

# TRIBUTE TO RAMACHANDRAN, AN ICS OFFICER PAR EXCELLENCE

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THE oldest Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer alive, of the 1937 batch, 102-year-old VK Rao will release a book on his colleague, also a former ICS Officer, the late CS Ramachandran on his birth centenary in Hyderabad on Tuesday - a rare occasion to listen to the legendary personality. The late CS Subramanian of Tamil Nadu, who too would have been an ICS officer but for his fascination of Left wing ideologies, when involved in the freedom movement despite a ban on the communist party, was arrested on orders issued by none other than his own younger brother, CS Ramachandran, the then Home Secretary. That might have been an odd coincidence, but, it did take place.

Subramanian was sent to England for ICS but left the studies half way and returned to India to play a key role in the formation of the organizational structure of the Communist Party of India in Madras. On the other hand, his younger brother Ramachandran, after his BSc Honors in Physics, appeared for the civil services examinations in 1940 and cleared not only the ICS but also the Financial Civil Service examination simultaneously.

On his birth centenary, Valluri Kameshwara Rao, popularly known as VK Rao, will be releasing a book on CSR published by his daughter, Ms Gayatri Ramachandran, a former IAS officer, at the Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad. VK Rao, as many people are aware, worked as district collector Vizag, Chief Secretary of AP, Governor's advisor when President's rule was imposed in AP in 1973 and later, after retirement, as Vigilance Commissioner of AP and finally, as Principal Secretary to the then President N Sanjeeva Reddy during 1981-82. Former IAS officers M Gopalakrishna, S Parthasarathy, TL Shankar and eminent doctor AP Ranga Rao will also speak on the occasion.

Coming to Ramachandran, after his selection to the ICS, he was allotted to the Central Provinces and Berar cadre in 1942 which was also called Madhya Bharat then. From 1942 to 1948, he worked in the Central Provinces before opting to change his cadre to the Madras Presidency. Among others, the 1942 ICS officers included Bengal cadre

Leslie Power, Madras Presidency cadre DD Sathe, Punjab cadre HB Williams, Assam cadre AN Kidwai, UP cadre BK Kaul, Bengal cadre Alexander and UP cadre Satish Chandra. Some of them opted for Pakistan after partition. Kudrat Ullah Shahab of his batch went to Pakistan in 1947 and became the principal aide to the then President Ayub Khan.

If we go through the list of some of the Indian members of the ICS officers, who were seniors to CSR, we find such great personalities as Sir Sarat Kumar Ghosh (who finally became a chief justice), Sir Bengal Narsinga Rau (who became Prime Minister of Kashmir), Sir Bengal Rama Rau (who became Reserve Bank Governor), Sir Akbar Hydari, Sir NR Pillai (first cabinet secretary of India), Subhas Chandra Bose, KPS Menon (first foreign secretary of India) and many more.

The ICS, officially known as the Imperial Civil Service, was the elite higher civil service of the British Empire in British India between 1858 and 1947. At first, almost all the top thousand members of the ICS, known as "Civilians", were British, and had been educated in the best British schools. By 1905, five per cent were from Bengal. In 1947, there were 322 Indians and 688 British members. Nirmal Kumar Mukherjee, who retired as Cabinet Secretary in April

CS Ramachandran also went on deputation to the Government of India in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. He worked under Lal Bahadur Shastri who became his model in simplicity, great vision and capacity to look at development of the country as well as in shaping the industrial revolution of the country. Even today, people remember CSR's contribution as the one that laid the foundations of industrial India and to have given the momentum for industrialisation of the country. In 1961, Ramachandran was chosen for the Nuffield Foundation Fellowship in England where he studied and updated his Physics particularly developments in nuclear and astrophysics in Oxford and Cambridge universities.

In later days, Ramachandran went on to hold several distinguished positions in the Government of India - Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Advisor, Planning Commission and Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Planning. In recognition of his administrative capability and statesmanship in steering the country, he was offered and held several international positions with the UN and was also the chairman of several committees of the UN and FAO. He was also associated with the WHO when he was Secretary in the Ministry of Health.

Ramachandran was a deeply religious person, who believed in Vedas and the Upanishads and was a great devotee of the Shankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham - the Paramacharya - as he was known. He valued the great heritage of India and was involved in preserving the Vedas in the various trusts set up by the Kanchi Mutt. He was also involved in building several temples. Ramachandran was appointed in 1977 as chairman of the Badrinath and Kedarnath Temple committee by the Uttar Pradesh Government. The renovation of Badrinath-Kedarnath commenced with his appointment. Thanks to Ramachandran, today, Badrinath stands as a monument to the glorious traditions of the Adi Shankara and our great heritage.

CSR was also the President of South Indian Samaj, a first-of-its kind cultural organisation for all South Indians in Delhi. Ramachandran tried to integrate all south Indian cultures from Kerala to Andhra in the functioning of the organisation.



102-year-old VK Rao, a former ICS officer, will release a book on CSR today. The latter is credited for shaping the industrial revolution in India. The book is penned by CSR's daughter

1980, was the last ICS (in 1944) officer to retire, while the last ICS officer to retire in Pakistan was Agha Shahi, also of 1944 batch, who retired as foreign advisor to the President in 1982. The last recruited batch of the ICS was in October 1944.