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SUBJECT:

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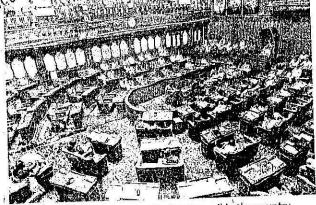
Legislative Council: To be or not to be in existence. There has been an argument for abolition, though there have been long debates on making it more relevant for political reasons – prominent among them being the abolished," said of Shankar favorured. Mr. Shankar favorured.

Andhra Pradesh's decision to do away with its Legislative Council has sparked off a debate on the need for an Upper House of the State legislature. In Karnataka, though there have been occasional debates on the Council sliding away from its mandate, abolishing it has never been seriously considered.

Karnataka has the oldest functioning Council in the councy. The other States with an Upper House are Bihar, Uttar Prudesh, Maharashtra and Telangana. Karnataka is perhaps the only State that has increased its Council strength multiple times, to bring it to the present 75.

In 2015, JD(S) member from Turuvekere M.T. Krishnappa had tabled a private member's Bill in the Assembly seeking aboution of the Council.

"The Council has become a rehabilitation centre for politiciars who lose elections or are not electable. It has



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moved away from its purpose, and legally it is not mandatory," he told The Hindu. The Bill did not gather any support. Earlier, though a few senior MLAs had expressed the same view, never had it taken any concrete form.

The Karnataka Legislative Council was started in 1907 as Praja Pratinidhi Sabhe in the princely state of Mysore, and it is highly regarded for its rich history and quality of in-

terventions, said B.L. Shankar, former Council Chairman. Basavaraj Horatti, a seven-time Council member since 1980, said the House acts as a "forum of sane advice" and as a system of checks and balances against the excesses of the government. Political scientist Sandeep Shastri said that in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and several other States, Legislative Councils were abolished

ty in the House.

Many political observers and Council veterans, however, agree that the quality of the Council in the State has also been on a downward spiral and there is a need to make it more relevant, "The category of social work is being misused to nominate career politicians to the Upper House. The Council, which is supposed to be the House of elders and intellectuals, has today been reduced to accommodating politicians. It is filled with realtors and businessmen," said a senior Council member who did not wish to be named.

Need for reconstitution

"The constituencies of teachers and graduates made sense during the colonial times when there was limited suffrage. They do not during times of universal adult franchise and when literacy rates

are high. Those needs to be

Mr. Shankar favoured taining the teachers' comb tuencies, but argued for acding representation for farmers and cooperative inch. tutions.

Dr. Shastri said Legislative Councils need to be remodelled to represent the third tier of governance, like the lla iva Sabha that represents the States. "A majority of acmembers of the Council magain to be elected from local in. dies," he said.

There has also been a treasof States wanting to recousiitute or constitute Councils. Two Bills to constitute Legicia tive Councils in Rajasthuar and Odisha are pending in Passisment. In Tamil Nadu, the vida Munnetra Kazhagana am been consistently batting by the reconstitution of its Council abolished in 1986. Th namool Congress has been at vouring reconstituting Council in West Bengal Grawas abolished in 1969.