While the much-hyped India-Pakistan Agra summit was progressing on a gut-wrenching roller coaster ride, a powerful and damaging reality-check made a quiet and unnoticed entry. The Human Development Report 2001, an annual release by the UNDP, brought back into focus a very worrying collage of poverty and deprivation in South Asia. The Report also raises the debate on the emancipatory potential of technology (see a critique on this on p.2). But coming back to HDR 2001, basic indicators show highly skewed regional profiles: South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa lag far behind other regions, with income and human poverty still high. The adult literacy rates in South Asia hover around 55% and is well below the developing country average of 73%. And the share of people living on less than $1 a day is a high 40% in South Asia, compared with 15% in East Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America. Forty eight percent of children below the age of five in South Asia are severely undernourished.

It’s against this bleak backdrop that the arms race in the region fuelled by historical distortions and religious fundamentalism simulate war scenarios that divert precious resources and inflict enormous human costs. As a student of economics, I remember my old professor highlight the finer nuances of developmental choices by depicting the Guns Vs Bread syndrome. We all rooted for bread and continue to do so. However, in the more nebulous real-world, political compulsions and historical forces combine to make Conventional Wisdom stand on its head. Nationalist jingoism and ostrich stances in Agra derailed what could have been a turning point for the social and economic quality of life in the sub-continent. What stand out in the debris are sentinels of extreme poverty and squalor accentuated by a history of hatred, follies and apathy. It’s time Atlas shrugged!

This issue of Public Eye attempts to piece together some interesting patterns. We commence by taking a dispassionate look at the potential of technology to wipe out all economic and social evils. PAC’s initial work on urban local body election in Bangalore has found new champions in smaller and diverse settings. We look at how committed and highly innovative groups are preparing the ground for a much more participatory and transparent democratic process. In another example, this time on Report Cards, a partner organisation is conducting a report card study in Sehore – a small town in Madhya Pradesh. Though Citizen Charters are now actively pursued by many local governments in India, they are not finding effective translation mainly due to lack of awareness. In an interesting exercise, two organisations in Mumbai organised an innovative training programme for community groups to sensitise them to the concept of Citizen Charters and how to use the enshrined Rights for better access.

What do these pieces tell us? What larger picture are they beaming? For one, it shows how new ideas and concepts are finding rapid adaptations in local contexts. It also reveals the synergising power of information as it facilitates a blend of organised commitment with credible and doable strategies. More pieces are yet to be located. But the pattern gives hope. It’s time to create a new history in this geographically much maligned sub-continent.

Gopakumar

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THEME ESSAY

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2001
Magic Bullets or Bitter Pills
Dr. Gopakumar K
(The views expressed here are those of the author and
does not in any way reflect those of any organisation)

Technology is dominated by two types of
people: those who understand what they do
not manage, and those who manage what they
do not understand - Putt's Law

The demise of the Cold War and the rise of the
New World Order have radically altered the trajectory of development
thinking and praxis. More than an 'end
of history' (as optimistically ill-
conceptualised), the defining trend has
been an 'end of geography' (as
myopically overlooked). The last
decade of the 20th century has seen
phenomenal erosion of our traditional
notions on geography as a limiting
domain. Powered by the explosive
energy of technological innovations and
the integrative tsunami unleashed by globalisation,
the world is getting increasingly inter-meshed and
inter-linked. And 'technology', which hitherto hid in
the shadows of classified defence researches and
phantasmagoric space fantasies has suddenly
metamorphosed as the new Spartacus ready to
liberate the darker recesses in the globe from hunger,
poverty and deprivation.

However, the very same forces which are redefining
the contours of our economy, society, polity and
culture are creating an engrossing counter-debate
on the nature of this technology-driven and
globalisation-facilitated integration. Small, but
massively networked and inter-connected
movements all over the world are actively (and many
times violently) challenging the politics of the new
knowledge that is being created. If the WTO
summit in Seattle first revealed the intensity of the rumblings,
the very recent G-8 summit in Genoa points to an
extremely worrisome and dangerous future.

The latest Human Development Report (HDR 2001)
Attempts to plot these emergent discourses in the
larger canvas of development themes. The Report
titled 'Making new technologies work for
human development' makes a strong plea for
harnessing the potential of technology as a strategy
for economic and social development. In the
process of drawing a blue print for the future, the
Report highlights six critical themes:

I. The technology divide does not have to
follow the income divide. Throughout history,
technology has been a powerful tool for
human development and poverty reduction.

Contrary to the conventional pattern which
emphasised that economic growth stimulates
opportunities for useful innovations to be created
and diffused, new trends show that investments
in technology can equip people with better tools
and make them more productive and prosperous.
This switch over is possible due to a variety of
issues like:

a. Participation: The Internet, the wireless
telephone and other information and
communications technology dramatically open
up possibilities for people to participate in
decisions that affect their life.

b. Knowledge: Information and Communications
Technology (ICT) can provide rapid, low-cost
access to information about almost all areas
of human activity.

c. New Medicines: Bio-technological innovations
are fast producing cures for many endemic
diseases in the poorer countries.

d. New Crop Varieties: Genetic engineering an
transgenic seeds offer possible solutions to the
question of hunger and food shortage.

e. New Employment and Export Opportunities:
As electronic commerce breaks barriers of
distance and market information, developing
countries can reap enormous benefits.

II. The market is a powerful engine of
- technological progress- but it is not powerful
enough to create and diffuse the technologies
needed to eradicate poverty

Technology is created in response to market
pressures - not the needs of poor people, who
have little purchasing power. Research and
development, personnel and finance are concentrated in rich countries, led by global corporations and follows the global market demand dominated by high-income consumers. For instance, in 1998 global spending on health research was $70 billion, but just $300 million was dedicated to vaccines for HIV/AIDS and about $100 million to malaria research.

The global map of technological achievement in HDR 2001 shows inequalities between countries—not just in terms of innovation and access but also education and skills required to use technology effectively.

III. Developing countries may gain especially high rewards from new technologies, but they also face especially severe challenges in managing the risks.

The current debate in Europe and United States over genetically modified crops mostly ignores the concerns and needs of the developing world. Farming communities in developing countries stand to gain a lot from possibilities of transgenic seeds to boost up yield productivity, enhance nutritional value and a reduction in the need to spray pesticides. However, these technologies also pose greater risks. Technology-related problems are often the result of poor policies, inadequate regulation and lack of transparency. From that perspective, most developing countries are at a disadvantage because they lack the policies and institutions needed to manage the risks well.

IV. The technology revolution and globalisation are creating a network age—and that is changing how technology is created and diffused.

New horizontal networks across continents, with hubs from Silicon Valley (United States) to Sao Paulo to Gauteng (South Africa) to Bangalore, are connecting researchers and creating new and exciting opportunities to share information and apply global best-practices to local context. In 1995-97 scientists in the United States co-wrote articles with scientists from 173 other countries. Global corporations, often based in North America, Europe or Japan, now typically have research facilities in several countries and outsource production worldwide.

V. Even in the network age, domestic policy still matters. All countries, even the poorest, need to implement policies that encourage innovation, access and development of advanced skills.

The Report stresses the importance of creating flexible, competitive and dynamic economic environments. Alongside, human skills should expand. In the network age, concentration on primary education will not suffice—the advanced skills developed in secondary and tertiary schools are increasingly important.

VI. National policies will not be sufficient to compensate for global market failures. New international initiatives and the fair use of global rules are needed to channel new technologies towards the most urgent needs of the world’s poor people.

A major lesson highlighted by this Report is that at the global level it is policy, not charity, that will ultimately determine whether new technologies become a tool for human development. The broader challenge is to agree on ways to segment the global market so that key technology products can be sold at low cost in developing countries.

GETTING PAST THE RHETORIC

At the risk of being labelled as a ‘Luddite’ by the champions of technology, I would like to point out some disturbing trends that may very well temper the ongoing euphoria. For a start, the twin forces of technology and globalisation have accentuated the gap between the rich and poor nations. The technology revolution has added to the competitive gap which in turn has further deepened the development gap. What we need to understand is that ‘technology’ is not value-neutral and historical narratives show that commercial interests have propelled most technological applications. The resonance of this is heard quite powerfully today in the ongoing debates on Genetically Modified Crops, Transgenic seeds and patent rights. Also, tighter intellectual property rights raise the price of technology transfer and risk blocking developing countries out of the dynamic knowledge sector in areas like generic drugs. Added to this is the issue of bio-piracy facilitated by the new patent laws.
It is a suspicious case of profits before people. What then should be the future agenda? A tentative wishlist:

Knowledge gap widens the income divide. This is the hard truth that developing countries need to square up to. The priorities of cash strapped governments in the developing world should be to provide basic education to all, spread knowledge opportunities through foreign direct investment, and offer tax concessions and other incentives to the private sector to support training and advanced education.

It's not in the Genes! Food insecurity, as noted commentators have time and again argued, is a problem of distribution and not production. What is urgently needed is reducing price instability through correction of tariff distortions in developing markets and the creation of a strong international mechanism to prevent food supply from falling under monopolistic corporate control.

The New Mercantilists. Rich countries need to practice what they preach. Their insistence on free-trade only in services in which they are dominant, opposition to low tax centres that threaten their revenue raising powers, raising the bogey of labour and environmental standards to protect their industries at the expense of those in developing countries - all these point to a big-bully attitude and in turn, has contributed to the current polemics.

At the end of the day, it is the creation of strong institutions and the ambience of transparency and participation that has the potential to translate technological innovations to well meaning strategies to counter some of the crippling economic and social maladies. All hyperbole on the emancipatory potential of technology let loose like an unguided missile will remain as a Pentium powered fantasy which if played out, will only widen all existing chasms.

(The entire report can be downloaded from www.undp.org)

WIDE ANGLE

IT'S TIME TO ACT!!!

A Campaign to reform the political process

A major area of focus of the Public Affairs Centre (PAC) during the last five years has been in the realm of the electoral process. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 sought to decentralise municipal administration by entitling urban local self-government functional independence. PAC realised early on that this is an area where public opinion and pressure, provided it was organised & effective, could make a powerful impact on society and improve the quality of governance.

Against this backdrop, PAC has been trying to stimulate informed choices on the one hand and promote greater citizen's participation in the other. The "Choose the Right Councillor Programme (CRCP)" was the name given to PAC's endeavour to create transparency regarding the quality of candidates in elections, and was conducted for the elections to Bangalore City Corporation in 1996 and Lok Sabha in 1998 &1999. PAC has been active in running experimental campaigns to encourage and educate citizens on their duties to vote and make the electoral process more transparent and accountable.

PAC was spurred by the fact that candidates standing for public elections in India are not obligated to divulge information regarding them. PAC's first campaign called "Know Your Candidate" was thus conceived. Through efforts like the CRCP, the electoral process was to be made more transparent so that people can make an informed choice. A questionnaire prepared by PAC was used as a template by the NGOs who adapted it to their local conditions. The objective of this programme was to create awareness among voters about the candidates in the fray, their background, qualifications, experience and so on.

After this PAC devised a campaign on voter's education and motivation. It seemed that mere publishing of information was not enough to obliterate public apathy towards the entire voting process. People did not seem to believe that their voice counted for anything. PAC's response was to run an awareness campaign - "VOTE" to explain why voting is important.
In 1998, when the Electoral revisions came by, PAC identified another gap in the process. The fact remains that unless a citizen gets himself/herself registered on the electoral rolls, he/she is ineligible to vote. Verification of the voter’s list was the theme of the “Protect Your Voice, Your Vote” information campaign, which aimed at publicising the importance of the summary revisions.

**The Legal Loopholes**

Parallely, PAC set up an expert panel consisting of a retired civil servant, a former State Election Commissioner and a retired Law Secretary. The panel was requested to examine the laws and isolate areas where reforms could be made. Following this, PAC conducted field surveys to empirically substantiate the incongruities in the electoral process.

The review of the existing electoral laws revealed some of the glaring loopholes existing in the electoral system. To quote two major ones:

**Electoral Expenditure:**

The Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951 provides for regulation of election expense (Sec-76). Section 77 subsequently states that every candidate or his election agent must keep a separate and correct account of all the expenditure incurred or authorised between the date on which the candidate was nominated and the date of declaration of results.

Though there is an expenditure limit for both parliamentary and assembly elections, the candidates do not adhere to the expenditure norms. The lack of accountability would make candidates and political parties go out of their way to mobilise resources and use them for electoral gains.

It is useful to reiterate a major court intervention on this issue: ‘As the law stands in India, anybody including a smuggler, criminal or any other anti-social element may spend any amount over the election of any candidate in whom he is interested, and this is not deemed to be an expenditure’ (C. Narayanamswamy Vs CK Jaffer Sharief, 1994 - SUPP, sec.170). Despite these and similar observations and criticisms, the legislature has failed to enact any corrective measures.

**Electoral Rolls:**

At present there is no mandatory period stated for revision of the electoral rolls which is left at the discretion of Election Commission of India (ECI). The electoral rolls prepared for the parliamentary and assembly constituencies by the ECI are used for urban local bodies also. The study recommended the preparation and revision of rolls at different levels - local (corporation and district level administration), State (State Election Commission) and Central (ECI). Due to lack of awareness death of electors is not reported, hence their names are not deleted from the rolls. At present the qualifying date for inclusion is January 1, in view of this it is recommended to have 4 qualifying dates: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 of the Year.

As a follow up to this analytical exercise, four issues were identified where civil society could intervene:

![Electoral Rolls](https://example.com/electoral_rolls.png)

- **Electoral Rolls** - to make the electoral registration process simple and accessible to motivate and encourage voters.
- **Money and Muscle Power** - state funding of urban local bodies elections to curb the use of money and muscle power and have more accountability in this area.
- **Knowing the Candidates** - background information on the candidate should be published and he/she should have worked or held residence in the particular ward for a period of time before being eligible to stand for election.
- **Conduct of elections** - Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) should be used to ensure accurate figures, and election authorities should be allowed to arrest candidates violating election laws.

**Protect your VOICE, Protect your VOTE: Summary Revisions - Karnataka 2001**

PAC’s involvement in the campaign called “Its Time To Act”-2001, began when it initiated its campaign during the Summary Revision of Voter’s List for 2000-2001, held in November 2000 in Karnataka. PAC’s work in this regard complemented the efforts of the State Election Commission to prepare an accurate and complete voters’ list. The Summary Revision was announced from 2.11.2000 to
30.11.2000 during which the relevant forms were made available to public. The Election Commission made the process voter-friendly by bringing the system closer to people. PAC advertised the event through various media channels like newspapers (all major dailies), cable TV networks, vernacular magazines, emails, posters and flyers. One of the most effective interventions of PAC during this event was the setting up of Help lines to answer people’s queries. Volunteers were identified in 8 different towns and cities in Karnataka and were then supplied with all strategic information details on the summary revisions, important dates, locations etc. to help them run Help lines in these places. After the summary revisions, PAC decided to contact all those who had called the Bangalore help line, as a follow-up so that an analysis could be done. It was quite encouraging to note that 69% of the people who called the help line took further action.

Setting the Pace

Meanwhile, the first phase of urban local bodies elections for 148 civic bodies in Karnataka including 4 city corporations, 32 Municipal Councils, 76 Town Municipal Councils and 36 town Panchayats were announced to be held on the 3rd of May 2001. PAC took this opportunity to gear up for an information and communication campaign for voter awareness. This time PAC planned to expand its activities to other parts of Karnataka, as only scaling up of these activities would bring the desired changes in the electoral process.

With this intention, PAC created a network of interested groups in Mysore, Tumkur, Davanagere, Hassan, Shimoga, Bhadravathi, Doddaballapur, Challakere and Chickmagalur, where the campaign “Its Time to ACT” was conducted. Most of the campaigns were modelled on the Public Affairs Centre’s Kit on Urban Local Body Elections, which was produced as a guide to aid organisations interested in educating, sensitising and motivating people to vote, stressing on the fact that an informed public was an empowered one. The Kit contained information on various activities that a group could organise under voter’s education and motivation programme and different methods of organising the CRCP. Different types of media, largely television and various forms of print media were used in conducting the CRCP.

Learnings & Future Plans

A meet was organised by PAC on 15th July 2001, where representatives of NGO’s from the nine different cities who participated in the campaign “Its Time To Act”, where invited to share their experiences. The event facilitated an interesting exchange of experiences and ideas. Major feedback were:

- CRCP was organised in all the cities by the identified local groups. They were successful in interviewing candidates from major parties.
- First off the blocks pay rich dividends: In the town of Doddaballapur, the local partner hit the turf immediately on receiving PAC’s kit and they were able to cover all the candidates and bring out a special edition on civic elections in a local newspaper with all information and photographs of those in the fray.
- One of the groups participated in a phone-in programme on CABLE TV, to discuss on the quality of candidates.
- The groups carried out their information dissemination largely through the cable network and used print media like pamphlets, posters and banners and even announcements in auto rickshaws to create voter’s awareness.
- An array of slogans with strong messages was prepared to sensitise and motivate voters.
- Few groups organised press meets, attracting the presence of a large chunk of local & national newspapers.
- Some groups were able to organise a Candidate’s platform, the event was well attended and members of the public inquired candidates on their goals and priorities if elected.
- Local cable television networks aired PAC documentary, along with scrolling messages with information on voter awareness.

And miles to go...

PAC’s progress in the area of the electoral interventions has been mapped logically in a cause and effect manner, finally arriving at the present, “Its Time To Act” campaign. It builds on to PAC’s mandate of promoting actions informed by the power of knowledge. As for the immediate future, PAC is gearing up for the forthcoming civic elections in Bangalore. Watch this space for more on that!!

(For further information, please contact Ms. Poornima or Ms. Sheila Premkumar at PAC)
Global Problems, Local Solutions...

Voter apathy is an oft-quoted malice for the low intensity participation in civic elections. However, in Tumkur (a small city 60 kms north west of Bangalore), our partners adopted some interesting strategies to get the voters line up for polling!! To begin with, Voters in different wards were interviewed and 32 slogans were developed interspersed with the peoples’ feelings and these were aired on the local cable TV network. On the day of elections the group blocked all channels of the cable TV and showed only messages urging the voters to vote! This exercise was found to be effective as the group observed an increase in the voter’s turnout in polling stations around 11.00 O’clock, when the channels were switched off. Maximum polling occurred when the cable network was off between 11.00 am to 6.00pm. On a similar vein, on the day of the polls the members of the group answered all incoming phone-calls with a polite but firm query: “did you vote?” instead of saying “hello”. After the campaign, the group has become very popular and people have started approaching the group regarding problems in their wards. The group has started responding to these grievances by communicating the complaints they have received, to the concerned Corporator. Since the elections to municipal presidents are due and realising the strength of the cable TV as a channel of communication, the Corporators are responding to the public grievances effectively, without giving a chance to the group to record the problems and air them on the network. In this way the group has already started playing the role of a watch dog.

What do you do when you organise a ‘Meet the Candidates Programme’ and no candidate turns up? A nightmare for any committed group! However, members of the Bhadragathi Junior Chamber converted this crisis into an opportunity. They decided to directly approach the candidates and interview them on the spot, which was video recorded and aired on the local cable TV later. No running away from these juniors!

RESEARCH

CITIZENS’ REPORT CARD ON MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A PAC – SAMARTHAN Initiative in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh

Public Affairs Centre’s (PAC) Report Card studies of public services have highlighted the significance of citizen feedback for improving the information base on quality of public services and the use of Report Card findings as a basis of systematic dialogue between civil society and civic agencies on measures to improve quality of service. Most previous studies were carried out in large cities such as Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai. It was evident from the experiences in bigger cities that the task of facilitating citywide dialogue is a massive one which is usually beyond the scope of small civil society institutions. But this would not be the case in smaller towns and cities.

To explore this potential, PAC and Samarthan (See box) are testing out a model for applying Report Cards to smaller towns, with a pilot project in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh.

The ‘Citizens Report Card’ proposes to introduce and test out the concept of sustained citizens’ involvement and monitoring of public services in selected wards of Sehore.

Objectives

- Extend Report Card findings to directly support grassroots action
- Enhance and strengthen the capacity of Samarthan to address issues related to governance and service delivery
- Facilitate and promote citizen-state fora to improve and maintain quality of public services.

Methodology

A multi-pronged methodology is envisaged, which involve active mobilisation and awareness building efforts, creation of a scientific and credible database, designing an effective and simple system of monitoring the infrastructure, and creation of mechanisms for effective interfaces between service providers and citizens.
The specific stages of the exercise include:

◆ **Mobilisation & Awareness Building.**

Preliminary meetings with resident groups, service providers and elected political representatives will be held wherein local issues on public services would be discussed and the objectives of the proposed programme will be discussed. Strategies and options to follow up on the findings will be explored and an Action Plan formulated with ‘sign-posts’ detailing list of tasks and roles.

◆ **Creating a Database & Designing Monitoring Systems**

A Report Card Study will be conducted by Samarthan with the assistance of PAC in selected wards to chart out how different agencies/services are rated by the community and also to highlight critical qualitative and quantitative aspects of services. This database will be augmented by Participatory Appraisal based problem assessments to vividly explore the nuances of dissatisfaction and highlight stress areas.

A simple system of monthly audit of the infrastructure will also be carried out to observe and monitor select aspects of public services. Data collection will be carried out by investigators from Sehore recruited by Samarthan, who will be trained by resource persons from PAC and Samarthan. Data compilation and analysis will be carried out by Samarthan.

◆ **Creating Citizen-State Interfaces**

Meetings between the resident groups and the service providers will be held to discuss the results from surveys and monthly monitoring interventions. These meetings will serve to identify mechanisms related to:

a. issues that the citizens and community needs to address internally

b. issues which the local service provider can address internally in the next three months

c. issues which the service provider and citizens need to take up with higher levels of the government

**Expected Outputs**

- Creation of a citizens database on public services;
- Empowering the community to use the database to demand better services and also to benchmark and monitor status over time;
- Explore innovative mechanisms and strategies to resolve problems related to civic service delivery at the ward level;
- Creating a forum wherein elected representatives, government officials and community organisations interact frequently to evolve collaborative strategies to find sustainable solutions to issues at the ward level;
- Enhance the capacity of Samarthan to effectively address issues related to public services delivery.

*(For further information, please contact Dr. Sita Sekhar, Senior Research Advisor, PAC.)*

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**Samarthan**

Samarthan – Centre for Development Support was founded in August 1995 and registered in April 1996. It is a support organisation based in Madhya Pradesh, working with a number of voluntary groups, development agencies as well as the government on various developmental issues. Samarthan is one of the members of the National Collaborative Regional Support Organisations (NCROs), a network covering eight states of the country. Samarthan aims at supporting voluntary efforts and strengthen the capacities of CBOs/NGOs in programme management and organisational management areas.

*For further information, contact:
SAMARTHAN - Centre for Development Support,
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Bhopal – 462016,
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Email: samarth@bom6.vsnl.net.in*
**NETWORKING**

**TRAINING PROGRAMME ON CIVIC LEADERSHIP**

The need of communities to access and use basic amenities, which are provided by the Municipal Corporation in the city, is quite critical. However lack of awareness about the structure and functioning of the municipality, coupled with the apathetic attitude of the service providers towards poor communities, very often prevents the urban poor from accessing essential services. Keeping this critical background in mind, PRAJA and YUVA – two Mumbai-based NGOs, conceived the need for a capacity building program on the Citizen’s Charter of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation in selected communities in Mumbai. With technical and resource support from the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), a training schedule was designed for members of community-based organisations in order to empower them on issues of civic rights and to provide the necessary information required to access basic services.

The programme, called Nagari Nethrutva or civic leadership, aimed at providing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the municipality from broad policy issues to the specifics of implementation. The goal of the training design was to build the understanding and skills of the participants in relation to:

- **Knowledge**: Information about various departments and functions of the Municipal Corporation.
- **Skills**: Exploring components of interaction and negotiation with the Municipal Corporation and developing the requisite skills in order to achieve this.
- **Attitudes**: Identifying assumptions, conditioning in interaction with the Municipal Corporation, dealing with obstacles to effective and proactive behaviour.
- **Perspective**: Broader understanding of issues within the framework of social equity, environmental harmony, gender justice, personal and collective integrity and communal harmony.

Towards meeting the above goal, each session of the workshop was designed to contain:

a) A general orientation to a Municipal Corporation service or department
b) Technical issues and budget information on the department
c) Exploring and understanding common issues and problem areas associated with the department and developing strategies for intervention.

The program was spread across five days and involved representatives of ten community-based organisations (CBOs) from six wards in the Western Suburbs of Mumbai. Eighty per cent of the participants were women.

**LESSONS LEARNT**

The Civic Leadership or “Nagari Nethrutva” program was evaluated by the participants and the convening organisations as having served the following important purposes:

- It has accomplished an orientation to the concept and instrumentality of a ‘citizen’s charter’ of municipal services
- It has served as a platform for raising several critical issues in relation to how poor communities experience and receive the essential services provided by the Municipal Corporation.
- It has highlighted the need for and directions for further capacity building among the poor to access basic amenities as provided for in the Citizen’s Charter, which opens a new channel of negotiation for communities to gain standardised services which could significantly enhance the quality of their lives.

The next phase of community training on civic leadership is planned to coincide with the campaign of the Municipal Corporation on the Citizen’s Charter. The campaign focuses on the use of mass media to generate awareness about the Charter and the training programs seek to complement this awareness drive with a series of group discussions and presentations on the ways in which to use the Citizen’s Charter to access basic services. In order that these sessions may be easily replicated, PRAJA and YUVA are working towards the creation of a film and poster based training material on the “right to and the right way to complain” as the first step in getting people to see the Charter as a legitimate route for requests and redressal on civic amenities.

(For further information, please contact: Ms. Berna Lyca John at Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), 53/2, Nare Park Municipal School, Parel, Mumbai – 400012.
Email: yuva@vsnl.com)
PROFILE

URBAN SERVICES ENVIRONMENTAL RATING SYSTEM (USERS)

Rapid urbanisation has brought in its wake new challenges for the municipal bodies in India. Coupled with this is the increased public scrutiny on the delivery and maintenance of public services. Are Indian municipal bodies following the best practices in delivering these services? What could they learn from and share experiences with the best performing municipalities worldwide that face similar challenges? What are the impacts of these services on the urban environment? How does one gauge when and how does a service improve? To find answers to these and similar questions, the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) has launched an interesting initiative called USERS – Urban Environmental Rating System. The project seeks to measure, through a set of performance indicators that are benchmarked against set targets, how well a municipal body delivers its public services. The municipalities of Delhi and Kanpur have been identified as pilot areas.

The central idea behind performance measurement is to identify gaps in information, weaknesses related to infrastructure skills, budgetary constraints, and ways and means of strengthening the municipal services. These measures also enable a municipality to compare its services with those of other municipalities, both within the country and abroad.

A key feature of this exercise will be the active involvement of various stakeholders: policymakers, advisory bodies, the bureaucracy, communities, resident associations, NGOs, think-tanks, industry, media and others. It is expected that the feedback from communities, who are beneficiaries of the municipal services, and their satisfaction levels will form an integral part of the indicators to be used for measuring the performance of the municipal bodies.

(For more information on USERS, contact: Dr. Sujata Gupta, Dean, Policy Analysis Division, Tata Energy Research Institute, Habitat Place, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003. Email: sujatag@teri.res.in)

New Release from PAC!

‘ABC of Voting: A guide for voter participation in Indian elections’.

Citizen participation is essential to make the electoral system more representative, fair, transparent and free. Instead, with each passing election, the educated voter, the law-abiding citizens have become indifferent, apathetic and distant from the electoral process. The most important objective of the guide is to provide the voter with accurate, timely information regarding the electoral process and aid in trouble shooting. Written in a reader-friendly language, the guide is in a Frequently Asked Questions format and covers the ambit of Assembly, Parliamentary, and Urban Local Body Elections.

Key themes addressed include:

What you should do to be an informed voter? The questions range from issues regarding enrolment of a voter in more than one place to transfer of registration.

How do you exercise your vote? Questions relating to voter ID cards, use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and so on are addressed in this part.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism - How to be a responsible and alert voter?

This section throws light on the steps that need to be taken when a person is ineligible, or when underage persons are registered, or if voters are registered at multiple places and also when a person’s name does not appear on the voter’s list even after submission of application.

This part educates a voter about tackling issues like staff misbehaviour, bribe paid to the voter, instances of booth capturing. It also includes information related to filing an election petition in High Court.

The annexure gives meanings of key legal terms, a list of NGOs working in the electoral arena, electoral offences and electoral forms.
CPI 2001: THE HALL OF FAME.... AND SHAME

This year’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI), published by Transparency International—the world’s leading non-governmental organisation fighting corruption, ranks 91 countries. Some of the richest countries in the world - Finland, Denmark, New Zealand, Iceland, Singapore and Sweden - scored 9 or higher out of a clean score of 10 in the new CPI, indicating very low levels of perceived corruption. But 55 countries - many of which are among the world’s poorest - scored less than 5, suggesting high levels of perceived corruption in government and public administration. Countries with a score of 2 or less are Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Cameroon, Kenya, Indonesia, Uganda, Nigeria and Bangladesh. The CPI, which TI first launched in 1995, is a poll of polls, this year drawing on 14 surveys from seven independent institutions. The surveys reflect the perceptions of business people, academics and country analysts. The surveys were undertaken over the past three years and no country has been included in the CPI without results from a minimum of three surveys. The CPI also registers very high levels of perceived corruption in the countries in transition, in particular the former Soviet Union. Scores of 3.0 or less were recorded in Romania, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

Some profiles are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2001 CPI Score</th>
<th>Number of Surveys used</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>71</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:

2001 CPI Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people, academics and risk analysts, and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt).

Surveys Used refers to the number of surveys that assessed a country’s performance. A total of 14 surveys were used, and at least three surveys were required for a country to be included in the CPI.

Standard Deviation indicates differences in the values of the sources: the greater the standard deviation, the greater the differences of perceptions of a country among the sources.

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