



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Karnataka Regional Branch, Bengaluru

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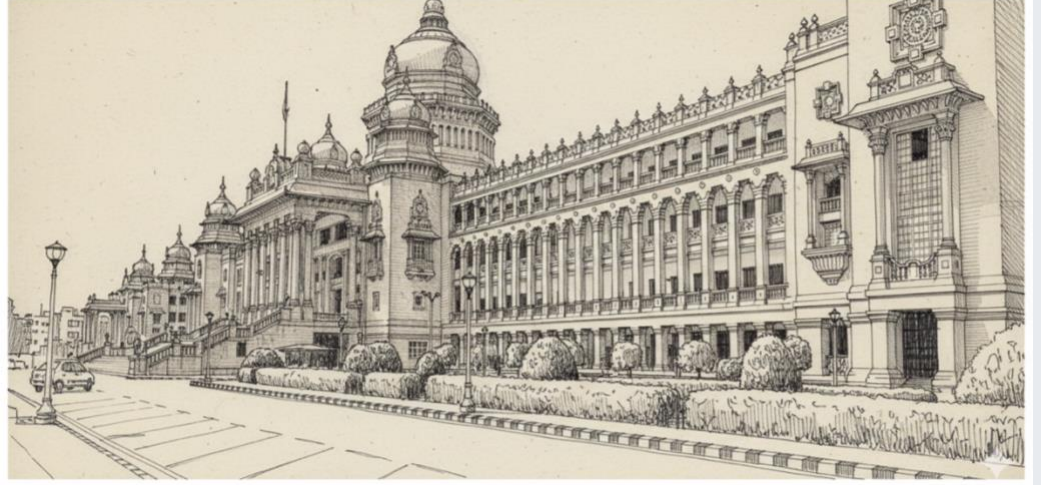


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WHAT'S NEW

LEAD FEATURE

**REDRESSAL OF REGIONAL
IMBALANCES IN
KARNATAKA**

OPINION

**DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S
UNFINISHED AGENDA**



From the Chief Editor

It gives me great pleasure to place before readers the **May 2026** issue of our Newsletter, the **70th** since we began this initiative.

Our **Lead Feature** is on the **Dr. M. Govinda Rao Committee Report on Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka** which emphasizes improved measurement through composite indices, advocates institutional restructuring with a focus on decentralization, and shifts attention to developmental outcomes in terms of human capabilities. The highlights of the report are presented here.

We also carry some **Critical Observations** on the above report, as presented by **Dr. S.Y. Surendra Kumar**, Professor of Political Science at Bangalore University, Bengaluru. According to him, while the Dr. M. Govinda Rao Committee report represents a significant step forward, its effectiveness would be greatly enhanced by integrating political accountability, social equity considerations, and institutional reforms into its analytical framework.

In our **Opinion** column, **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar** writes on **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Unfinished Agenda** and why his ideas matter more than ever today. In an age of rapid change and deep uncertainty, Ambedkar's thought offers not just critique, but direction. His vision continues to remind us that the measure of a democracy is not its institutions alone but the lives of its most vulnerable citizens.

In our column on **Branch Activities**, we report on two events organized by us:

- (1) A Lecture-Discussion on "*Regional Imbalance in Karnataka*"; and
- (2) A Panel Discussion on "*Foreign Policy Decision-Making*".

In our column on **Branch Members' Writings in the Media**, we provide links to thought-provoking articles penned last month by **Dr. A. Ravindra, Mr. G. Gurucharan, Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, and Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**.

In our **Book Review** section, we carry an abridged version of the comprehensive review by **Prof. P. S.**

Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd.)

Former Chief Secretary,
Government of Karnataka.
Former Chairman, Karnataka
Administrative Reforms
Commission-2.

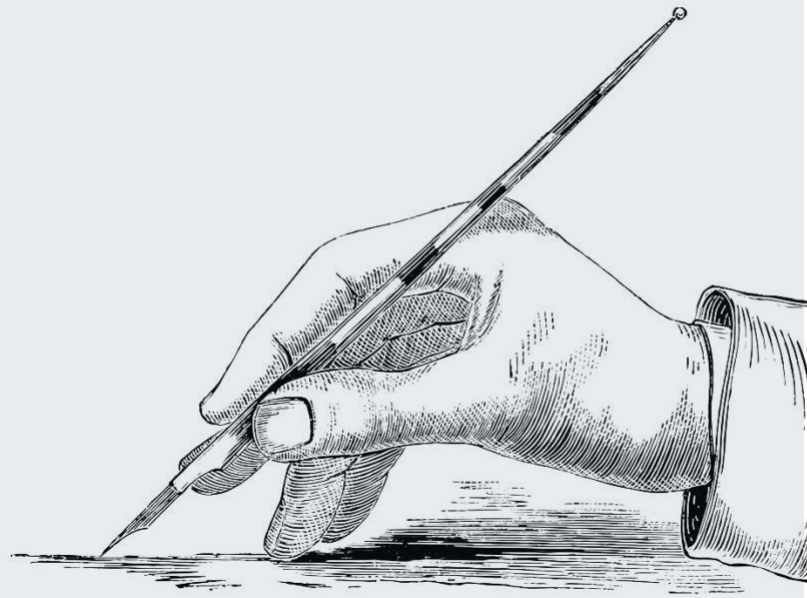
Chairperson, Karnataka Regional Branch
Indian Institute of Public Administration



Jayaramu of **Prof. S.S. Patagundi's** book on **Foreign Policy Decision-Making in India**. The review appeared in **Mainstream** weekly recently.

We end the issue with our column on **Food for Thought**. According to a study in **The Guardian**, human connection with Nature has declined 60 percent in the last 200 years!

I add our usual disclaimer here that the views expressed by the contributors in this issue of the Newsletter are personal and *do not represent the views or position of the Editorial Board or the Executive Committee of the Branch*. Do write in with your responses, views and ideas for improvement of the Newsletter.





Lead Feature

REDRESSAL OF REGIONAL IMBALANCES IN KARNATAKA

Report of Dr. M. Govinda Rao Committee



Dr. M. Govinda Rao is seen presenting the report to the Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri Siddaramaiah on 4 February 2026.

The **Dr. M. Govinda Rao Committee Report on Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka** represents a significant evolution in thinking on regional development in Karnataka. It may be understood as a second-generation critique of earlier policy frameworks, particularly those associated with the **Dr. D.M. Nanjundappa Committee**. While the earlier framework was primarily concerned with identifying backward regions and allocating funds accordingly, the present report moves towards a more nuanced and sophisticated approach. **It emphasizes improved measurement through composite indices, advocates institutional restructuring with a focus on decentralization, and shifts attention from mere expenditure to actual developmental outcomes, particularly in terms of human capabilities.**

Highlights of the Report

1. Persistent and Widening Regional Imbalances

One of the most striking and sobering findings of the report is that **regional disparities in Karnataka have not only persisted but, in certain respects,**

have widened over time. Despite substantial public investment and targeted interventions over the past two decades, the expected convergence between developed and backward regions has not materialized. The report highlights that structural inequalities—particularly between southern Karnataka and the northern and northeastern regions—remain deeply entrenched.

This persistence suggests that earlier policy interventions may have addressed symptoms rather than underlying causes, thereby necessitating a fundamental rethinking of strategy.

2. Development Expenditure has not yielded Expected Outcomes

The report raises important questions regarding the effectiveness of development expenditure. **While significant financial resources have been allocated under various schemes and programs, the translation of this expenditure into tangible improvements in Human Development indicators has been uneven and often inadequate.** This points to issues such as inefficiencies in implementation, leakage of resources, lack of coordination across departments, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms. The report thus implicitly critiques earlier approaches that equated higher spending with better outcomes, arguing instead for a stronger focus on efficiency, accountability, and measurable impact especially on human development.

3. North Karnataka continues to lag significantly

The report reaffirms a long-standing concern regarding the relative backwardness of North Karnataka. **Despite repeated policy attention and special packages, the region continues to lag behind in key indicators such as education, health, infrastructure, and employment opportunities.** The persistence of this gap underscores the depth of

structural disadvantage faced by the region, including historical neglect, ecological constraints, and weaker institutional capacity. The report suggests that incremental policy adjustments are insufficient, and that a more focused, region-specific development strategy is required to address these entrenched disparities.

4. Revised Methodology and Composite Development Index

A major contribution of the report lies in its **methodological innovation**. The committee undertook a comprehensive reassessment of all 236 taluks in the state using a newly developed **Composite Development Index**. This index incorporates a broader and more contemporary set of indicators, moving beyond outdated measures such as access to post offices or landline telephones that were used in earlier assessments. Instead, it includes variables that better capture present-day realities—such as per capita income, digital connectivity, quality of education and healthcare, access to infrastructure, and socioeconomic well-being. This shift enhances the accuracy and relevance of regional classification, enabling more targeted and evidence-based policy interventions.

5. Major Institutional Recommendation: Rationalization of Regional Boards

The report makes a significant institutional recommendation regarding the **rationalization of Regional Development Boards**. It observes that existing boards often suffer from overlapping mandates, limited autonomy, and inadequate coordination with Line Departments. As a result, their effectiveness in addressing regional imbalances has been constrained. The committee therefore calls for a restructuring of these institutions to enhance their functional clarity, accountability, and integration within the broader governance framework. Strengthening these boards is seen as essential for ensuring that regional priorities are adequately reflected in planning and implementation processes.

6. Large-Scale Targeted Investment Plan

Recognizing the scale and persistence of regional disparities, the report proposes a substantial fiscal intervention. It recommends an investment of approximately **₹43,000–44,000 crore over a five-year period (2026–2031)** specifically aimed at addressing regional imbalances. This investment is to

be strategically directed towards critical sectors, particularly Human Development—such as education, healthcare, and nutrition—which are foundational to long-term socio-economic progress. The emphasis is on creating durable capabilities rather than short-term gains, thereby aligning fiscal policy with broader developmental objectives.

7. Shift Towards Outcome-Oriented and Multi-Sectoral Strategy

A notable feature of the report is its emphasis on an **outcome-oriented and multi-sectoral approach to development**. Moving away from fragmented and scheme-based interventions, the report advocates for integrated regional planning frameworks that address multiple dimensions of deprivation simultaneously. This approach recognizes that issues such as poverty, poor health, low educational attainment, and inadequate infrastructure are interlinked and must be addressed in a coordinated manner. By focusing on outcomes rather than inputs, the report seeks to ensure that development interventions lead to tangible improvements in the quality of life of citizens.

8. Reassessment of Policy Paradigm

At a deeper level, the report represents a significant **reassessment of the policy paradigm governing regional development**. It argues that **regional imbalance is not merely a question of fiscal allocation but is fundamentally rooted in governance deficits, institutional design flaws, and uneven development of human capabilities**. The report calls for a **shift towards evidence-based policymaking**, supported by continuous data collection and analysis, and **adaptive policy frameworks** that can respond to changing conditions. In doing so, it moves the discourse beyond traditional approaches and lays the groundwork for a **more holistic and dynamic model of regional development**.





Observation

Critical Observations on the Report of the Karnataka Regional Imbalances Redressal Committee



Dr. S.Y. Surendra Kumar

Professor of Political Science
Bangalore University
Bengaluru

Introduction

While acknowledging the substantial analytical effort and technical rigour that underpin the report of the Dr. M. Govinda Rao Committee on the Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka, the following critical observations are offered to strengthen its scope, depth, and policy relevance:

1. Political Dimensions of Regional Imbalance

Both the Dr. D.M. Nanjundappa Committee (2002) and the present Committee reiterate the persistence of regional disparities, particularly in Kalyana Karnataka and Kittur Karnataka. However, a notable omission in both reports is the inadequate engagement with the political dimensions of this imbalance. Despite substantial political representation from these regions—including 41 MLAs, 15 MLCs, 5 Members of Parliament, and even Chief Ministers such as Veerendra Patil, Dharam Singh, and Basavaraj Bommai—regional disparities continue unabated. This raises important questions regarding political commitment and accountability. Furthermore, the delayed implementation of other major reports, such as the Caste Census (2017) and the State Education Policy (2025), casts uncertainty over the eventual implementation of the present report. Ultimately, the success of these recommendations will hinge on sustained political will.

2. Inadequate Emphasis on Social Dimensions

The report is predominantly anchored in economic indicators, with relatively limited attention to the social dimensions of inequality. A more comprehensive analysis would have examined disparities across caste, religion, gender, and rural-urban divides since 2002. Beyond education and

health, dimensions such as land ownership, income inequality, digital exclusion, access to basic services (drinking water, sanitation, electricity, housing, and clean cooking fuel), and social marginalization warrant deeper exploration. The absence of a multidimensional index specifically tailored to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and gender categories represents a missed opportunity. Consequently, the concerns of marginalized communities appear insufficiently foregrounded.

3. Concerns in Higher Education Policy and Financing

The observations on higher education raise significant concerns regarding both governance and resource allocation. First, funding for universities should ideally be routed through the Higher Education Department's regular budget rather than through the Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Board (KKRDB), to ensure institutional stability and accountability. Second, the chronic shortage of permanent faculty remains a critical issue. For instance, Gulbarga University has not witnessed substantive faculty recruitment since 2013 and currently operates with only 33 permanent faculty members, while Raichur University has an extremely limited faculty base. This reflects a long-standing neglect of higher education in the region.

Additionally, public expenditure on development and research grants in aid for higher education appears to be declining. Universities are increasingly expected to generate their own revenue, even for essential expenditures such as salaries and pensions. Although the overall higher education budget stands at approximately ₹6,432 (2026-27) crore, compared to ₹5,000 crore allocated to KKRDB (2026-27), the structural imbalance in funding priorities persists. While the report's recommendations are significant, their implementation remains uncertain under current fiscal and administrative conditions.

The ongoing rationalization (merger) of schools due to low enrolment and infrastructural constraints is a pragmatic step; however, a similar policy clarity is lacking in the higher education sector. Public universities are neither adequately strengthened nor strategically consolidated, leaving them in a state of institutional limbo.

4. Gross Enrolment Ratio and Article 371(J)

Karnataka's relatively high Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is acknowledged, yet the report does not sufficiently examine the impact of the special provisions under Article 371(J). Introduced to promote educational and employment opportunities in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, this constitutional provision has significantly enhanced access to higher education for local youth since 2013. A systematic evaluation of its outcomes would have enriched the report's analytical depth and policy insights.

5. Migration as a Structural Indicator of Imbalance

Seasonal and long-term migration from Kalyana Karnataka to urban centres such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai remains a critical indicator of regional distress. The persistence of migration underscores the inadequacy of local employment opportunities and regional economic development. Although policymakers frequently acknowledge migration as a pressing issue, the report does not engage with it in any substantive manner. Addressing migration is essential for any meaningful strategy aimed at regional balance.

6. Role of Civil Society and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The report does not adequately consider the role of civil society organizations and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in addressing regional disparities. Given the increasing importance of CSR funding in development finance, a systematic assessment of the inflow of CSR funds into Kalyana Karnataka—and the potential for enhancing such investments—would have been highly valuable. These actors can play a complementary role in bridging developmental gaps, particularly in sectors such as education, health, and skill development.

7. Quality versus Quantity in Educational Investments

While the report rightly prioritizes expansion in educational infrastructure—such as schools, colleges, and universities—the emphasis appears to be more on quantity than quality. This is a critical limitation. The 2022 report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) highlighted several determinants of quality in higher education, including faculty competence, curriculum standards, technological infrastructure,

research environment, accreditation systems, governance practices, and financing mechanisms. North Karnataka continues to lag on most of these parameters. Without a strong focus on quality, mere expansion of institutions is unlikely to yield meaningful developmental outcomes.

8. Additional Observations

(a) Need for a Multidisciplinary Perspective

The report would have benefited from a more interdisciplinary approach. Given that the Committee is predominantly composed of economists, the analysis tends to privilege economic indicators, potentially at the cost of a broader sociopolitical and institutional understanding of regional imbalance.

(b) Use of Outdated Data

The reliance on the 2011 Census data limits the contemporary relevance of the report. Ideally, the Committee could have aligned its findings with upcoming data sources, such as the next Census (expected around 2027) or the forthcoming State/District Human Development Reports (anticipated in 2026), to ensure greater empirical robustness.

Concluding Note

In sum, while the Dr. M. Govinda Rao Committee report represents a significant step forward in refining the measurement and policy framework for addressing regional imbalances in Karnataka, its effectiveness would be greatly enhanced by integrating political accountability, social equity considerations, and institutional reforms into its analytical framework. The challenge ahead lies not merely in diagnosis but in translating recommendations into sustained and inclusive development outcomes.





Opinion

AMBEDKAR'S UNFINISHED AGENDA

Why His Ideas Matter More Than Ever

- D. Jeevan Kumar

Few figures in modern India command as enduring a relevance as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. More than a constitutionalist, Ambedkar was a moral philosopher of democracy—one who insisted that political freedom must be anchored in social and economic justice. Today, as India navigates complex transitions marked by inequality, identity conflicts, and institutional strain, Ambedkar's ideas are not merely of historical significance; they are urgently contemporary.

At the heart of Ambedkar's thought lies a radical commitment to **social justice**. He recognized that formal equality without addressing structural disadvantage would only reproduce inequality. Contemporary public policy in India—from reservations to targeted welfare schemes—draws heavily from this insight. Yet, the persistence of caste-based disparities and exclusion reminds us that the project of justice is far from complete. Ambedkar's framework compels policymakers to move beyond symbolic inclusion towards substantive equality—ensuring not just access, but dignity and agency for marginalized communities.

Equally significant is Ambedkar's unwavering defense of **constitutional morality**. He warned that the success of democracy depends not merely on constitutional design but on the ethical conduct of those who operate it. In an era marked by concerns over institutional erosion, majoritarian impulses, and the weakening of deliberative norms, Ambedkar's emphasis on the rule of law, judicial independence, and protection of civil liberties assumes renewed importance. The Constitution, in his vision, was not a static document but a living moral contract—one that demands constant vigilance.

Ambedkar's commitment to **secularism** also offers vital guidance in today's context. He envisioned a state that maintained principled distance from religion while guaranteeing freedom of belief and protection for minorities. At a time when social cohesion is tested

by polarization and identity politics, Ambedkar's insistence on *fraternity*—often the least discussed of his triad of liberty, equality, and fraternity—becomes central. Fraternity, for Ambedkar, was not sentimental rhetoric but a social ethic necessary for democratic survival.

Another pillar of Ambedkar's thought is his profound faith in **education as an instrument of emancipation**. His famous exhortation—“*Educate, Agitate, Organize*”—continues to resonate in contemporary policy debates. India's efforts to expand access to education, reduce dropout rates among disadvantaged communities, and promote skill development echo his vision. Yet, persistent inequalities in educational outcomes, digital divides, and discrimination within institutions highlight the need to deepen this agenda. Education, in Ambedkar's conception, was not merely about literacy or employment—it was about cultivating critical consciousness and self-respect.

Ambedkar was also a pioneering advocate of **gender justice**. His efforts to reform Hindu personal laws through the Hindu Code Bill, though resisted in his time, laid the foundation for subsequent advances in women's rights. Today's policy discourse on gender equality—ranging from economic participation to protection from violence—draws implicitly from his insistence that no society can claim progress while half its population remains marginalized. In this sense, contemporary welfare initiatives targeting women's empowerment can be seen as part of an unfinished Ambedkarite project.

His vision extended beyond social and political domains to encompass **economic justice**. Ambedkar understood that democracy cannot survive amidst stark economic inequalities. His advocacy for labour rights, land reforms, and state intervention in key sectors reflected a commitment to inclusive development. In today's India, where economic growth coexists with widening disparities, his call for equitable distribution and financial inclusion remains deeply relevant. Policies aimed at expanding opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups must be seen not as charity but as instruments of justice.

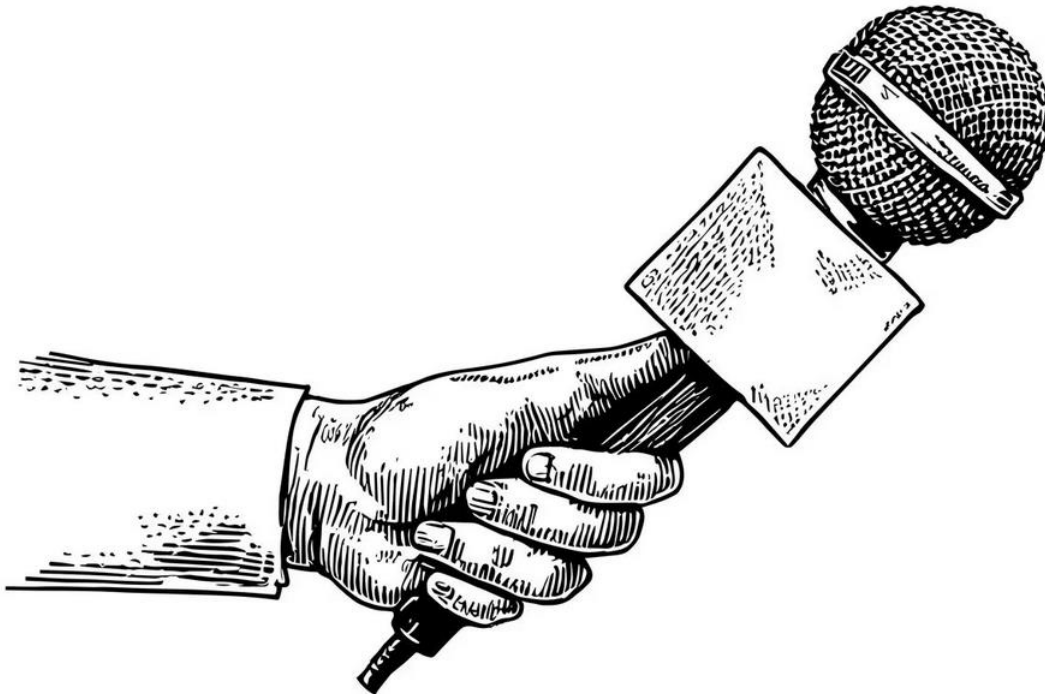
Perhaps most striking is the contemporary resonance of Ambedkar's emphasis on **human dignity**. For him, rights were meaningful only when they translated into lived experiences of respect and recognition. This insight is particularly relevant in addressing issues such as caste-based violence, discrimination, and exclusion. It also extends to emerging domains—such as digital governance—where questions of access, surveillance, and algorithmic bias intersect with issues of dignity and rights.

Even in areas he did not explicitly address, such as environmental policy, Ambedkar's principles offer guidance. The disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on marginalized communities underscores the need for an **Ambedkarite approach to environmental justice**—one that integrates sustainability with equity.

Ultimately, Ambedkar's relevance lies in his insistence that democracy must be transformative. Political democracy, he argued, cannot endure without social and economic democracy. This remains India's central challenge—and its greatest opportunity.

To engage seriously with Ambedkar today is not to commemorate him but to confront the unfinished tasks he left behind. It requires a renewed commitment to equality, a vigilant defense of constitutional values, and a willingness to reimagine public policy through the lens of justice and dignity.

In an age of rapid change and deep uncertainty, Ambedkar's thought offers not just critique, but direction. His vision continues to remind us that the measure of a democracy is not its institutions alone but the lives of its most vulnerable citizens.





Branch Events

Branch Activity 1 - Report of Lecture-Discussion on 'Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka'

The Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA (IIPA-KRB), in collaboration with the Department of Political Science, Bangalore University, organized a lecture-discussion on "*Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka: Hits, Misses, and the Way Forward*" by **Dr. M. Govinda Rao** on 16 April 2026 at the Prof. Venkatagiri Gowda Auditorium at Bangalore University.

The programme commenced with opening remarks by the **Chairman of IIPA-KRB, Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar**. He described the Karnataka Regional Imbalances Redressal Committee Report as a landmark document and noted that IIPA-KRB was pleased to organize the first public lecture and discussion on the report.

In his lecture, **Dr. M. Govinda Rao** began by distinguishing between *imbalances* and *inequality*, emphasizing that while they cannot be entirely eliminated, corrective action becomes necessary when disparities reach critical levels. He offered a critical appraisal of the report of the first committee on regional imbalances and its implementation. He then elaborated on the methodology adopted by the present committee to assess development and backwardness across regions.

Presenting the key findings, Dr. Rao highlighted that although there has been considerable progress in absolute terms across taluks, regional imbalances continue to persist. To better capture these disparities, the Committee classified taluks into four quartiles based on levels of comprehensive development. He further noted that the committee prioritized targeted allocation of funds towards school education, healthcare, and irrigation in the more backward taluks.

Responding as a Discussant, **Dr. Basavaraja Benni**, Professor of Economics, Bangalore University, observed that several recommendations of the report had been reflected in the State Budget of 2026. He pointed out that migration from districts such as Ballari, Yadgir, Koppal, and Raichur to Dakshina Kannada and Udupi for education and employment contributes to widening regional disparities. He emphasized that, in addition to financial allocations, effective governance is essential to address these challenges.

Prof. S.Y. Surendra Kumar, Professor of Political Science, offered further comments as a discussant. He noted that while the report rightly emphasizes the role of the private sector, greater attention should also be given to the role of civil society. He appreciated the focus on education, health, and irrigation but suggested that the report could have more explicitly addressed imbalances affecting social groups such as women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. He also highlighted the potential role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds in strengthening education and skill development.



In his Presidential address, the **Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University, Dr. S.M. Jayakar**, underscored the need to strengthen universities through the recruitment of regular faculty. He stressed that enhancing the academic environment is crucial for achieving balanced and sustainable regional development.

The programme began with a welcome address by **Professor Veena Devi**, Chairperson, Department of Political Science, Bangalore University, who coordinated the event along with **Dr. Jeevan Kumar**, Secretary, IIPA-KRB. The lecture was well attended by students, research scholars, and faculty members and was followed by a lively and engaging interaction session. **Mr. Akbar Ali**, Under Secretary, IIPA-KRB proposed a vote of thanks.



Branch Activity 2 - Report of Panel Discussion on 'Foreign Policy Decision-Making in India'

The Karnataka Regional Branch of the IIPA, in collaboration with the Department of International Relations, Political Science and History of CHRIST (Deemed-to-Be) University, Bengaluru, organized a Panel Discussion on the book, '*Foreign Policy Decision Making in India: A Political Psychology Perspective*' written by Prof. S.S. Patagundi, former Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at Karnatak University, Dharwad. The event was held on 3rd December 2025 on the premises of CHRIST (dtb) University.

The Panelists were former Ambassadors of India, **Shri Ravi Neelakantan, IFS (Retd.)** and **Smt. Latha Reddy, IFS (Retd.)**, and **Professors R.L.M. Patil** and **Dr. M.J. Vinod. Shri T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd.)**, former Chief Secretary of Karnataka and Chairperson of the Karnataka Regional Branch of IIPA presided over the programme. **Prof. Madhu Deshpande**, Head, Department of International Relations, Political Science and History at CHRIST (dtb) University, moderated the discussion.

Prof. S.S. Patagundi, the author, who was present on the occasion, spoke about the focus of the book and the motivation behind writing it. *Foreign Policy Decision Making in India: A Political Psychology Perspective* is written from an inter-disciplinary perspective and overcomes the compartmentalization generally prevalent in Social Sciences. In his view, the

combination of insights from Political Science and Psychology helps to understand the reality of the multifaceted phenomena of perceptions, cognitive processes, and beliefs of Foreign Policy decision makers and institutions.

Amb. Ravi Neelkantan opined that the study of Foreign Policy should be based, not on independent variables but on contextual factors. He referred to some of the landmarks in Indian Foreign Policy like the India-Soviet Treaty of 1971 and the India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement of 2008, and how the perceptions of the political leadership at the time played a critical role in safeguarding our national interest. He appreciated the meticulous structure of the book under discussion.

Prof. R.L.M. Patil attempted a case study of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's Foreign Policy. In his view, it was largely based on whims and caprices, and therefore a disaster. He said there is a need to evaluate the Foreign Policy decisions taken by successive Prime Ministers in India from a Political Psychology perspective, with less emphasis on theory.

Prof. M.J. Vinod referred to Harold Lasswell's contribution to Political Pathology and how psychological traits (high need for power, aggression, anxiety) can produce pathological political behaviour. Leaders with deep insecurities or unfulfilled personal needs often seek power as compensation. This leads to authoritarianism, narcissistic leadership, and abuse of office.

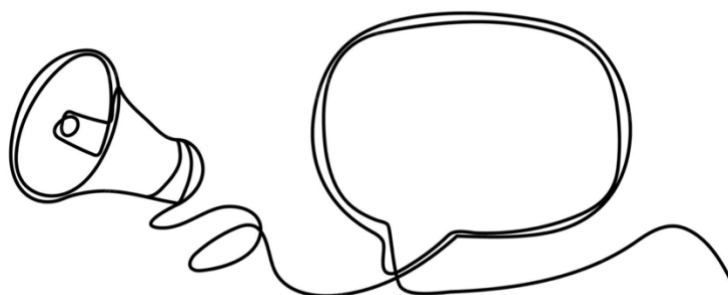


Amb. Lata Reddy presented an overview of India's Foreign Policy, since Independence. She was appreciative of its moral and ethical foundations and how it helped India assume leadership of the Global South in the UN and other world forums.

In his Presidential remarks, **Mr. Vijay Bhaskar** summarized the arguments presented by the Panelists. He said such events served a very useful

purpose of bringing together academicians and practitioners to share their views and perspectives on matters of public policy and interest.

Prof. Madhu Deshpande, Head of the Department of International Relations, Political Science and History at CHRIST (dtb) University, very ably moderated the Panel Discussion. **Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Secretary, IIPA_KRB, proposed a vote of thanks.



Branch Members' Writings in the Media



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

As Wars Rage, a Deeper Crisis builds beneath Geopolitics: Water Drought

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 6 April 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/as-wars-rage-a-deeper-crisis-builds-beneath-geopolitics-water-drought-3957254>



Shri G. Gurucharan, IAS (Retd.)
Director, School of Social Sciences
MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences
Bengaluru

A World at the Brink: Five Calls to Conscience
In *Deccan Herald* dt. 5 April 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/a-world-at-the-brink-five-calls-to-conscience-3956586>



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander
Freelance Consultant

How can Think Tanks in India be more Visible in the State of the Sector?

13 April 2026
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/how-can-think-tanks-in-india-be-more-visible-in-the-state-of-the-sector/>

Communicate to Write, Speak and Listen

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6Yk1dfdVUYKDKAFiW2FsBh?si=042735a4efb744a>

Training 360° A Practical Toolkit for Before, During and After Sessions.

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1bdj3nKKPwzLB12x5qsIPkgPQ_XwLVpUM



Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar
Hon. Professor
Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development & Panchayat
Raj University
Gadag, Karnataka

War, Oil, and Poverty: Why India needs an Atmanirbhar Bharat 2.0

In *Deccan Herald* dt. 17 April 2026
<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/war-oil-and-poverty-why-india-needs-an-atmanirbhar-bharat-2-0-3970612>





Book Review

Abridged from *Mainstream*, Vol. 64 No. 8, March 19, 2026

A Political-Psychological Perspective of Foreign Policy Decision Making in India



Prof. P.S. Jayaramu

Former Dean, Faculty of Arts,
Bangalore University and

Former Senior Fellow, ICSSR, New Delhi

Foreign Policy Decision Making in India:

A Political-Psychological Perspective

S. S. Patagundi

Rawat Publications

2025. Pp. 201

Rs. 1095

Prof. S. S. Patagundi’s book represents a significant scholarly attempt to examine Indian Foreign Policy (IFP) through the lens of Political Psychology, drawing upon his ICSSR-funded research and long academic engagement with the role of elites in Foreign Policy making. Influenced by works such as Linda Shepherd’s *Political Psychology*, the author adopts a cognitive approach, focusing on perceptions, beliefs, and decision-making processes. However, methodological constraints—particularly the inability to conduct fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic—limit the study largely to secondary sources and theoretical reflection.

The book is structured into seven chapters, covering theoretical frameworks, institutional roles, and contemporary developments, including the Foreign Policy of the Narendra Modi government. Patagundi engages extensively with leading theorists such as James N. Rosenau, Graham Allison, and Robert Jervis, demonstrating commendable theoretical depth. Yet, a central limitation of the work lies in its insufficient engagement with the divergence between theory and practice. While the theoretical framework emphasizes multiple actors and institutional processes, empirical realities suggest that Foreign Policy decisions—particularly in contemporary India—are highly centralized.

This reviewer raises a critical objection to the author’s claim that political parties, Parliament, and other institutional actors significantly influence Foreign Policy. In practice, decision-making appears concentrated in the executive leadership, often with institutions playing a largely post-facto or marginal role. This pattern, while not entirely new—given precedents under Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi—is argued to be more pronounced in the current context. The absence of substantive parliamentary debate on key issues such as the Galwan crisis is cited as indicative of this trend. Even the author’s own acknowledgment of “bold decisions” by the Prime Minister underscores this centralization, revealing a gap between theoretical assumptions and actual practice.

The historical chapter provides a useful overview of India’s Foreign Policy trajectory—from Non-Alignment and the *Panchsheel* Agreement to post-Cold War developments under successive leaders including Lal Bahadur Shastri, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Manmohan Singh. While informative, this section remains descriptive and could have benefited from deeper analytical engagement with decision-making dynamics.

The chapter on institutions constitutes the core of the book, but here too the analysis is constrained by limited access to primary data. Although institutional mechanisms such as consultative committees and policy planning divisions are discussed, the notable omission of the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO)—which plays a decisive role in contemporary Foreign Policy—is a significant gap. Similarly, while non-state actors such as business groups, media, and think tanks are

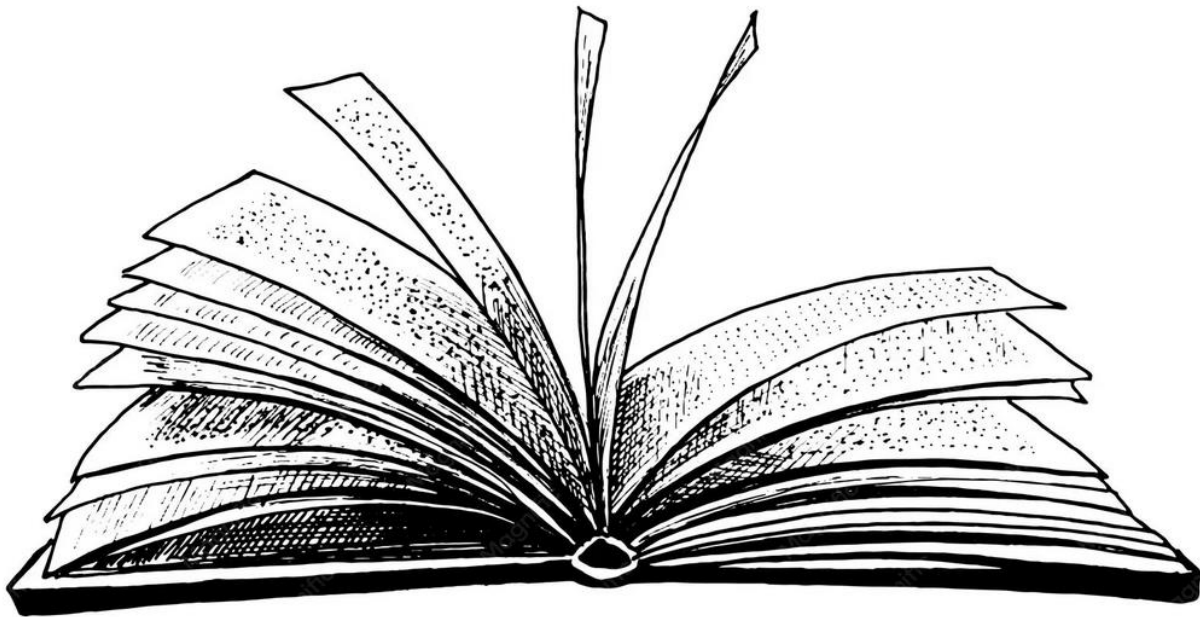
acknowledged, their actual influence is shown to be minimal, reinforcing the argument of executive dominance.

In his conclusions, Patagundi emphasizes the central role of Prime Ministerial leadership, particularly the charisma of Narendra Modi, while also noting the difficulty of establishing clear correlations between psychological variables and policy outcomes, due to the absence of quantitative analysis. The reviewer, however, suggests that broader scholarly and public discourse points more strongly toward leader-centric decision-making that often bypasses institutional mechanisms.

Despite these limitations, the book remains a valuable academic contribution. It highlights the importance of psychological dimensions in Foreign Policy analysis

and offers a structured theoretical framework, even if its empirical application remains partial. The reviewer also notes certain gaps in the bibliography, including the absence of key works such as those by Srikanth Paranjpe and Shashi Tharoor, which could have enriched the analysis.

In sum, while the book succeeds in advancing a theoretically informed perspective on Indian Foreign Policy decision-making, it leaves unresolved the crucial question of how and why institutional processes are often overshadowed by centralized leadership. Nonetheless, it is recommended as a useful resource for scholars, students, and informed readers interested in the evolving dynamics of India's Foreign Policy.





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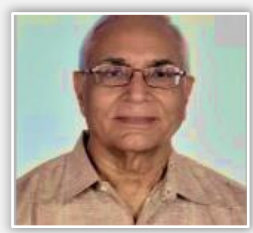
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