The past two months were phenomenal to say the least. It started with a bang (the Pokhran blast) and ended with a whimper (the state of the economy). In between, there was an unprecedented display of fury by nature. First, a devastating heat wave that saw the mercury scaling new heights and resulting in hundreds of deaths. Then came the deluge submerging the parched land and providing watery graves for hundreds. Threading this tapestry of events is one common theme: The folly of the State - In pursuing policies contrary to conventional wisdom; in showing gross negligence to provide critical relief measures; and in turning a blind eye to meteorological warnings facilitated by huge technological investments.

The demise of the Cold War serves two major pointers: One, economic indices and not military might are going to determine power equations. Two, the concept of 'security' has changed with the shift of focus from an exclusive notion of the state towards an inclusion of security of people, either as individuals, or collectively as global or international security. In simpler terms, the conventional military notion of security is giving way to aspects relating to the political, economic, ecological and societal. It is against this trend that the explosions in India stand out. It is a pity that given the gamut of crucial issues plaguing the nation like poverty, unemployment and deteriorating infrastructure to name a few, the government has gone ahead on a jingoistic exercise.

Government of India's Economic Survey 1997-98 points to hard times ahead. The economy seems to be caught in a low growth trap with a major recession in the industrial sector and a significant slowdown in the agricultural sector. Add to this a potential loss of $5.6 billion, mostly affecting infrastructure projects and social sector programs, due to various sanctions introduced. The time is not far off when the present illusionary feeling of pride and greatness give way to an unpleasant reality of having to face real threats that are endemic.

Even as the political leadership in Delhi was busy (albeit clandestinely) plotting India's entry to the much envied Nuclear Club, the citizens of the capital city delivered a severe indictment on the way the government performs (see pg 6). The Report Card on Public Services in Delhi reflects the contemporary history of urban India. A depiction that sadly fails to evoke any sense of pride or greatness. But, more important highlights the range of issues to be addressed. Patriotism does not run on empty rhetoric. Nor, for that matter on empty stomachs. National pride surges on the track record. On how responsive and responsible is the State. On the strength and vibrancy of institutions. And, on the proactiveness of citizens and the potency of their voices.

Promoting populist policies with scant regard to the state of the exchequer and dithering on tackling issues like corruption are often cited as unavoidable compulsions of tenuous coalitions. The report card of the government in power, so far, reinforces this unfortunate legacy of coalition politics. The coming months will turn out to be quite critical. It is high time that the nation stops preening over the nuclear afterglow and take on matters of more immediate concerns. Rightly or wrongly, Pokhran has given the government in power a rare exhibition of public support. It is time to adopt some 'political opportunism' and use the prevailing euphoria and goodwill to push some tough measures through.
Ecological Footprints of Nations: A New Benchmark to Monitor Development.

Conventional measures of development and progress hinge around popular indicators like National Income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) etc. However, these measures of economic accounting neglect the depreciation of natural capital like destruction of forests, soil erosion, depletion of water sources etc. And more important, provides no check on environmentally destructive economic policies. The need of the hour is to evolve a valid biophysical accounting system that will act as a global indicator for calculating the pressure on the environment and monitoring progress toward a sustainable society. The Ecological Footprint Method developed by Mathis Wackernagel and his colleagues at the Rio +5 Forum, provides a good starting point by providing a tool to assess the sustainability of nations.

Calculating the ecological footprint of nations

Everybody (from a single individual to a whole city or country) has an impact on the Earth, because they consume the products and services of nature. Their ecological impact corresponds to the amount of nature they occupy to keep them going. The Ecological Footprints of Nations' Report quantify, nation by nation, the biologically productive areas necessary to continuously provide their resource supplies and absorb their wastes, using prevailing technology. In other words, the methodology calculates the "ecological footprints" of these countries.

Ecological footprint calculations are based on two simple facts: first, we can keep track of most of the resources we consume and many of the wastes we generate; second, most of these resource and waste flows can be converted to a biologically productive area necessary to provide these functions. Thus, ecological footprints show us how much nature nations use. However, in reality this footprint is not a continuous piece of land. Due to international trade, the land and water areas used by most global citizens are scattered all over the planet. It would take a great deal of research to determine where their exact locations are. To simplify, the occupied space is calculated by adding up the areas with world average productivity that are necessary to provide us with all the ecological services we consume.

Now, these ecological footprints can be compared to the biological capacity available within each country. Which countries are analysed? The report examines 47 nations discussed by the world Economic Forums's Global Competitiveness Report plus five others. Together these 52 nations house 80 per cent of the World Domestic Product. One key finding is that today, humanity as a whole uses over one-third more resources and eco-services than what nature can regenerate. In 1992, this ecological deficit was only one quarter.

To illustrate, a 4.6 hectare footprint would mean that 4.6 hectares of biologically productive space (with world average productivity) are in constant production to support the average individual of that country. If the footprint exceeds the available productive area, it runs an ecological deficit. (See Table).

The ranking of ecological footprints points out which people are on the ecologically most sustainable trajectories and which ones exacerbate the current ecological squeeze. Out of the 52 countries analysed in the Report, only in ten do the average citizen use less than what is available on a per capita basis worldwide. The profiles show that the ecological footprint of humanity is larger than the biologically productive space that exists on the planet. This overshoot

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indicates that humanity’s consumption is greater than what nature can regenerate on a continuous basis.

But, where do we go from here?

The ecological footprint is not just about how bad things are. It is about how they are and what we can do about it. The indicators provide a clear and comprehensive picture of human impact on earth. This type of simple and accessible tool can finally put the abstract sustainability concept into more concrete terms. Moreover, simple benchmark yardsticks that compare human consumption with nature’s limited supply help refocus public attention on the sustainability challenge. The Report points to three broad areas of impact:

- **A Tool to Check**: Government, businesses and NGOs can adapt the methodology for better national assessments. They can also redesign it for tasks such as budget reviews, technology and policy assessments or eco-labelling. NGOs can audit more effectively whether ‘sustainable’ initiatives of government and business really hold what they promise.

- **Positive and Accessible Information**: NGOs and governments can use footprinting not only to assess progress, but also to make local sustainability efforts work. This is especially true when information bottlenecks are often cited as reasons for low levels of action.

- **Inside and Outside the Classroom**: These types of sustainability tools become powerful educational resources, for primary school up to university courses. They can integrate sustainability thinking in all kinds of subjects as demonstrated by already existing curricula. Such courses not only provide tools but also stimulate interest and enthusiasm for a better future.

![Image of map with countries highlighted]

**The Decentralisation Score Card**

A progress card on decentralisation in 15 countries relates some interesting trends. Here are some samples:

- Burkina Faso emerged as the least decentralised and Karnataka in India, the most decentralised;

- Countries performed consistently poor on fiscal decentralisation, except for three federal countries: Brazil, Pakistan and India;

- Columbia had the highest score in administrative decentralisation; Burkina Faso and Tanzania scored the lowest;

- Customer involvement is found to be negatively related to degree of service decentralisation;

- Local NGO involvement in rural services is high in Zambia, Mexico, Tanzania and Colombia, and low in Tunisia, Brazil, India and Poland.


![Image of Bangkok flooding]

**Some Snapshots of Our Urban Legacy**

- Bangkok is sinking at the rate of one centimetre a year due to excessive private tapping of ground water.

- Tokyo buries its garbage in artificial islands in the Tokyo bay and surrounding areas. But it will run out of room for the 15 million tons of household refuse it generates.

- Air pollution in New Delhi is so heavy that it is comparable to smoking 10 to 20 cigarettes a day.

- The average speed of traffic in some of the central areas in Bangkok city is 12 km/h.

Source: Internet: www.socttech.ac.jp.
WIDE ANGLE

The recent years have seen an explosion in initiatives across the globe demanding better responsiveness and accountability from the government. From isolated ripples to powerful waves, civil society efforts are today redefining the contours of governance. Wide Angle will endeavour to bring such interesting initiatives reported across the globe. We welcome contributions to this section.

Innovations in Community Collaboration: Lessons from Escondido City, California.

✦ Neighbourhood Improvement Team

Neighbourhood Improvement Team (NIT) was formed in the fall of 1991 to increase crime prevention and resistance through neighbourhood activism and City support services. Employees from various departments, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, non-profit organisations and citizens meet regularly to develop solutions to community problems such as gang violence, drug-dealing, transients, and deteriorating neighbourhoods.

✦ Rental Housing Improvement Team of Escondido (RHITE)

A volunteer inspection program to identify property maintenance deficiencies which violate City codes. Volunteer inspectors from the rental housing industry work closely with City Code Enforcement to ensure the quality of rental housing stock in the community, assuming responsibility for “policing themselves.” The program was awarded ICMA 1995 Citizen Involvement Program Excellence Award.

✦ Childcare Advocacy Council

A coalition of childcare providers charged with designing a childcare master plan for the City of Escondido, including a childcare subsidy program, efforts to expand the type and availability of affordable childcare services, interdepartmental co-ordination and public assistance in sitting facilities, and training for providers and residents on childcare issues.

✦ Escondido Community Alcohol Planning Project (ECAPP)

A City-community partnership which identifies alcohol problem prevention opportunities, develop strategies and work programs, formulates policy recommendations, and facilitates and promotes implementation of strategies to modify community conditions to reduce risks and prevent alcohol-related problems.

✦ Citizens Patrol

A voluntary association of citizens who patrol the community on weekend evenings. The group is trained by the Police Department, but manage their own scheduling and dispatch. The program currently includes 200 volunteers. Areas to be patrolled are suggested by the Police Department.

✦ Safehouse

Family day-care providers in the community volunteer to be a safe haven for children on their way to and from school. The homes are identified by easily-identifiable signs, and youngsters of nearby schools are informed of the program on a regular basis by school personnel.

✦ Safe Walk Home

Citizens volunteer to monitor streets near elementary and junior high schools after school. The volunteers are provided hand-held radios to contact school administrators or police to resolve problems children may encounter on their way home from school.

✦ Healthy Families Escondido

A five-year pilot project to create a community-based system of integrated prevention screening and early intervention services for low-income families with young children. The system is intended to reduce the demand for expensive, intensive crisis services by identifying and intervening early with families at-risk for a wide range of problems. The project is developing and implementing comprehensive family risk screenings and brief interventions for a wide variety of problems, e.g., alcohol/drugs, family/interpersonal violence, child abuse/neglect, chronic diseases, intentional and unintentional injuries. Additional support services include referral management to specialised services and transportation.

✦ Training and Technology Transfer Institute

Established in 1995 to provide training, technical assistance and consultation to establish collaboration between city governments and community agencies for integrated services and blended funding. The Institute’s initial focus is on reducing the harmful effects of alcohol and drug use at the community level as alcohol/drug use is a contributing factor in most all problems of community concern – crime, violence, child abuse, youth problems, etc. The Institute promotes a model of community-based collaboration and integration of alcohol and drug problem screening and brief interventions particularly for city governments, health care and law enforcement agencies.

✦ Compact

The Escondido Education Compact is an important and dynamic partnership among education, business and civic leadership. Its purpose is to assist in developing and implementing community-wide programs to support the educational experience of all youth of Escondido. Its goal is to enhance the career paths of at-risk youth through either entrance into the employment sector or higher education, in order to encourage them to become responsible and contributing citizens of our society.
This column introduces organisations and forums involved in promoting good governance. The objective here is to augment and strengthen the process of networking among individuals and institutions sharing similar views and perceptions and also to facilitate a process of adaptability and replicability of good initiatives.

Bangkok Forum: Making Democracy Work at the Grassroots

Bangkok Forum, established in 1994, is a non-profit civic group of about 300 middle class professionals, including businessmen, academics, social activists, lawyers, architects and medical doctors. The Forum emerged in the aftermath of what in the recent history of Thailand is known as the 'Black May' incident of 1992 when the pro-democracy uprising in Bangkok was brutally put down by the armed forces and the police. The founders of this Forum were concerned that the government which came to power after the Black May Incident had not undertaken the promised reforms, and that therefore a movement to create political awareness among the people of Bangkok was needed.

The Forum is a loose coalition without any formal organisational structure. The activities are coordinated by a full-time staff and has about 20 core group members. Bangkok Forum is financially supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

The major clientele of the Forum is Bangkok's middle class. In the early stages, Bangkok Forum concentrated on creating awareness about the need to decentralise political and administrative power to make Thailand more democratic, promote public participation in public affairs, and restore a sense of community among the residents of Bangkok. The credo behind these programmes and projects was quite simple: Let us humanise Bangkok, let's make it liveable. In pursuit of its objectives, the Forum has organised a fair to teach middle class consumers alternative lifestyles that would not damage the environment of traditional culture. It has taken reported and concerned citizens on tours of neighbourhoods that would be hurt by the commissioning of mega projects. It also works with the Governor's office on projects to encourage people to take part in deciding development plans for the city. As a long term perspective plan, the Bangkok Forum has in sharp focus five critical themes: Conservation and restoration of neighbourhoods and communities; Improving the aesthetics of city life; Management of the urban environment; Management of urban geography and city life and; Restructuring and reform of the city's bureaucratic system.

A major success of the Bangkok Forum has been the conduct of the hugely popular Street Festivals. These festivals recreate the diverse cultural ambience of the city and presents an amazing repertoire of folk arts, music, cuisine and theatre. What makes this effort stand out is the high involvement of the local community in planning and organizing the various themes. These street festivals have brought a sense of place and togetherness that are becoming rare in urban communities.

Bangkok Forum can be contacted at 65/1, Fl.2, Pridi Banomyong Institute Building, Sukhumvit Soi 55, Bangkok. Fax: 712 7396

Lok Satta: A Call for a Second Freedom Struggle

Lok Satta (People’s Power) is a broad based movement launched by the Foundation for Democratic Reforms, a registered non-partisan voluntary society based in Hyderabad and dedicated to the cause of comprehensive reforms of the governance structure in India. The movement has set forth tangible, verifiable and measurable goals for the rejuvenation of Indian polity. Lok Satta is also registered as a voluntary, non-profit and non-partisan Society.

A major focus of Lok Satta has been on popularising the concept of non-partisan National Referendums to achieve the various reform goals. Lok Satta strongly advocates the National Referendum as a peaceful, democratic, practical and legally tenable mechanism for obtaining people’s verdict on constitutional reforms. At the grass-roots level, Lok Satta is organising groups of local people to act as vigilantes on the local institutions of governance. These groups will closely monitor the functioning of local schools, hospitals, ration shops, revenue offices, panchayats, municipalities and police stations. Alongside, Lok Satta is emphasising on effective networking and participation on a national scale to create an environment for a national movement for democratic reforms.

For further information on Lok Satta, please contact Foundation for Democratic Reforms, #401, Nirmal Towers, Dwarakapuri Colony, Panjagutta, Hyderabad 500082. E-mail: fonderef@hd1.vsnl.net.in
SAD CAPITAL!
A Report Card on Public Services in Delhi

The city of Delhi has had a frequent tryst with history. And as any historical city, its fortunes have fluctuated with the march of time. Though the city finds a place of mention since 1000 B.C., it was in 12th century AD that Delhi rose to prominence as the capital of Prithviraj Chauhan’s kingdom. After a four century long period of decline, Delhi had its moment of glory under Shah Jehan during early 17th century. It was, however, under the British colonial rule that the city enjoyed the privilege of being a permanent seat of power. After Independence, Delhi has become synonymous with power - where governments are made and unmade and mind boggling political experiments are tried out.

Being the national capital, substantial investments and efforts have been made for providing public services to the citizens of Delhi. How have public service agencies in Delhi performed? How do citizens of Delhi rate these agencies? How did these agencies respond to complaints and requests for better services? These questions and issues defined the framework for the “Report Card” on Public Services in Delhi recently completed by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC). Other Report Card studies carried out by PAC covered the cities of Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Pune, Calcutta and Chennai. The significance of this study stems from the emphasis it makes on a critical but neglected aspect in the redesign and improvement of public services, namely citizen feedback.

The study was designed and conducted by PAC in association with Gallup MBA India and covered 745 general households and 659 slum dwellers in Delhi. The slum component of the study is being redone in the wake of some observations and suggestions that came up during the discussions following the release of the study findings (see box). Some salient findings, based on the feedback from the general households are presented below:

How satisfied are the citizens of Delhi with public services?

The feedback from citizens of Delhi suggest that they have a high level of satisfaction with services of banks (94%) and the postal department (96%). The services that they are most dissatisfied with are garbage disposal (30%), power supply (33%) and sewage system (33%). It appears that the services in which there is a greater degree of monopoly (such as power, sewage and garbage) have reflected higher dissatisfaction than services where citizens have a choice or options (such as banks, and postal services).

How long does it take to find a remedy?

Many of the citizens who chose to complain in the first place, gave up due to lack of response from service providers. The process of seeking remedy is reported to take, on an average, four visits spread over 10 days. The longest wait when it came to seeking relief were reported to be with the water supply agency (5 visits and 20 days). Over half of these efforts had to be taken up to higher officials - in the case of interaction with the police, this was reported to have been necessary in 61 per cent of the instances.

What sort of staff behaviour do citizens confront?

The root of the problem does not seem to be in the availability of staff or their competence. While citizens report that the staff are knowledgeable (76%), courteous (81%) and usually available (76%), they have found them to be unhelpful (91%) and slow to respond (82%).

Paying speedmoney for public service!

Among those who made complaints, 10% reported paying speedmoney to service providers. This phenomenon seems to be more rampant in the Vidyut Board (14%), telephones (17%) and police (19%) - average amounts paid were Rs. 327, Rs. 98 and Rs. 994 respectively. Citizens who paid speedmoney report that it was demanded for services in over 80 per cent of cases, but for the case of sewage clearance where it was demanded only in 20 per cent of the cases.

The use of speedmoney was justified only by 10 per cent of the respondents. While another 9 per cent felt that it could be used as a last resort, 79 per cent felt that it was wrong. Citizens of Delhi (86%) indicated that they would be willing to pay 10 per cent more for improved services.

Substantial investments are made by the citizens of Delhi to cope with the unreliable services. Estimates based on the data collected during the study suggest that these investments could be as huge as Rs. 2119 crores !!

(This study was coordinated by Dr. Sita Sekhar, PAC.)
DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR A BETTER DELHI

It was almost a year ago, that the Public Affairs Centre (PAC) initiated steps to carry out a study on the efficiency and effectiveness of the public services in Delhi. The study was carried out in early 1998, and the findings shared at a day long workshop on April 30, 1998 titled "Developing Partnerships Towards a Better Delhi". The Workshop was conducted at the India International Centre, New Delhi and attended by over sixty participants, including officials from the Government of Delhi, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, representatives of NGOs and the press. His Excellency, Mr. Vijai Kapoor, Lt. Governor of Delhi was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

The presentations of findings of the study and the deliberations that followed set the tone for the urgency to have actionable plans for partnership action among the various stakeholders. A notable factor was the responsive and active exploration of possibilities by the government officials present. PAC is actively pursuing the follow-up to the study by building on the synergy and commitment generated at the meeting.

PAC has been very heartened that its efforts in working jointly with local stake-holders have produced such promising results, and hope that should a similar user-feedback study be done some years down the line, it will show marked improvement in the delivery of basic services!

NETWORKING

Corporate Citizenship in City Management

The Swabhimaana Initiative in Bangalore has been striving to forge new partnerships between various stakeholders to improve the quality of governance in the city. One area that projects a lot of promise is the concept of Corporate Citizenship. An exploratory meeting was organised by the Karnataka Ownership Apartments Promoters Association (KOAPA), Swabhimaana, and the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) on 18 April 1998 around the theme of "Corporate Citizenship in City Management". Around 90 people representing corporates, residents associations, NGOs and various Government agencies participated.

Objectives of the meeting

- Commitment by corporates to specific development projects
- Commitment by the Government to a single window speedy clearance of these projects

The meeting functioned as a forum where different players pooled their ideas, resources and expertise for comprehensive development of the city.

Areas where the BMP needs investment

The Commissioner talked about the areas in which the Corporation needed investment by the private sector. They are:

- Parks, gardens and fountains
- Public toilets
- Traffic signals, traffic islands, and road medians
- Footpaths
- Slum redevelopment
- Accessing IT in civic management
- Solid Waste Management
- Promotion of civic awareness

The benefits that would accrue to corporates in return are numerous, ranging from an alternative form of advertising, to an opportunity to be involved in the planning and decision making of the city. Both these in turn would result in a cleaner, greener, and investment friendly environment.

How the participants responded

The overall response to the meeting was that the theme was praiseworthy. However, some corporates pointed out that there was no guarantee that the infrastructure development they undertake will be appreciated and prevented from misuse. Also, the
difficulties associated with obtaining sanctions from different civic agencies often deterred corporates from doing as much as they would like to. KOAPA urged the Government to initiate a single window clearance system and to nominate one official at a sufficiently high level from each civic agency as a representative to Swabhiman. These representatives could attend the Swabhiman meetings and provide a via media for provision of sanctions.

The Follow Up

Inspired by this effort to foster corporate involvement in city management, Mr Madan Padaki and Mr Mohan Kannegal from the S. P. Jain Institute of Management Research, Mumbai, conducted a study to identify the means to promote such partnerships in fulfilling the developmental needs of Bangalore. The study highlighted the following issues:

- Corporates are willing to partner the BMP in the development of the city
- In a majority of companies there is no concrete corporate policy on infrastructure development. Project decisions are taken on a case-to-case basis
- Apart from being a good “corporate citizen”, other benefits like goodwill, visibility etc. are sought from their involvement
- All corporates highlighted the need for systemic changes in the BMP
- For most of the businesses, Bangalore’s development is critical to their company’s growth

The findings of the study as well as the future implications were then discussed in a forum comprising of representatives from Corporate bodies, NGOs and Government agencies. Subsequent to the deliberations, the following commitments were made by the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike:

- A single window clearance for projects - A committee will be formed comprising of the HOD’s of various departments in the BMP, and representatives from civic agencies like the KEB, BWSSB etc.
- The Committee will meet once a month and clear all pending proposals, including setting time limits for every activity. The maximum time frame within which a decision will be given will be one month.
- The BMP will make available a list of projects in different locations from which the corporates can choose.
- The BMP is also open to partnerships in areas like computerisation, training of its personnel, increasing civic awareness, nomination of civic wardens by corporates for particular areas.
- Longer contract periods for projects of higher investment.

- The BMP will undertake Benefit Accounting to ascertain the amount of money saved due to corporate involvement.
- Setting up an information desk at the BMP and advertising details of partnership ventures on the BMP’s internet homepage.
- Constituting an Awards Committee to recognise outstanding corporate citizens.
- Setting up an Advisory Committee with representatives from the BMP, corporates, trade associations, NGOs and CBOs to take this partnership forward.

PAC Open House on “Civic Journalism: Strengthening Urban Governance Through Neighbourhood Newspapers in Bangalore”

Decentralisation of governance necessitates the evolution of strong local depositories of information. These depositories become absolutely relevant given the growing importance of the Citizen-elected councillor-local executive triad. The proliferation of locality based news in newspapers, locality focus in cable Television etc., strengthens the move towards these decentralised information depositories.

Neighbourhood Newspapers (NNP) are relatively untried and less explored media to invigorate the concept of local information depository in the Indian context. Given the fact that the educated middle class in most of the metropolises are today taking on a more proactive role to articulate their needs vociferously and also to explore innovative avenues to solve civic problems, the concept of NNPs augur great potential.

It was against this backdrop that the Public Affairs Centre, a non profit NGO based in Bangalore, conducted an exploratory study to highlight pertinent themes and dynamics associated with bringing out this relatively unknown medium. The study emphasises the commercial viability of such ventures and also the growing demand of the community for more access to information on matters affecting their livelihoods.

A meet with the public and resident associations was organised on July 1, 1998 to disseminate the findings and also to explore the possibilities of making the NNPs potent platforms to voice, debate, advocate and address neighbourhood concerns. The response of the residents’ associations, NGOs, and media people present was good, both in terms of attendance as well as participation.

* Public Eye * Vol. 3 No.2 Apr-June 1998
Contemporary development literature is brimming with new concepts, terms and jargons. This section attempts to demystify some of them by giving a learned narrative on these catchwords. We commence this section with a short write up on 'Social Auditing'.

**The origins of social auditing**
- The increasing deregulation, privatisation, and freeing up of markets brought about by the gradual retreat of the state from its role of regulator and provider meant that corporates had to take on greater social responsibility.
- At the same time corporates came under increasing pressure from external movements and pressure groups such as the environmental movement, to account for themselves.

**What is social auditing?**
Social auditing is a way of measuring the social and ethical performance of an organisation, be it a non-profit organisation or a corporate. This measuring process enables organisations to be more accountable to their key stakeholders through an evolving dialogue.

**Who are stakeholders?**
Stakeholders could be defined as anybody who can affect, or is affected by, the activities of an organisation. Common stakeholders include staff, customers/beneficiaries, suppliers, shareholders, and the community with which the organisation interacts.

**The process**
Social auditing is being seen by many today as a means of organisational development. It takes as a starting point the organisation’s mission statement and objectives as well as the stakeholder’s expectations of the organisation. It then compares performance with these expectations. The whole process is a cyclical one which entails the building of social auditing systems into the organisation. The steps are:
- The mission statement and objectives of the organisation
- Stakeholder dialogue
- Measurement and comparability
- External verification
- Communication

**How does it work?**
First, the auditor (an external person or body appointed by the organisation) decides with the organisation and its key stakeholders on the best method for undertaking the social accounting. This includes the identification of internal and external benchmarks that enable measurement and comparability of performance within the organisation, between the organisation and others, and social and industrial norms. The organisation itself draws up the social accounts, which represent a sampling of the views of its stakeholder groups. The auditor monitors the preparation of these accounts. A Social Statement is then prepared for publication based on the accounts. Both the Statement and the accounts are then evaluated by an independent audit review group, which is selected by the external auditor and is comprised of people with expertise in the organisation’s field of operations and the stakeholder areas and views. Finally, the results are made public, enabling the measurement of the social impact of the organisation.

**The benefits of doing social auditing**
Social auditing allows organisations to recognise and respond to the views of stakeholders and as such, makes for greater stakeholder loyalty, commitment and productivity. It also is a means of objectively measuring the social impact of an organisation and enhancing transparency within it.

**The difficulties**
In practice there are various difficulties associated with social auditing. It is important to cover all the major stakeholder groups during a social audit. Sometimes, however, the number of stakeholders is very large and they are spread over a large geographical area, making it difficult to include them in the stakeholder dialogue.

Another difficulty is to know how to start the whole process of social auditing, and how to ensure that its different components are built into the organisation. To get staff to co-operate and involve themselves wholeheartedly in this process, especially at the initial stages, is vital too.

To undertake a social audit involves a firm commitment on the part of the organisation to make public all the results of the audit, as well as to make improvements in those areas of operation that the stakeholders indicate during the stakeholder dialogue. This too, is not always adhered to with organisations withholding potentially damaging information and resisting the decentralisation of power.
READINGS

The Race to the Intelligent State: Charting the Global Information Economy into the 21st Century.
Michael Connors, 1997, 242 pages
Capstone Publishing Limited, Oxford Centre for Innovation, Mill Street, Oxford OX2 0JX, United Kingdom.

Are we witnessing an information revolution? If so, what is its likely future course and what will be its consequences? And, more important will the 'information revolution' create a more just and equitable society? These issues are debated in this well produced book. The Race to the Intelligent State traces the evolution of information infrastructures in the past, considering the role of technology and other factors, and predicts the course of events up to the year 2005. Two major pointers that emerge are: One, technology is essentially predictable in that timeframe. Two, information revolution will have marked negative, as well as positive consequences and contrary to popular perception, it will be the developing world and not the developed nations, which will reap in the maximum benefits.

Drawing on case studies from Japan, India and Israel, the study predicts the rise of 'Info-tigers' which will pose significant competitive threat to companies in the developed world which has hitherto been assumed to have an unassailable monopoly in the high tech information sector. But perhaps, the best contribution of the book is the design of an unique Infrastructure Index which gives a snapshot of the world's information flow and availability. The Index ranks 147 countries according to a composite of statistics for literacy, newspaper readership and radio, television and telephone diffusion, giving scores as disparate as 309 for the United States and a meagre score of seven for Burkina Faso.

Published by and available from the New Economics Foundation, Vine Court, 112 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1JE.
e-mail: neweconomics@gn.apc.org.

This is the first of two publications from a project researching current UK thinking and practice on social auditing for community, co-operative and social enterprises. This report provides background information on the development of social auditing and a survey of its users and their practices, with clear explanations of all terminology used. The Report traces the emergence of social auditing practices from the late 1950s onwards and gives examples of contemporary experiences in countries such as Denmark and the United States. There is also a good exposition on the use of social auditing by community and co-operative enterprises, explaining the various models that have been applied and illustrating the discussion with examples from the UK. The results of a survey questionnaire to discover the social auditing practices of community and co-operative enterprises are also discussed.

The Corporate Planet: Ecology and Politics in the Age of Globalisation

This book serves a grim reminder to all the neo-converts to globalisation who sing eulogies on the power of trans national companies and global corporate giants to change our lives. Taking the theme of corporate globalisation as the starting point, this work discusses the elaborate efforts of giant corporations to 'greenwash' themselves by using free trade agreements and World Bank loans to build a world order where they are accountable only to themselves. With examples from a wide spectrum of settings - From Tokyo, where Mitsubishi processes rain forest logs from around the world, to a polluting Chevron oil refinery in California, to India, China and Brazil, where global chemical factories are setting shop, Joshua Karliner gives a fascinating account of corporate greed and the unexpected powers of local activists to combat it.
Officials dismissed after failing public evaluation test

Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency, reports that 11 officials in Luyang city in Hunan province in Central China were dismissed after they were graded "unqualified" by the public in two consecutive years. The city introduced the public appraisal system two years ago. At the end of last year, more than 10,000 people were invited to grade over 6,000 civil servants in the city. The public evaluation test has been introduced in various parts of the country to make the government more accountable in the absence of democratic elections.

(Far Eastern Economic Review, February 26, 1998)

Mayor-in-Council for Mumbai

Nanda Satam of Shiv Sena has been elected as the first Mayor of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation under the new Mayor-in-Council system. It is for the first time in the 110 year old history of the Corporation that the Mayor has been vested with executive powers which were exercised by the Municipal Commissioner who is an official nominated by the state government.

(Panchayati Raj Update, April 1998)

Spotlight on Bangalore & Colombo

The Asian Development Bank has chosen Bangalore and Colombo as the two cities which will receive funds to corporatise their administration for its development projects. Bangalore and Colombo were selected from 16 cities from all over the world. The amount of aid has not been finalised.

(The Asian Age, May 22 1998)

South Asia’s Education Wasteland

There are 50 million primary school children who have not seen the inside of a school - nearly equal to the total population of U.K.

There is a shortage of 1.25 million teachers in primary schools alone: only two-thirds of the required teachers are available.

Massive brain drain leads to a situation where, for instance, there is one Indian doctor serving 1,325 Americans in the United States compared to one Indian doctor serving over 2,400 Indians in India.

South Asian governments have spent only $12 billion on education during 1990-96 while committing approximately $70 billion to defence.

( Human Development in South Asia 1998 - UNDP)

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More on Public Affairs Centre

Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a non-profit society established in 1994, is dedicated to improving governance in India by strengthening civil society institutions in their interactions with the state. The Centre’s mission is to identify and promote initiatives that facilitate a pro-active role by citizens to enhance the level of public accountability and performance. To this end, PAC is involved in:

- Research on public policy, programmes and services
- Networking with people’s initiatives
- Providing advisory services to state agencies
- Addressing themes of wider national concern
- Sharing information with and building capacity in citizen’s groups

Catch us on the Web....

To know more about PAC, please pull in for a brief stopover while you cruise along the internet highway at http://www.his.com/~holycow/pac.

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Public Eye aims to stimulate creative interaction and lively debates on various themes related to good governance. We welcome like-minded individuals, public interest groups and citizen associations to share information and perspectives through this forum. Please send your contributions to:

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