Public Affairs Centre
Annual Report 2007-08
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CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report and Accounts of Public Affairs Centre for the year 2007-08. For PAC, the past year has been a year of transition at multiple levels. New members have joined the board of PAC. A new full time Director, Dr. Gopakumar Thampi, has been appointed at the Centre. The new Campus has provided the staff and visitors a pleasant work environment. New and innovative avenues for engaging with the State and partnering with the civil society in different parts of the country have not only helped us leverage our strategic advantages but also given us a host of daunting challenges.

Given the immense problems of public governance in the country, the board and staff of PAC will have to position themselves with care in the pursuit of its mission. The need to sustain and speed up the momentum gained over the decade and a half while constantly striving to uphold the quality benchmarks we have set for ourselves cannot be overstated. Though the art of blending knowledge with informed citizen action towards improving the quality of governance has been our unique forte, we still have considerable ground to cover in actualizing its full potential. Our ability and inclination to constantly redefine our goals and strategies, reflect on our relevance and reposition ourselves in the rapidly changing milieu of public governance will prove vital in realizing the vision and dreams that we have set for ourselves.

Dr. Samuel Paul
DIRECTOR'S REPORT
The Year
in Perspective

The financial year 2007-2008 highlighted new challenges and opportunities for the future growth of the Centre. New additions to the staff and emergent partnerships with both state and peer civil society organizations have opened up the possibility to deepen and scale up the scope of work. Alongside, extension of grants from existing funders and expression of interests from new donors point to opportunities for continuing PAC's core competencies (generating new knowledge, experimentation, adaptation and replication) in research and advocacy. With the expansion of staff and new opportunities for financial support, there is a strong case to review and reorganize the Centre's portfolio of activities. Currently, a perspective planning process is underway to respond to these issues.

On the research and programme fronts, consolidation of key approaches, new partnerships and successful completion of activities embellishes the spectrum of initiatives during the year. On the research front, the year saw increasing interest in Citizen Report Cards from the government; a major programme on evaluating the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is underway in Karnataka with support from the SSA unit in Karnataka. The second CRC on public services in Hubli Dharwad was completed – further evidence of getting CRCs embedded in local governments. Two partnerships with peer civil society organizations have also been successfully completed. The citizen action and advocacy activities of PAC continued its focus on elections, enhancing accountability of the state and empowering ordinary citizens to fight corruption. The Coalition Against Corruption (CAC) extended its helpline to cover Right to Information issues. A series of public campaigns were initiated to raise awareness on CAC. The Centre's capacity building interventions focused on the Right to Information Empowerment Programme that covers south Asia. A series of events including capacity building workshops, field audits and documentation of best practices was carried out. The Children's Movement for Civic Awareness (CMCA) is finding wider resonance with expansion of activities in Bangalore and initiating new chapters in other cities.

PAC’s emerging role as a think tank on national issues was reiterated by an invitation extended to the Centre by the Second Administrative Reform Commission (ARC) to author the Commission’s report on “Citizen Centric Administration”.

Dr. Gopakumar Thampi
Research Projects

Citizen Report Card (CRC) on Gram Panchayat Services

Background
- An exploratory study to help generate citizen perspectives and voice, on how Gram Panchayats, constituting the lowest tier of governance in India, deliver services was carried out in Tumkur district in 2005-06.
- Findings for the four GP services (drinking water, sanitation, streetlights and roads) indicated high dissatisfaction levels among all the services except for drinking water, which was widely disseminated at the state and taluka levels.
- Follow-up advocacy measures through participatory exercises were carried out in 2006-07 in the best-ranked and worst ranked Gram Panchayats.
- The study was discussed among top-ranked officials of RDPR at workshops with the World Bank as an approach to getting user feedback.

Outcome & Current Status
- drafts of the print were again scrutinized for aspects such as presence of all content, alignment, formatting, etc.
- The final version for printing was approved and the printed version of the report was brought out in June 2008.

Second Citizen Report Card (CRC) on Public Services in Hubli-Dharwad

Background
- Following the CRC that was carried out in Hubli-Dharwad on services provided by Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation (HDMC), Hubli Electricity Supply Company (HESCOM) and North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC), there was a request from HDMC to carry out a second CRC.
- HDMC has been carrying out various reform measures to resolve issues related to their public services and wished to assess the effectiveness of the same as well as benchmark the current quality of the services.
- In addition to the services covered in the first CRC, feedback queries on birth and death certificate related services have been incorporated. Also, there is a third segment – commercial establishments, that is being covered for the same services as well as for understanding issues related to trade licensing.
- The survey was carried out by a local team based in Hubli with considerable experience in carrying out household surveys, under the close supervision of the PAC Research Team.
- The fieldwork was completed by end of November 2007, data entry completed by around end of December. Currently, tables are being generated by analysing across various cuts – general households vs. slum households; Old Hubli - New Hubli – Dharwad; and for Commercial Establishments.
- On completion of the CRC survey, a field report was submitted to the HDMC, which has been approved.

Public release of the CRC findings at Hubli - Dharwad
Outcome & Current Status

- Power point presentations based on topline and relevant findings were readied in preparation for the release function to be held in Hubli.
- The draft report was also completed and sent to the HDMC, HESCOM and NWKRTC heads for their comments and suggestions.
- The presentation to the three agencies has been completed
- A public release of the findings is being planned in July

Citizen Report Card (CRC) on Gram Panchayat Services in Chattisgarh

Background

- Samarthan - Centre for Development Support, a Bhopal-based NGO working in the field of participatory governance and development, with support from PAC, carried out a CRC on Gram Panchayat services in two districts of Chattisgarh – Rajnandgaon and Bastar.
- The findings of the CRCs were disseminated among the stakeholders and the public over a two-day programme (14-15 November 2007) in Raipur. The presentation on “Services of Gram Panchayats in Rajnandgaon and Bastar – What does the Citizen Report Card Show?” involved representatives from Samarthan, Raipur, PAC (Dr. Sita Sekhar) and from the service providers.

Outcome & Current Status

- Revised chapters from the report have been sent by YSD which have again been checked by the Research Team.
- All the chapters of the report have been revised and finalized. YSD will bring out the print version of the report after whetting the cover design with PAC, in July-August 2008.

Citizen Report Card of Public Services in Berhampur, Orissa

Background

- Youth for Social Development (YSD), an NGO, working in the field of governance through research and advocacy, carried out a CRC on various public services in Berhampur City of Ganjam district, Orissa, with financial support from Public Affairs Foundation (PAF).
- The CRC included both user feedback as well as feedback from officials from the concerned service providers.
- Training and technical inputs (questionnaire design, sampling design, training programme modules, data analysis structures, chapter formats and presentation templates) were provided by the PAC Research Team (Dr. Sita Sekhar, Dr. Meena Nair and Dr. K. Prabhakar).
- Presentation of the CRC findings among stakeholders and the public was carried out in a one-day workshop on “Benchmarking Quality of Public Services in Brahmapur City” at Berhampur on January 18, 2008, with PAC and PAF being represented by Dr. Sita Sekhar and Mr. T.S. Prasad respectively.
- YSD has subsequently made presentations of the same among other interested stakeholders thus attempting to disseminate the findings across a wide spectrum.

Outcome & Current Status

- Drafts of the print were again scrutinized for aspects such as presence of all the content, alignment, formatting, etc.
- The final publication “Public Services provided by Gram Panchayats in Chattisgarh – A Citizen Report Card of Rajnandgaon and Bastar” was brought out.

Participants discussing advocacy measures in the Post CRC dissemination workshop
Assessment of the Initiatives by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Karnataka, funded by SSA-PAC

Background

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched by the Government of India in 2001-02 in all the states in India, aims to bring all children in the 6-14 year age group in the net of Class 1 to 8 elementary education, retain them in school till they complete an 8-year cycle and see that they attain standards of a specified quality.

- Implementers of the programme (which is proposed to be completed by 2010), feel that while the concerns of universal access and participation have been satisfactorily addressed, concerns of quality and equity persist. The year 2007 being the mid-phase of the project, it was felt at SSA Karnataka that it is time that there was a systematic review and feedback on concerns of equity and quality which may serve as guidelines for corrective action.

- PAC after discussions submitted a proposal “Study of impact of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiatives on universalisation of elementary education in Karnataka with special reference to concerns of quality and equity” to SSA, Bangalore, which was approved.

- Consequently, a MoU was signed between SSA and PAC in July, 2007 to carry out an assessment in four districts of Karnataka. In three districts (Gulbarga, Chitradurga and Bangalore Urban), the CRC approach would be followed while the fourth (Hassan) would involve case studies.

- The project is funded mainly by SSA while PAC has also agreed to put in a small proportion from its side.

- Following the signing of the MoU, and Advisory Panel has been constituted with members including experts in the field of education, administration and budgets. The Panel has met twice – the first to get acquainted with the study and the second, to discuss the draft data collection instruments.

- During period of the course of discussions with SSA, which also witnessed a change of guard in the form of a new SPD (State Project Director), Ms. Vandita Sharma, I.A.S, there has been a gradual widening of the scope of the project.

- The target groups now also comprise of various representatives from the community who should be (as per SSA norms) be involved in the running of the schools and the various regular and mainstreaming programmes.

- Due to the expansion in the scope of the study, SSA has agreed to a revision of the MoU and the financial terms.

- The PAC Research Team is currently finalizing the questionnaires in close accord with the SSA and also the revised Terms of Reference for the new MoU.

- As per suggestions from SSA, the main fieldwork will commence with the reopening of the schools after the vacations, preceded by observations of other SSA programmes that are carried out before the same. Local teams have already been contacted for this purpose and will be used for data collection.

Outcome & Current Status

- The PAC Research Team visited some regular and mainstreaming schools in Bangalore to understand the various levels of school activities taking place and the role of different stakeholders in the running of these schools. For the latter, the Research Team witnessed an SDMC-CAC members Training Programme conducted by SSA in Kolar district.
• In a crucial meeting held at SSA on March 26, the final version of the revised budget was submitted to the SPD. The SPD also requested the Research Team to change Chitradurga district to Shimoga also specifying the two talukas to be covered for the CRC survey.

Observation of children participating in the Chinnara Angala Programme in Shimoga

• All the draft questionnaires (7 addressing all target groups including Head Teachers, Teachers, SDMC members, Public Officials, Households and Observation of Regular and Mainstreaming schools) were submitted to SSA for their perusal. These were also sent to all the Panel Members for their comments and suggestions.

• Based on the comments and suggestions received from SSA as well as internally, the questionnaires were finalized in English and then translated into Kannada. The final bilingual questionnaires were then re-submitted to SSA.

• The revised sampling design (for Shimoga) was also completed and submitted to SSA, which was approved by the latter.

• Following the Research Team’s decision to use local teams for the fieldwork, the NGO Samanvaya was identified for carrying out fieldwork in Shimoga and Bangalore, while for Raichur and Gulbarga, UNICEF recommended independent local teams with whom they have had field experience.

• Approval of enhanced budget for UNICEF has taken place and the enhanced budget has also been internally approved at SSA, though a written approval is pending from the Ministry of Human Resources, Govt of India.

• Training Programmes for the selected teams and investigators were carried out at two centres – at Raichur on 26-29 May 2008 for the Raichur and Gulbarga teams and at Bangalore on 2-5 June 2008 for the Shimoga and Bangalore teams.

• The first phase of the fieldwork was completed by the third week of June. The Research Team has consistently monitored the fieldwork through on-site visits and off-site follow-up measures.

• An Inception Report providing all the details was submitted to SSA in the last week of June.

Assessment of the Initiatives by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Raichur district, Karnataka, funded by UNICEF

Background

• UNICEF’s Education Programme supports the SSA to ensure that all children complete primary school and has been focusing on providing support and advocacy for the development of an effective quality education package.

• The UNICEF office in Hyderabad, which also overlooks its programmes being carried out in Karnataka, expressed an interest to fund a similar assessment exercise in the district of Raichur where the organization has been endeavoring to carry out various programmes related to quality education for all children, especially girls.

• UNICEF has accepted the proposal submitted to SSA and it has also agreed to provide the necessary support at the time of fieldwork and dissemination.

• This assessment of SSA initiatives in Raichur district is funded entirely by UNICEF with payment being routed through the SSA to PAC.

• The UNICEF has been kept apprised of the latest developments at PAC in terms of its discussions with the SSA and also the stages of the data collection instruments and preparations for fieldwork.
UNICEF has proposed to help raise a local team to carry out fieldwork in the districts of Raichur and Gulbarga, which has been accepted by the PAC Research Team.

Outcome & Current Status

- As a result of the increase in the scope of the study, a revised budget was also submitted to UNICEF, which was approved.

- All the draft questionnaires (7 addressing all target groups including Head Teachers, Teachers, SDMC members, Public Officials, Households and Observation of Regular and Mainstreaming schools) submitted to SSA was also sent to UNICEF for their comments and suggestions.

- For fieldwork, local teams that have had previous experience with UNICEF were selected with their recommendation.

- Training Programme for the selected teams and investigators were carried out at Raichur on 26-29 May 2008 for the Raichur and Gulbarga teams.

- The first phase of the fieldwork was completed by the third week of June. The Research Team has consistently monitored the fieldwork through on-site visits and off-site follow-up measures.

- An Inception Report providing all the details was submitted to SSA in the last week of June and sent to UNICEF.

Preliminary Activities for carrying out a Citizen Report Card for Greater Bangalore

- In March 2008 informal discussions were held at PAC to start preliminary activities such as meeting service providers and other stakeholders for their views on carrying out a CRC for Greater Bangalore.

- The first meeting with a service provider was with the BMTC Managing Director and his team on 1 April 2008, where the Research Team showed the CRC film, presented the findings of the third CRC and submitted the questionnaires canvassed then to the MD and the senior officials. Recent reform measures and their inclusion in the revised questionnaires were discussed at the meeting.

- A formal meeting on the CRC was carried out in PAC where Dr. Sita Sekhar made a presentation of the issues involved in carrying out the CRC.

- Meetings with other service providers in the same format as given above were carried out. The service providers whom the Research Team met included – BESCOM (4 April 2008), RTO (8 April 2008), BBMP (11 April 2008), BWSSB (28 April 2008), the Health Department (2 May 2008) and BDA (15 May 2008).

- Follow up activities will take place with each agency for feedback on the data collection instruments and additional aspects to be covered.

Other Activities carried out by the Research Team

- Participation in Workshops and Seminars

- Dr. Sita Sekhar participated in a workshop on Budget Analysis on 2-3 February 2008, sponsored by YASHADA in Pune.

- Dr. Meena Nair attended a workshop on ‘Write Winning Proposals’ hosted by MCC in Bangalore on 17 January 2008.

- Dr. K. Prabhakar and Dr. Meena Nair attended a Seminar on ‘Expenditure on Education and Health at the local level: A Study in Karnataka’, presented by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS), Bangalore on 29 January 2008.
Dr. Meena Nair, along with Ms. Poonam Kaur of the Citizen Action Support Team participated in a workshop on 'Result-oriented Practice for Learning and Accountability', sponsored by Hivos in Bangalore on 3-7 March 2008.

Dr. Sita Sekhar represented PAC at a workshop organized by the International Budget Project (IBP) from 6th to 9th May 2008 at Cape Town, South Africa. The participants came together to plan and design a ten day training workshop on the use of eight methodologies selected by IBP.

Advocacy & Citizen Action Support

VOTE Bengaluru (VB) Initiative

Background

In Dec 2007, PAC, CIVIC, Citizen Action Forum, Swabhimana and Karnataka Kolageri Nivasigala Samyukth Sanghatane (KKNSS) came together to pool in their expertise and reach out to larger sections of voters by launching the campaign - "VOTE Bengaluru". The campaign focuses on cleansing of our electoral system & processes as well as to shift the focus from vote bank politics to issue based politics. This is expected to be an on-going campaign till the desired level of purity in elections is achieved.

Outcome & Current Activities:

- Inspection of Electoral rolls: Vote Bengaluru carried out a sample inspection of the latest electoral rolls released by the BBMP after several revisions, in about 10 polling booths in Bangalore. Earlier, VB had trained volunteers by developing a resource kit to carry out the inspection of the electoral rolls in the city. The study revealed that the rolls are riddled with errors. As a corrective measure, VB has suggested several reforms in the preparation of electoral rolls. Memoranda with recommendations were faxed to the Chief Election Commissioner in New Delhi and the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)-Karnataka R Ramaseshan. A delegation from VB also met Ramaseshan personally and apprised him of the errors and measures to be taken to minimize the same.

- Evolving Voters’ Charter and Voters’ Issues of concern: In view of the Karnataka Assembly elections held recently, Vote Bengaluru had organized a city level workshop in April 2008 to evolve voters’ charter, in consultation with representatives of various resident welfare associations. Voters’ Charter is a document that spells voters rights and expectations on how the elected representatives behave towards voters after the election. The rights in the Charter are aspirations of voters that the representatives should meet in relation to the developments in a constituency. During the meet, a list of voters’ issues of concerns was also prepared to be presented to the contesting candidates.

- “Meet Your Candidates” & “Dialogue with the political parties”: Vote Bengaluru facilitated interactions between the contesting candidates and the voters of respective constituencies just before the recently concluded assembly elections in Bangalore. “Meet your candidate” was organized at city level as well as in 8 different constituencies in association with resident welfare associations. The objective of the meet was to introduce and inform voters about the contesting candidates, present voters’ charter and voters’ issues and elicit candidates’ response on them.

- In all these interactive meetings, Vote Bengaluru presented voters’ charter and voters’ issues of concern to the candidates and sought their agreement to it. Almost all candidates recognized the importance of the charter and signed these documents in proof of their consent. A few candidates have accepted it with some conditions / modifications.
Follow up: As a follow up activity, various resident welfare associations are meeting their newly elected representative, inviting him/her for a discussion and are reiterating on the points mentioned in the Voters charter and issues.

Follow up on the correction of electoral rolls: The office of the Chief Electoral Officer has been in touch with VB and has sought feedback on the preparation of new lists. It has been assured to the members of VB that the lists will not be finalized until the new process of preparation of voters list and the results are found satisfactory. They have also assured to implement some of the suggestions made by the VB earlier.

**Panchayat Jamabandi**

**Background**

- Panchayat jamabandi is an innovative administrative mechanism to bring about transparency and accountability in administration at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level through an open audit and annual inspection of accounts and registers maintained by the GPs and works executed by them.

- The Government of Karnataka in 2001 initiated this process of social auditing to examine the working of GPs in the state. Though jamabandi as a process of maintaining revenue records exists in many states in India, perhaps Karnataka is the only state, which has taken it further to make it a true social audit process for panchayats.

- With the objective of understanding the conduct and implementation of the jamabandi process, PAC carried out an observation study involving rural civic groups and NGOs in 60 gram panchayats belonging to 16 Taluks of 8 districts in Karnataka in 2005.

- PAC’s study revealed lots of anomalies in the Jamabandi process and highlighted areas for specific improvements and reforms.

- Findings from this study and actionable recommendations were presented to the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department.

- RDPR invited PAC for a discussion and informed that the points of recommendation will be circulated to all the concerned officials in the entire state. The department also suggested to the PAC to carry out a similar study covering the same set of grama panchayats to see any improvement.

- In this regard, PAC repeated the exercise in 34 gram panchayats in 7 districts in the current year (between 15th Sept 06 to 15th Oct 06) involving the same partner groups. The study showed no marked difference in the quality of the process and all the suggested points continue to hold good to be implemented. PAC also repeated the study in 2007 also and no marked differences were noticed.

**Outcome & Current Status**

- PAC had approached the RDPR to reiterate its suggestions to improve the quality of the process by ensuring important criteria such as publicity to the event, information dissemination regarding the works in panchayats, jamabandi officials to make use of the jamabandi kit while carrying out field inspections etc.

**b. Research & Action Proposal on Jamabandi**

- In view of the many shortcomings observed during the conduct of jamabandi, PAC compared the Karnataka Panchayat Raj (Conduct of Panchayat Jamabandi) Rules, 2001 and the guidelines issued by the RDPR with its field observations for the clear understanding of the extent of deviation.

- PAC is currently preparing a proposal to strengthen this unique process of social audit with a focus on capacity building of the gram panchayat members and secretaries of the panchayat; empowering people with information and encouraging them to participate in jamabandi and independent audit of the programs/works of the GPs by an expert.

- The proposal has been submitted to the RDPR. In the light of the PAC’s proposal and also with the broader objective of taking the RDPR towards more responsive administration, RDPR had organized a brainstorming meeting on 15th June 2007 inviting PAC and other concerned organizations and institutions. The discussions are on at various levels.

**Coalition Against Corruption (CAC)**

**Background**

- Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Swabhimana, AVAS, CREAT, & Consumer Care Society has formed a platform called the ‘Coalition Against Corruption’ (CAC) or Brashtachara Virudha Sanghatane to promote
good governance by tackling the menace of corruption. CAC operates a Helpline in Bangalore City for aggrieved citizens to seek redress.

- Citizens who have faced demands for bribes/illegal gratification are encouraged to approach these Centres and register their complaints on a specified format in person or online. The CAC will forward these complaints to the agencies concerned for remedial action. The CAC has contacted nine public service providers like Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP), Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) etc. to appoint Nodal officers in their organizations to investigate these complaints and take suitable action. In case complaints are not addressed within the stipulated time or the agency response is unsatisfactory, members of the Coalition will contact the Agency/Dept. to sort out issues.

Current Status
- The HELPLINE set up by CAC to register and redress complaints from public with regard to demands for bribe and undue delay in delivering services in government departments is continuing its services. Though limited in number, CAC has had some success stories. Between May 08 and June 08, CAC has received about 120 enquiries on the helpline. Out of this, about four cases have been registered and one case has been resolved.
- CAC Helpline extended to provide information on RTI - Under HIVOS project, the RTI helpline has been publicized. Nearly, 100 inquiries specifically on RTI have been received. 40 callers have been guided to apply under RTI. 14 of those who have not received any information or wrong information have been guided to go for an appeal.

Publicity:
- Helpline number cards have been printed and distributed at various meetings.
- Display of helpline Number boards at various branch offices of BMP, BDA and BESCOM.
- A Street play on corruption, its ill effects and CAC’s Helpline to address the issue of corruption was organized in Gulbarga Colony in South Bangalore, which houses 600 families belonging to low income group.

- A Proposal on setting up of HELPDESKS at government hospitals - CAC has submitted a proposal to the health department, GoK for establishing Helpdesks at Government hospitals and maternity homes. The objective of these helpdesks is to improvise the service delivery to the poor by providing information on various available services and by setting up corruption prevention helpline. The discussions are going on with the department.
- In May 08, CREATE, one of the partner groups of CAC organized a workshop on RTI Act 2005 and Prevention of Corruption. Information regarding CAC and its helpline were disseminated.
- Regular reviews, documentation and follow up on the registered cases have been carried out by the members of CAC.
- Statistics – So far, CAC has received nearly 975 enquiries on the helpline, out of which 45 have registered their complaints, 21 of them have been resolved, 9 of them have been either in the court or could not stand due to lack of evidence and the rest are under process.
- CAC has been receiving more number of cases / complaints with regard to building bye law violations and illegal notices that are sent by the revenue department to the owners of various apartments with regard to undervaluation of properties. CAC is planning to organize open house on these two issues.

Drafting of a Model Citizen Charter for the Bangalore Police

Background
- PAC’s desk review of Citizen Charters in Karnataka in early 2005
- Discussion of findings with agencies in late 2005 results in an expression of interest from the Police Department to seek PAC’s assistance to develop a Model Charter.
- The Department of Planning commissions PAC to undertake this assignment

Current Status
- A number of meetings were held with senior police officials during the year and a draft charter has been prepared.
- Final discussions are on to finalize the draft.
The Charter was approved by the Police Commissioner in July 2007, the same was forwarded to the Principal Secretary, Dept. of Planning and Statistics on August 1st, 2007.

Several appeals to the Police Department to publish and implement the Charter have not met with success.

Capacity Building Programme

The Right to Information Empowerment Programme

Background

- The Right to Information Empowerment Programme intends to facilitate the effective engagement of active citizens, civil society organisations, human rights activists and development experts in the field of right to information, through awareness raising and capacity building activities. The Programme is supported by HiVOS.

Outcome & Current Status

- Programme has been launched in October 2006.

- An initial field visit was made by the Project Coordinator, Ms. Sabine Benzing Balzer to the two leading RTI activists groups in the field of right to information - Parivartan & MKSS Movement - in order to discuss the challenges, opportunities and experiences of their current right to information activities and to clarify the needs and the focus of the planned right to information training activities. The field visit helped to design the right to information training for Indian NGOs, in addition it gave

Participants at the RTI workshop, South Asia, 2007

The following activities will be implemented to achieve the project objectives:

- designing a right to information website containing information on international and national right to information standards, procedural aspects of the right to information, best practice examples, non-governmental organisations active in the field of right to information and training programmes.

- establishing a “Anti-corruption and Right to Right to Information Helpline”, which citizens can use to complain about illegal gratification, bribes or speed money demands by public authorities in Bangalore; as well as to ask questions on right to information application procedures and to report problems in respect to this new legal instrument.

- conducting and publishing a comparative study on best practice examples in developing countries, including elaborate right to information legislation and litigation, effective implementation strategies, and successful activities of civil society organisations in the field of right to information.

- developing and publishing a compilation of instruments to strengthen right to information legislation and its implementation. This compilation will include a whistle blower protection model for South Asian right to information legislation and citizen charter models, which focus on the promotion of right to information implementation.

- conducting an implementation audit on right to information provisions in the public sector in Karnataka with the help of volunteers - this audit will focus to 75% on the urban sector (Bangalore) and to 25% on rural districts (Bellary Town Municipality).

- undertaking a field assessment on civic action, which aims at ascertaining the capacity building needs in the field of right to information.

- designing, organising and conducting 4 workshops for participants from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.

- supporting citizen action and raising capacity of civil society in the field of right to information in Karnataka through two 2-day district level workshops for 40 participants and an orientation session for the 15 implementation-audit volunteers.
the impetus to invite a member of Parivartan as a trainer to the right to information training for Indian NGOs in Bangalore.

- A three day training programme for Indian NGOs/Activists was held at Bangalore from January 22-24, 2007 for 15 selected participants. Feedback to this programme was quite positive. Almost all of the 15 participating NGOs started or about to start right to information activities. For example the Right to Food Campaign Orissa undertook an extensive advocacy campaign for the improvement of the right to information rules and their implementation in Orissa; some participants filed right to information applications in their area of work in order to improve the situation of tribal peoples in Andhra Pradesh or the environmental and social situation of displaced people in Gujarat; the Youth for Social Development NGO in Orissa is planning an extensive capacity building programme in the field of right to information for which they approached several donor organisations with their project proposal for funding.

- A three day training programme on right to information for 17 participants from Sri Lankan and Pakistani civil society organisations was held from March 11-14, 2007 in Colombo with the main focus on advocacy and strategic litigation for the adoption of procedural right to information and for the improvement and implementation of the Pakistani Right to Information Ordinance of 2002 and the Sri Lankan Draft Freedom of Information Act of 2004. The participating civil society organisations were selected jointly with Transparency International Sri Lanka, whom the Public Affairs Centre selected as the lead partner organisations for the Right to Information Empowerment Programme. In the aftermath of this programme the participating Sri Lankan NGOs established on April 1, 2007 a right to information advocacy campaign aiming at putting an effective procedural right to information into the hands of the common people in Sri Lanka and this group of NGOs agreed in the first meeting on a right to information action plan for Sri Lanka. The participating Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan is planning strategic litigation activities in the field of right to information and SPADO from Pakistan is planning capacity building training programmes on right to information in Pakistan.

- A three day training programme on right to information for 18 participants from selected Bangladeshi and Nepali civil society organisations was held from March 18-21, 2007 in Kathmandu. The training programme’s focus was on advocacy and strategic litigation for the adoption of procedural right to information laws in Bangladesh and Nepal. The participating civil society organisations were selected jointly with Transparency International Nepal, whom the Public Affairs Centre selected as the lead partner organisations for the Right to Information Empowerment Programme. In the aftermath of this programme the participating NGO activists from Bangladesh meet on May 17, 2007 in Dhaka and agreed to organise four training courses on right to information at divisional level and one at national level of Bangladesh.

- An Open House Meeting with the Karnataka Information Commission was held on March 17, 2007 in Bangalore. Approximately 100 NGO activists attended this meeting.

From April 2007 – March 2008 the following activities have been carried out:

- The existing Anti-corruption Helpline was extended to an “Anti-corruption and Right to Information Helpline”, which citizens can use to complain about illegal gratification, bribes or speed money demands by public authorities in Bangalore; as well as to ask questions on right to information application procedures and to report problems in respect to this new legal instrument.

- Designing right to information WebPages as part of the new Public Affairs Centre’s website.

- Supporting citizen action and raising capacity of civil society in the field of right to information in Karnataka through a district level workshop in Kolar for 35 participants.

- Conducting an implementation audit that evaluates the implementation of the Right to Information Act No. 22 of 2005 in the public sector in Karnataka with the help of volunteers. Currently we are in the analysis and report writing process.

- Conducting a comparative study of best practice examples in the field of the right to information in developing countries, including elaborate right to information legislation and litigation, effective implementation strategies, and successful activities of civil society organisations in the field of right to information. This study will be published in spring 2008.
Pilot Project for Citizen Monitoring and Quality Control of Rural Roads

- A novel experiment in citizen/beneficiary monitoring of public infrastructure projects
- Supported and funded by the National Rural Roads Development Agency
- Scope of the pilot limited to 16 PMGSY roads in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
- Monitoring to be carried out by teams of volunteers. Several meetings with the IRRastha team were held from April 2007 onwards to design and make a simple tool kit for illiterate villagers to monitor the roads
- Various options to get volunteers for this project were explored. Initially it was hoped that local NGOs would help us connect with local citizens in the GPs for this social audit. We found that there was no local interest because these roads provided connectivity through fields/open spaces where there was little or no habitation on either side of the road.
- Next we explored the option of enlisting the help of organisations like the Jaycees or Lions in the districts. There was no interest evinced from these groups also.
- Finally, we decided to see if local children in high schools in the Gram Panchayats could be taught to use the kit prepared for the social audit.
- In February 2008, three 10th std. boys from an Anekal High School participated in an inspection of a PMGSY road. It was found that they could easily grasp the objectives of the social audit and also learn how to use the kit.
- NRRDA team will be visiting PAC to take stock of the situation and see how to proceed further. There is a possibility that NSS / NCC students can be roped in for this social audit.

Children's Movement for Civic Awareness

Civic clubs in 37 private schools and 12 aided schools in Bangalore

- Focus issue was water in Bangalore city.
- Campaigns in schools for Ganesha festival, Diwali, Road Safety, e waste collection, etc
- Survey by civic clubs on awareness and practices with respect Water
- Leadership camp to enhance leadership and communication skills for government and aided schools

Traffic Police Day

- Traffic Police Day was held on 27th October to sensitize children and adults to issues related to traffic and road safety and to acknowledge the contribution of the traffic police to the safety of the general public
- Two issues of newsletter which serves as an information booth was bought out.
- Various awareness campaigns like assembly talks, cleanliness drive, sports day campaign etc. were conducted in the school/neighbourhood creating ripples.
- Jaatre – Annual day was held on 19th January 2008.

Audit of the Right to Information from an Institutional Perspective

PAC is currently engaging six students from various colleges in Bangalore to carry out a "supply side" audit of RTI through structured interviews with the Public Information Officers.
Events with Civic Clubs

Children celebrating Traffic Police Day

- Inspiration was held on 21st July 2007 to motivate civic club members to involve themselves in the club activities during the academic year by learning and participating in campaigns and awareness programmes.
- CMCA made presentation to external organizations.

Children's Investigation Report on Water in Bangalore

- Release of Children's Investigation Report in December 2007, findings of the survey was presented to government representatives and different stakeholder of water in the city.

Civic clubs in Mumbai

- Partnership with Sophia School Ex Students Association (SCESA)
- 30 civic clubs
- Induction Programme for core team of volunteers
- Diwali and ganesha campaign by civic club members
- Volunteer Retreat and evaluation

Civic clubs in Hubli Dharwad

- Financed by HDMC
- 120 schools
- Induction Programme for NGOs and their volunteers
- Cleanliness awareness drive
- Chakachak film was screened. Around 4000 children viewed the film.

Public Affairs Centre Annual Lecture

This year's Annual Lecture titled "Mediation: A Success Story in Judicial Reform" was delivered on 22nd January 2008 by Shri Justice Cyriac Joseph, Hon. Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka. The new and innovative mode of "mediation' initiated by the High Court of Karnataka has emerged as a promising alternative dispute resolution mechanism. In just one year, this new approach has resolved over 50% of the more than 1600 cases that took this route. The origin, scope, modalities, track record and how ordinary citizens can take advantage of it was the theme of the lecture.

Open House

In order to facilitate a first visit to the campus, the Centre invited Friends of PAC (RWAs, NGOs and others) to an open house on Thursday, 29th November 2007. After a tour of the premises they were briefly addressed by Dr. Paul and Dr. Gopakumar who updated them on the current work and programmes. Lunch was served thereafter. Transport had been arranged for the participants.
Advisory Support to the Second Administrative Reform Commission

The Second ARC, headed by Shri. Veerappa Moily has requested PAC to formulate recommendations on “Citizen Centric Administration”. PAC identified five thematic domains as cornerstones of citizen centric administration:

i. Governance
ii. Citizen Charters
iii. Regulation
iv. Human Rights
v. State Civil Society Partnerships

Experts were subsequently identified to author short reports on each of these themes. PAC has completed the first draft of the report and has submitted the same to the ARC.

Update

Final report has been submitted to the ARC

PAC Ford Fellowship (2008-2009)

Dr. Kala Seetharam Sridhar was appointed as the PAC Ford Fellow for 2008-2009. The fellowship will focus on the theme “Financials, Land Sales and Public Service Delivery: A Pilot Study of India’s Large Cities”. Part of the proposed work under the Fellowship will be funded by the Thirteenth Finance Commission.

Professional Contributions from the Staff

PAC staff contributed articles and presented papers in various national and international fora during the year:

Gopakumar Thampi

Chapters in Edited Book


Articles / Columns


‘From Endangered to Engendered: Gender in ICT Policies and Praxis”, Dataquest August 2007

“Some Potemkin Stories from Etopia”, Dataquest, July 2007

Financial Performance in Summary

A) The Centre received a sum of Rs.159 lakhs during the current year from Grants, Professional Fees, Interest, Profit on investments, Donations etc.,

B) The centre received project support during the year from:

- Asian Development Bank, Manila, The Philippines
- HIVOS, Netherlands
- Partnership for Transparency Fund, Washington D.C. USA
- Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation, Hubli
- Samarthan, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
- The Catalyst Trust, Chennai
- Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Govt. of Karnataka
- Administrative Reforms Commission, Govt. of India

Donors

Deshpande Foundation
R. Jhunjhunwala Foundation
Swabhiman
Civic Bangalore
### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**Consolidated Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st March 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration Expenses</td>
<td>1,932,354.51</td>
<td>1,164,308.86</td>
<td>3,000,000.00</td>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Dissemination and Publications</td>
<td>96,712.00</td>
<td>94,816.00</td>
<td>1,084,222.44</td>
<td>Project receipts</td>
<td>10,157,453.00</td>
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<td>Professional and Consultancy Charges</td>
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<td>751,878.00</td>
<td>228,170.00</td>
<td>Profit on Investments</td>
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<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
<td>2,436,737.00</td>
<td>2,947,161.00</td>
<td>16,930.00</td>
<td>Interest on Deposits</td>
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<td>Project Receipts</td>
<td>4,353,962.33</td>
<td>5,439,860.44</td>
<td>147,319.00</td>
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<td>Membership, Subscription and Library</td>
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<td>1,187,762.13</td>
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<td>Rates &amp; Taxes</td>
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<td>52,541.00</td>
<td>720,486.76</td>
<td>Income from Corpus Fund</td>
<td>1,874,082.82</td>
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<td>Purchase of Assets</td>
<td>224,496.30</td>
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<td>280,242.00</td>
<td>Dividend on Investments</td>
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<td>Honorarium</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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<td>Depreciation</td>
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<td>240,000.00</td>
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<td>Excess of Income over expenditure</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3,041,391.90</td>
<td>Voluntary Contributions</td>
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<td>caried down</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Interest on IT Refund</td>
<td>29,810.00</td>
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**Total** | 14,081,681.33 | 15,927,359.20 | 14,081,681.33 | **Total** | 15,927,359.20 |

**Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>31.3.2007</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>31.3.2008</th>
<th>31.3.2007</th>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>31.3.2008</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Donor's Account</td>
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<td>5,683,744.00</td>
<td>Fixed Assets - Land</td>
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<td>Corpus Fund Account</td>
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<td>18,362,346.84</td>
<td>10,302,055.00</td>
<td>Building, Garden &amp; Road</td>
<td>13,272,745.00</td>
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<td>Development Fund Account</td>
<td>8,540,614.09</td>
<td>8,395,889.00</td>
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<td>Fixed Assets (as per contra)</td>
<td>5,728,025.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets Reserve Fund Account (as per contra)</td>
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<td>5,728,025.40</td>
<td>18,597,067.75</td>
<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Income and Expenditure Account</td>
<td>14,198,836.42</td>
<td>16,967,447.02</td>
<td>6,101,424.21</td>
<td>Current Assets, Advances &amp; Deposits</td>
<td>4,778,997.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | 44,683,415.36 | 49,453,708.26 | 44,683,415.36 | **Total** | 49,453,708.26 |

**Name & Address of the Auditor**

N. Suresh, B.Com., F.C.A.
Nandhini Associates,
No. 504, 5th Floor, Commerce House,
9/1, Cunningham Road, Bangalore - 560 052
STAFF OF THE CENTRE

Director
Prof. KRS Murthy, (till May 31, 2007)
Dr. Gopakumar K. Thampi

Research & Analysis
Dr. Sita Sekhar, Chief Research Officer
Dr. Meena Nair, Senior Research Officer
Dr. K. Prabhakar, Research Officer
Dr. V.T. Basavaraj, Research Officer

Citizen Action Support & Programmes
Mr. S. Manjunath, Chief Programme Officer
Ms. Sheila Premkumar, Senior Programme Officer
Mr. Cyril W Vas, Programme Associate
Mr. Wilson G Pais, Programme Assistant
Ms. Sabine Benzing Balzer, Project Coordinator
Ms. Poornima D.G., Consultant
Ms. Geetha Lakshmy, Project Assistant - Coalition Against Corruption
Ms. Megha Channegowda, Coordinator - Communications & Public Relations
Mr. Sripad Sriram, Programme Assistant
Ms. Poonam Kaur, Project Coordinator
Ms. Shareena, Consultant

Children's Movement for Civic Awareness
Ms. Vrunda Bhaskar, Coordinator CMCA
Ms. Geetha S, Coordinator CMCA Hubli-Dharwad
Ms. Priya Krishnamurthy, Programme Consultant
Ms. Dipa Padmakumar, Programme Consultant
Ms. Sheela Ladha, Programme Consultant
Ms. N. Nagaveni, Programme Associate
Ms. Harriet Sathyavathi, Programme Associate
Ms. Maldita Mathias, Programme Associate
Mr. Murali Munisamy, Programme Coordinator

Administration & Accounts
Ms. Shanthi S Shetty, Senior Administrative Officer
Mr. Gopal B. Accountant
Mr. Kanthappa B. Administrative Assistant
Mr. Anil Kumar V. System Administrator
Ms. Popsy Jacob, Receptionist
Ms. V.M. Lakshmi, Receptionist
Ms. Manjula, Office Support

Project Consultants
Mr. T. Sethumadhavan
Mr. Mathew Thomas
Mr. Vinay Prabhakar (Intern)

20 | PAC ANNUAL REPORT