Panel Discussion on Strengthening of Ethical & Moral Values in Governance
Jointly held with IIPA and C-Lanps, Bangalore

Panel Discussion on Strengthening of Ethical & Moral Values in Governance was organised by IIPA Bangalore Chapter, C-Lamps and MPBIM Bangalore at MPBIM on 24th September 2016. Panelists were **Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan,** IIMB, **Prof. Sandeep Shastri** Pro. Vice Chancellor, Jain University, **Dr. Meenakshisundaram IAS(Retd)** Former Additional Chief Secretary, GOK and **Sri. B L Sridhar IAS (Retd)**Former Addional Chief Secretary, GOK. **Ms. Sowmya Aji** Asst. Editor Economic Times was the moderator. **Sri. S V Ranganath IAS (Retd)** Former Chief Secretary Govt of Karnataka gave the preliminary Remarks and **Sri. S Ramanathan IAS (Retd.)** Former Secretary, Govt. of India and Sri. S V Ranganath gave concluding remarks. **Dr. N S Viswanath** proposed formal vote of thanks. The event witnessed an active participation from the audience.

When a society witnesses deteriorating ethical and moral values, it is reflective of current political and social thought. Opening the discussions, Sri S V Ranganth outlined the cause of degradation in ethical moral values in governance and said first thing the society sees in such a situation is corruption.

Opening the discussion Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan touched upon the dynamics of moral and ethical values in the society, which can not universalised. Corruption is not a new phenomenon and has been prevalent from times immemorial. Chanakya

refers to different facets of corruption in his Arthashastra. The issue is getting highlighted due to revolution in communication technology and awareness among people. While the tools like RTI and RTE constitute hardware, she said, the human aspect of technology is the software that should prevail in order to stem the fall in ethical and moral values. When such values are addressed in social arena governance also stands to gain. She touched upon the aspect of collective conscience to combat the situation. One is naturally reminded of Noonan who observes that "the common good of any society consists not only in its material possessions but in its shared ideals. When these ideals are betrayed, as they are betrayed when bribery is practiced, the common good, intangible though it be, suffers injury."

Bribery and corruption—however much the experts may wish to disguise them in the language of costs and benefits and economic choices—have a moral dimension. We ignore it at our own risk and at considerable cost to society in terms of the effectiveness of measures taken to limit or ameliorate their corrosive effects.

Prof. Sandeep Shastri touched upon various pillars of democracy like Politics, Administration and judiciary which form the spectrum of corruption. He raised the question of the main function of bureaucracy?. Is only corruption main fall out of weak value system in the society.

As we have seen, corruption weakens the state and its capacity to punish violations of the law. We also see free usage of euphemisms like gifts, contributions, etc. while analysing corruption.

Dr. Meenakshisundaram elaborated the use of technology to provide access to the citizens preventing the human interface which could be main reason for corruption. He said framing of both policy and its implementation would be the work of bureaucracy. Quoting from his personal experience through anecdotes, he also analysed the roots of corruption among politicians. He opined that unless there is state funding of election expenses, corruption is bound to raise its hood and haunt the society.

Sri. B L Sridhar traced administration from times of Mahabharata (as told by Bhishma to Yudhishthira in Bhishma Parva) and Chanakya. He analysed how the value system has changed over the three generation (1950-75, 1975-2000 and 2000-

2025). He said it is necessary to tackle the issue of values from macro levels without losing the sight of grassroot level.

Ms. Sowmya Aji, who moderated the discussions spoke about ethics in Journalism and questioned the value system which needs to be understood in right perspective.

During a lively interactive session after the presentations by the panellists, value education and normative behaviour as an essential part of upbringing of an individual and strict adherence to societal norms as the basic instrumentality with which corruption can be fought. The issues of linking Aadhaar card with public services and educating the people to bridge the digital divide in the society among the haves and have nots of the society were dwelt upon.

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In the concluding remarks Sri. S Ramanathan and Sri. S V Ranganath pointed out involvement of people which is very important. While technology with human face can bring about change and there is a need to develop human values.