliamentary financial control of the Executive.

### ***Expanding Horizon of Public Audit***

The intent and purpose of audit is to provide necessary assurance on the accuracy, integrity and reliability of financial statements achieved through financial and compliance auditing. SAIs also provide the most independent, objective, reliable and comprehensive assessments of programme implementation and make implementing agencies accountable to the Legislatures and to the public through their performance audits<sup>7</sup>. As opined by OECD<sup>8</sup>, good government requires continuing oversight to ensure that public policy is implemented as intended, strategies are met and the overall performance of the government meets the expectations and needs within the policy, laws and regulations. Performance Audit, which involves the audit of *economy, efficiency and effectiveness* of projects and programs is an innovative form of audit which has become a major tool of financial accountability.

It is relevant to mention that the CAG has submitted 67 Performance Audit reports during 2019-20, despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic. Some of the Performance Audit reports of the CAG made history, such as those on purchase of Bofors Guns, sale of 2G spectrum and allocation of Coalfields, to mention a few. The recent Report on Storm Water Drain Management in Bengaluru, which was covered in an earlier IIPA Newsletter<sup>9</sup> is also worth mentioning for its scientific and methodical evaluation of the deficient management practices by the local body.

### ***Public Auditing and Detection of Fraud / Corruption in Government Entities***

Prevention of fraud is primarily the function of the management, but auditors are responsible to review the systems and procedures which facilitate such acts and to report on them. While fraud will affect the financial statements which are (to be) checked and certified by the auditors, corruption will not be evident in the accounts and records since it is carried out in secrecy and outside the purview of records. CAG has issued extensive guidelines to auditors on verifying frauds and corrupt practices during field audits. The effectiveness of public auditing in such cases arises more from its deterrent value.

<sup>7</sup> INTOSAI Guidelines (LIMA Declaration) on Performance Auditing.

<sup>8</sup> OECD Policy Brief: Open Government.

<sup>9</sup> IIPA-KRB Virtual Newsletter Vol.2, No.15, October, 2021.

### ***Shortcomings in the System***

Even though the system of public auditing in India under the CAG has been playing a crucial role in ensuring financial accountability of the Executive, there are several shortcomings which impede the effectiveness of the system. For example, the DPC Act, 1971 falls woefully short of the requirements of SAI as envisaged by the International Organization of Supreme Auditors (INTOSAI); in fact, the CAG has had to depend on the liberal interpretations of the Act by the Finance Ministry and the higher judiciary to enable it to carry out its expected role, including Performance Audit. Moreover, the audit jurisdiction of the CAG is too wide and includes even accounting and entitlement functions in many States which is, somewhat, an anachronism. Moreover, the DPC Act does not prescribe a specific date for presenting the audit reports in the House which enables the Executive to delay their submission.

Delays occur not only in presentations of the reports, but also in their examination by the PAC / COPU. Another issue relates to the partisan approach by members of the Parliamentary Committees which might affect their implementation. Another issue is that in the absence of provisions in the Act, auditors face difficulty in getting the required data and records in time. Added to that, the lack of interest in audit findings by the media and general public impact the effectiveness of audit.

### ***Suggested Measures for Improvement***

Certain measures which would help to improve financial accountability are listed below:

1. More intense internal controls and internal audits in Departments and organizations will go a long way in improving the financial accountability. This is of particular importance in the case of many State Governments who lack a rigorous Integrated Finance System (unlike in the Central Ministries).
2. The existing system of parliamentary control by PAC / COPU needs reform measures to ensure timely presentation and follow up audit reports. (There is a strong case to increase the number of Parliamentary Committees. An additional Committee to examine the reports relating to large Ministries such as Railways, Defence, Communication etc. could be a starting point.)
3. Formation of effective Audit Committees in Ministries with outside experts may help to bring in improved follow up of audit observations.
4. The existing system of selection of the CAG is flawed and needs review.
5. A new and comprehensive National Audit Act is overdue.
6. The whistleblower system with CAG functioning as the nodal agency, as in the case of General Accountability Office in the USA, will enhance financial accountability.
7. Follow up action against erring officials, especially where fraudulent transactions are involved, should be expeditious and act as deterrent.

### ***Conclusion***

In the ultimate analysis, there are fairly well-established systems and procedures to ensure financial accountability in the domain of public administration in our country with public auditing as the fulcrum. However, there is scope for review and refinement of the rules and regulations and legislative practices to improve the efficacy of financial accountability.

## Karnataka – Policy Matters-1

### Wake-Up Call for Karnataka as it slips in Development

Deccan Herald, Bengaluru dt. 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dr. A. Ravindra, IAS (Retd.)

Former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka



Link to Dr. A. Ravindra's article is given below

<https://www.google.com/url?>

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## Karnataka – Policy Matters-2

### Corruption in Karnataka



**Mr. V. Balasubramanian, IAS (Retd.)**  
Former Additional Chief Secretary  
Government of Karnataka

*Deccan Herald*, Bengaluru dt. 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

**COMMENT**

**WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, INDEED!**

# Karnataka's progress, from mamool to mega-corruption

**Why do highways stay good, but BBMP roads develop potholes and craters? Therein hangs the tale**

**V BALASUBRAMANIAN**

In the pre-1947 days of Mysore State, there was mamool, which meant a token appreciation of a contractor for getting his bill passed, usually not exceeding 10% of the bill amount. People express surprise that in 75 years, mamool has made much progress, it has reached 40%. They forget, in a democracy, there are many mouths to feed.

Traditionally, the Public Works, Irrigation and Power departments are the main sources of *mamool*. This is because the government does not adopt best practices in executing works. They are: preparation of a Detailed Project Report by an outside agency; prequalification of tenders to avoid benami tenderers, such as the Chief Engineer's son-in-law, minister's brother, etc.; scrutiny of tenders by a committee consisting of reputed institutions such as the Indian Institute of Science. Once the tenders are received, they must be scrutinised for quality and cost and finally ranked as the Lowest (L-1), second lowest (L-2), third lowest (L-3) and so on. Once this is done, the work is awarded to the L-1 tenderer. The quality of work should be assessed by an external quality control agency selected by a tendering process. Only once that agency certifies that the quality of work is according to the DPR specifications, payment should be made within 15 days, and reimbursement claimed and received from the funding agency.

This is the reason why we do not find potholes and craters on national and state highways as we find on BBMP roads. The state government taking up projects with its own funds does not follow these best practices. Take, for instance, the construction of Vikasa Soudha, taken up in 2001. It was unilaterally announced that Rs 100 crore was allocated for it, without any detailed plan and estimates. No Internationally Competitive Bids (ICBs) were called. Only those firms 'registered' with the PWD were eligible to give tenders. An internationally reputed firm which had constructed airports, metro rail, roads and buildings both in India and abroad did bid, and it was even the L-1 bid at Rs 76 crore. The PWD "negotiated" with another higher cost tenderer who was nowhere near L-1 in past performance and the construction

was given to this small firm. Eventually, this contractor was paid Rs 150 crore, for the delayed completion of the work.

These malpractices are intentional. On the other hand, best practices were followed in the State Highways Improvement (K-SHIP) of 2,300 kilometres, costing Rs 2,500 crore, with a 70% loan from the World Bank, which is why one will not find potholes and craters on them. In projects funded entirely by the Government of Karnataka, these practices are deliberately violated.



There is the infamous DSR – Divisional Schedule of Rates – for each component of work, and these rates are never updated. So, when the PWD floats tenders, all kinds of 'registered' contractors quote DSR + 50%, +75%, etc. Then the higher cost tenderer is called and he is asked to reduce his cost to the level of the L-1 tenderer. He obliges and gets the contract. Then, deliberately, implementation is delayed and the PWD certifies that the delay is justified and the cost over-run is allowed. As there is no outside agency to exercise quality control, the PWD engineers themselves certify defective work such as 2-inch top layer of road in place of the contracted 4-inch, and the higher rate paid is shared. This is how for the Vikasa Soudha, though the L-1 tender was for Rs 76 crore, the government ultimately paid Rs 150 crore. The excess is shared between politicians, officers and contractors.

The recent outburst of the contractors that they have to pay now 40% is amusing. The inflated cost and its distribution between the contractors and ministers, MLAs and officers has been going on for decades. What has happened now is that the government is going bankrupt as salaries take away 75% of revenue and very little is left for paying the contractors. The available amount is supposed to be paid to contractors who are in the queue,

but for jumping the queue, some more extra payment has to be made, and this has irked the smaller and medium-sized contractors.

A few weeks ago, the house of an engineer of Nirmiti Kendra, among others, was raided by the Anti-Corruption Bureau and over 20 apartments and sites, six luxury cars, bank deposits, gold and silver were found, valued at over Rs 65 crore. The man had started his career 35 years ago at Rs 2,000 per month! From where does the unaccounted wealth come?

Of course, it all comes from certifying defective work and sometimes even fictitious work, for which inflated bills are paid nevertheless. The officers, many MLAs and ministers are all together in this.

Everyone admires the Lok Ayukta and the ACB for raiding the houses of corrupt officers. But does anyone know what happens after the raids? There is not a single case of a senior officer or an MLA or a minister having been punished with imprisonment.

Firstly, under an antiquated and intentionally misinterpreted Section 197 of CrPC, the Department of Personnel under the Chief Minister has to give permission if a public servant has to be prosecuted. The corrupt officer always brings pressure, and that permission is withheld. Only a Village Accountant or a BBMP Health Inspector taking a bribe of Rs 5,000 is prosecuted and sometimes the court sends him to jail. When corrupt senior officers are prosecuted, under our Adversarial System of Law, the expensive lawyers that such officers hire are able to create "reasonable doubt" on technical points of law, and the accused goes free. Even the government advocates can be bought over. Recently, the recruitment of 80 of 193 Government Prosecutors was held invalid because they used forged documents to secure the position.

We are fast descending into the Palygarn-raj of the kind that existed between the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 and the disintegration of Mughal rule thereafter and the establishment of British-raj in 1857 since no Chief Minister can survive without MLAs' support, and that support comes at a cost. Corruption is the lifeblood of our democracy. And history, it said, repeats itself as a tragedy.

*(The writer is a former Additional Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka. He was Chairperson of the Task Force on Land-grabbing in 2010-11 and author of its report, Greed and Conscience)*



Link to Mr. V. Balasubramanian's article is given below

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ret=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi6z9ujz4H1AhUvTWwGHYmtAEkQFnoECACQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.deccanherald.com%2Fopinion%2Fmain-article%2Fkarnataka-s-progress-from-mamool-to-mega-corruption-1063675.html&usg=AOvVaw06DYnjKASNCFDp-xTGKQj7>

## Report of December 2021 Activities of the Branch-1

The poster is titled "IIPA WEBINAR SERIES" and features the IIPA logo at the top right. The main title is "An Initiative on Flagship Schemes of Government of India by IIPA" followed by "New Education Policy, 2020 Transforming Education". It is organized by the "IIPA Karnataka Regional Branch". The date is "December 10, 2021" and the time is "1500-1700 Hrs". The poster lists four key speakers: Shri S.N. Tripathi IAS (Retd.), Shri S. Ramanathan IAS (Retd.), Shri S. V. Ranganath IAS (Retd.), and Shri M. Madan Gopal IAS (Retd.). It also mentions a vote of thanks by Prof. D. Jeevan Kumar. A link to join the webinar is provided at the bottom: <https://iipa.webex.com/iipa/onsstage/g.php?MTID=ea8afd58f29960f32e94fbb2e9f4adbc>. The event is supported by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

The **Indian Institute of Public Administration**, New Delhi, in association with its **Karnataka Regional Branch**, organized a **National Webinar** on '**New Education Policy 2020 – Transforming Education**' on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 in virtual mode. The Director-General of IIPA, **Mr. Surendranath Tripathi**, IAS (Retd.) gave the Opening Remarks and moderated the webinar. Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch, **Mr. S. Ramanathan**, IAS (Retd.) gave the Welcome Address.

The two Resource Persons were **Mr. S.V. Ranganath**, IAS (Retd.) and **Mr. M. Madan Gopal**, IAS (Retd.). **Mr. S.V. Ranganath** identified some issues which were fundamental to the success of NEP-2020. The initiatives to be taken in the Primary Education sector include raising substantially the current expenditure on education; reducing the dropout rate; imparting foundational learning skills; lending extra support to first generation learners; and addressing the challenges facing the *Anganwadi* scheme. The problems in the Higher Education sector include funding; raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio from the current 26 per cent to 50 per cent; inadequate infrastructure in Higher Educational Institutions; freeze on recruitment; inadequate comprehension and utilization of technology and e-learning platforms; absence of research on critical issues; and politicization.

**Mr. M. Madan Gopal** focused his attention on School Education, with specific reference to early childhood education. Referring to the huge learning loss created by the pandemic, he emphasized the need to address its challenges, through short-term, medium-term and long-

term planning. In order to ensure equitable education, there is an urgent need to bring the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) into the system. The inclusion of a Gender Inclusion Fund and the focus on Special Education Zones in the NEP were laudable initiatives. Particular attention needs to be paid to imparting training in soft skills and ensuring capacity building in the youth. For this, the quality of the teacher is critical, concluded Mr. Madan Gopal.

**Dr. Sapna Chadah**, Asst. Professor at the IIPA and Faculty Advisor of the Karnataka Regional Branch introduced the theme of the webinar, as well as the speakers, and effectively mentored the webinar. **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Secretary of the Karnataka Regional Branch proposed a Vote of Thanks.

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### **Report of December 2021 Activities of the Branch-2**

**Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE), Jain (Deemed-to-be University)**, in collaboration with the **Karnataka Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA-KRB)**, organised a 35-hour **Certificate Course in Public Policy** from 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Given below are the names of the Resource Persons and the topics of their lectures:

<b>Resource Person</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1. <b>Prof. R. S. Deshpande</b> , Former Director, ISEC, Bengaluru.	<i>Making Policy in Economics and Agriculture in India</i>
2. <b>Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander</b> , Head – Training, Resource Mobilisation, Policy Engagement & Communication, Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bengaluru.	<i>Implementing Public Policy – Role of Media and Public Engagement</i>
3. <b>Ms. Shukla Bose</b> , Founder, Parikrma Humanity Foundation, Bengaluru.	<i>Formulating Public Policy – The Process and Instruments: Policies for Education of Urban Poor - Case Study</i>
4. <b>Dr. Mridul Mehndiratta</b> , Assistant Professor in Economics, Institute of Finance and International Management (IFIM), Bengaluru.	<i>Policy Evaluation – Emerging Challenges</i>
5. <b>Dr. Sonam Mansukhani</b> , Assistant Dean-Academics, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS), Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru	<i>Making of Public Policies in India - Challenges and Paths Ahead</i>
6. <b>Dr. K.C. Smitha</b> , Assistant Professor, CeRSSE, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru.	<i>Public Policy in the Context of Urban Governance</i>

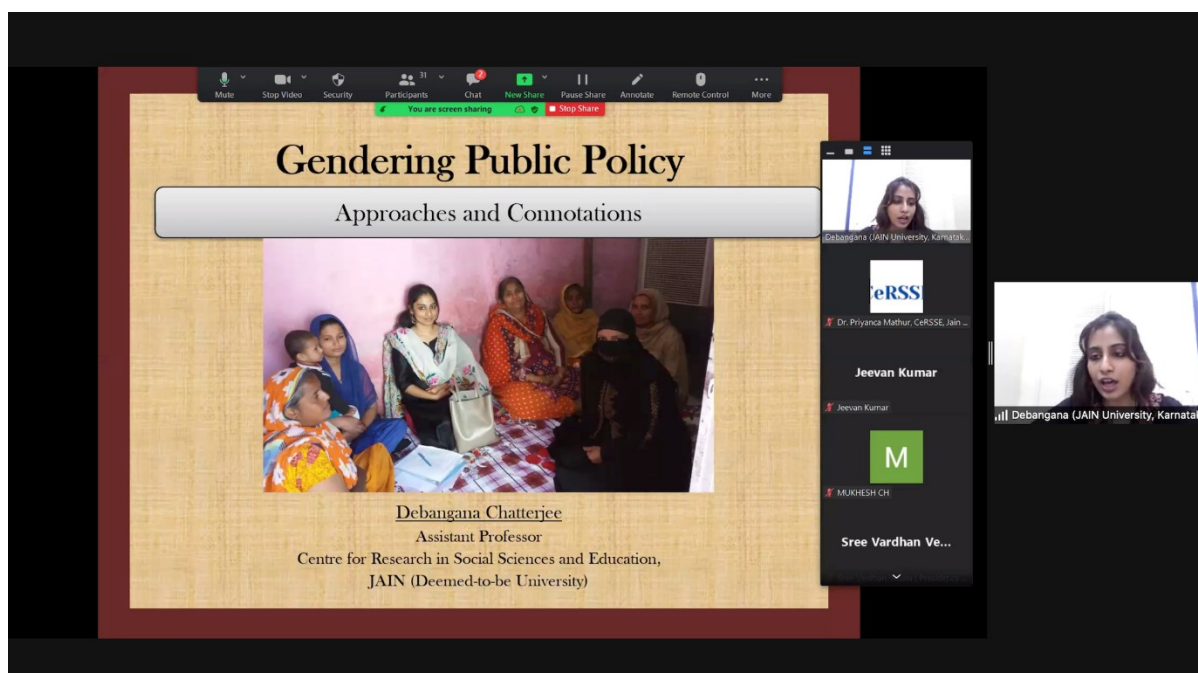
7. <b>Ms. Debangana Chatterjee</b> , Assistant Professor, CeRSSE, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru.	<i>Gendering Public Policy: Approaches and Connotations</i>
8. <b>Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar</b> Hon. Professor Karnataka State Rural Dev & Panchayat Raj University, Gadag.	<i>Contextualizing Public Policy</i>
9. <b>Dr. Priyanca Mathur</b> Asso. Professor, CeRSSE, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru.	<i>Overview of Certificate Course on Public Policy</i>

After the 35 hours of classroom teaching (online on Zoom), the 30 students from colleges and Universities across Bengaluru who signed up for this Course, are being mentored to write **Policy Briefs** on areas of their choice. On presentation of those Project Reports, Certificates will be awarded.

The **Karnataka Regional Branch** of the **IIPA** will be awarding cash prizes to the top three Policy Briefs. A proposal to publish the texts of the lectures delivered at the course, as well as the Policy Briefs submitted by the participants, is in the pipeline.

*Below:*

**Ms. Debangana Chatterjee**, one of the Resource Persons, is seen making a PowerPoint presentation on “*Gendering Public Policy*”.



## Reminiscences

### **How to be a Good Administrator**



**Mr. Thayyil Sethumadhavan, IAAS (Rtd.)**  
Formerly Principal Accountant General  
Madhya Pradesh

Source: *The Hindu*, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021

What are the attributes of a good, competent administrator? Management schools will list out several; but to my mind, being humane should be on the top of the list. An administration which is fair, transparent and humane will ultimately score over all else. I learned this lesson at the beginning of my long career in the civil service, and consider that as the most important attributes of managers, even in today's technology- driven approach to management.

I was a newly minted Civil Servant in the latter part of the Sixties when I got posted as the second-in-command in a large, politically charged field office: virtually thrown into turbulent waters to learn swimming. After the Chinese aggression, there was a palpable feeling of insecurity all over the country. Economy was in dire stress and inflation was climbing; and the salaries in the public sector were woefully inadequate. The atmosphere was propitious for self-seeking political interests to exploit the pervading frustration among the low paid employees; and their influence was visible among the staff associations and unions alike. Strikes of different hues were the rule than exception. In fact, on the day I assumed charge, there was a "pen-down strike" and the activists of the union were prowling around to stop anyone from attending to work. Officers were their class enemies.

Though I started my new official life in a hostile environment, the *mantra* that I was trained to adhere to was to be fair and transparent, as much as the rulebooks would permit. Each day, meanwhile, turned out to be a day of unease, with the staff representatives trying their best to dominate various aspects of administrative interactions. One of their strategies was to shout personalized slogans against senior officials, with a view to demoralizing the weaker ones among them.

Devising hard-hitting slogans and shouting them to maximum effect was creative work. There were a few vociferous ones among the staff who had specialized in the art. The slogans would be rhythmical, personalized and witty, except for the ears of the victims! The best way

to deal with such slogan-shouting was to ignore them; - even better if one could enjoy them for their lyrical impact! Among the ones who used to indulge in the histrionics there was a tall, thin and angry-looking young man, roughly of my own age, figuratively spitting venom at the class enemies.

So it was a surprise to me when, on an innocuous day, the angry young man came to my room unobtrusively and placed an invitation card on my table. I was a bit surprised that he had cast aside his class prejudices and had come to invite me for his wedding; it struck me as unusual. I thanked him and forgot all about it. I still do not know what made me, however, to go to the given address on the day of his wedding; it was a holiday, and I had nothing particular to do. Being new to the place, I just looked at it as an idle drive. But when I reached his house, what I saw made me feel sorry for him. His was a very small thatched hut proclaiming the fringe of his financially poor circumstances.

The bridegroom seemed to be totally taken by surprise to see me arrive, quite unexpected; and to his embarrassment, there were a few of his union colleagues also present. I wondered whether they will take him to task for inviting me for the wedding, a representative of the ruling class. In any case, my gesture seemed to have made no difference, and his dexterity in shouting slogans including against me continued unabated.

A few months later, there was an occasion to consider the appointment of a person closely related to the newly married activist as a low-paid employee in the office. Some of my staff, drawing attention to his behaviour cautioned against offering the appointment; but to my mind, denying the job would have been unjust and I went ahead.

That was a turning point. The former agitator and class enemy turned out to be a valuable source of information on crucial occasions. On his own, the slogan shouting expert started providing valuable inputs on their agitational plans in advance, which enabled the office to face the situations with suitable counter-measures. I still do not know whether receiving such inputs was truly ethical; but the fact remains that it helped the administrative machinery to survive in an adverse atmosphere.

A career in civil service will offer several challenges as well as opportunities: to serve people, to be helpful and to work for the common good of the society. But there is nothing more effective than treating every individual with fairness and compassion blended with firmness, which will throw up opportunities to overcome hurdles. After all, as the Bard said, ‘Mercy is twice blessed: it blesses him that gives and him that takes’!

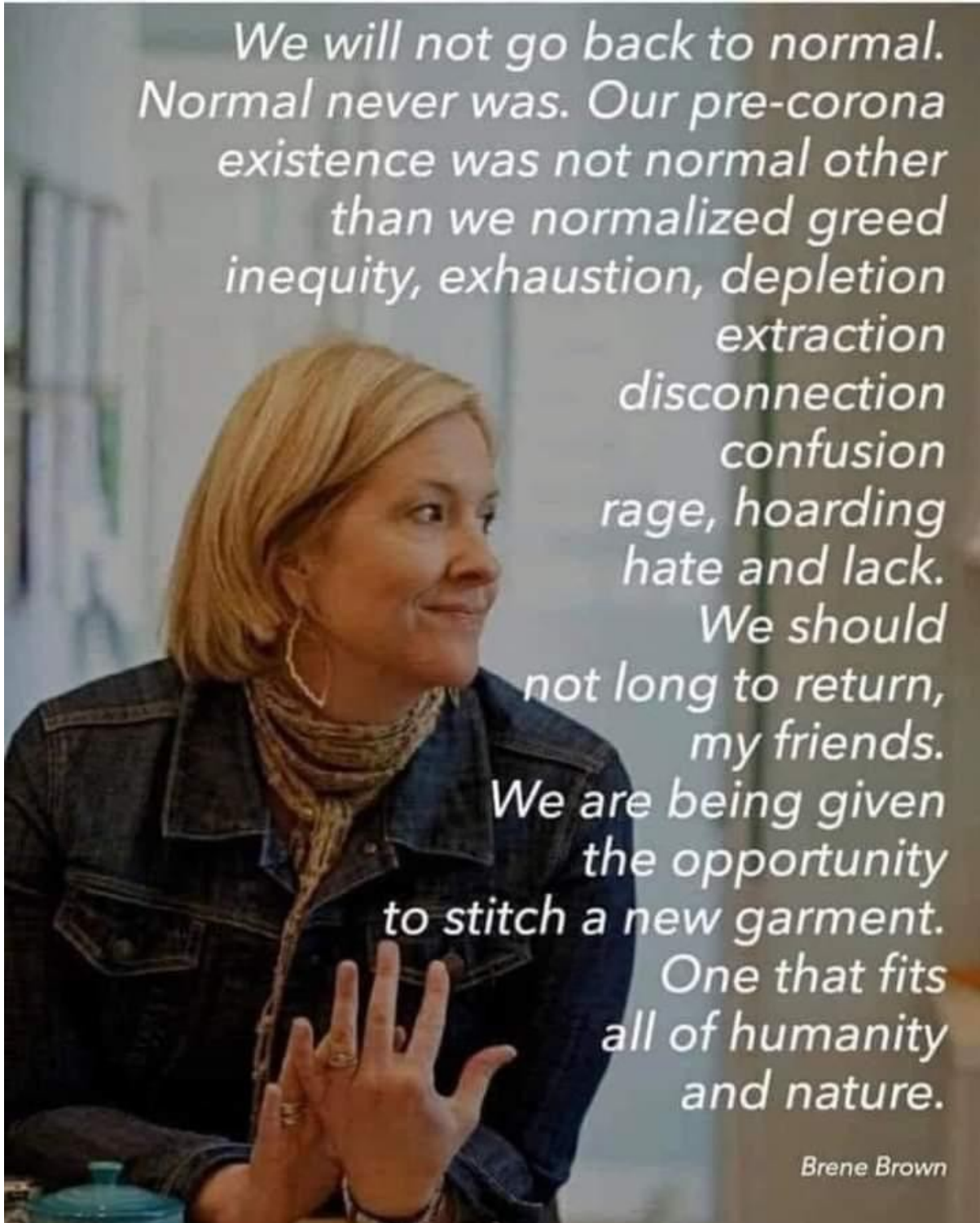
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**Link to Mr. Sethumadhavan’s article is given below:**

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjOzIj604HIAhUISmwGHU0OCTAQFnoECAkQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thehindu.com%2Fopinion%2Fopen-page%2Fhow-to-be-a-good-administrator%2Farticle37985060.ece&usg=AOvVaw0PH8XE11hT-\\_N9MZ87\\_ao8](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjOzIj604HIAhUISmwGHU0OCTAQFnoECAkQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thehindu.com%2Fopinion%2Fopen-page%2Fhow-to-be-a-good-administrator%2Farticle37985060.ece&usg=AOvVaw0PH8XE11hT-_N9MZ87_ao8)

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## Food for Thought



*We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed inequity, exhaustion, depletion extraction disconnection confusion rage, hoarding hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.*

*Brene Brown*

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## **Feedback**

Dear Sir,

The December 2021 Newsletter has been excellently brought out. The Lead Article by Mr. V. Balasubramanian and Book Review by Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar stand out. Kudos.

**Dr. P.S. Jayaramu**

Dear Sir,

The December 2021 issue gives a lot of knowledge about the prevailing legal systems in the world. In addition to this, the Book Review is excellent. Do accept my congratulations. Thank you for sharing the link of the book *Money and Politics* by Avery. As I understand from the review, the book is in the "must read" category.

**Dr. K. Eresi**

Dear Sir,

While there are a lot of interesting articles by retired people, I hope some news of problems troubling the people due to lack of proper administration could be included in the Newsletter.

**Mr. E.P. Menon**

Dear Sir,

The lead article, *The Adversarial and Inquisitorial Systems of Justice*, is very timely and provides a necessary piece of knowledge. I wish the author had also suggested some solutions to the present non-working judicial system in the country which are also the cause for many social and economic problems in India. As a commoner's opinion, the current judicial system exists to serve only the legal profession and for people in power. For the rest, there is no judicial system in the country, due to the humongous delay built into the system and perpetuated by all three organs of our state.

Thanks for making the grey cells active now and then.

**Wg. Cdr. A. Raghunath**

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## **IIPA-KRB Virtual Newsletter**

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