

INTERVIEW WITH SHANKAR BIDRI



Supreetha: As a child had you ever dreamt of becoming a highly successful police officer? What were your aspirations then?

I had never dreamt of becoming a police officer. Initially, I worked as a telephone operator in 1971; I met a few police officials and realized how important their work was. They encouraged me to become an IPS officer. Mr. Krishna Kumar Varma who was a retired ACP officer, encouraged me to study further and become an IPS officer. Then I passed my BA in 1975. (I studied as an external candidate). I first joined United Commercial Bank as an officer. But within a month I got appointed as Asst. Commissioner, I appeared for IPS examination which is called allied services examination. I was selected in higher rank for IPS.

Pranav: Sir, can you please tell us about your education?

I belonged to a middle class family, my family had about 28 acres of land. My father was a secretary of the weavers' society, I studied in a Kannada medium government school till my 7th grade. My uncles were running grocery shops. Then I went to a local school (SRA high school) where I completed my SSLC. I was not a bright student till my high school. I worked hard and became one of the toppers of the class. I passed my SSLC in 1969 with 87%. Though I was not interested in algebra and calculus, the compulsion of the peer group forced me to take up science in Bagewadi Pre-university College. I completed my BA in Dharwad. I had to discontinue my studies because of my father's ill health and I came back to the village to look after him. My formal education was only till 2nd PUC. I received an honorary doctorate from Gulbarga University.

Trisha: What hardships did you have to overcome to achieve your goals?

I never had any financial hardships. I joined school when I was 4 years old. Initially, I worked as an operator and got Rs.233 and earned Rs.60 to 70 for extra hours of work. I used to spend a lot of money on buying books & magazines. I excelled through hard work in spite of jealousy among the peer group. But with God's grace I could overcome all the hardships.

Supreetha: Who do you think were your role models in the police department?

My role model was B.N. Garudachar who looked after me like my father. He was a philosopher and a guide to me. He groomed me well and I cannot forget his care and affection for me. He has always remained one of my ardent well wishers.

Trisha: Is there any particular incident in your life which inspired you to become a police officer?

I realized that police service is the only one service from where one can serve from the first day to the last.

Pranav: You being a police officer, how did you feel when your daughter Vijayalakshmi topped the all India IAS exam?

She completed her BE and worked in a company for 5 days and later decided to take up civil service examination. She succeeded getting the first rank though it was very difficult. With God's grace and her effort, she secured a very high post.

Sameera : How were you able to handle the sensitive issues during the kidnap of Dr. Ramkumar?

When I took charge, Veerappan's gang had 300 people; we arrested around 125 people and encountered 60 of them. It was a very difficult operation as the geographical conditions were very challenging but we were successful in bringing down their number to 5.

Neha : Apart from being an integral part of the police force, you have taken up many welfare activities for the people of Karnataka. Can we know about some of them?

I have started a career guidance center at Koppal to help students in institutions at Jamakhandi and enable them to secure better scores in competitive exams. I have also been trying to spread awareness among the public to discourage bribe.

Neetha : If not in the police force, which field would you have chosen?

I would have chosen the public service.

Supreetha : WHAT WERE THE CHANGES IN THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WHEN YOU GOT PROMOTED AS THE DGP OF THE WHOLE STATE?

When I got promoted, I gave priority to the upright police officers. I impartially carried on my duties and started the Arogya Bhagya scheme for parents of police officers and encouraged police officers through rewards.

Pranav : EXPLAIN YOUR APPROACH IN PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING?

I always considered myself to be one among the community members. The police and the public go hand-in hand and 85% of our successful operations were due to public support.

Sameera : DOES YOUR OPINION MATCH WITH THE PUBLIC OPINION WHICH OFTEN SAYS THAT THE PRESENT DAY YOUTH ARE GETTING SPOILT BY SOCIAL MEDIA AND FREEDOM GIVEN TO THEM IN THE SOCIETY?

Social media has a limited role. The students need not give importance to social media till +2 and I advice the younger generation to concentrate on education as social media has its own advantages and draw backs.

Trisha: What are the qualities that set you apart from the other police officers?

I treated all the police officers impartially and encouraged the efficient officers and discouraged bribes.

Neetha : SIR, CAN YOU PLEASE TEL US ABOUT YOUR HOBBIES.

I don't watch films and would like to attend public functions arranged in schools, colleges and universities. I was a student of history, economics and political science and a voracious reader and I have Indian and European history of the last 2000 years at my finger tips.

Neha: CAN YOU GIVE A FEW REASONS TO ATTRACT THE PRESENT DAY YOUTH TO JOIN THE POLICE FORCES?

The role of a police officer is that of the work done by Lord Krishna in Dwaapara Yuga and it is the protection of righteousness and punishment of the wrong. The highest service is of the police and law is the Dharma.

Sameera: CRIME RATE IN THE SOCIETY IS INCREASING DAY BY DAY, IS THIS SITUATION UNFAVORABLE FOR THE PEOPLE TO LIVE IN? WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THIS?

Crime and the Thamasa quality is integral part of the society and even Gods cannot control the crime. As far as there is jealousy, greed and other attractions such as bribe, crime is at large, crime can be brought down but cannot be controlled extensively.

Neha : FINALLY, WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO THE YOUTH OF INDIA?

There is corruption and nepotism in the society. But hardworking people will definitely succeed in the society. There are no short-cuts to hard work. Never get influenced by the bad elements in the society.