

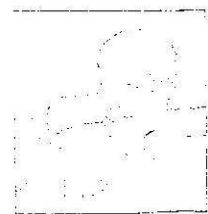
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ / ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: ನಿರ್ಮಲಾ ದೇವಿ ಸೇವಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: ಪ್ರಜಾವಾಣಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 15/05/2018

### Shameful conduct

Karnataka's Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi has reluctantly resigned after a sleazy video allegedly featuring him surfaced. The regularity with which such videos keep appearing points to the complete lack of probity in public life. A person's sex life is a private affair and though there may be nothing illegal in a consensual relationship, those holding public office are expected to espouse high moral standards and set an example for others. In this case, however, the minister is accused of sexually exploiting a young girl, who is also seen in the video, with the promise of getting her a government job. Indian politicians are usually avowed in white to signify purity, but their conduct often belies this. Their private actions are in total variance with the image they portray of themselves in public. While such moral turpitude among politicians attracts severe backlash in many countries, Jarkiholi's supporters took to the streets demanding that his resignation be not accepted. The minister himself professed his innocence and refused to resign until he was coerced to do so by Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa and the BJP high command.

Nothing usually comes out of these cases because the woman in question normally does not file a complaint or turns hostile. What's even more appalling is that politicians caught in unbecoming acts are actually rewarded.



In 2007, Jayalakshmi, a nurse, had accused BJP MLA M P Renukacharya of sexual harassment. The two later compromised and Renukacharya is now political adviser to the chief minister with cabinet rank. In 2012, three BJP ministers had to resign after being caught watching porn in the Assembly. One of them, C C Patil, is a minister in the Yediyurappa cabinet now; another, Laxman Savadi, who ever lost the 2018 Assembly elections, was made a member of the legislative council and promoted as deputy chief minister. BJP MLA Arvind Limbavali, now a minister, was cleared through an investigation into a video clip. Yet another BJP MLA SA Ramesh attempted suicide some time ago after he was accused of sexual exploitation, while his colleague Hemant Hulappa was acquitted in a rape case.

Congress, too, had its share of embarrassment with HY Meti, a minister in the Siddaramaiah cabinet, being caught in a sextape. One would expect such politicians to fade away into oblivion, in Karnataka they only seem to emerge stronger. While politicians are usually shamed and rarely feel embarrassed, it is disappointing for the people not only to forgive them for their deeds but also to see them back to power.