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Legislative Councils

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# Council ruckus rekindles debate on abolition of Upper House

**'It's no more a place for intellectual discussions'**

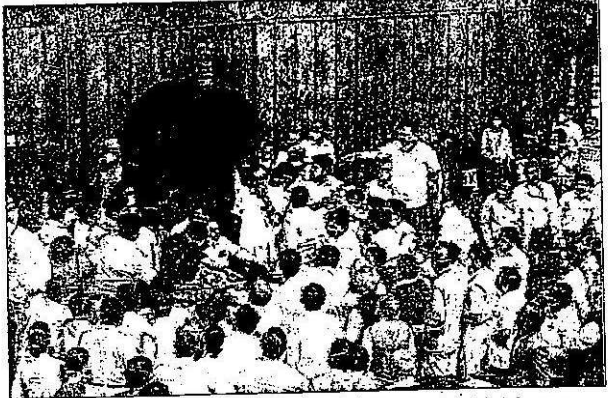
BENGALURU, DHNS

The recent ruckus in the Legislative Council has rekindled demand for its abolition. While Karnataka is among the few Indian states to have retained the Legislative Council, many feel that the nature of the elected members to the Council has undergone a transformation over the years and is no more reflecting the spirit of the Upper House as a place for "intellectual discussions". Federation of Farmers' Association leader Kuruburu Shanthakumar is among those raising the demand. "The composition of the Legislative

Council has changed over the years. It has become a haven for real estate businessmen. The seats are being bought by the wealthy. Abolishing the Council will help the government save crores of rupees annually. States, like Tamil Nadu, have already abolished Legislative Councils in their states. Karnataka government must follow the same," he said in a statement.

Shanthakumar had raised the issue two years ago as well and had written to the governor seeking the abolition of Council.

Demand for abolishing the Upper House has been raised from time to time in Karnataka. In 2015, JD(S) MLA M T Krishnappa had moved a private members' Bill in the Legislative Assembly, calling for the abolition of the Council. He had, in his motion, argued that the Council had become a backdoor entry for politicians



**Karnataka is among the few Indian states which have retained Legislative Council. The recent chaos and commotion in the Council had become national headlines. DH FILE PHOTO**

who lost elections.

However, former Council chairperson DH Shankaramurthy said the abolition of Council was not a solution. "What happened recently was unfortunate. None of it was justified. But, the Council's job is to discuss at length the issues

faced by citizens. This is not possible in the Assembly. During my tenure, the Council had taken up discussion on Child Rights for three days, which drew appreciation from the United Nations Organisation. Members should take up constructive discussions," he said.

## Chairperson issues show-cause notice to secretary

BENGALURU, DHNS: While the blame game continues between Congress and BJP over who was responsible for the December 15 Legislative Council ruckus, Chairperson Pratapchandra Shetty has now issued a show-cause notice to Council secretary K R Mahalakshmi citing dereliction of duty.

Going by the visuals captured of the proceedings that day, it appears that the secretary was facilitating the ruling party's attempt to take over the Chairperson's seat, Shetty has said.

"Bringing shame to the House, some legislators stopped me from entering the House and later allowed the deputy chairperson to occupy my chair. I direct you to submit a detailed report on everything that transpired in the House before I was able to enter and even after I left the premises," the

notice stated.

That apart, the recorded visuals show that the secretary, who is supposed to be in-charge of the House in the chairperson's absence, did not intervene when the deputy chairperson occupied the seat "illegally". It appeared that the secretary had failed in her duty by handing out files to the deputy chairperson, facilitating him to continue the session without the Chairperson, Shetty has said.

"You have acted in violation of the rules and beyond the scope of your position as the secretary," Shetty stated, asking Mahalakshmi why should action not be initiated against her under Karnataka Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules.

Mahalakshmi has been asked to respond to the notice within 48 hours.