

# Reviewing the Performance of the Government of Karnataka

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To understand people's perceptions about the functioning of their representatives in the legislature, DAKSH, a civil society organisation in Karnataka, conducted a survey in October and November 2009 across 218 legislative assembly constituencies. The results from the survey reflect a stark gap between people's expectations and their perceptions of the performances of the representatives. A summary of the report.

**D**AKSH, a registered civil society organisation in Bangalore, conducted a survey of democracy and governance in Karnataka as a way for a citizen's group to engage with the democratic structures and processes at the state level. It focused on the assessment of the overall functioning of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, which came to power in June 2008, and encompassed issues pertaining to the period between June 2008 and November 2009. This is a summary of DAKSH's report.

The data has been collected from the government via the Right to Information (RTI) Act, annual reports of various departments, newspaper reports and topical reports, reviews of various schemes and programmes by select national agencies and non-governmental organisations, and inputs from experts and persons working on a range of issues. The exercise to assess the functioning of the government consisted of the following three key reviews: (1) analyses of performance of the members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) in the legislature; (2) review of administration, policies and programmes; and (3) a survey of citizens' perceptions of important issues and performance of elected representatives.

## MLAs' Performance

The legislative assembly met for three sessions comprising 46 days until July 2009. In addition, there was a special session on agriculture in September 2009. The assembly considered and passed less than 30 statutes and most of the statutes were financial in nature and no significant policy reform was effected in the form of legislation.

The attendance records for each MLA are not reliable indicators of the actual presence and participation of MLAs. The assembly lacks proper mechanisms to record such attendance and there is need for the Karnataka assembly to follow the

process instituted by Parliament for recording and disseminating such information.

As per the attendance records of the MLAs, 12 have a 100% attendance record, 132 have a record of more than 75%, 32 have a record between 50% and 75% and nine have a record of less than 50%. There are three members who attended the sessions for less than 15 days.

The data on the questions asked is more revealing. There are 78 MLAs who have never asked a question, whether starred or unstarred<sup>1</sup> during the 46 days. This constitutes nearly 40% of the MLAs for whom records are kept. A further 31 MLAs have asked less than five questions each. Only 35 MLAs have asked 20 or more questions; and only nine of these 31 have asked 50 or more questions. Only a single MLA has asked more than 100 questions!

More questions have been asked in relation to the departments of public works, urban development and municipality, social welfare, revenue, rural development and panchayati raj, primary and secondary education and health and family welfare than other departments.

## Review of Administration

This section contains a broad review of some policies, programmes and processes by which the government functions and an assessment of the impact of the government's administration on the larger public.

The format is based on asking a number of questions to which answers are drawn from the performance records of the government.

What have been the major achievements of the government for the period?

– In an attempt to streamline administration, the government has sanctioned the formation of 43 new talukas and one new district (Yadgir). This is an important process that will facilitate decentralised administration. The formation of Yadgir as a new district, bifurcated from Gulbarga district, was long overdue. Its formation and allocation of funds to the new district should see an improvement in life conditions and administration in the otherwise very poor region.

– Establishment of and activating a commission (the High Power Committee to Implement the D M Nanjundappa

DAKSH is grateful to all those who supported this endeavour. A copy of the detailed report is available on the DAKSH web site ([www.dakshindia.org](http://www.dakshindia.org)).

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Commission's Recommendations) to oversee the implementation of the special development plan for backward talukas.

– Establishment of additional common entrance test (CET) counselling at Hubli and Gulbarga. This has eased the burden on several thousands of people who have had to travel to Bangalore for the CET counselling.

– Establishment of Janaspandana programmes to facilitate administration and development works at *hobli* (cluster of adjoining villages) and village levels. According to the official rules, every last Saturday of the month is to be devoted to open and public reviews of all programmes. People's grievances are to be addressed immediately. This is being done in some areas, but its conduct in all the hoblis and its frequency need to be improved.

– The hosting and management of the unveiling of the statues of Sarvajna and Tiruvalluvar in Chennai and Bangalore, respectively, have been a positive contribution of the BJP government. By managing dissent of varied regional linguistic groups, the government facilitated the

unveiling of these statues, thereby contributing to regional and inter-group harmony.

The state has allocated a sum of Rs 16,613 lakh in the 2009-10 budget to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as its contribution to the programme, and has therefore, met the requirements of contributing 35% of the state's share.

– Free bus passes have been provided to students up to the high school level, thereby facilitating travel to schools in rural areas.

– Based on an increased fund allocation from the central government, the state has also enhanced funds and programmes for the department of social welfare which caters primarily to the social (educational) needs of disadvantaged caste groups. Altogether 12 new programmes have been initiated and the overall budget for the department has increased. Therefore, a Hostel Management Committee has been constituted to oversee the functioning of nearly 5,000 hostels and the Best Hostel Award also has been set up. The state government has also initiated recruitment of teachers in both government and

aided colleges. This is significant as all recruitments for full-time faculty had been stopped for several years.


*What have been the financial priorities of the government?*

Despite its election time and manifesto promises to support agriculture, the BJP government has not prioritised the needs of the rural and agrarian sectors. Urban, infrastructure and commercial interests receive more financial allocation than rural, agricultural and social sectors.

In its first full budget (for 2009-2010), the BJP government made the following allocations:

#### Urban vs Rural Financial Allocations:

The outlay for rural development (Rs 1,070.27 lakh) is 4% of the total plan. The outlay on urban development (Rs 4,162.40 lakh) is 16% of the total plan. Agriculture and allied activities receive a total of 6% of the budget or a total of Rs 1,517.21 lakh. Transport receives 14% of the budget accounting for Rs 3,758.70 lakh. The largest increments over the previous budget (136.9%) have been for commerce and industries.



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## N.C.E.R.T.

### Doctoral Fellowship 2010

Applications are invited for the award of 10 NCERT Doctoral Fellowships in the field of education and other disciplines directly related to education. The fellowships are intended for young aspirants to pursue doctoral work in a recognized university/research institute of their choice. Young scholars from different disciplinary perspectives will be encouraged to research the field of education.

Fellowship will be given for research in the priority areas emerging from the concerns expressed in National Curriculum Framework 2005. Broadly, these areas are as follows: (1) Education of the Disadvantaged, (2) Classroom processes and practices, (3) Curriculum areas, (4) Education for peace and (5) Psycho-social development of children.

**Eligibility:** (1) Good academic record with atleast 55% at the Master's degree level, (2) Candidates should not be more than 35 years of age as on the last date of receiving their application, (3) Candidates registered for Ph.D. degree in a recognized university or working toward their Ph.D. registration are eligible to apply.


**Application Procedure:** Applications should be made in the prescribed format, which along with the information brochure, can be downloaded from the NCERT website: [www.ncert.nic.in](http://www.ncert.nic.in) or can be obtained by post. Completed application forms should be accompanied by a concept paper of about 1,500 words on the theme of the proposed research, which should contain statements about (a) rationale and objectives of the study, (b) conceptual framework, (c) proposed methodology and (b) potential contribution of the study. Proposals involving fresh ideas and innovative methodology related to school education in the country will be given preference.

**Selection Procedure:** Applications will be screened and short listed candidates will be required to appear for a Seminar-cum-interview. Candidates will be paid second (sleeper) class train fare by the shortest route for attending the Seminar-cum-interview. The statutory provisions for reservation of seats will be available to the candidates belonging to different categories.

**Fellowship Amount:** NCERT Doctoral Fellows will receive a fellowship of Rs. 10,000/- per month for a maximum period of three years. They will receive a contingency grant not exceeding Rs. 10,000/- per annum during this period. The fellowship be commence from the date of registration for Ph.D. or award by NCERT, whichever is later and will terminate at the end of three years from the award or with the submission of the thesis, whichever is earlier.

Completed applications should reach at the below given address latest by 20.04.2010. For details, visit the NCERT website: [www.ncert.nic.in](http://www.ncert.nic.in) (see the link ANNOUNCEMENTS).

**The Head, Department of Educational Research and Policy Perspectives (DERPP)**  
**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 110 016**



**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING**  
**Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016, [www.ncert.nic.in](http://www.ncert.nic.in)**

**Focus on Infrastructure Development:**

As the key commitment, the allocations for Bangalore alone exceed most other allocations. Some key allocations include the following: Monorail – about Rs 4,000 crore, Metro Phase 1 – about Rs 14,000 crore, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) 51 km outer ring road – about Rs 800 crore, BDA's peripheral ring road (including land acquisition in public-private partnership (PPP)) – about Rs 5,000 crore, Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (for next two years) – about Rs 1,000 crore and the Department of Infrastructure Development has declared (on 27 November 2009) that a sum of Rs 1 lakh crore will be available for infrastructure projects in the state.

**Focus on Commercialised PPP:** The PPP Cell formed in June 2007 to mainstream PPPs in infrastructure sectors sits within the Department of Infrastructure Development. In June 2008, at the start of the new administration, there were 39 PPP projects valued at Rs 6,000 crore. In November 2008, 166 PPP projects had been proposed at a capital cost of Rs 1,09,329 crore. The success or failure of these PPP projects will have to be evaluated in the future.

**Expenses for Personal Lifestyles of Chief Minister and Ministers:**

The BJP government sanctioned a total of Rs 10 crore for the chief minister and some other ministers to renovate and refurbish their homes in Bangalore. The amounts that were spent were: chief minister – Rs 1.7 crore; residence of home minister V S Acharya – Rs 61.30 lakh; former speaker (and now minister) Jagadish Shettar – Rs 24.83 lakh; Shobha Karandlaje, former rural development and panchayati raj minister – Rs 38.05 lakh; Karunakara Reddy, revenue minister – Rs 88.26 lakh.

**Expenditure on Farmers' Visit to China:**

For "exposure" to agricultural training and development 633 farmers visited China and the total cost was Rs 423.79 lakh.

*How strong is the law and order situation in the state?*

Mangalore and Mysore have experienced major conflagrations of communal violence. In addition to this, there have

been sporadic and targeted forms of intimidation, threats, and erosion of human rights which have marked the first 18 months of the BJP government.

Within a month of coming to power, police fired in Haveri on a farmers' demonstration regarding shortage of fertilisers. One farmer died and an enquiry committee was constituted. The final report of the committee is still pending.

On 20 October 2009, Bangalore police brutally attacked five sexual minority activists and arrested them on false charges when they tried to enquire about the illegal detention of five *hijras*. Police illegally detained and assaulted a large number of human rights defenders when they held a peaceful protest against the illegal police actions. Police also arrested 31 human rights defenders on false charges.

The Bangalore city police has come out with a notification on the Licensing and Controlling of Assemblies and Processions (Bangalore) Order, 2008. The notification proposes a system of regulation of processions and assemblies through a method of licences and views democratic protest as a law and order problem.

Several churches were attacked and vandalised between the months of September and October 2008. On 1 January 2009, the Resurrection God's Ministries Church in village Malebennur was set on fire and completely gutted.

The newspaper *Karavali Ale* was targeted by right wing elements including the Bajrang Dal for its reporting on the attacks on churches in August/September 2008, in which it reported the role of the Bajrang Dal.

Different cases filed against the members of the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, BJP and Sri Ram Sene in regard to their illegal activities around the Baba Budangiri shrine in Chikmagalur have been withdrawn in the last week of December 2008.

The state has even witnessed the violation of the Supreme Court order on Prohibiting the Conduct of Worship in the Bababudan/Dattatreya Complex in Chikmagalur on December 2008. The government's decision to conduct *puja* has led to a law and order problem providing grounds for abetting communal riots.

*How have democratic structures and processes been sustained?*

Although the office of the state ombudsman, the Lokayukta, functions in an effective manner and seeks to curtail corruption and violation of governance norms, it has not received adequate support from the government. Most cases of corruption by officials remain ignored and little legal and punitive actions are taken against them.

The functioning of the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC) has been stalled by the state government. Inadequate financial support, failure to appoint adequate staff, and the lack of provision for a full-fledged investigative wing and independent office space have all been the reasons for hindering the full functioning of the KSHRC.

This government and its administration have made little effort to disseminate information on the status of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) infrastructure projects or their nature and likely impact of urban reforms being undertaken as part of JNNURM. This has resulted in widespread violation of basic rights and safety of residents in cities. Processes such as demolition of illegal and encroached constructions in Bangalore have often been undertaken without due notice and process. This has been specially so in the slum and urban poverty areas. In addition, Akrama-Sakrama schemes (legalisation of encroachment) have been introduced without any thought to the impact on urban planning and governance.

Bypassing processes and the concerned institutions, the government attempted to "declare" all *lingayat* subcastes as backward classes. This has been done twice and submitting to the uproar and criticisms the government has had to revoke the order.

Details related to the selection of the corporate groups and the religious organisations which were selected to build homes and shelter for victims of the floods have not been transparent. Nominations to committees, missions, and to be "partners" and agencies in various development schemes and programmes have not been open and transparent. Membership of organic agricultural missions, allocations of

rights to distribute flood relief, selections of persons for benefits such as travelling to China for training, etc, are examples.

*What has been the impact of the government on the administration of the state as a whole and on decentralisation of administration (panchayats and nagar palika)?*

There has been a serious slippage in the administrative machinery of the state. Frequent transfers of key officials, including those with excellent records, have made many departments slack. Plans to appoint panchayat development officers by the department of rural development and panchayati raj remain delayed. Panchayat Jamabandi (open social audits of the fund allocations and its utilisation) by the people have largely been discontinued.

The government has delayed the conduct of elections to the Bangalore Corporation (despite the court and the State Election Commission sending in three reminders) until February 2010. But details about notification of reserved wards and other processes remain contested. The

ABIDE group has formulated the Draft Bengaluru Region Governance Act (2009) which has been uploaded on its web site but no public discussions have been held.

There is a serious lack of internal accountability within the government. Our own request for information regarding functioning of the government revealed that the key departments do not have update information on various administrative aspects, like funds utilisation, implementation of programmes and effectiveness of administration.

*How have calamities, such as drought and the floods, in the state been handled by the government?*

Rural Karnataka saw unprecedented disasters and calamities in 2009. Both drought and floods have wrecked havoc on the lives of people. Since the summer of 2009, 86 talukas in 20 districts have been declared as drought-hit. Standing crops on 16 lakh hectares were damaged on account of deficit rains. The crop loss in rainfed areas has been estimated at Rs 720.20 crore and the horticultural

crops on over 60,000 hectares have been ruined due to scanty rains.

All reports from media and from visitors to the districts indicate the absence of strong and effective drought-relief programmes. Loss of crops, unemployment, underemployment, distress migration, low food security, and overall poor economic and social conditions continue to mark the affected districts and regions.

Between the end of September and the first week of October last year, rain and floods affected large parts of north-east Karnataka, leaving behind unprecedented damage to lives, crops, homes and cattle. Three hundred and fifty villages were affected, 1,16,000 homes damaged, and 139 people died. Nearly 583 relief camps were set up.

The chief minister and the government announced through an advertisement that the people of Karnataka had "donated" an amount of Rs 1,000 crore, this is in addition to the amount sanctioned by the central and state governments. However, by all reports the measures undertaken to provide relief for the affected areas by



## Ministry of Environment and Forests GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



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### INVITATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP AWARDS FOR PITAMBER PANT NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FELLOWSHIP AND DR. B.P. PAL NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FELLOWSHIP AWARD FOR BIODIVERSITY FOR THE YEAR 2010.

Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for the following fellowships:-

- (i) Pitamber Pant National Environment Fellowship Award for the year 2010.
- (ii) Dr. B.P. Pal National Environment Fellowship Award for Biodiversity for the year 2010.

These National Fellowships are given each year to one scientist/expert and are instituted in recognition of significant Research and Development contributions made by the scientist/expert and to encourage him/her to continue R&D pursuits in the area of **environmental sciences and biodiversity**, including socio-economics respectively.

Nominees should not be more than 60 years on the date of application or the last date fixed for submission of application. Application for both the fellowships should be supported by at least two Fellows of the National Academy of Science/Engineering/Agriculture.

The duration of the fellowship is for a period of two years. The details of the fellowship award, procedure and proforma for submitting research proposal as well as the terms and conditions are given in the guidelines (for Pitamber Pant Fellowship and B.P. Pal Fellowship) available on the website of the Ministry ([www.envfor.nic.in](http://www.envfor.nic.in)).

The nominee should also submit his/her application in the prescribed proforma (available on the website of the Ministry) for nomination (ANNEXURE) for both the awards.

The applications complete in all respects should be sent by registered A.D. Post in 10 copies and one set of reprints and other documentary evidence of achievements in a confidential sealed cover by **31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010** addressed to:-

**The Advisor (Dr. G.V.Subrahmanyam)**  
RE-Division  
Ministry of Environment & Forests  
Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex  
Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003.



flood and drought have been inadequate. The governor of Karnataka has in public called upon the BJP government to undertake and improve the conditions of the flood-affected persons in the state. A recent report by Kannada University on the flood-affected districts indicates problems in distribution of relief amounts, delay and failure to provide rehabilitation, inadequate and unsanitary conditions of the relief camps, inadequate attention to medical and educational needs of the people, and to overall conditions of distress among the people. The most severely affected are the members of dalit caste groups.

*How adequately have schemes and programmes from the central government been implemented?*

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is a flagship programme of the centre and is meant to alleviate rural and agrarian problems. The programme has not been adequately supported in the state. As a result, Karnataka has not utilised the scheme as effectively as it should have. The recent report conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research and the Public Interest Foundation (PIF) indicates that of all the states, Karnataka stood last in terms of transparency, vigilance, and social audit.

Karnataka compares poorly in an interstate review of NREGS. For 2008-09, the maximum number of job cards were provided in Madhya Pradesh (112 lakh), followed by Andhra Pradesh (109 lakh) and Uttar Pradesh (102 lakh). Karnataka provided a mere 29 lakh job cards.

*What "vision" is guiding the state's policies and programmes?*

In addition to the formation of the Karnataka Vision Group, a number (11 in total) of missions and task forces such as the Agricultural Mission, Karnataka Education Mission, Agenda for Bengaluru Infrastructure Task Force (ABIDE) have been formed to oversee the development of the state. However, most of these are not representatives of various groups (such as dalits, agriculturists, religious minorities, et al), are largely dominated by corporate interests and those close to the BJP and its affiliated groups, and the functioning of most of these groups is irregular. In addition, there are at least two one-man committees that have been established.

*What is the environmental record of the government?*

Several violations of environmental safeguards and concerns continue to be perpetrated. The most glaring of these are (1) The continuation of illegal and open cast mining in the Tumti forest areas in the Bellary region. Despite the Lokayukta's reports on this issue, no action has been taken. In addition to the violations of environmental safety, issues related to labour regulations (including use of child labour and working conditions and payment), human rights, encroachment on forests, and revenue generation and collection remain unresolved. (2) Clearance and felling of thousands of trees in Bangalore for either road widening projects or the construction of the metro railway have been unprecedented. Lack of clarity in planning has been compounded by lack of environmental sensitivity and bypassing citizens' interests and safety. (3) Inauguration of the Gundia hydel project in Hassan district which was conducted without receiving clearance and certification from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (a violation of Forest Conservation Act, 1980).

### Conclusions

To understand the issues that are important to people across the state and to gather people's perceptions about the functioning of their MLAs, DAKSH conducted a perceptions survey across 218 legislative assembly constituencies (the six constituencies where by-elections were held in late 2009 were excluded from the survey). The survey was conducted in October and November 2009 and the opinion of more than 8,000 respondents was obtained.

Some salient features of the results obtained from the survey are:

**General Performance:** The results from the survey reflect a stark gap between people's expectations and their perception of representatives' performances: the average performance index of all legislators across the state is a mere 2.84 (on a 0 to 5 scale) – just over 50%!

**Performance on Most Important Issues:** The survey results indicate that the six most important issues for people, across

the state, are: better electric supply, better water supply, better employment opportunities, training for jobs, reservation for jobs and education and better educational facilities.

On these issues, the average performance of the elected representatives is 3.23 out of 5 – that is around 60%. Contrary to popular propaganda, the six most important issues for people do not vary significantly between respondents in urban and rural areas. Issues that people focus on, when it comes to expectation from their representatives and government, whether in urban or rural Karnataka are much the same, being one or more of the issues enumerated above. However, we notice that there is a wide gap in people's perceptions in performance across districts and across urban and rural areas. This can broadly be correlated to the gap between the more developed regions in the state against the less developed regions.

**Candidates and Political Parties:** There is a similarity in the gap between expectation and performance of all the three major political parties. However, it should be noted that, on an average, the independent candidates have a better perception image than the political party candidates when it comes to performance. In terms of accessibility to their constituents, the MLAs, on an average, earned a marking of 2.96 out of 5 – a mere 59%.

Overall, there has been a serious deterioration in the law and order situation in the state buttressed by intense instability in governance which is visible in the periodic intra-party infighting and frequent transfers of key officials. Populist schemes and policies have gained mainstay, compounded by a strengthening of neoliberal policies with a focus on infrastructure and urban policies. While the state's flagship democratic structures and processes (such as panchayati raj) have been neglected, parallel advisory and vision groups have gained leverage and presence.

### NOTE

- 1 Starred questions need to be answered by the relevant minister on the floor of the house and supplementary questions can be asked by any member of the house in relation to that question. Unstarred questions can be answered by the minister in writing without discussion in the house.