Although democracy is all about a government of the people, seldom do citizens believe that their voice is heard by the administration. Apathy, distance and indifference, embedded in personnel and procedures of the administration, have eroded the faith of our people in the fairness and capacity of the government. Much of what PAC does today, through Report Card studies and strengthening citizen participation in management of public services, is directed towards tackling this widely pervasive malady. An important milestone was the National Debate on Responsive Governance launched by the Government of India, whereby the issue of responsiveness has been brought into the centre stage of administrative reform. The effort was led by the Prime Minister of India, and the issue deliberated upon with Chief Ministers at a special conference in April, 1997. PAC played a role in shaping this initiative towards making the administration more responsive.

The issue of responsiveness has to be viewed in the context of the current buzzword of 'less government is better government'. In a country like India, there is no shortcut to make less government happen that quickly. A wide variety of essential services continue to be provided by the government. But the preoccupation with mega projects and high-tech investments often gets decision-makers to forget about checking whether citizens derive tangible benefits that are supposed to reach them.

We cannot forget that the primary task of the government is to ensure that people are served efficiently and equitably. Responsiveness is the essence of what people expect from the government. When public servants fail to listen and respond to the problems of the citizens, government ceases to be effective and relevant to its citizens. The need of the hour is not more complex procedures or new models of governance but greater simplicity, transparency and ease of access within the government.

Archaic laws inherited from the colonial era are being subjected to a systematic review to weed out outdated and complex procedures. Public agencies are being encouraged to have ‘citizens charters’ that spell out entitlements of citizens to standards of service, conditions to be met by users, and remedies available to the latter in case of dissatisfaction. The proposed ‘Right to Information’ is seen as a deterrent to the abuse of power, because it would ensure that public agencies make available to citizens, on demand, information on budgets, current and future plans, service standards, regulations and procedures, specific public decisions including contracts, and steps taken for redressal of grievances.

Information technology is viewed as a source of significant assistance in achieving greater responsiveness. This medium would enable agencies to provide information on schemes and programmes, procedures for applications, tracking the progress of applications, complaints, etc., and make pinpointing of responsibility more manageable. Not only would this help tackle the oft repeated complaint of delays, but also enable easy access to service related information and services, and thereby save time and effort for citizens and officials.

When tenures of large numbers of civil servants are cut short due to changes in the political environment, it becomes difficult for administrative bodies and the police force to perform in a manner that is based on good local knowledge, sensitivity and commitment. It is obvious that we need to give civil servants some stability of tenure in designated positions. This would happen only when we institutionalise tenures of key functionaries and insist that reduction of tenure under exceptional conditions be accompanied by a public statement on why such a decision is made.

These steps need to be matched with a greater commitment of civil servants to the spirit of the Constitution and ethical conduct. A Charter of Ethics is being prepared to remind civil servants of the norms of conduct they should uphold throughout their careers. Administration of justice is yet another area that requires urgent attention. Overloaded courts, complex and time-consuming legal procedures and inordinate delays in the enforcement of judicial decisions are marks of an unresponsive government.

The concern and attention directed to this theme promises to lead to much more widespread action within and outside the government. Our need is not only for a more efficient service delivery system, but also a more caring and responsive public system.

Dr. Suresh Balakrishnan, PAC
Urban Environment: Countdown to Armageddon

For the Heavens Gate cultists, the sign was quite clear. The incendiary tail of the comet Hale-Bopp signalled the arrival of the 'vehicle to heaven'. The cultists left for their heavenly abode by paying tribute to the sign of the times - choking themselves to death. And, going by the latest statistics on the quality of urban environment, many of us will be forced to follow the Heavens Gate's path. The 1996-97 report of the World Resources Series (an annual report prepared by the World Resources Institute in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme) on The Urban Environment would in all probability set the Cassandra singing out loud. Such is the drastic and rapid deterioration of the physical and social urban environments.

Exploding Cities

Perhaps, a major precipitatory factor of this urban crisis is the phenomenal increase in population in most urban centres. It is estimated that within the next decade, more than half of the world's population will be living in urban areas and by 2025, this proportion will have risen to almost two-third. More important, almost all of this growth (a staggering 90 per cent) will occur in the developing world! Though one could comment from a historical perspective that many cities in the developed world have experienced similar growth rates in the past, the sheer numbers involved and the extent of squalor and desolation makes the scenario in the developing countries quite bleak. It doesn't require much visioning to prophesise that much of the adverse fall-out is going to be on the urban poor, who in most parts live in life threatening conditions. The conditions of vulnerable groups like children and the elderly in particular are pathetic. An estimated 100 million children struggle for daily survival in city streets. And exposure to poor sanitation and contaminated water supplies result in the death of around 5 million children in the developing world.

The Health Threat

A major threat to human health in the developing world is the lack of adequate water and sanitation services. Around 220 million of the urban residents lack access to clean and safe drinking water. The per capita availability of water in many developing countries is abysmally low. To quote an example, in a city like Lucknow in India, with a population of about 2 million, water is available only for 10 hours each day. And the price the urban poor has to pay to obtain drinking water from vendors is quite high; the costs vary anywhere from 4 to 100 times higher than the cost of water from a piped city supply. The case of sanitation service is much worse. More than 420 million do not have access to basic sanitation facilities. Inadequate sanitation facilities are often cited as one of the major cause for the intestinal diseases like diarrhoea and intestinal worm infections, transmitted by faeces. In fact, diarrhoea alone killed more than 3 million children in 1993 and cause around 1.8 billion episodes of illness annually. The magnitude of the problem is borne out amply by the fact that despite nearly $100 billion in investments, the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade of the 1980s fell far short of meeting its deemed objective of providing water and sanitation for all.

The Spectre of Pollution

Another area of major concern is the acute air pollution. Across the globe, more than 1.1 billion people live in urban areas exposed to a deadly cocktail of pollutants released from industrial, energy and vehicular sources. The most dangerous among the identified pollutants are the small particles under 10 microns in diameter, which can be easily breathed into the lungs. Lead poisoning is another danger. A major threat associated with lead emissions is the extensive neurological damage in children. A study conducted in Mexico City, where lead levels in the atmosphere are high due to the use of leaded gasoline,

Delhi: An Urban Nightmare

Delhi evokes strong reactions. Not surprising, considering the fact that the city has long since been used to the tag of a 'power centre'. For a city that serves as the political and administrative capital of India, the quality of urban life is shocking, to say the least. Here are some samples:

- About 11 million people inhabit the city; of these, nearly 60 per cent live in illegally built or sub-standard housing.
- The river Yamuna which supplies water to the city is a virtual Sargasso of raw sewage, industrial effluents and pesticides.
- During 1996, over 7,500 people have died directly from diseases caused by air pollution.
- It is estimated that 10 to 15 per cent of Delhi's population will get cancer and much of it will be caused by air and water pollution.
- Delhi's roadways have the highest death-to-accident ratio in the world with 2091 deaths due to traffic accidents in 1996; the combined total for those killed in Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai (Madras) was only 1,842!

Source: Newsweek, March 31, 1997
reports that more than 25 per cent of the new-borns had lead contents in their blood, high enough to impair neurological and motor physical developments. Various studies have also suggested that high lead levels in childhood may be associated with dropping out of high school, reading disability, absenteeism and neuro developmental deficits later in life.

Crumbling Eco Systems

The urban explosion is fast expanding into very fragile eco-systems; nearly 40 per cent of the cities with a population more than 500,000 are located on the coasts. And under the rubric of urban land conversion, wetlands, mangrove swamps and salt water marshes are fast disappearing and thereby upsetting the already precarious eco-balance. A study conducted by the World Resources Institute in 1995 estimates that roughly half of the world’s coasts are threatened by development activities. These mindless forays accelerate coastal erosion, alter the hydrology of estuaries, disrupt natural processes and trigger off unmitigated eco-disasters. In East Calcutta, for example, about 4,000 hectares of lagoons and swamps were filled to provide home sites for 100,000 middle class families, resulting in an estimated annual loss of 25,000 metric tons of fish and contributing to local flooding problems.

Priorities for Action

Though the indicators and trends portray a possible disaster scenario, the Report highlights many innovative endeavours undertaken by cities around the globe. A major pointer that emerges common to all these is the increasing use of broad-based partnerships involving varied actors like national governments, local governments, non-governmental organisations, local communities, industry and other support groups. There is also the demonstrated success of cost effective technologies that offer low-cost solutions. But many of these call for strong political will, massive mobilisation efforts and the creation of a new culture in managing the cities.

K. Gopakumar, PAC

INITIATIVES

This section introduces creative and innovative experiments that reflect proactive efforts of administrators, citizens and NGOs in producing models that need to be disseminated and shared. The initiatives covered in this would attempt to highlight the need for creating mechanisms for people’s participation that hinges around replicability and adaptability. We welcome contributions to this section.

Back from the Edge: The Incredible Transformation of Surat

It was like the proverbial rise of the Phoenix. Within a span of a year, one of the dirtiest city in India was transformed into the cleanest. All it took was one determined Municipal Commissioner, a core of dedicated officials, a highly proactive media and minimal additional investments. The success story of Surat in Gujarat, India provides many inspiring lessons to city administrators struggling to maintain the urban lifeline.

How it all started....

The young male patient admitted to a municipal hospital in Surat on September 21, 1994 did not evince much interest. He had come in complaining of fever and weakness. However, within hours he was dead. And before the perplexed medical authorities could react, 17 more residents of the city had succumbed to what by then was identified as pneumonic plague. And as the Surat Municipal Corporation declared Surat city as a plague epidemic zone, there was widespread pandemonium as more than 70 per cent of the city’s 2.2 million people fled to safer havens. By the end of September, over 58 people in the city had died and over 800 contracted the infection. The social and physical costs incurred were phenomenal. Over 300,000 power looms and 1000 diamond polishing units shut down temporarily, resulting in a colossal loss of over Rs. 120 billion. Most of the international flights refused to touch down in India and several countries imposed a ban on air traffic into and out of India. It is estimated that the country lost over Rs. 150 billion. And thousands who fled the city to their native lands were forced out of their homes like ostracised outcasts.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that such an epidemic has rocked Surat. Often designated as India’s dirtiest city, Surat portrayed a picture of filth and squallor. Over 40 per cent of the residents lived in slums along the river Tapi, adding excrement and refuse to its already polluted waters. Population densities of over 20,000 people per square kilometre in the slums were among the highest in the world. The city generated around 1100 tonnes of garbage every day of which only 450 tonnes (less than 50 per cent!) were cleared daily, leading to massive accumulation of uncleared filth.
The Clean up Act

The metamorphosis of the city started with the coming of the new Municipal Commissioner, Mr. S.R. Rao in May 1995. The first task the new Commissioner did was to clear up the garbage in the city. Private contractors were hired to assist the Corporation in this task; the contract entailed a payment of Rs. 130 per ton of garbage removed. Strict conditionalities were applied. Each load of garbage had to be verified by a municipal official, and every load had to meet weight stipulations. All trucks had to be covered to prevent collected garbage from spilling over to the streets. Further, all senior officials were mandatorily required to undertake field visits every day to monitor and supervise the removal operations. The results were stunning. By early 1996, almost 94 per cent of the garbage generated in Surat was being collected every day, making the city the second cleanest one in India, after Chandigarh.

The next part of the agenda was to prevent littering. Months of gentle persuasion mixed with punitive actions, like on the spot fines, have resulted in making the public aware of the need to dump garbage only in the designated collection points. A major area of concern were public places like food markets, main thoroughfares of the city and slums. A different strategy was adopted to clean up these places. The city harbourered thousands of illegal food and food carts and past experiences have proved that removing them is not an easy job. The Commissioner made a deal with them: Keep the immediate surroundings spotlessly clean in exchange for a tacit permission for carrying on their respective trades. This approach worked extremely well. Every vendor got a waste bin, collected the litter in the surroundings and later delivered the same to a collection centre. Hotels and restaurants were forced to install special garbage bins, pack garbage and dispose it in designated collection centres. Within six months, Surat was free of litter and garbage and 95 per cent of its streets were swept everyday.

Efficient Grievance Redressal systems

A new system of grievance redressal was designed to build credibility and trust among the people. Any citizen lodging a complaint with a municipal office was immediately issued a Red Card or a White Card, depending on the nature of the complaint - Red for minor complaints and White for major ones. The card assured the complainant of an answer and a solution within a specified time period - 24 hours for a minor complaint and 7 hours for major ones. The whole system was centrally monitored by the Commissioner. By late 1996, 98 per cent of all complaints were being resolved within a week.

Building Critical Infrastructure

Immediate steps were taken to improve availability of safe drinking water and sanitary services. Forty one new pay and use toilets were constructed in slum areas and safe chlorinated water was supplied to all slum areas through tankers. The budgets for the city's 277 municipal health centres were raised and a daily reporting system on reported incidences of infectious diseases were enforced in all these centres. These combined efforts soon produced very dramatic results. Reported cases of dengue and typhoid dropped by 70 per cent, gastro-enteritis fell by 50 per cent and pneumonia declined by 50 per cent in a period of six months. Efforts are also underway to resettle a significant number of slum dwellers from flood prone low lying areas to alternative sites across the city. To reduce the acute congestion in the city, the Commissioner sought popular support for demolishing hundreds of illegal structures in the city. The response was overwhelming. Residents voluntarily offered to demolish their own illegal buildings to facilitate road widening and paving; over 48 km of roads have already been widened and up to 42 km of new paved roads have been added to connect the newly built colonies.

Reflections and Lessons

The Surat experience serves a grim reminder to all smaller cities where urban solid waste management continues to be a neglected area. Studies conducted by the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, reveal that in many smaller Indian cities the level of garbage removal is abysmally low, with a significant number exhibiting less than 50 per cent efficiency levels. It has been amply documented that poor collection and disposal of solid waste can trigger off severe epidemics of water borne and food borne diseases. It is high time that authorities and citizen bodies wake up to this fact. And as the Surat story shows, the act of cleaning up is neither expensive nor difficult. The total annual cost of removing an additional 400 tonnes of garbage per day from Surat worked out to Rs. 30 crores or a mere 37 paisa per capita per day. A probable answer is in privatising the collection of garbage and implementation of effective control and monitoring systems. An awareness building campaign coupled with punitive measures would drastically reduce the tendency to litter. Above all this, the responsive, sensitive and citizen friendly approach adopted by the City Municipal Officers ensured that public participation is forthcoming in sustaining the initiatives.
PROFILES

This column introduces organisations and personalities 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.

SOCLEEN, Baroda : Saying no! to pollution

The Society for Clean Environment (SOCLEEN) is a forum set up by a group of dedicated professionals and institutions committed to protect and improve the environment in and around the city of Baroda in Gujarat. The forum, in operation since 1977, has been attracting a wide range of groups like students, citizens, public agencies, civic bodies and voluntary organisations in the concerted crusade to make Baroda a 'cleaner and greener city'.

In its effort to address the issue of pollution, SOCLEEN draws upon a multi-pronged strategy like Greenery promotion, Traffic planning, Disaster management, Fighting pollution, and Prevention of hazardous diseases. Apart from these, a constant effort to sensitise the public on issues in environment management is made by creating proactive committees, organising workshops, seminars and competitions.

Greenery promotion is one of the major activities of SOCLEEN. Every year the forum loans a large number of tree guards to municipal corporation, housing societies, schools and the other institutions to promote tree planting.

The traffic management committee of SOCLEEN frequently interacts with the Police Department to address various issues in traffic control and management like maintenance of parking rules, checking of toxic exhausts etc. A Traffic Management Plan prepared by SOCLEEN for Vadodara Railway Station has been accepted by the concerned departments; similar such efforts are underway in other areas as well.

Due to the close proximity of the city to major chemical complexes that prove to be a potential danger, SOCLEEN has been campaigning for a need for better communication systems and improves technical and medical support systems to cope with any unmitigated disaster like the Bhopal gas tragedy.

In its attempt to control noise, air and water pollution, SOCLEEN interacts with a host of government agencies at various levels. Efforts made to draw the attention of the Collectorate to erring factories which pollute the environment has resulted in the government issuing strict warnings and taking punitive actions. Similar efforts are on to check hazardous exhaust emissions by vehicles, caused mainly due to lack of maintenance and adulteration of fuel.

Water pollution is another area where much attention has been devoted. To improve the quality of piped water supply, SOCLEEN has urged the municipal authorities to change the corroded pipes and to ensure that drainage pipes are not laid over water pipes. Effluence of toxic chemicals to catchment areas has been addressed by sensitising the industries concerned to the fact and also by supporting technological solutions like ion-exchange methods.

To promote environmental sensitivity and awareness among the younger generation, SOCLEEN has initiated many programmes and projects. A youth wing committee was formed in 1993 to mobilise young students in the crusade against pollution. The cleanest school in Baroda is given an award by SOCLEEN every year. Various programmes like painting, debates, quiz and poetry writing on environmental themes are organised to foster environmental awareness among children.

SOCLEEN can be contacted at:

SOCLEEN
c/o Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Science, M.S. University, Baroda-390 002, India.

The Catalyst Trust, Chennai

It's yet another example of citizens responding to challenges in governance. The Catalyst Trust based in Chennai (Madras) is an effort by a group of concerned citizens from all walks of life to bring about a qualitative change in the way government works by promoting norms of probity, propriety, accountability and transparency. The origin of this innovative forum can be traced to a meeting convened by Mr. R. Desikicher, Chairman of the Federation of Consumer Organisations - Tamil Nadu (FEDCOT) in July 1996 to organise a public forum which could develop a non-political Shadow Cabinet of experts from different walks of life in Tamil Nadu. The meeting resulted in the appointment of an Action Committee consisting of prominent citizens, and experts from different walks of life. This Committee, later evolved as The Catalyst Trust.

A Cabinet of Sevaks (workers) has been appointed by the Trust to monitor and suggest improvements to government policies and their implementation. A Citizens Assembly of about 120 members drawn from all districts of the State will help the sevaks by disseminating the message of the expert group to the public and also act as an important feedback mechanism to inform the Trust about field level happenings. Though the primary focus is on influencing government policy by interacting with the government directly, the Trust will also present its perceptions and suggestions to the opposition members in the legislature to ensure that its views are carried into the floors of the Assembly.

For further information, contact:

The Catalyst Trust,
115/2, Kamaraj Avenue,
Chennai - 600 020, India.
PAC UPDATE

The activities of PAC have considerably widened over the years; the broad mandate of the Centre’s activities today includes conducting Report Card Studies and research; providing active citizen action support; facilitating information dissemination and providing advisory support to the government. We would like to share some of the ongoing initiatives in this regard:

Research/Report Card Studies
- **Report Card Study on Slums in Mumbai**
  The study intends to provide an overall assessment of the availability, usage, and satisfaction of critical public services used by the urban slum population in Mumbai and also focuses on related issues like nature of stress, problem solving initiatives, hidden costs and options for citizens’ participation. The study, covering more than 1000 slum dwellers spread over 27 wards in Mumbai, is being supported by a broad-based forum of more than 40 NGOs in Mumbai. We hope to bring out more details on this in our next issue of the ‘Public Eye’.
  (Study coordinated by Prof. Suresh Balakrishnan / Dr. Sita Shekar)

- **A critical review of the Member of Parliament’s Local Area Development Scheme (MPLARDS)**
  MPLARDS was initiated in 1993 to enable an MP to identify and implement public developmental works in his/her constituency to the tune of Rs. 1 Crore (Rs. 10 million) per year. And, over the past three years, an estimated Rs. 1500 Crores (Rs. 15 billion) should have been deployed for development activities in India. However, not much is known about the scope and progress of this scheme. The study, framed against this backdrop, attempts a critical review of the Scheme in one sample district with a specific focus on the processes and mechanisms through which the Scheme operates, major issues and problems in implementing the Scheme and salient pointers for the future.
  (Study coordinated by K. Gopakumar / S. Manjunath)

- **Impact of Economic Liberalisation on the Small Sector**
  The study attempts to highlight the trickle-down effect of the liberalisation process with specific reference to the small industry sector. The feedback is expected to throw light on the impact of the intended reforms and also identify areas where further interventions are required.
  (Study coordinated by Prof. Suresh Balakrishnan/K. Gopakumar)

Citizen Action Support
- **Ongoing support to the Swabhiman Movement**
  The Swabhiman Movement in Bangalore has created a highly proactive citizen-state forum that looks into generating sustainable solutions to the city’s problems. PAC has been an active supporter and facilitator of this endeavour since its inception. In an effort to strengthen the institution building process, PAC commissioned an independent review on the Swabhiman movement. The review has highlighted core areas that require more attention and focus. An effort is being planned to share these perceptions with the core group of Swabhiman to help facilitate capacity building and process strengthening initiatives.
  (For further details on Swabhiman, contact Anjana Iyer / S. Manjunath)

- **Strengthening Neighbourhood Newspapers**
  The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of India passed in 1992 presents Neighbourhood Newspapers with an enormous potential to function as a bridge between the administration and community at the ward level. In this context, an effort is being made to study and establish the financial viability of this forum to encourage wider replication of the same in the city. Specific aspects of the study will include creating a database of existing neighbourhood newspapers in Bangalore, establishing a network of such forums in the city and designing a model feasibility report.
  (Study coordinated by S. Manjunath/K. Gopakumar)
Information Dissemination

- **Information on Essential Civic Services**
  
  Availability and accessibility to information is a recurrent problem confronting citizens in their interactions with public service providers. In order to break down this information barrier and promote greater transparency, PAC is supporting a venture that endeavours to collect and provide all essential details on service delivery and grievance redressal.

  (For further details, contact S. Manjunath)

Advisory Services

- **Assistance to UNDP for designing Report Cards on public services in Vietnam**
  
  The Quang Binh Pilot Project was conceived by the UNDP under the National Public Administration Reform Program for Vietnam, to improve the quality of services provided by the provincial agencies in Quang Binh province. The project strategy put emphasis on increasing public administration effectiveness through reforms whereby tangible improvements in service delivery would strengthen public support for reforms. PAC is helping the project through the monitoring component which provides three major elements of support for the project:
  
  - Prioritisation of public services where the project is to concentrate;
  - Design of a monitoring system which would enable the project authorities, at the provincial and national level, to assess the degree to which activities and expected impact are being achieved; and
  - Providing processes through which lessons can be drawn from this pilot-province experience for replication and adaptation under the National Public Administration Reform Program.

  The key element of this strategy is to invest in a comprehensive inception activity built around baseline surveys modelled on “Report Cards”, so as to ensure that the prioritisation of problems and selection of action areas reflect the felt needs of the citizens of the province.

- **Assisting BDA in its internal reforms**

  PAC is assisting the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), which was rated the worst by the citizens of Bangalore in the first Report Card study undertaken by PAC, to improve the quality of service delivery. As the first stage of this effort, a study on citizen's feedback on BDA’s services was conducted by PAC; the study provided significant insights on various dimensions of the agency’s functioning. Following this, a training module was organised for the staff as part of the agency’s internal reforms. Efforts are underway to bring about sustained systemic improvements through the introduction of information technology.

- **National Debate on Responsive Administration**

  The National Debate on responsive Administration has been initiated by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India, to reaffirm the government’s commitment to be responsive to the needs of the citizens and thereby enhance the confidence of the common man in the government. PAC was invited to assist the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in designing this debate. As an initial step, a Conference of Chief Secretaries of the States was organised in New Delhi on November 20, 1996 to discuss salient themes and frame strategic actions. This phase of the National Debate on Responsive Administration concluded with a Conference of Chief Ministers at New Delhi on May 24, 1997. The Conference deliberated on the major recommendations to improve the quality of service delivery, to improve the internal systems of administration and to strengthen the commitment of civil servants to the letter of the law. Most of the operational recommendations made for reform were accepted by at the Conference. A Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary for reviewing the implementation.

  (For further information on these programmes, contact Dr. Suresh Balakrishnan)
The Council-Manager Form of Government

The Council-Manager form is the system of local government that combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. This arrangement establishes a representative system where all power is concentrated in the elected council and where the council employs a professionally trained manager to oversee the delivery of public services. But how popular is this model? Check out the following:

- This has proved to be the most successful and popular model of local government in most communities across the United States.
- Nearly 2,500 cities in the United States operate under this plan.
- It is the single most popular form of government in cities over 10,000 in population.
- This form of government represents over 100 million citizens in the US.
- More than 75 per cent local governments adopt this plan each year.

In Council-Manager government, the council members are leaders and policy-makers elected to represent various segments of the community and to concentrate on policy issues that are responsive to citizens' needs. The manager is appointed by the council to carry out policy and ensure that the entire community is being served. If the manager is not responsive to the council's wishes, the council has the authority to terminate the manager at any point of time. In that sense, a manager's responsiveness is tested daily.

The duties of the manager include preparing a budget for the council's consideration; recruiting, hiring and supervising the government staff; serving as the council's chief adviser; and carrying out the council's policies. The council members and citizens count on the manager to provide complete and objective information, pros and cons of alternatives, and long term consequences.

A very positive observation on Council Manager communities has been that they facilitate a high level of citizen participation in local public service delivery processes by encouraging open communication between the citizens and their government. Examples range from visioning, in which citizens play a major role in determining the future of their community, to neighborhood service delivery, which involves residents through the development of citizen-government partnerships, to community oriented local government services. Further, local governments have found that overall costs have been reduced with competent management; savings come in the form of reduced operating costs, increased efficiency and productivity, improved revenue collection and effective use of technology.

For more information on The Council Manager Form of Government, please contact:

ICMA, 777 North Capitol Street,
N.E. Suite 500, Washington D. C. 20002-4201
202/289 - ICMA (4262).
Fax : 202/962 - 3500

Introducing....
Canada - ASEAN Governance Innovations Network (CAGIN) Programme

CAGIN is a four year Programme which attempts to facilitate and augment capacity building initiatives to govern by sharing knowledge and providing concrete support for improved governance practices. The programme brings together participants from Canada and ASEAN countries in three different types of activities:

- **Learning Events**, such as courses, seminars and conferences;
- **Pilot Projects**, where partnerships between government, citizens and /or business are used to address a development challenge through an innovative governance process;
- **Action Research**, which documents pilot project in a practical and accessible way, in order to facilitate adaptation and application in other settings.

The Programme strives to create a network of people and organisations with the knowledge and tools required to enhance the effectiveness of governance in their communities. CAGIN is managed by the Institute of Governance, and funded primarily by the Canadian International Development Agency.

For further information, please contact:
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FOLLOW UP

Tackling Corruption In India: The Follow Up!

Readers of Public Eye will recollect the efforts of PAC in addressing the issue of corruption in India. A major effort in this direction has been the publication of the book 'Corruption in India: Agenda for Action'. To carry this effort forward, PAC has been endeavoring to inform the public on the major proposals and strategies articulated in the publication. One such initiative was the organising of a symposium on 'Corruption: Agenda for Action' on May 3, 1997 at Bangalore. The key thrust of this effort was to share with a select gathering, PAC's efforts in designing an agenda to tackle the phenomenon of corruption in India and to stimulate an informed debate to fine tune the strategies for practical action. Presentations by an eminent panel consisting of Dr. Madhav Godbole, former Home Secretary, Dr. P.S.A. Sundaram, Additional Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India and Mr. Som Mittal, CEO, Digital India and Chairman, Confederation of Indian Industries set the paradigm for the discussions. The Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka, Mr. B.R. Prabhakara gave the introductory remarks.

There was a general consensus that corruption is rampant today in every walk of life and urgent measures were required to tackle the problem along the lines discussed in the book. In this regard, special emphasis was placed on civil service reforms, simplification of rules, right to information, citizen charters and transparency in all departments dealing with the public. Information technology was also seen as a very useful tool for introducing transparency, providing updated information and reducing corruption.

By creating awareness of the magnitude of corruption in various forums it is hoped that greater pressure would be put on the system to bring about sustainable systemic and behavioral changes.

Corruption
Who Will Bell the Cat?

Given the magnitude and spread of corruption in India, it is no wonder that the Vikram Sarabhai Foundation and the India International Centre chose to select this issue as the theme for the 1997 Vikram Sarabhai Memorial Lecture. We are pleased to inform our readers that this year's distinguished speaker was Dr. Samuel Paul, Chairman, PAC. The meeting was presided over by Mr. H.D. Shourie, a pioneer in public interest litigations and a leading consumer activist.

Copies of Dr. Paul's lecture titled 'Corruption: Who will bell the cat?' are available on request. For details, please see the section on PAC publications.

VIDEO

Whose Vote is it Anyway?

English, Colour, 16 minutes.

The film narrates an interesting and educative experiment on bringing in transparency in the electoral process through civil society initiatives. Both PAL and NTSC versions are available on request. Price (inclusive of mailing): Rs. 400/- or US$30 for PAL and US$50 for NTSC.

Please send payment through bank draft/cheque (add Rs. 10 for out station cheques) drawn in favour of Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore, to

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The nature, role and function of the Public Administration system in India are themes of perpetual debate. Of particular interest are the oft-quoted systemic flaws inherited as part of the colonial legacy. The state has often responded to this concern by appointing several Committees to suggest changes in the system. International Aid Agencies like the Ford Foundation provided enormous funds to bring in specialists and consultants to improve public administration in India. Scholarly efforts are also not lagging behind; a vast body of literature has been generated over the years, focussing on professionalising the administration and bringing about behavioural and attitudinal changes among administrators. However, most of these efforts failed to translate into effective implementation.

The contributions to the volume under review recognise the pitfalls in conceptualising administrative reforms within watertight compartments and attempts to locate administration within a broader socio-political and economic context. The essays combine policy perspectives with analyses of the implementation of development plans in India and of institutional performance. While each paper is a major contribution to its own area, read together the collection facilitates a clear understanding of the emerging concerns in public administration. The expositions cover a wide range of relevant issues including the state and development planning, the bureaucracy and the policy apparatus and the role of international agencies, panchayats, cooperatives and NGOs in meeting the needs of the people.

Private but Public: The Third Sector in Latin America by Rubem Cesar Fernandes. Published by CIVICUS in collaboration with Network Cultures. Rs. 150.

Latin America has been the breeding ground for many social movements and radical ideologies. The ramifications of these have been a major inspirational force behind many civil society initiatives across the globe, especially those falling under the ambit of non-profit or non-governmental sector. Connoted to as the Third Sector, these associations are increasingly being perceived as the cutting edges of development action and interventions. One could today visualise the Third Sector as an organised, independent and transformational entity powered by the voluntary dimension of human behaviour. 'Private but Public' is an honest and insightful examination of the existing and potential strengths of civil society in Latin America. Argued in a simple and lucid style with 'live' examples from the field, the book provokes a major rethinking on the character and context of NGO action.


This short monograph describes the India Indicators Programme, designed in the context of the United Nations Second Global Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in June 1996. Indicators is a new management tool developed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and the World Bank for assessing the current conditions in housing and urban infrastructure as well as the progress in social sectors. The word indicator means 'point' to a desirable outcome. Indicators are basically statistics, related to specific programmes and policy concerns and are used as pointers to the desirable choices from among policy options. In the context of urban complexities in developing countries and inadequate information and financial resource flow, indicators can be immensely useful for providing quick access to processed information. Indicators are highly cost-and-time effective multi purpose tools, that can be used to detect specific problem areas, monitor and evaluate policy programmes and also to examine issues of sustainability.

The India Indicators Programme was developed and extended across the country by Society for Development Studies (SDS), a national research and training organisation and an Indian NGO registered with UNCHS for Habitat II activities. The effort which profiled 11 cities across 46 key indicators was awarded the Habitat Indicators Award for Excellence. Innovative features of the India Programme included evolving city-specific and indicator-specific methodologies relating to city product, women headed households, informal employment, poverty line etc.
Improving Public Eye... The Feedback!

We had sought your views and insights on making Public Eye more focused and effective. Many of you were prompt in getting back to us with suggestions, comments and criticisms. We thank you for all your support, encouragement and creative inputs. We would like to share some of the salient suggestions and comments with our readers.

The relevance of Public Eye.....
- Quite useful. But focused only on urban issues.
- Effective in giving a macro-perspective of issues in governance critical to the ordinary citizen.
- A forum for exchanging information on citizen initiatives in different parts of the country through catalysing ideas for replication.
- Profiles useful information and workable ideas.
- A rare forum that addresses the aspect of improving governance in public institutions.
- Sensitises different groups to the need for a collective social responsibility.

Specific sections that are most interesting....
- Report Card Analysis and Research.
- Citizen initiatives Networks.
- Thematic Essay.
- Institutional profiles and Initiatives.
- Articles on corruption in India and Comparative studies on the functioning of public agencies.

New themes/sections to be added...
- An assessment of the impact of various initiatives/systemic changes/advocacy methods.
- More focus on linkages/partnerships and replication of good practices.
- Add rural issues; a Report Card on rural services.
- More information from other countries.
- Analysis of initiatives that did not succeed.
- Evaluation of agencies providing and maintaining critical infrastructure.

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Moving Communications has been registered as a not-for-profit Trust under the name of Communication for Development and Learning. It is our endeavor to work closely with development agencies, especially NGOs, to integrate communication more effectively into the development process. Our activities include:
- Research and design of media strategies
- Design and production of communication material
- Training of NGOs in communication skills
- Focus mainstream media in building awareness of development efforts
- Networking with other groups and individuals on issues of common concern.

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