The events in India, during the first half of this year, are probably a prologue to what will follow in the rest of the decade. The vibrancy of Indian institutions has asserted that quality of governance is a central issue, and that demands for transparancy and accountability have come to stay. Whether it be judicial activism around the Hawala episode, reforms on controlling poll expenses, elections to Panchayati Raj institutions, or the Rogi Kalyan Samiti of Indore, one can see the emotional upsurge to make our nation a better and more fair place to live in.

What makes these recent developments more striking is the extent of influence they have had on our society. If "small is beautiful" was the norm of yesterday, "more the better" is the norm of the day. Experiments and innovations, which were local and muted in the past, are now the harbingers of big changes on the horizon. To recognise these efforts, to foster them and help them evolve, are the challenges that public institutions need to take up. The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) has been striving to keep pace with these developments through some experiments in the recent past.

The quality of governance in our country can be no better than that of our elected representatives. If five decades of democracy have left serious questions on the quality of life in a large section of citizenry, it is certainly a reflection on the quality of governance that our elected public servants have brought to bear. Improvement in the quality of governance, therefore, begins with ensuring quality in our electoral candidates. Hence, PAC in association with Deccan Herald, Bangalore put in motion an experiment on voluntary public disclosure by candidates during the recent Lok Sabha elections, whereby the electorate could examine the qualities and achievements of candidates, and vote in an informed manner. The success of this experiment (described in greater detail in this issue of Public Eye) suggests that there is room for improving transperancy in the electoral process and that our systems are mature enough for bigger initiatives in this regard.

The other big issue of the year has been "corruption". This phenomenon, which has invaded most walks of public life, is now a larger than life force. While grand corruption hits the headlines, sometimes pushing elected representatives out of office (even behind bars), "retail corruption" continues to flourish unabated. It is clear that this phenomenon, in all its forms, cannot be wished away by some virtuous souls or smoked out with strong arm techniques - a mix of tools that draw the combined strength of most of the major institutions of the nation would have to work in synchrony for any substantial improvement in this arena. To this end, PAC brought together ten leading persons from academia, bureaucracy, legal systems, industries and NGOs to systematically prepare action agendas for tackling corruption - a report on the workshop is part of this issue of Public Eye.

Both these experiments draw strength from the very basic "right to know", which alone can make the citizen play a meaningful role in the process of governance. Be it backgrounds of candidates, obligations of public servants, procedures for access to facilities of the state, or the like, citizens must have the right to know. If the instruments of state can survive or derive strength only by maintaining a good deal of ignorance in the polity, it is certainly a shame. The Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad has taken up this issue in right earnest, by drafting "The Access to Information Bill" for the consideration of the Indian Parliament. This was also discussed at the National Workshop on "Tackling Corruption", on which we carry a report. We hope that this will serve to inspire many more of us to initiate and explore different avenues for action to improve the quality of governance in India.

Suresh Balakrishnan
PAC
RESEARCH

Public Services and the Urban Poor
A comparative assessment across five Indian cities

Though a plethora of programmes and projects have been designed, at the central, state and local government levels to provide basic civic services and infrastructure facilities to the urban poor, have we ever spared a thought to assess whether these services are actually being utilised and if so, whether they meet the felt needs adequately? PAC decided to explore this issue further on a comparative mode using information generated by the Report Card Studies carried out in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Madras and Pune. The study was conducted by Dr. Sita Shekhar, Consultant at PAC, with financial support from Actionaid, India.

We present below some interesting observations and major findings from the study.

Level of Interaction

The interface between the service users (the urban poor) and the service providers to discuss problems regarding access to and optimum use of public services has been found to be very limited. Analysis on the point of contacts made show that while the Electricity agency accounted for a majority of the contacts made in Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Pune, respondents in Calcutta and Madras indicated most frequent contact with the Public Distribution System and the Police respectively.

The picture speaks for itself! (See table below) Perceptions across the five cities clearly highlight the low customer orientation and the non-responsive attitude of the urban service providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions*</th>
<th>Ahmedabad</th>
<th>Bangalore</th>
<th>Calcutta</th>
<th>Madras</th>
<th>Pune</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Helpfulness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time taken to attend to problem</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time taken to solve problem</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more visits to agency</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases of problems solved</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures presented are % of respondents satisfied in the case of first three items and % agreeing with statement in the case of last two items.

The Speed Money Phenomenon

Bangalore leads in the prevalence of corruption among service providers with every third slum dweller having had to pay extra to get his job done. The situation is no better in Madras with every fourth resident paying an average sum of Rs.163 as speed money. Ahmedabad and Calcutta are not far behind in corruption with one in five and one in eight slum residents respectively resorting to payment of speed money. A sum of Rs.350 was the average amount paid by a Calcutta slum dweller as speed money. Again Pune sets an example in performance for the other four cities with just one in 17 slum dwellers having had to pay speed money.

Where do we go from here...

We briefly sum up the salient issues identified, based on which some corrective actions are suggested:

The urban poor in all the cities studied, have identified sanitation as the most unsatisfactory public service. Probably, an overhaul of the management system, a streamlined coordination of the provision of toilets, adequate water, drainage, and education of the urban poor in the use of toilets would improve the quality of this service. Furthermore, it would probably be beneficial to seek the involvement of the urban poor in the maintenance of the sanitation facilities. This is one area where specialist NGOs like Centre for Environment Education (CEE) can help in the choice and dissemination of appropriate and tested technologies.

Among the few findings that strike a positive note in this study is that as compared to other agencies, electricity agencies (though they too leave much to be desired) emerge as better performers in all the cities, especially in Madras and Pune. The agency in
The Speed Money Phenomenon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>%age paying speed money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pune</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ahmedabad, where the service has been rated very poor, could well take a cue from the successful models. Further, other service providers could also derive some lessons from the systems and practices being followed by the electricity agency.

The urban poor in all the five cities are unanimous in their dissatisfaction with the behaviour (e.g., helpfulness of the staff), and the time taken to deal with and to solve their problems. This is clear evidence of the existence of gaps in the management and control of the public agencies involved and more important, implies a need for a change in the attitudes, approachability, and responsiveness of the public service providers for the better.

The speed money phenomenon in public services is ubiquitous. Except for Pune where only one in 17 of the slum dwellers paid extra-legal sums of money to get work done, the findings in all the cities are appalling. Improved information and transparency in the agencies' functioning would definitely go a long way in controlling this phenomenon.

And as an end note, the exercise proved the efficacy of using public feedback as a tool for evaluating the quality of public services. The evidence provided by such feedback will not only generate information on the strengths and weaknesses of service providers, but also highlight subtle themes and trends that need further probing. Inter-city variations in corruption, responsiveness, staff behaviour, etc., are factors which, when studied in depth, could offer lessons and fresh insights to the service providers.
Tackling Corruption in India
Generating Actionable Proposals

Vasco Miranda, a character in Salman Rushdie’s latest offering ‘The Moors Last Sigh’, gives an inebriated sermon on the night of India’s independence “... Let me give you a tip. Only one power in this damn country is strong enough to stand up against those gods... You know what it is? I’ll tell you what it is. Corruption. You get me?... Jolly old damn fine bribery and grease... V. Miranda’s definition of democracy: one man, one bribe.”

Well, fact is turning out to be stronger than fiction! The nineties could well go down as the decade of corruption. As scandals, murky dealings, scams and frauds come tumbling out of the closet, there is a felt urgency to stem the rot. As an institute committed to the cause of good governance with emphasis on themes like transparency and accountability, Public Affairs Centre has sought to address this issue by initiating a project on ‘Tackling Corruption in India’. The project, envisaged along a research-cum-action mode, is coordinated by Dr. Samuel Paul, Chairman of the PAC. Prof. S. Guhan of the Madras Institute of Development Studies is the honorary Project Director.

The broad paradigm for the project evolved over several rounds of discussions in Madras and Bangalore among civil servants (retired and serving), academicians, lawyers and industrialists. These brainstorming sessions highlighted certain critical factors.

✦ Corruption in India has assumed crisis proportions; its scale and spread have increased significantly, especially during the last two decades. A notable feature regarding this has been a mutually reinforcing collusion between the political and bureaucratic levels. And, at each of these levels, corruption has seeped to the top echelons in the Central and State governments. The malaise, however, isn’t confined merely to the executive arm of the government; it has afflicted legislators, the judiciary, the media and also independent professions.

✦ Though there exists a high level of expressed concern on the scale, pervasiveness and consequences of corruption, there has been no effort to translate it into effective action. The daunting nature of the problem tends to generate a feeling of helplessness and apathy. This, in turn, is often rationalised in terms of cynicism or in arguments that tend to acquiesce in corruption.

✦ Large and sweeping solutions for the control of corruption have been suggested; fundamental changes in the constitution, through growing deregulation and privatisation of the economy, large scale decentralisation of governmental activities and emphasis on moral values and character. While each of these approaches has its values and validity, all have their limitations in terms of scope and feasibility. We cannot rely on them as effective mechanisms.

Against this backdrop, the project endeavours to research and formulate concrete, systemic reforms that can contain and roll-back corruption. To give the effort a definite focus and generate meaningful action, guidelines were drawn up.

Such reforms will need to be addressed to the legal, institutional and structural aspects of the problem, covering medium and longer term aspects. The proposals addressing these issues will have to be reasonably comprehensive, given their ramifications and manifestations over several levels, sectors and transactions in public administration. In particular, the political bureaucratic nexus in corruption will have to be taken into account. The attack on corruption will also have to be viewed in the wider context of administrative reforms. In this perspective, the exercise will have to deal with what can be broadly classified as the preventive, punitive and promotional aspects of the problem. Preventive aspects will include electoral reforms, especially in campaign finance; an optimal balance between the roles of the state and the market, involving appropriate deregulation and privatization, curtailing the role for discretion in governmental decisions; decentralised governance strengthening transparency and accountability. The punitive aspect will consist of strengthening laws, rules and mechanisms for the effective detection, pursuit, punishment and deterrence of corruption. The promotional aspect will involve the encouragement of value-based politics and administration, respect for laws and a culture of compliance with them.

In the first stage of the project, PAC commissioned leading exponents from diverse fields like administration, industry, academia and the legal profession to author discussion papers with emphasis on action proposals. Following this, a workshop was organised at Bangalore on 11-12 April, 1996 wherein the authors had an opportunity to discuss their papers and make revisions based on the comments and suggestions put forth by
In the Name of GRAFT ...

The phenomenon of corruption is certainly not confined to India. The epidemic seems to have spread globally. The past two years have seen a distinguished list of international figures falling prey to the disease. Roh Tae Woo in Korea, Carlos Salinas de Gortari in Mexico, etc., the list goes on. And, around the world, citizens and public interest groups are getting ready to tackle the genie and bottle it up for good.

Leading the battle against corruption at a global level is a small public interest group based in Berlin, aptly called Transparency International (TI). Transparency International was launched in May, 1993 as a not for profit non-governmental organization to counter corruption, both in international business transactions and through the National Chapters established in various countries, and in national levels also. Since its inception, TI has generated wide interest through the publication of a corruption index that places nations on a comparative scale and also by popularising the concept of National Integrity Systems. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of organizations like Transparency International, there is a new found empowerment among the citizenry to combat corruption locally, nationally and globally.

Mr. Michael Weihen from TI recently visited PAC for an exchange of ideas and views and to explore common themes.

knowledgeable discussants. Final versions of these proposal will be widely disseminated through articles, national level workshops, monographs and media. Details of the themes and authors are presented below.

- **Corruption in Political Process**
  K. Ganesan, former Secretary, Central Election Commission, New Delhi

- **Abuse of Political Power and Civil Servants**
  Madhav Godbole, former Home Secretary, Government of India

- **Controlling Corruption: The use of Audit**
  Ramaswamy R. Iyer, Professor, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi and former Secretary, Government of India

- **Right to Know**
  A G Noorani, lawyer and author, Bombay

- **The Indian Ombudsman**

- **Commissions of Inquiry**

- **Corruption in Public Services**
  Samuel Paul, Chairman, Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore, and
  Manubhai Shah, Trustee, Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad

- **Crusade against corruption**
  C. V. Narasimhan, former Director General of Police and Director, Central Bureau of Investigation

- **Corruption of Ministers and Civil Servants: How Law can combat it?**
  S P Sathe, Director, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Pune

These presentations are in the process of being brought out as Working Papers by PAC. Copies are available for Rs. 25 or US $ 5 each. Please state title and author while placing orders. For details on the mode of placing orders, please see box on PAC publications on page 8.

These presentations are expected to be ready for dissemination by August, 1996. Thereafter, it is hoped that a wide ‘alliance against corruption’ will be forged among politicians, administrators, legislators, jurists, academicians, journalists, industrialists, businessmen, concerned citizens and the public at large. A structured and well directed campaign will be mounted through appropriate citizen and public interest groups at local levels on specific issues through sensitisation, conscientisation, awareness building and also through provision of legal and other forms of support.

It is high time that citizens should be made to feel that, as tax payers and consumers of public services, they can demand administrative accountability as a matter of right and entitlement.

"It is time to exorcise Vasco Miranda's prophecy.....!"

(For more information on this project, please contact Gopakumar, PAC.)
FACT BOX

A Report Card on Public Services in Madras

The Report Card Studies of the Public Affairs Centre attempt to analyze feedback from citizens on important civic services such as water supply, sanitation, garbage collection services, electricity, transport etc. A series of such studies has already been carried out in the cities of Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta and Pune; the following report summarises the findings from a study completed in Madras. The study was jointly designed by PAC & MBA.

The city of Madras has a population of approximately 4 million of which nearly 18% live in slums; the annual growth rate is estimated to be around 2.5%. Like other major cities, the growth rate in Madras has been due to a spurt in industrial activity. A number of industrial and export processing zones, especially in leather and automobile ancillary industry segments, have sprung up and around the city. A major fall out of this development has been a large scale migration from the hinterlands to the city. But then, are the urban infrastructure services really geared to support the growing needs of the city? And, more important, how do the poor perceive the services in terms of availability, accessibility and responsiveness? To reflect on these questions and highlight specific issues that warrant immediate attention, PAC initiated a study on the urban public services in Madras.

The study focused on an analysis of responses from 850 general households and 540 slum dwellers. The random sample survey was conducted in six localities segregated as 'old', 'middle age' and 'new'. After determining the major services used frequently by the public, through preliminary fieldwork, a comprehensive questionnaire was administered to elicit responses on a variety of indices like availability and access of services, satisfaction with the services provided, prevalence of speed money etc. The agencies identified for this study were:

- Tamil Nadu Electricity Board
- Madras Telephones
- Dept. of Posts and Telegraphs
- Police
- Dept. of Food and Civil Supplies
- Government Hospitals
- Dept. of Health and Family Welfare
- Public Sector Banks
- Madras City Corporation
- Madras Metropolitan Development Authority
- Madras Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board
- Metro Railways
- Indian Railways
- Road Transportation and Public Works Department

Salient findings from the study highlight the following:

- Citizens in Madras have, on the whole, expressed moderate satisfaction with most of the urban services used; the highest rating, however, corresponds to "somewhat satisfied". Respondents were quite dissatisfied with the services of Madras City Corporation (MCC) and the Food and Civil Supplies Department, especially when it came to contacting the agency with a problem. The conclusions, regarding MCC in particular, are observed to be consistent across both the general sample as well as the slum residents for all the major services rendered by the MCC, including street lighting and garbage collection. Citizens gave a good rating to the Electricity Board, Government Hospitals and Public Sector Banks. Although nearly 56% of respondents (non-poor) had contacted the TNEB with a problem, they returned satisfied because their problems had been attended to fairly promptly.

- Respondents, in general, expressed dissatisfaction with the police services and the services of the Food and Civil Supplies Department. Slum dwellers expressed a strong degree of satisfaction with the local bus transport services, the services of the Health and Family Welfare Department, TNEB and the Post and Telegraphs Department (all above 90%).

- Access of slum dwellers to important civic amenities such as water supply and sanitation is very low at the personal level; 1% and 9% respectively. As for the amenities at the community level, they do not compare favourably (only 42% of respondents had access to a water tap, and 51% to a toilet) with the other cities where the report card studies were done.

- The phenomenon of speed money seems to be fairly widespread in Madras. Nearly 25% of the respondents paid speed money. The average amount paid was...
Rs.169 in the case of general households and Rs. 163 in the case of slum dwellers. The incidence was observed to be the highest with the Madras City Corporation. Except in the case of police services, wherein the officials asked for money in 84% of the cases reported, people paid on their own accord in anticipation of better services.

Investments made by households to build coping mechanisms to tide over unreliable and inconsistent services (water supply, as a case in point) is estimated to be around a whopping Rs. 454 crores!

The study has brought into sharp focus the glaring systemic anomalies that warrant immediate attention; some conclusions and policy recommendations are presented below:

Whose job is it anyway?
A striking factor that emerged in the course of our interaction with citizens was the overlapping jurisdiction of different agencies for certain services. For instance, three agencies are involved in the supply of water and matters related to sanitation - the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority (MMDA), the Madras City Corporation (MCC) and the Water Supply and Sewerage Board. This functional spread not only creates confusion among the end users but also severely hampers the quality of services being rendered.

Streamlining the functions of MCC
The Madras City Corporation, the oldest and functionally the biggest public service agency in Madras, has been rated extremely poor by the citizens; only 30% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of service extended by the Corporation. The phenomenon of speed money is also observed to be widely prevalent in this agency. Any attempt to streamline the functions of the Corporation should take cognisance of three facts. One, the legislation empowering the Corporation to function is more than a hundred years old! Many of the provisions are totally ineffective and do not give the Corporation any functional autonomy to provide quality infrastructure and civic services, not to talk about the numerous legal loopholes that facilitate corruption. The second issue concerns the necessity for a democratically elected body to take over the functioning of MCC, so as to make it more accountable and transparent. The final fact relates to the need to adopt a more client-responsive posture or, in short, transform itself into an entrepreneurial, responsive and client-oriented agency.

Trend Setters
While the overall picture of public services appear to be dull, a few examples stand out in bright contrast. City transport services, Electricity and Post & Telegraphs have been rated very high in satisfaction by the citizens. City transport services (run by two major corporations) are operating exceptionally well and are often cited as a model for similar services in other states. The conscious efforts to improve customer services and streamline departmental operations, undertaken by the Electricity Board and Department of P&T have produced very encouraging results. These agencies also hold regular meetings with representatives of the citizen groups to improve services. What is possible for two agencies should definitely be possible for others. But that calls for developing the right attitude!

REPORT CARD GAINING WIDER ACCEPTANCE...

The Report Card Methodology is fast gaining acceptance as an innovative approach for improving public services. The January 1996 issue of The Urban Age, published from Washington DC, featured PACs experiences in using the report cards to facilitate increased public interest in the improvement of urban services as well as to encourage public service providers to be more responsive to citizens. The Urban Age provides a forum to stimulate debates and interaction on various topics in developed and developing countries. The quarterly publication is available to developing country subscribers free of charge. The Urban Age is funded by UNDP-UNCHS (Habitat) - World Bank Urban Management Programme and the World Bank.
The PAC Research Paper/Working Paper Series has been initiated to disseminate the findings of its research studies, surveys and innovations. The following titles are available on request:

1. A Report Card on Public Services in Indian Cities: A View from Below
   Rs. 30 or US$ 7*

2. Public Services for the Urban Poor: A Report Card on Three Indian Cities
   Rs. 25 or US$ 5*

   Rs. 25 or US$ 5*

4. Making the Grade - How do Public Service Providers in your City measure up?
   Rs. 25 or US$ 5*

5. Public Services and the Urban Poor: A Comparative Assessment Based on Citizen Feedback from Five Indian Cities.
   Rs. 30 or US$ 7*

6. Bringing Transparency into Elections: A Field Experiment
   Rs. 25 or US$ 5*

* Foreign orders only. Please include US$ 2 towards processing charges.

Please send payment through bank draft/cheque (add Rs. 5 for out station cheques) drawn in favour of Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore, to:

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707, 6B Cross Road, Block 3
Koramangala, Bangalore 560 034, India
Tel: 5537260, 5520246
Fax: 5537260
MORE ON PAC

Public Affairs Centre (PAC) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the cause of improving the quality of governance in India. While recognising that many factors influence governance, PAC will focus attention initially on areas in which the public can play a useful role in improving governance. Towards this end, it will undertake and support research on public findings and assist citizen groups and public organisations concerned with improving governance. The current focus of PAC on urban public service reflects the urgency and timeliness of the problems.

PAC's role in this challenging endeavour will be:

- To assist in enhancing the quality of public policies, programmes and services of concern to citizens through research and advisory services to both citizen groups and the government;

- To use the findings of research to inform the public and stimulate collective action by citizen groups; and

- To network with other organisations, both public and private, in furtherance of its goals.

PAC's long-term strategy will identify and respond to major issues pertinent to governance from time to time in collaboration with other groups that share similar concerns.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PAC proposes to conduct a two day 'Awareness Workshop' on the Report Card Methodology for a major NGO network in Tamil Nadu in July-August, 1996. The workshop is intended to bring the Report Card Methodology closer to community based organisations and public interest groups, to help them appreciate the need for identifying action alternatives based on information obtained through systematic surveys. This could then be used to assess problems faced by the citizen in accessing various public services provided by the government. A Workshop on the same theme, conducted in June 1995, was found to be very useful by participants; many groups had expressed a need to try out these studies and hold similar workshops. Institutions and Networks which require such support can contact Prof. Suresh Balakrishnan, PAC.
INNOVATIONS

A Vote for Transparency
Candidates do some candid talking

Consider this: If you are to apply for a job in government or for obtaining a passport to travel abroad, you are expected to provide pages of information on your background, parentage, family income, etc. And in seeking employment you are further subjected to a scrutiny of previous work experience, and of qualifications and skills deemed necessary to hold public office.

And now consider this: If you are seeking election to a public office, which may even lead to the office of the Prime Minister, all you have to do is provide proof of age and registration as a voter to the electoral officer. That's all about it!

Well, the strange but uncomfortable fact is that candidates standing for public elections in India do not have to disclose information about themselves to anyone! And you as a voter, what do you know about your candidate who may become your representative?

- Do you know how they make a living?
- Or, whether they pay taxes?
- Do you know how often they have changed their political affiliations?
- Are they history sheeters?
- What achievements can they claim to their credit?
- Do they have any specific agenda for action?

If you do not have answers to these and related questions, on what basis are you electing them as your representatives? To cast our valuable votes solely on the basis of party manifestos, rhetoric and charisma is to avoid taking our responsibility as conscientious citizens.

PAC in collaboration with the Deccan Herald, a leading English daily published from Bangalore, undertook an innovative experiment to get candidates, who contested the recently concluded Parliament Polls from the state of Karnataka, to respond to the queries raised above. The exercise was carried out three weeks prior to the date of polls and the result of the analysis was published two days prior to the elections. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to as many candidates as were easily accessible from all the major political parties in 12 constituencies. About half the number of candidates from these constituencies responded to the effort. We present some highlights from the survey:

I declare....(Details about oneself)
Cutting across party lines, politicians disclosed a variety of personal details, touching upon sensitive issues like pending criminal and corruption charges and sharing their achievements and vision. Many candidates seemed to prefer a strategy of selective disclosure - guard against exposure on controversial aspects, yet speak enough to avoid being perceived as someone with a past. Some of the respondents refused to disclose their income, but said they pay taxes. But one response carried it to the extreme by declaring that he pays income tax, although the declared income is much below the taxable limit! Two candidates disclosed they have/had criminal charges against them; one of them promised to fight corruption charges if elected!

Who am I? What do I do? Where do I live? What are my priorities?

Around half of the respondents (14) are lawyers by training, three have professional qualifications like engineering. Only six had not gone beyond high school, of which three were from the cities.

Regarding profession, 12 candidates reported agriculture as their main source of income; 11 reported income from the legal profession. Business, journalism and social service were reported by two each. 23 respondents disclosed the quantum of their
annual income (the rest chose not to disclose). Income tax was reported as being paid by 15 candidates, although four of them did not disclose the quantum of their income. Fourteen of them reported that they did not pay income tax, including three persons with income greater than Rs. 50,000/-. Most of the candidates reported that they lived in the constituency itself. Four reported that they lived outside and four candidates maintained an enigmatic silence.

Refreshingly enough, most of the candidates voiced specific priorities that went beyond their party manifestos. Ideology seems to be passe. Most of the issues identified as priorities were local in nature and addressed specific felt needs like rail lines, basic infrastructure and irrigation facilities. Interestingly enough, the issue of corruption has been mentioned only by a few! So too, the Cauvery river water dispute (on sharing of the river water between the States of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) finds attention in only two candidate’s manifestos. Judicial activism, which was instrumental in triggering off the crusade against corruption in high places, has been endorsed by 19 respondents; 18 candidates felt that the tempo of economic liberalisation should be increased or maintained, while six felt that it should be reduced.

Since the responses were not uniform enough across the constituencies, we were not able to able to analyse data on an individual basis. However, we present below a sample of the analysis, based on candidates from a constituency near Bangalore and compared across party lines.

Public disclosure by candidates will certainly help in encouraging transparency and probity; when data is made public, it is possible for the candidate’s competitors, the media and other public interest groups to probe and challenge any information they suspect. And, moreover, access to such information by the public is bound to make political parties more careful in their choice of candidates. It will also help the voter in exercising a certain degree of political maturity in voicing their mandate by paying more attention to the credibility of the candidates, their leadership potential and priorities. The first attempt taken in this direction proves that promoting transparency in public life is certainly feasible. We are highly enthused by the positive response showed by the candidates themselves. Perhaps the time has come for the authorities concerned to have a mandatory requirement that all candidates have to furnish a basic set of information while registering nominations; the precise nature of the information has to be worked out. Given the clamour for transparency and openness, it is high time that the voters get to know their candidates beyond the image provided by cutouts, handouts and megaphones.

(For more information on this programme, please contact Suresh Balakrishnan, PAC)

The Mexican Way

Citizen movements are getting stronger all over the world to act as sentinels against abuse of power by officials and elected representatives. Alianza Civic (Civic Alliance), the largest association in Mexico that acts as a watchdog on the electoral process and government functions, has devised an ingenious plan to root out corruption and abuse of power at the grassroots. Under their adopt-an-official agenda, each of the groups 50,000 members chooses a Congressman, senator or High-level government official and monitors his use of public funds. That's some monitoring for sure!!

KNOWING YOUR CANDIDATES

(Data from a constituency near Bangalore)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party issue</th>
<th>Congress (I)</th>
<th>Janata Dal</th>
<th>BJP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lives in constituency</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held elected position</td>
<td>Lok Sabha</td>
<td>Local body</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed parties in five years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pays income tax</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces/d Criminal charges</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion on economic reforms</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority for action if elected</td>
<td>Tackle illiteracy</td>
<td>Uplift poor</td>
<td>Silk &amp; Milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where people come first.....

Swabhiman was formally inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Karnataka in August 1995. In the last issue of "Public Eye" we had briefly outlined the concept of Swabhiman, the composition of the core team and the alliances between NGOs, resident groups, government agencies (BDA and BCC), media and industry. The movement directed to restore self-respect, accountability and participation in the running of our essential services, is gaining strength. We here present an update of the activities of Swabhiman.

Learning-by-doing

One of the underlying principles of Swabhiman is "learning-by-doing". This concept is operationalised through the creation of models for different aspects of civic services. In creating "models", a certain amount of collective effort and thought is put into finding solutions for a situation in order to enable others to make similar efforts where needed. In the context of Swabhiman, the idea of setting up models has been conceived so that solutions to specific civic problems like waste management, preservation of the environment, maintenance of residential layouts can be experimented at local and micro levels. Thus the problems of size, scope, coordination and mobilisation of resources are tackled. It is far more feasible to implement a waste collection and processing mechanism to cover 500 households in a locality, than to attempt the revamping of a garbage management system for the whole city - in a single attempt.

Under Swabhiman, some models have been set up in the city of Bangalore. These are:

- A compost pit at Rajaji Nagar
  Although, this had been designated as a model, there are as many as 35 waste management systems under the umbrella of Swabhiman that are functional in the different localities; many resident groups have expressed a desire to find a solution to the problem of uncleared garbage. The compost pit at Rajaji Nagar covers about 500 households in the area.

- A model street at Church Street
  Residents of Church Street meet the government officials from the Electricity Board, Water and Sewerage Agencies, Traffic Department and the City Corporation (BCC) every fortnight to find solutions to the existing civic problems in the area. These efforts are being taken through a collaborative mode of action between residents, commercial establishments and government agencies. Citizens are also keeping a close watch on the new multi-storied buildings in the area to check violation of parking laws, and other rules.

Apart from these, other efforts like a model park in Indira Nagar and a comprehensive Neighbourhood Development Plan for Malleswaram are also on the anvil.

- A model Ward Office
  The model Swabhiman ward committee is being designed to resemble the structure given below:

  This structure will ensure a democratic and transparent style of functioning. It will also ensure that the interest of all members of the community are

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**SWABHIMANA WARD COMMITTEE**

- Chairman
- Area Ward Counsellor

Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) Medical Officer of Health (MOH) BCC

Prominent citizens, one member of SC/ST community, one rep. from NGO, resident group, traders group and local business

One representative from BCC, BDA, KEB, BWSSB, DHS & FW, Police, Slum Board

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well represented. The model ward office is concerned with the sustained facilitation of the above mentioned issues that are an integral part of good urban management. Ward committees will function in a decentralised manner with the participation of citizens at the local level in the spirit of the 74th amendment to the constitution.

The models described above are some examples of the efforts made under Swabhimaana. It is, however, important to remember that these experiments are really an application of the basic principles of a good governance - participation by citizens, transparency in operations and accountability for results and efficiency. The models can be considered as experiments in getting the community to collectively find solutions to problems and issues of waste management, decoration of public spaces, maintenance of amenities (street lighting, roads etc) in the locality and neighbourhood planning.

**Swabhimaana - Towards safe, motorable roads**

A recent report in the “Business Today” referred to chaotic traffic situation in our cities as “Gridlocked”. Road users in Bangalore are probably more familiar with this description than their counterparts elsewhere, as he/she often have to go around in circles, quite literally! Nearly one million vehicles squeeze into Bangalore’s narrow roads making daily commuting a nightmare. The utter indiscipline on the part of the public also contributes to the present situation. The sheer magnitude of the problem virtually makes it impossible for any single agency to continuously monitor traffic discipline. A concerted effort, evolving out of commitment and involvement at the individual level is the need of the hour. Only when there is a demand from all of us, from all walks of life for a safer Bangalore, and when this demand translates into concrete and coherent action, in different forms and through different capacities, does discipline get a chance to forge itself into a culture. Compliance with the law then becomes more and more achievable.

**Spandana**, initiated by the Department of Traffic, is an experiment in this direction. About nine organisations, including NGOs, business houses and an advertising agency are participants in this innovative program. Along with PAC, Spandana aims to evolve methods to prevent road accidents and smoothen flow of traffic by improving traffic discipline and to reach timely aid to accident victims. This is being attempted through teams and networks between NGOs, agencies and various organisations to sensitise common citizens to follow traffic rules, initially through campaigns. This will gradually be internalised by the department as formal procedures. This way, practical procedures could be framed bottom-up, encouraging self-discipline, rather than enforcement. Spandana also aims to facilitate an atmosphere of cooperation and motivation and provide training to officials at all operational levels to improve traffic control.

Under the banner of Spandana, a unique traffic campaign was launched in March 1996. The idea was to bring a positive influence on the behaviour of road users. We chose a busy junction on Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore and along with the traffic police attempted to enforce a few simple rules that form part of the junction code, like not jumping traffic signals, staying in the appropriate lane, keeping the walkway free for pedestrians and so on. One of the goals of the...
Mr Rohinton D. Aga

We deeply mourn the sad demise of Mr Rohinton D. Aga, Chairman and Managing Director, Thermax Ltd. Pune, and a member of the Board of Directors, Public Affairs Centre.

An economist by training, entrepreneur by profession, visionary by temperament and a humanist at heart - Rohinton D. Aga was truly an inspiring influence. After completing his economics trip from Cambridge in 1957, Mr Aga commenced his business career with a short stint in a couple of multinational organisations, before helping start a small firm manufacturing industrial boilers. This small step has since then become a giant leap with the creation of a group of companies under the banner Thermax - a pioneer in the areas of energy and environment, with a sales turnover exceeding Rs 3000 million and a dedicated work team of around 3000 people. Mr Aga was the Chairman and Managing Director of the flagship company - Thermax Ltd.

Mr Aga was closely associated with the founding of the Public Affairs Centre; we fondly recollect his words of encouragement, support and advice. He was also the first person to enrol his company as an institutional member of the Centre. More than his entrepreneurial acumen and his undaunting spirit of enterprise, he was foremost among industrialists in India in his concern and active interest in the socio-political developments in our society.

program was to demonstrate the viability of cooperation between NGOs, enforcement agencies and citizens in improving traffic conditions in the city.

Volunteers manned this junction for a week, doing "duty" for two hours each day and handed out stickers with the slogan "I'm safe behind the wheel." A guide to good driving was also given to pedestrians and vehicle owners who evinced interest in our program.

Very often we feel that commuters do not follow rules. But, have we ever stopped to think of the several factors that impede users from following the rules? The campaign highlighted certain situations that literally block even the most diehard of the rule followers from doing their duty. For instance, on a busy and famous road in Bangalore, a zebra crossing encounters a strong barricade at the end (are the public expected to jump over the railing?); in fact, many footpaths also lead to the same END! These problems have been placed before the traffic police and they have promised to take action (in fact, one barricade was removed immediately after our suggestion so as to give more space on the footpath). We are heartened by the enthusiasm and support of the Traffic Police Department.

Though the campaign lasted for only a week, it highlighted the complexity of managing traffic problems in a mega city like Bangalore. It is our belief that constant reinforcement of the idea of traffic discipline is the only solution. And what better way to achieve this than a truly participative endeavour.

Let the pulse beat on...

For more information on Spandana, please contact Ms. Rohini Nilekani, NAGRIK, 930, 4th Cross, Stage 2, Mico Layout, Bangalore-560,076.

Awards Programme for Public Innovations

PAC has submitted a proposal to the National Foundation of India (NFI) for constituting an independent awards programme to recognise outstanding innovations in government; the proposal is presently under consideration of the NFI Board. The project initiates the project: To begin with, there is a need to recognise good work and innovative practices in government; we believe that good government deserves as much exposure as bad government! Secondly, an awards programme would stimulate dissemination and adoption of ideas that may lead to better policies and action. Finally, it was felt that an independent awards programme is both desirable and timely, given the widespread prevalence and domination of state initiated awards. A major recommendation of the proposal is that initially, awards may be constituted for innovations in partnership between government and NGOs.

The proposal was prepared with the assistance of Ms. Anuradha Rao of the Consumer Action Group (CAG), Madras.
THE PAC TEAM

Suresh Balakrishnan is Research Coordinator at the Centre. He completed his doctoral programme from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad specialising in Organisational Behaviour. He has considerable experience in providing consultancy and advisory support to NGOs, local voluntary organisations and self-help groups. His areas of interests are Organisational Redesign and Development Strategy, Performance Standards in Public Services and Governance.

Anjana Iyer coordinates the Centre's programmes in support of citizen action; two of the major ones being Swabhimaana and Spandana. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration. She has considerable experience in working with consumer groups and other public interest initiatives. Her areas of interest include working with community groups and government agencies in the areas of local governance and civic administration.

Gopakumar is Research Officer at the Centre. He has post-graduate qualifications in economics and journalism and is completing his Doctoral Degree in Entrepreneurship. He has also completed an Advanced International Certificate Programme on Conflict Resolution from the European University Centre for Peace Studies in Austria. His areas of interest include organisational behaviour, innovations, civil society and conflict resolution.

Sita Shekhar is Consultant at the Centre and supports its research and training activities. She has a doctoral degree in Economics from the University of Madras. Her areas of interest include gender issues and Quantitative Research.

Shanti Shetty is Secretary (Office Administration and Accounts) at the Centre.

Moving on...

Anant Nadkarni, who was Programme Coordinator at PAC, has moved to the Tata Council for Community Initiatives (TCCI) as Secretary General. Anant had joined PAC on deputation from TELCO and was instrumental in organising the initial programmes of the Centre. We, at PAC, salute his efforts and commitment, and wish him the best in his new assignment.
We welcome your suggestions, views and comments on Public Eye; letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

- We are particularly impressed by the contents of your lead article in the first issue of ‘Public Eye’ wherein you have brought out the importance of the responsibility of public agencies in delivering efficient services and effective implementation of agreed upon policies on day-to-day basis.

S. Krishnan
Adviser Consumer Coordination Council
New Delhi, India

- I have gone through the inaugural issue of the Public Eye carefully; the beautiful layout and the contents deserve special mention.

Sandeep Patnaik, I.P.S.
Senior Superintendent RMS, Bangalore, India

- I was very happy to receive the inaugural copy of the Public Eye. I particularly appreciated reading the report card and the workshop details. Please accept my congratulations on initiating this activity and also for mobilising citizen opinion towards public affairs.

Prof. J.P. Singh
Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India

- I am more than pleased to receive the first copy of ‘Public Eye’ and note that it makes very good reading. I not only agree but fully endorse your view that what is required is good governance and efficient management of resources. All good wishes.

Jayubhai Patel
President State Unit, Gujarat State Consumers Protection Centre, Nadiad, Gujarat, India

- To bring out a good newsletter on time is a commendable job and I think Public Eye has turned out to be a good effort. The newsletter has given a good perspective of the activities of PAC Centre. However, some of the conclusions mentioned in the report on the ‘Workshop on Accountability in Public Services’ seemed too general; you could have mentioned the follow up action proposed. And, may be the layout can be changed a bit (but I like the little sketches!) Keep up the good work.

Subha
Centre for Education and Documentation
Bangalore, India

- Congratulations on the initiation of this new series (Public Eye) and on an first rate introductory statement. Best wishes.

Peter F. Geithner
Director, Asia Programs, The Ford Foundation, New York

- I greatly appreciate your idea of creating awareness among people through a forum like Public Eye. In this connection I would like to emphasise that the accent should be on transforming the existing political system in the country which is characterised by concentration of powers in the hands of a few to a genuine, direct, vibrant and dynamic democracy.

Dr. A.V. Huigol
Secretary-General, The Citizens’ Forum, Hubli Karnataka, India

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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Public Eye
A newsletter from Public Affairs Centre

Vol 1. No. 2
April - June 1996

For private circulation only

Editorial coordination:
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