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Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru**

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- Chief Editor

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A Note from the Chief Editor



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Government of Karnataka
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I am happy to place before our readers the **October 2023** issue of our **Virtual Newsletter**. This is our **39th issue**, since we began this initiative.

We have a **Special Feature** on **Panchayat Raj** in this issue. Three eminent experts have contributed articles, based on their presentations at the two-day **National Seminar** on '**Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj in Karnataka**' which was held last month in the premises of the **Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University** in Gadag: **Mr. S.M. Vijayanand** has discussed the *Challenges, Reforms and Prospects of Panchayat Raj* in the country; **Dr. N. Sivanna** has looked at *Three Decades of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in Karnataka*; and **Dr. S.S. Meenakshisundaram** has made several suggestions for *Strengthening Panchayat Raj Institutions in Karnataka*.

October being the month when we celebrate '**Gandhi Jayanti**', our column on **Food for Thought** carries a few quotes of the Father of our Nation.

In our regular section titled, **Communication Pulse**, **Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander**, Executive Director at **Public Affairs Foundation** writes on **SDG-3** which deals with **Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All**.

We carry reports of the following Branch events: (1) The **National Seminar** on '**Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj in Karnataka**', held in collaboration with the KSRDPR University and the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj of the Government of Karnataka; (2) Entering into a **Memorandum of Understanding** with **St. Joseph's University**, Bengaluru; and (3) The **Prelude Conference** on '**New Paradigms of Governance**' held in collaboration with the Department of Public Policy of Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences. We also carry a report of the Prelude Conference organized by the **Dharwad Local Branch** of the IIPA.

In the section on **IIPA-KRB Members' Writings in the Popular Media**, we give the link to articles penned by our distinguished members: **Smt. Uma Mahadevan's** Book Review titled, "*An Ambitious Mapping of an India of Multiplicity and Co-Existence*"; **Mr. T. Sethumadhavan's** piece titled, "*The Yearly Grind*"; **Dr. A. Ravindra's** article, "*As Tempers Rage Outside, Quiet Flows the Cauvery*"; **Dr. Gurucharan Gollerkeri's** piece on "*The Stellar Scientist*", Dr. Subrahmanyam Chandrasekhar; and **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar's** Book Review titled, "*The Pandemic and the Need for Civilizational Introspection*" – all of which appeared in the popular media 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.



Special Feature on Panchayat Raj



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PANCHAYATS – CHALLENGES, REFORMS, PROSPECTS **A Few Points for Reflection**

Introduction

It is good and wise move to take stock of Panchayati Raj in India at the end of three decades after the Constitutional Amendment. There is no developed country without strong elected Local Governments. Unfortunately, though Panchayati Raj was ushered in at the time when economic reforms were also in their formative stages, the possibility of critical governance reforms through Local Governments to buttress economic reforms was ignored.

Looking back, barring a few bright spots like the generous devolution by the Union Finance Commissions especially after the 13th Finance Commission, nothing much has been achieved. More sad is the fact that Panchayati Raj is nowhere in the political or development discourse. If only half the effort put into as slogan like “ease of doing business” is spent on Panchayati Raj, things could improve substantially.

And, surprisingly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have no mention of local democracy, even though it is easy to realize that without cutting edge democratic institutions, the goals would become too distant for the people for whom they are intended. Interestingly, when SDGs were being rolled out the proposal of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) to involve Local Governments in realization of the SDGs was

not even considered. But fortunately, the voice of the MoPR is now audible, even though it took nearly seven years.

Challenges

The biggest challenge is that decentralization is nowhere in the political agenda, particularly in the last 15 years. Even the Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj in the States seem to be ignorant of its potential and appear rather embarrassed by their portfolio.

There are several institutional challenges:

1. The size of Village Panchayats in large parts of India especially in the backward regions is too small making them unviable as a local government with extremely limited service area and low revenue raising potential.
2. Though the reservation of seats for backward communities and women is a very positive development, the fact that there is a five-year rotation practically annuls the impact of the provision.
3. There are lots of concerns regarding the democratic functioning at the cutting-edge level. The Gram Sabha which is the most important Constitutional institution of Panchayati Raj is extremely weak. In many parts of India, male dominance through a phenomenon called ‘*Sarpanchpati*’ has not been diluted even after powerful Self-Help Groups of

women have sprung up all over the county.

4. Though Panchayats are supposed to be an organic collective of “*Panches*” or elected representatives, who have to act as trustees of the people, power is largely concentrated in the elected head or Sarpanch, so much so, in most places there is *Sarpanch Raj*.
5. The three tier Panchayati Raj system is not meant to be a hierarchy. Each level of Panchayat has to be visualized as an independent sphere with its own functions and powers, of course, coordinating with the other tiers but not acting as subordinates.
6. At the same time, the intermediate and district level Panchayats are weak in most States with very low resources.
7. Parallel bodies mostly at the district level have been the bane of the Panchayati Raj from the beginning.
8. From the fiscal angle, a grand failure has been that there is no serious discussion, let alone consensus, even among experts on what could be the ideal fiscal domain of Panchayats especially Village Panchayats in India.
9. As per the Constitutional Amendment, all the States had to set up the Sixth State Finance Commission in 2019. But only six of them did so.
10. The space given to Panchayats in the planning and implementation of big Centrally Sponsored Schemes is extremely limited.

In respect of development performance, there are several issues which are listed below:

1. Decentralized planning is based on priorities decided arbitrarily and not based on data or real preferences of the people.
2. The decentralized plans are largely infrastructure oriented and ignore critical areas like human development and access of development rights.
3. The District Planning Committees are non-functional, another big Constitutional failure.
4. Though the core objectives of Local Governments as per the Indian Constitution are local economic

development and social justice, the Panchayats don't seem to have achieved much in either of these important areas.

5. The biggest challenge faced by all tiers of Government now is ecological. Climate change is a big threat and there is an urgent need for delineation of responsibilities across tiers of governance for addressing this tough challenge.
6. In the matter of governance, Panchayats have very little autonomy. They have to seek approval, formal or informal, even where statute or policy conditionalities empower them.
7. Panchayats are supposed to be the institutions with the high degree of natural social accountability. But unfortunately, it has not been borne out in practice.
8. Though Social Audit is done in most of the Village Panchayats, it is a routinised, trivialized and domesticated version in most of the places. Corruption is a major problem which needs to be addressed on top priority. Corruption at the local level can destroy the very roots of democracy and undermine trust in governance.
9. There are several systems of local governance in the country especially in tribal areas. In spite of PESA, harmonization of Panchayati Raj with such institutions is still work in progress.

Reforms

The reforms which need to be undertaken in the short run are listed below:

1. The only feasible option seems to be mapping out the responsibilities of Panchayats as already assigned by the States especially through various government orders and circulars and preparing an Action Plan for realizing the powers already devolved which are not being fully exercised.
2. The administrative operating systems in the country were all designed for centralized governance. Now it is the time to develop appropriate operating systems which are easy to use at the cutting-edge level even while conforming

- to principles of fairness, accountability and due process.
3. The capacity building of Panchayats needs to shift from rules and processes to management covering different areas like projects, finance, personnel, time, interface with people etc.
 4. While it may not be easy to create more staff in Panchayats especially Village Panchayats, issues related to human resources need to be addressed with primacy.
 5. The rotation of seats could be made once in 10 years which will facilitate learnings by the elected representatives and more importantly enhance accountability.
 6. Earnest efforts must be made to use the Gram Sabha route to Gram Panchayat strengthening. For holding a Gram Sabha and making it effective, the entire responsibility is with the Gram Panchayat.
 7. It is time to bring about a partnership between the Gram Panchayats and the SHG network which would be really mutually beneficial. They can work together to realize the Ambedkarite ideal of political democracy and social democracy being realized together.
 8. With the partnership with SHGs, there are possibilities of the Village Poverty Reduction Plan of SHGs feeding into the preparation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) by the Gram Panchayats.
 9. Localizing SDGs offers another opportunity for activating the Panchayats especially at the Village level. To this idea could be added the concept of "Communitizing SDGs" through the instrumentality of the SHG network.
 10. The idea of PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) developed by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Former President of India and Prof. P.V Indiresan, former Director, IIT is a concept which can convert our Villages into vibrant hubs of development. This seems to be the only solution to achieve orderly rural development and prevent chaotic migration to urban areas.
 11. There are hundreds of low cost - no cost activities which Gram Panchayats can take up basically to enable people to

access available services, adopt new technologies, perform co-operative tasks and so on.

12. To ensure accountability, a bouquet of measures need to be put in place starting from transparency and covering due process, proactive disclosures, community-based monitoring, participatory fora, right to hearing and social audit.
13. A high-quality study has to be got done by an eminent institution or a group of institutions to generate a document on the possible fiscal domain of Panchayats in India.
14. It is necessary to create Local Government Associations through a formal system where every Panchayat is represented and organized into an association based on clear rules.

Prospects

Even in this bleak scenario there are several positives. They are listed below:

1. Over the last decade or so, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has been very active and they seem to enjoy considerable autonomy of action
2. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) are working synergetically especially in pushing the Self-Help Group - Gram Panchayat convergence. It would not be an exaggeration to call it the 'mother of convergence', that is, the convergence of the institutions of SHGs and GPs, processes of Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and resources from MGNREGS, 15th Finance Commission and other sources.
3. The recent emphasis on Localizing SDGs again is very positive.
4. Of late, particularly during the Covid episode, NGOs have begun to appreciate the Local Government character of Panchayats and are beginning to engage with them.
5. UN agencies especially UNICEF and UNDP are showing interest in Panchayats especially in the context of SDGs.
6. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is showing special positive interest in Local Governments. There is

an attempt to strengthen the Technical Guidance and Support (TGS) to Local Fund Audit departments, reintroduction of the AGs report on audit of Local Governments, and regular engagement with AGs and heads of Local Fund Audit to improve co-operation of mutual benefit. Recently the C&AG has decided to set up a Task Force on Social Audit.

7. And on 16 November, the *Audit Diwas*, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) in partnership with C&AG is launching a programme for training Accountants at the Village level to provide accounting services to the Local Governments which may need them.
8. Another very significant move is the decision to set up an international Centre of Local Governances by C&AG at Rajkot.
9. National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) is setting up a School of Excellence focusing solely on Panchayats. It is nurturing beacons across the country through clusters of Village Panchayats for improving GPDP.
10. Because of the conditionality of the 15th Finance Commission, that States which have not set up State Finance Commissions (SFC) and acted on their recommendations would not be eligible for Finance Commission grants from 2024 onwards, several States are in the process of setting up SFC, which is a positive sign for Local Governments.
11. To address the serious lacuna caused by the absence of scientific guidelines for spatial planning in rural areas, the Rural Area Development Plan Formulation and Implementation (RADPFI) guidelines have been issued in 2021. Of course, they need to be operationalized; but an important beginning has been made.

Conclusion

Panchayati Raj has been a tale of **missed opportunities** in the country since the dawn of independence. To list a few of them:

1. Not making Panchayati Raj as an integral part of the governance system in the Constitution.

2. Not following up the Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report to its logical conclusion as was done in Maharashtra, Gujarat, etc.
3. Just a short-lived euphoria after the Ashoka Mehta Committee Report which was implemented only by West Bengal and Karnataka.
4. Failure to translate the mid-80s political discourse on power to the people into practical action.
5. Weak follow up of the 73rd Amendment in the mid-90s especially in the context of political instability.
6. Failure to see the potential of local planning under MGNREGA.
7. The duality between the MoPR and the MoRD since 2004 with low resource allocations to the former.
8. Lack of political signals to reinforce the MoPR decision to introduce GPDP.

But there is enough reason to seize the moment now, reflecting on past failures and inaction. One has to repose faith in the virtuous circle by nurturing beacons to develop a hub and spoke model of practical capacity building. Once Panchayats start performing, it would be impossible to ignore them politically.

Another likely opportunity is to make the 16th Finance Commission understand the value of Panchayats especially in delivery of public services so that it could move further in strengthening Panchayats in keeping with the tradition of the earlier Finance Commissions.

Finally, with elections to Parliament on the anvil, unfortunately, a lot of empty noise is being made drowning real issues. Still, strengthening Panchayats could be pushed forward as a viable agenda in the manifesto of different political formations, if concerted action is taken by those who have faith in Local Governments, cutting across ideological, professional and other barriers.

Three Decades of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution and the Journey of Panchayat System in Karnataka



N. Sivanna

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Context

The meaningful and impactful journey of decentralization began in India effectively with the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, which opened up a new chapter in the history of Panchayati Raj. What was termed as an '*experiment*' has

gradually institutionalized itself firmly over the decades, although village panchayats existed right from the Vedic times in the 2nd millennium BCE and performed as essential units of village/local administration. '*Gram Swaraj*' was also a dream and vision of Mahatma Gandhi.

Several committees were appointed in the post-independence years, whose recommendations towards greater decentralized governance and planning were formalized and contributed to the passing of the historic 73rd CAA. The twin objectives of the 73rd CAA has been to ensure local 'economic development' and 'social justice' through Panchayati Raj Institutions (hereafter PRIs). The institutional journey of three decades of PRIs in India is the most fascinating and challenging one, in the context of ensuring responsive local governance and delivering developmental outcomes.

Decentralized governance mechanisms have evolved with the twin objectives of (i) engaging people in decision-making process and (ii) delivering public goods and services effectively. The basic premise of decentralization rests upon the 'Principle of *Subsidiarity*' according to which a particular

function or activity can be done at a government system or level closest to the people, in a given administrative locality. And such governance is always carried out keeping in view the parameters and issues that arise from the theory of decentralization, such as access to decision-making, political and financial autonomy, accountability, integrated area development planning framework, and sustainability.

The Indian Situation

The Constitution of India clearly provides for a decentralized governance framework, primarily through its Directive Principles of State Policy (hereafter DPSP) enunciated in Articles 36-51. The objectives of the DPSP become much clearer when we realize that the States have to enable the Panchayats to function as institutions of self-government with the twin goals of 'economic development' and 'social justice'. The addition of the 11th Schedule to the Constitution, that consists of 29 functions to be devolved to the local governments, has operationally defined the concept of decentralized governance with greater clarity in the Indian context. This has shifted the paradigm of the Indian Republic from being a 'representative democracy' to that of a 'participative democracy', with the Gram Sabha as the forum for deliberations and discussions in local decision-making process. Thus, the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in 1992-93 has widened the political and institutional space with an expanding vision of involving citizens in governance with particular reference to

women, SCs, STs, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and other weaker sections of society.

Situation in Karnataka

The State of Karnataka is unique in that there have been sincere and frequent efforts by the successive governments to amend and redesign the PRIs, based on a number of critical reviews and reflections. Amendments to 1993 Act have been made on the basis of the recommendations made by various committees, formed for the purpose since 1995. This has been done, keeping in view the broad framework of the 73rd Amendment and the Act that ensued. It is significant to note that Karnataka was the first State to pass a new legislation in 1993, viz., The Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993. The Act provides for a three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj with Zilla Panchayats (at the District level), Taluk Panchayats (at the Taluk/Block level) and Gram Panchayats (at the Village level). In its Preamble, the 1993 Act, recognizing Panchayats as “Units of Local-Self Governance”, resolves to promote greater participation of people and ensures more effective implementation of rural development programmes.

Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993

The Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993, which is now rechristened as ‘**The Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993**’ came into force from May 18, 1993. All the three levels of panchayats are directly elected bodies. To facilitate and motivate people’s participation in governance and planning, the amended Act provided for the constitution of ‘*Habitation Sabha*’, ‘*Ward Sabha*’ and ‘*Gram Sabha*’, terming or labelling them as “Units of Gram Swaraj”, along with ‘*Mahila Sabhas*’ and ‘*Makkala Sabhas*’. The vision of the system lies in promoting sustainable and inclusive growth along with empowerment of PRIs for achieving overall rural development.

One of the salient features of the 1993 Act, as compared with the previous Acts, is that it has provided reservation not only to membership seats but also to executive positions – of the Adhyakshas and Upadhyakshas. It has provided reservation to women (fifty per cent in each category of seats), Backward Classes (in the proportion of one-third of total seats) and to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (together with a minimum of 18 per cent) in proportion to their population. The reservation of half of the seats to Women in Panchayats is a strong precursor to gendered governance determined to realize *gender equality in political participation and leadership*. These steps have played a critical role in breaking the deep-rooted gendered, social and political inequalities prevalent against some sections of population, by providing an enabling environment for them to participate as local political leaders in decision-making for granting benefits and in policy processes at grassroots level.

Any attempt at bringing about decentralization reforms must aim at including or addressing the three critical dimensions of decentralization viz., **functions, functionaries and finances** in order to achieve desired development outcomes. Devolution is considered as the most important dimension of decentralization; however, it has to be noted that only political motivation is not sufficient for decentralized development. Along with political will, administrative efficiency and,

most importantly, financial stability to run local affairs/administration is very critical for the success of decentralization. In fact, the extent to which national and sub-national governments devolve finances to local government institutions determines/defines the real intention of political moves behind introducing decentralization reforms.

Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions in Karnataka



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Ministry of Rural Development

(Extracts from the Valedictory Address delivered at the National Seminar on 'Gram Swaraj and Panchayati Raj' at Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag on 1st September, 2023)

At the time of making our Constitution, Gandhiji's insistence on Gram Swaraj was effectively vetoed by Dr. Ambedkar who felt that the village at that time was "a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism". However, a compromise was worked out and Article 40, which merely stated that the State shall take steps in due course to organize village panchayats and enable them to function as units of self-government, got included under the Directive Principles of State Policy. Four decades later, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) got their recognition as the third tier of governance through the Constitution 73rd Amendment, 1992.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to that Amendment stated that "in the light of the experience in the last forty years and in view of the shortcomings which have been observed, it is considered that there is an imperative need to enshrine in the Constitution certain basic and essential features of PRIs to impart certainty, continuity and strength". Thirty years have passed since the Seventy Third Amendment came into existence. Have we imparted strength to the PRIs as hoped for in 1992 or the shortcomings noted then still continue to weaken the PRIs?

In every discussion on Panchayati Raj, I hear elected panchayat representatives complaining about inadequate devolution of powers, functions and finances to the PRIs. The only positive development after 1992

seems to be that the PRIs have come to stay in many States including Karnataka as a delivery mechanism for development, but not as institutions of self-governance. What can be done to make them the basic tier of governance in our federal system? How do we convince the political leaders at the higher levels that their power is not really lost or reduced, if they empower the PRIs? How do we convince the local leaders that many things can be done at the village level even without money?

I believe power is something which is never given. It has to be taken. Democracy is a game of numbers. One single Panchayat cannot fight for power. If the Panchayats at each level in each State can form a union of their own, they will get the strength to fight for their powers and functions. Basing their demands on the Principle of Subsidiarity, the Panchayats should fight for allocation of functions and along with them the funds and functionaries to execute those functions.

One major challenge the PRIs have to face is the prevalent political environment in several States. Weak Governments at the State level totally dependent on the MLAs who do not wish to share power with the PRIs, will not be able to empower PRIs, unless they have the political will. We are in an election year. Political parties have to go to the people shortly with their election manifestos. Political leaders who champion the cause of decentralization need to take the lead and ensure that strengthening PRIs gets included prominently in their party

manifesto. If possible, they can persuade their leaders to suggest a time limit within which the functions, powers and finances would be transferred to the PRIs in respect of all the items listed out in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Policy making in India, even in respect of the subjects that can be allocated to the PRIs, is currently in the hands of the Union and State Governments. To ensure participation of the people in decision making it would be ideal if the Governments consult the Panchayat representatives/ their unions also before making any policy announcements. Such an assurance can also be given in the manifestos of the political parties.

A few other challenges including lack of adequate data and resources at Panchayat levels to facilitate bottom-up planning, inadequate capacities among the elected representatives, particularly from the weaker sections and women as well as the bureaucracy at the Gram Panchayat level can be effectively dealt with through demand-based capacity building of the elected representatives and the local bureaucracy. That is an area where the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and institutions like the Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University (KSRDPRU) have a major role to play.

I would appeal to KSRDPRU to take up the responsibility of building up the capacities of the Chairpersons of the district level Panchayats at least, so that they can effectively perform their leadership roles. The University can also take the responsibility of preparing the curriculum for capacity building at the intermediate and Gram Panchayat levels in consultation with

the stakeholders. The State can then identify competent NGOs and State Institutes to impart necessary training to the elected representatives periodically on that basis.

I would like to assign two more roles to the KSRDPRU. First is dissemination of best practices among the PRIs. This can be done by effectively engaging their students to scout for such practices and documenting them for adaption by others. Second is to identify young leaders at the local levels (including their students) and build them up to become future leaders at all levels of governance. We need younger participants to carry on the Panchayati Raj movement.

Thirty-five years is not a long period in the history of a State and course corrections are always possible to strengthen the PRIs. At the Gram Panchayat level, we need to conduct Gram Sabhas regularly, make them meaningful through data col

lection and social audit. They should carry out simple regulatory functions like issue of birth, death, marriage and caste certificates so that people will find a visit to their Panchayat useful. PRIs should manage natural resources within their territory and can also become local production centres. In effect, decentralization through local governments should become a popular people's movement and not another centrally sponsored scheme.

Administering a large country like India is impossible without decentralization. We have successfully created the necessary structures through the Constitution Amendment. We need to consciously empower them, so that ordinary citizens of this country can enjoy the fruits of independence.



Communication Pulse - Probe, Reflect, Act



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander

Executive Director
Public Affairs Foundation

Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at all Ages

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic became a boon for some and bane for others. It not only disrupted normal life but made everyone sit up and face the “unknown” illness. It not only disrupted regular health services but also increased anxiety and halted government services for several diseases. The departments concerned with health in Karnataka State include Health and Family Welfare ([HFW](#)), Home, [Social Justice & Empowerment](#) and Revenue ([DMC](#)).

Context

Broadly, the challenges for officials are to provide medical facilities and medicines at free or affordable prices to the people. Effective communication is key to achieving progress as it helps raise awareness, engage stakeholders and drive action. The following are some of the challenges and approaches that government officers can use to address communication challenges related to SDG 3:

Challenge 1: Need for a Comprehensive Communication Strategy



Approach:

- Create a well-defined communication strategy
- Outline goals
- Identify target audiences
- Develop key messages
- Select appropriate channels for disseminating information
- Ensure that the strategy aligns with the State's ideology.

Challenge 2: Be prepared crisis communication



Approach:

- Develop a crisis communication plan
- Ensure that people are kept informed on the various plans-emergency response measures, vaccination campaigns and safety protocols

Challenge 3: Understanding social media platforms



Approach:

- Use social media platforms to disseminate information
- Engage with people via online platforms for feedback and participation

Challenge 4: Transparency and Accountability



Approach:

- Share information on budgets, expenditures and outcomes by promoting transparency
- Build trust by being accountable for the progress made.

Challenge 5: Engaging Community



Approach:

- Develop outreach programmes / initiatives
- Introduce activities to involve the communities' citizens in health and well-being initiatives
- Invite their input, understand their concerns and involve them in decision-making processes.

Challenge 8: Monitoring and Evaluation



Approach:

- Assess the impact of communication efforts as a continuous effort
- Gather feedback from the communities
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different communication channels and messages. Amend strategy as required based on the results.

Challenge 6: Building capacity of communities



Approach:

- Introduce training programmes on effective communication techniques for government officials and employees
- Prepare them with skills required to communicate complex health-related information in a clear and simple manner.

Challenge 9: Language and Cultural Sensitivity



Approach:

- Understand the linguistic and cultural diversity
- Communicate in multiple languages
- Use appropriate and sensitive messaging approach.

Challenge 7: Empowering local leaders



Approach:

- Work with local leaders and community influencers to disseminate health information
- Encourage behavior change at grassroots levels.

Challenge 10: Reporting



Approach:

- Publish regular reports on progress made by Government
- Share success stories and highlight areas where improvement is required
- Use data visualisation tools to present health-related statistics and progress reports in an easily understandable format.

Conclusion

Having a well-planned and defined communication strategy is vital and more so identifying challenges

methodically and finding actionable solutions ensures that health and well-being information reaches and resonates communities.

Interview

Dr. Annapoorna interviewed Ashok Khemka in Voices of change in Asia - new series: What are the policies and change processes shaping the continent?

The discussion includes developing the courage to do what is right: <https://shorturl.at/iITX7>



Report of Branch Events-1

Report of 2-Day National Seminar on

Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj: A Journey in the State of Karnataka



Seen in the pic above are the dignitaries after lighting the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the National Seminar. (From R to L) are **Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**, IAS (Retd.), former Chief Secretary of Karnataka, Chairman of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission of Karnataka and Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch of IIPA; **Prof. Vishnukanth Chatpalli**, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of KSRDPR University; **Shri H.K. Patil**, Hon'ble Minister for Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation and Tourism, Government of Karnataka; **Shri M.R. Ekantappa**, Director, Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, GoK; **Dr. S.S. Meenakshisundaram**, IAS (Retd.), former Principal Secretary, RDPR, GoK; and **Dr. Basavaraj Lakkannavar**, Registrar, KSRDPR University, Gadag.

The **Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj** of the **Government of Karnataka**, the **Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA** and **Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University** organized a two-day **National Seminar on "Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj - A Journey in the State of Karnataka"** in the premises of KSRDPR University at Gadag, Karnataka on **1st and 2nd of September 2023**.

The seminar was inaugurated by **Shri H.K Patil**, Hon'ble Minister for Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation and Tourism, Government of Karnataka. He referred to the landmarks in the 30-year journey in the implementation of the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution in

Karnataka, to realize Mahatma Gandhi's vision of *Gram Swaraj*. As compared to other States, Karnataka is in the forefront in implementing the provisions of the 73rd Amendment. The State Government is taking steps to further empower Panchayat Raj Institutions, he stated.

Shri. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd.), former Chief Secretary of Karnataka, Chairman of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission of Karnataka and Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch of IIPA, referred to three areas in Panchayat Raj which needed strengthening in Karnataka: (1) Empowerment of Ward Sabhas; (2) Empowerment of Stakeholder Committees like the Anganwadi, Health and Nutrition, Lake Development and

School Committees; and (3) Deepening of administrative decentralization.

Shri M.R. Ekantappa, Director, Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, Government of Karnataka referred to the many innovations initiated in Karnataka like Panchatantra I and II, the E-Swaraj Gram Portal, the Directive Principles of Panchayat Policy and Rural Libraries being converted to Knowledge Centres, but several challenges still need to be addressed.

Vice-Chancellor of KSRDPR University, **Prof. Vishnukant Chatpalli** stated that the University was ready to take charge of the responsibility of being a hand-holder/guide to the nation in deepening democracy and the Panchayat Raj system.

The two-day National Seminar had three **Panel Discussions** on the following themes:

1. Journey of Panchayat Raj Institutions – Pre- and Post-73rd Amendment;
2. Devolution of Functions, Functionaries and Finances; and
3. Panchayat Raj Institutions – Challenges, Prospects and Reforms.

Experts who chaired and participated in the deliberations included **Dr. S.S. Meenakshisundaram**, IAS (Retd.), **Shri M.K. Kempe Gowda**, **Dr. Prakash Bhat**, **Shri Ganesh Prasad**, **Dr. Gopinath Reddy**, **Dr. Ashok Dalwai**, **Shri S.M.**

Vijay Anand, IAS (Retd.), **Dr. K. Gireesan**, **Shri V.Y. Ghorpade**, **Dr. Jos Chatukulam**, **Dr. V.N. Alok**, **Shri C. Narayanaswamy**, **Dr. G. Palanithurai**, **Shri D.R. Patil**, **Shri Pramod Hedge**, **Dr. N. Sivanna**, **Dr. Devendra Babu** and **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**.

Seven **Technical Sessions** were held on the following themes:

1. Journey of Panchayat Raj Institutions – Pre- and Post-73rd Amendment;
2. Decentralized Planning and Governance and their Implications for Economic Development and Social Justice;
3. People's Participation and Deepening Democracy;
4. E-Governance and its Implications for Accountability and Transparency;
5. Native Initiatives and Best Practices;
6. Devolution of Functions, Functionaries and Finances; and
7. Empowerment of Women and Weaker Sections.

A total of 42 papers were presented in the technical sessions. **Dr. N. Sivanna** and **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Hon. Professors at KSRDPR University coordinated the two-day National Seminar. **Mr. Praveen Ankalkoti**, **Dr. Santosh Kumar** and **Dr. Shridhar Hadimani** were the Local Coordinators. The University proposes to bring out the proceedings and papers presented at the seminar in the form of a publication.



Report of Branch Events-2

Memorandum of Understanding between Karnataka Regional Branch of IIPA and St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru

Seen in the pic below is **Mr. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**, Chairman, IIPA-KRB (second from left) with **Rev. Dr. Vincent Lobo**, SJ, Vice-Chancellor, St. Joseph's University (second from right), after signing the MoU between the two institutions on 19th September 2023. At extreme right is the Registrar of SJU, **Dr. Melwin Colaco**. At extreme left is the Secretary of IIPA-KRB, **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**.



The **Karnataka Regional Branch** of the IIPA has signed **Memoranda of Understanding** with the following institutions:

1. **Ramaiah Centre for Public Policy**, Bengaluru
2. **Institute for Social and Economic Change**, Bengaluru
3. **Jain (Deemed-to-be) University**, Bengaluru
4. **Public Affairs Centre**, Bengaluru
5. **University Law College**, Bangalore University, Bengaluru
6. **BMS College of Law**, Bengaluru
7. **Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University**, Gadag
8. **St. Joseph's University**, Bengaluru



Report of Branch Events-3

Prelude Conference on 'New Paradigms of Governance'

The **Karnataka Regional Branch** of the IIPA (IIPA-KRB), in collaboration with the Department of Public Policy of **Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS)**, Bengaluru, organized its **Prelude Conference** on the theme, '**New Paradigms of Governance**' on 22nd September 2023 in the Council Hall of Ramaiah Medical College, Bengaluru.

The **Inaugural Address** was delivered by **Mr. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**, IAS (Retd.), former Chief Secretary of Karnataka, Chairman of Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-II and Chairman of IIPA-KRB. The **Keynote Address** was delivered by **Dr. Govind Kadambi**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, RUAS. The **Presidential Address** was delivered by **Mr. S. Ramanathan**, IAS (Retd.), Chairman-Emeritus of IIPA-KRB. **Dr. Aradhana Talwar** of the Dept of Public Policy, RUAS welcomed the gathering. **Prof. Madhwaraj**, Treasurer, IIPA-KRB proposed a vote of thanks.

The Technical Sessions had the following Lead Speakers and Discussants:

1. **New Public Administration: Dr. Priyanca Mathur**, Head, Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education, Jain University, Bengaluru.

Discussant: Dr. L. Aruna, Head, School of Law, RUAS, Bengaluru.

2. **New Public Management: Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Hon. Professor, Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag.

Discussant: Prof. A.M. Prasad, Professor of Practice, School of Law, RUAS, Bengaluru.

3. **New Public Governance and International Relations: Dr. Aradhana Talwar**, Asst. Professor,

Dept. of Public Policy, RUAS, Bengaluru.

Discussant: Prof. M.J. Vinod, Dept. of International Studies, Political Science and History, Christ University, Bengaluru.

Speakers at the Inaugural Session referred to policies, strategies, programmes and institutional templates as Public Governance Paradigms in order to highlight the existence of relatively coherent and comprehensive norms and ideas about how to govern, organize and lead Public Administration. They emphasized that it is important to discuss New Governance Paradigms, as they play an important role in attempting to restructure and reorganize Public Administration, change its interactions with the citizens and civil society, and transform how public policies, regulations and services are produced, delivered and evaluated.

The three Lead Speakers at the Technical Sessions referred to each of the **New Paradigms of Governance**, namely, New Public Administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance, the concepts, contexts, implications and challenges. The Discussants highlighted a few issues in the papers, which were followed by an active discussion.

At the end of the day, there as a broad consensus that Governance for peaceful, inclusive and responsive Human Development should lead States and development actors to vigorously pursue the following:

1. Focus on strengthening institutions and human resource capacities at all levels;

2. Support a state-society compact grounded in constitutionalism, access to justice, equality and human rights;
3. Assist public institutions to become effective, responsive, accountable and representative through e-governance and other means, foster public-private partnerships, prevent corruption and promote the transparent and sustainable management of public goods and financial and natural resources;
4. Support capacity for cross-sectoral, integrated and inclusive policy-making at all levels; and
5. Ensure the strengthening of citizen participation and civil society organizations' engagement, to ensure accountability and transparency.

Two publications of the Branch were released during the Inauguration of the Prelude Conference. They are:

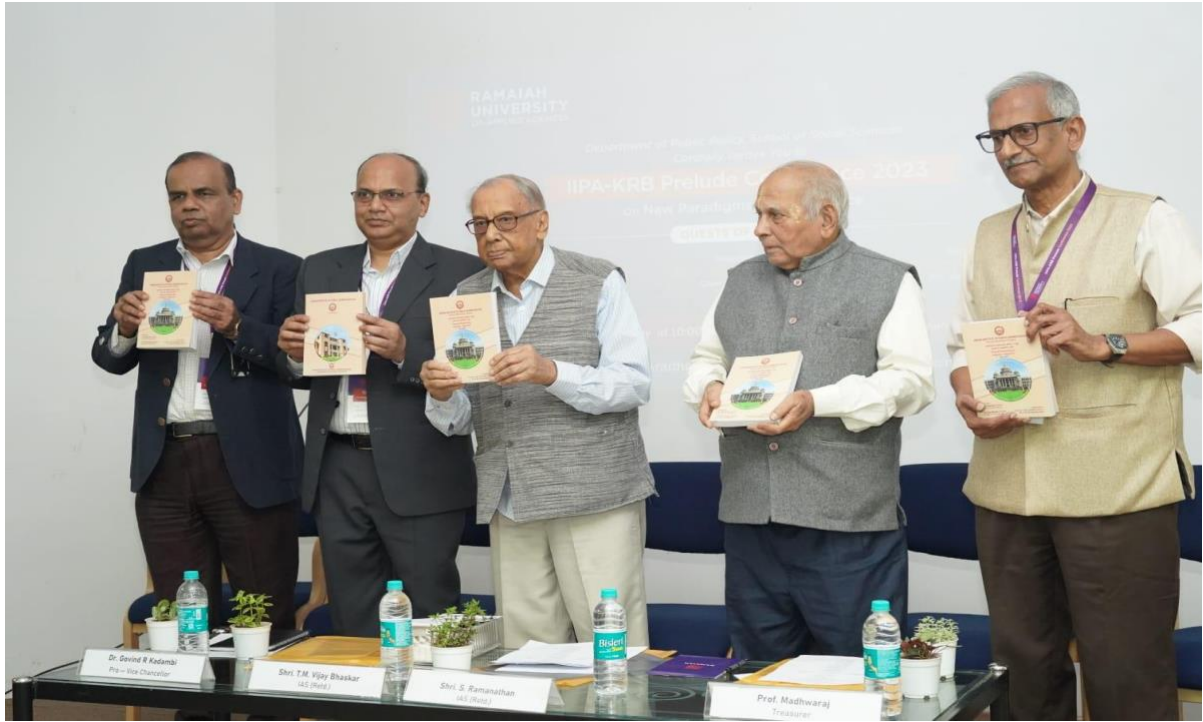
Compendium-3 of the 12 printed issues of the **Virtual Newsletters** of the Branch titled, '*Vidyunmana Suddipatra*' (from Vol.3 No.27 to Vol.4 No.38).

'Governance and Development in Karnataka', the proceedings and policy recommendations made at a seminar jointly organized by IIPA-KRB and ISEC in April 2022, edited by Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar and Dr. Anil Kumar.

The Prelude Conference was followed by the holding of the **Annual General Meeting** of the Branch, where the Annual Report and the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2022-23 were discussed and approved.

Seen below are some pics of the Prelude Conference; of the release of a publication of the Branch; and of the Life Members of the Branch who were in attendance.







Report of Dharwad Local Branch Event

Report of Prelude Conference on *New Paradigms of Governance*



The **IIPA Local Branch, Dharwad**, in collaboration with the **Department of Political Science and Public Administration of Karnatak University, Dharwad (KUD)** organized the Prelude Conference on *New Paradigms of Governance* on 26th September 2023. The programme began with an invocation. **Dr. Jangubhai**, Joint Secretary, IIPA Local Branch, Dharwad welcomed the guests. **Dr. V.R. Betgar**, Secretary, IIPA Local Branch, Dharwad introduced the guests of the inaugural function.

Dr. B.M. Ratnakar, Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science and Public Administration inaugurated the Conference by watering the plant. Dr. Ratnakar, in his inaugural address, outlined the political developments of a globalizing world focusing on LPG in the 1990s. He explained the development of the concepts of *Governance* and *Good Governance* based on World Bank Reports. The primary concern of *Good Governance* was to face the challenges of the 1990s and improve the overall performance of the government. Dr. Ratnakar viewed technology-enabled e-governance as delivering better public services to the people of our country.

Dr. Vijaykumar N. Torgal, retired Senior KAS Officer as the Chief Guest in his

address highlighted the significance of pillars of *Good Governance* namely civil society, the rule of law, the proactive role of people, transparency, accountability, equity, inclusiveness, and responsiveness. He viewed that these strengthen the voice of people in public policy-making contributing to achieving justice and strong democracy. He held the view that constitutional morality plays an important role in ensuring *Good Governance*. He appealed to youths to take active participation in governance. On the whole, Dr. Torgal shared his experience of solving the problems of people in governance. **Dr. M.G. Khan**, Adjunct Professor of Political Science spoke about organization, management, corporate governance, and global governance.

Technical Sessions

Dr. Jagadish Gouda, Teaching Assistant, Department of Public Administration, KUD welcomed and introduced the resource persons. Dr. Alkanand Shringere of Goa University, Goa, and Dr. Rajesh Hittanagi of Karnataka State Law University, Hubli were the Resource Persons at the technical sessions.

Dr. Alkanand Shringere began her presentation on '*New Public Management: Change and Continuity*' by elucidating how

the drawbacks of traditional Public Administration (Weberian Public Administration) were responsible for the emergence of New Public Management. NPM reforms in governance suggested improving the performance of the government highlighting the 3Es - Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness while the Public Choice Theory and Neo-Taylorism provided the theoretical basis for NPM. Further, Dr. Shringare focused on the fact that though NPM is considered a paradigm shift in Public Administration, it is unable to replace entirely the traditional system of administration. The major shifts noticed are privatization, corporate management, and adoption of technology, specifically digitization in governance. Besides, Dr. Shringare explained how Artificial Intelligence contributes to ensuring *Good Governance*. However, New Public Management should not subordinate humanistic concerns, she concluded, emphasizing the important role of public sensitivity in public policy decision-making.

Dr. Rajesh Hittanagi presented a paper entitled '*An Exploration of Governance from a Legal Perspective*'. He highlighted the significance of the role of laws in Governance and Good Governance. The Right to Information Act is closely linked to Good Governance since it upholds pillars of Good Governance. He focused on the active participation of people in public affairs. Artificial Intelligence with humanistic concerns can play a significant role in Good Governance from the perspective of serving the interest of the people.

Students, members of IIPA, and faculty members of Political Science and Public Administration interacted with resource persons.

Dr. S.S. Patagundi, Chairman, IIPA Local Branch, Dharwad gave his Presidential remarks. **Prof. S.S. Hiremath**, Treasurer, IIPA Local Branch, Dharwad proposed a vote of thanks.



Branch Members' Writings in the Popular Media

An Ambitious Mapping of an India of Multiplicity and Co-Existence



Uma Mahadevan-Dasgupta in *The Hindu* dt. 11 August 2023

To map the journey of a land and its people across a timeframe of 12,000 years would be an ambitious project. To do so for a country as vast and diverse as India is a massive enterprise. Yet this is exactly what the editors of *The Indians: Histories of a Civilization* have set out to do. The book is made up of more than a hundred chapters written by scholars and experts, and arranged across seven sections. The structure of the book itself points to the immense multiplicity of India.

Read more at:

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/india-civilisation-people-world-humans-migration-civilization>

The Yearly Grind



Despite the reforms, paying income tax dues and filing returns still give sleepless nights

Thayyil Sethumadhavan, IA&AS (Rtd.)

Formerly Principal Accountant-General, Madhya Pradesh

The Hindu, dt. 13 August 2023

Come July, most income tax-payers start getting butterflies in their stomachs. It is the season for paying self-assessment tax and filing income tax returns for the 'previous year'. Even the most meticulous tax-payer will spend sleepless nights till the process is completed successfully. No doubt, the various tax reforms implemented over time by zealous Finance Ministers and conscientious income tax authorities have made the process comparatively simpler; but the inherent anxiety and tension remain despite the well-meaning reforms and technological advancements initiated by the Income Tax department.

Read more at:

<https://flipboard.com/article/the-yearly-grind/f-2fad6dbc3f%2Fthehindu.com>

As Tempers Rage Outside, Quiet Flows the Cauvery



Dr. A Ravindra, IAS (Retd.)
Former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka

Deccan Herald dt. 18 September 2023

The Cauvery Water Monitoring Authority has ordered Karnataka to release 5,000 cusecs of water per day to Tamil Nadu. This has led to significant concern among the farmers in the Cauvery basin in Karnataka. This is a recurring issue that happens every time rain fails and reservoir levels drop to critical levels. I was a witness to a more severe instance of this in 2002, during my tenure as the Chief Secretary.

Read more at: <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/as-tempers-rage-outside-quiet-flows-the-cauvery-2690257>

The Stellar Scientist and his Quest for the Stars



Gurucharan Gollerkeri, IAS (Rtd.)
Director, School of Social Sciences
MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (MSRUAS)
Bangalore.

in *Deccan Herald* dt. 17 September 2023

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar was known to the world as Chandra, which literally means 'luminous' in Sanskrit. He was true to his name and was one of the 20th century's most prominent astrophysicists, combining physics and astronomy. He also had an abiding interest in literature, and from a philosophic perspective, his life represents the Shakespearean dictum that "Men at some times are masters of their fates." His contributions to the development of science spanned astrophysics, physics, and applied mathematics. In 1983, Chandra received the Nobel Prize in Physics (with the nuclear astrophysicist W A Fowler) for his work on the physical processes involved in the structure and evolution of stars.

Read more at:

<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/the-stellar-scientist-and-his-quest-for-the-stars-2689567>

The Pandemic and the Need for Civilizational Introspection

D. Jeevan Kumar in *Deccan Herald* dt. 3 September 2023

Covid-19 was easily the greatest humanitarian disaster in recent history. Those of us who have managed to survive would rather write it off as a nightmare that deserves to be forgotten. But should we? Mander lists a few reasons why it is our highest public duty to

not forget. We must remember the suffering it unleashed was not *caused* by the coronavirus. It was instead the inexorable consequence of bad Public Policy choices. We must remember so that we do not allow such a disaster to overwhelm us again.

Read more at:

<https://www.deccanherald.com/features/books/theres-no-looking-away-2669238>



Karnataka in the News

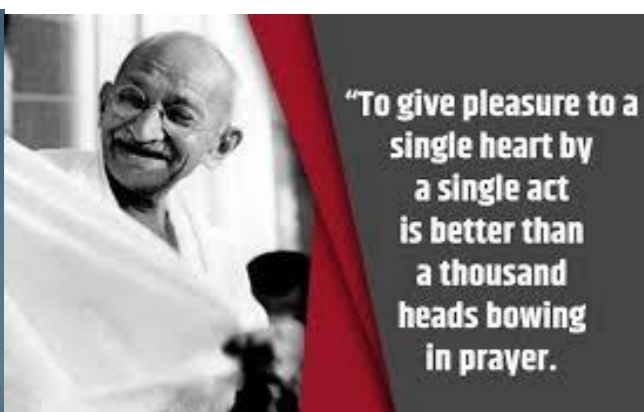
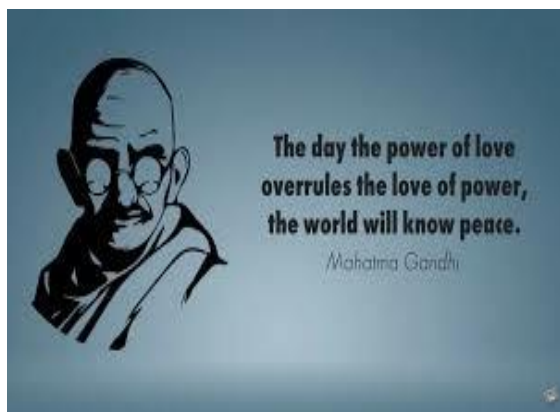
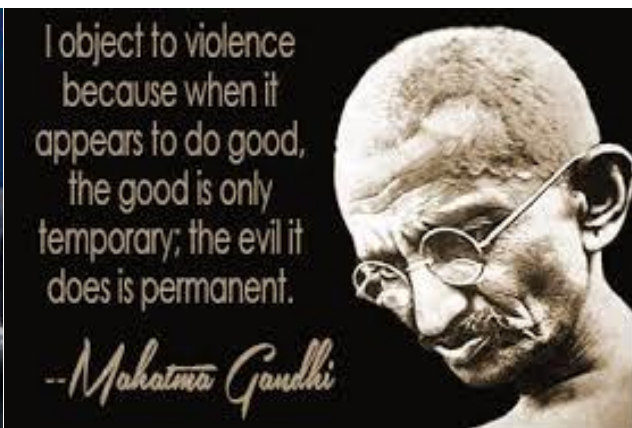
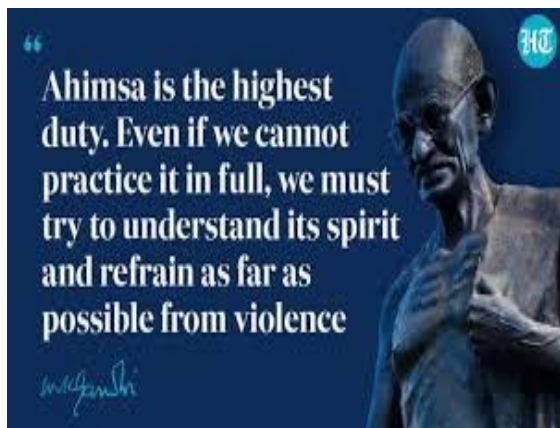
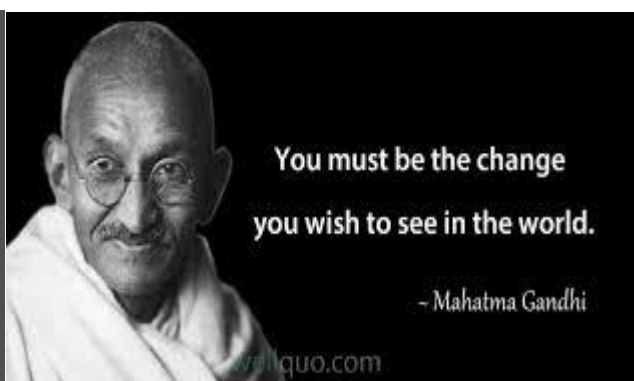
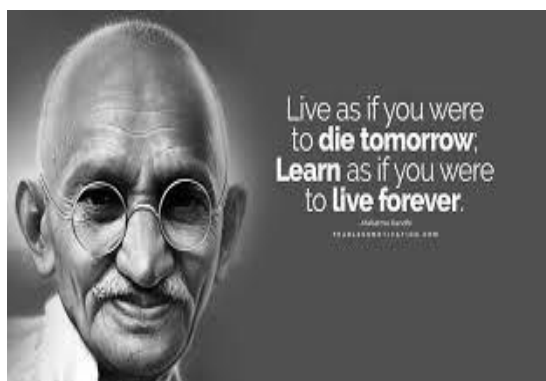
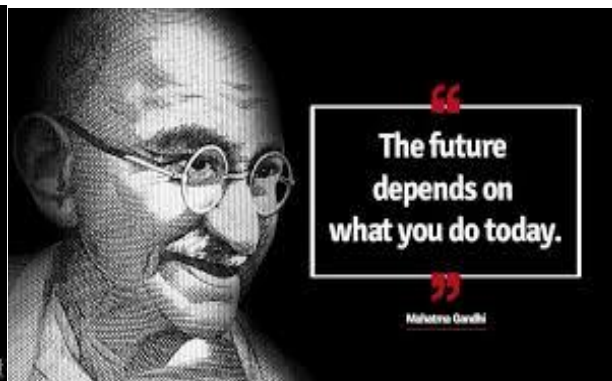
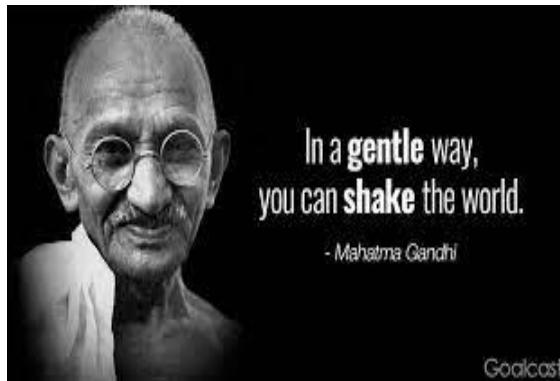


Miscellany





Food for Thought





IIPA-KRB Virtual Newsletter

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