In Greek mythology, Atlas was a heroic warrior who decided to challenge the gods of Mount Olympus in battle. He was defeated and, as his punishment, forced to carry the weight of the whole world around on his shoulders forever. Since then, Atlas shrugs occasionally.

The massive Tsunami (the Japanese meaning is a seemingly mild “harbour wave”) that unleashed its fury and power on unsuspecting millions on December 26, 2004 is by now seen as one of the worst ever natural disaster. In cold statistical terms, the death toll could well cross the 300,000 mark. The cause: a 6.2-magnitude earthquake over the central part of Sulawesi island, about 10 miles southwest of the city of Palu in Indonesia. And, as the debris is being cleared and broken lives are slowly healing, uncomfortable questions arise: It took between 90 and 150 minutes after the quake for the Tsunami to hit the coastlines — why was there no warning? Ignorance or complacency? Apathy or lack of resources? The answers are lost in the numbing imageries of loss, desolation and despair. On a brighter note, disasters of this magnitude often showcase tales of courage, bonding and empathy. The spontaneous surge of help and assistance from near and far, the enormous aid for rehabilitating and rebuilding lives that has been raised globally and the collective spirit of solidarity that, if only for a moment, cut across the scarred mindscapes of hatred and animosity flash a beacon of hope for a new future. That the ravaging waves did not discriminate between the tourists in beach-resorts and the impoverished communities living in the margins, underscores an equalizing vulnerability of seemingly divided socio-economic enclaves. Hopefully, this sense of collective shock and loss would stimulate governments in the region to rekindle the spirit of regional partnerships and bury the hatchet on age-old fears of cooperation and jingoistic chest-thumping. When Atlas shrugs, it signals more than tectonic shifts. It reminds us of the collective responsibilities and more, important not to buckle under the weight of a crisis.

As Public Affairs Centre gears up for the second decade of operations, an invigorating challenge is spreading the governance narratives to smaller towns and rural areas. Most of the practical approaches and initiatives on good governance have unfortunately been space warped in large cities and metropolises. The time has come to amplify and expand these resonances to smaller locales and rural contexts, where the challenges are myriad and the responses need to be more creative. PAC’s partnerships with like minded institutions in various states in India is a step in this direction; Our research report on the recent release of the Citizen Report Card in Bhubaneswar and the forays into the new terrains of electoral transparency and probity in institutions of rural self-governance are good cases in point. This issue of the Public Eye also showcases an interesting reform initiative in Bangalore involving health care systems for urban poor women. Though the larger war is still to be won, initial pointers give much reason to cheer about.

We also debate the question of social capital in pluralistic societies. Our theme essay explores some critical thoughts on the validity of the major conceptual contributions in social theory in the Indian context. We believe that a vigorous interrogation and reflection of emergent ideas and praxis that emanate from the North is necessary to make them relevant for the Global South. And forums like Public Eye should provide a fertile terrain for such discussions and contestations.

So, how do one bid farewell to a tempestuous year and usher in a new one? An evocative hymn come to mind:

"And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!"

- Gopakumar Thampi
RESEARCH

Setting A Benchmark- How Public Services measure up in Bhubaneswar

The Citizen Report Card on Public Services in Bhubaneswar was released on November 22, 2004 in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Orissa. Inspired by the decade long experience of Public Affairs Centre (PAC) in carrying out Citizen Report Cards in various cities, states and sectors in India, the Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), a Bhubaneswar-based Civil Society Organisation (CSO) working on tribal welfare and community development carried out a pioneering citizen feedback survey on public services in Bhubaneswar. PAC provided advisory support to the research wing of CYSD at various stages such as sampling, designing the questionnaire and during fieldwork.

What was the focus of the study?

The study primarily focused on three key urban services, i.e., drinking water, waste management and power. It also collected feedback from the respondents on a number of general services, such as roads, streetlights, ration shops, police, government primary schools, state-run hospitals and anganwadis in due course of the survey. The study was based on the response of 1552 sample households comprising 634 respondents from the city slums and 918 from general localities.

What was the purpose of the study?

The study proposed to assess the state of major public services as perceived by the users. The aim was to create public awareness, expand outreach to benefit the poor and persuade the service agencies to improve the quality of public services in the city. It further intends to create benchmarks for future comparison.

What did the study reveal?

Carried out in both slum and non-slum areas in 47 wards of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), the study found out that the satisfaction levels of the respondents were quite low for all services probed, barring electricity. The users also expressed their unhappiness on the inefficiency of these public agencies when it comes to solving specific problems.

Some interesting pointers that emerged from this study are narrated below:

Satisfaction with the quality of public services in Bhubaneswar:

The level of satisfaction was found to be the highest with services such as primary schools and hospitals. Primary schools excelled with a complete satisfaction of 74% from non-slum and 70% from slum respondents, followed by Public hospitals, where complete satisfaction level was reported to be high, with 74% rating from non-slums and 64% from the slum dwellers. Similarly, access was found to be high in services such as primary school (95%), streetlight (93%), metal road (79%) and ration shop (55%) in non-slum areas. Most accessible services in slum areas include ration shop (71%), Anganwadis (58%) and streetlight (55%) and the least accessible service reported was the public toilet (2%).

Problem incidence was found higher in slum areas in almost all services as compared to the non-slum areas. The major problems found both in non-slum and slum areas include: lack of maintenance in services of road and streetlight, bribery in case of police service and lack of quality in case of ration shop, primary schools and hospitals. Respondents also made more than three visits to various agencies in connection with several services from both slum and non-slum areas. Corruption was found to be high in services such as hospital and police both in non-slum and slum areas. Agencies that mostly demanded bribes include ration shops, police and hospitals. Another interesting finding was that satisfaction with the behaviour of staff in almost all agencies was low both in non-slum and slum areas.

Findings on specific services:

✓ Drinking Water
✓ Waste Management
✓ Electricity
Drinking water: overall satisfaction with drinking water was found to be quite low, with a complete satisfaction level of only 11% from slum household and 39% from non-slum household. Most used source of drinking water was tap at home (63%) in non-slum areas and tube well (50%) in slum areas. Problem incidence was found to be high, and the resolution low both in slum and non-slum areas. Inadequate supply of water was reported to be the most acute problem both in non-slum and slum areas followed by frequent breakdown of services. Level of satisfaction was also low in case of specific problems compared to routine work in non-slum areas whereas in the slum areas it was just the opposite. It should be mentioned that a higher proportion of residents in the slums pay bribes than those of non-slum areas. However the level of dissatisfaction with water service remains considerably high in slum areas as compared to the non-slum areas. (See chart below)

![Chart showing level of satisfaction with drinking water](image)

Level of Satisfaction with the Quality of drinking water (Non-Slum & Slum)

Waste management: Irregular cleaning of garbage and overflowing of waste due to lack of proper drainage system were said to be the common problems encountered by the respondents. In the non-slum areas only 18% of the respondents were completely satisfied with garbage clearance and 12% with the drainage. It was worse in the slum areas, where only 1% expressed complete satisfaction with drains and 16% on garbage. Irregular garbage clearance was experienced by a whopping 64 percent, whereas only in 9 percent cases the problem has been solved. Front/back of house is mostly used for disposal of garbage both in non-slum and slum areas. Use of the designated place for disposal of garbage is quite low both in non-slum and slum areas.

Drainage system was found to be poor in most areas. Open drains pose a threat as residents complain of foul smell, mosquito problem and overflowing of drain water on the roads. Nearly 73 percent respondents of the slum household encountered these problems, which were rarely addressed by the civic authorities. Wastewater mostly flows into the BMC drain in non-slum areas whereas the same overflows to the road or to the back of the residence in slum areas. Irregular clearance and foul smell in case of garbage and overflow of wastewater on road, mosquito problem in case of drainage are the major problems both in non-slum and slum areas. Garbage was reported to be cleared mostly once in a week whereas drains were cleaned occasionally both in non-slum and slum areas.

Problem incidences continue to be high both in non-slum and slum areas. The level of satisfaction was found to be high for routine work compared to interaction related to specific problem both in non-slum and slum areas. Overall satisfaction with quality of services is substantially low in waste management both in non-slum and slum areas as can be seen from the chart below.

Electricity: The power sector got a fairly positive rating by the users with a complete satisfaction of 67% by the general households and 54% from the slum areas. However, voltage fluctuation is the major problem encountered by 39 percent of respondents from the general household and 30 percent of the respondents from the slum household. Further getting the service providers to address maintenance issues was a taxing job as complained by the users. Interestingly, problem resolution was found to be good in non-slum areas compared to slum areas.

January 2005
Problem resolution by The Central Electricity Supply Company (CESCO) is high compared to other agencies, though delay in getting connections was also reported. However, the overall satisfaction with quality of services is high both in non-slum and slum areas as compared to water and waste management.

(See chart below)

![Chart showing level of satisfaction with the quality of electricity in non-slum and slum areas.]

**Level of Satisfaction with the Quality of Electricity (Non-Slum & Slum)**

**Conclusion**

The Citizen Report Card on Bhubaneswar points to an urgent need to improve basic services. Very clearly, low responsiveness, poor behaviour and high level of corruption emerge as areas of concern. Furthermore, the feedback from poorer sections of the city calls for service-providers to expand their outreach to the poor by focusing their attention on the slum areas, which are trailing behind in terms of accessibility and quality.

The release of the Citizen Report Card was followed by a function, attended by the former Chief Secretary S.B. Misra, former OERC Chairman D.K. Roy, President of Confederation of Citizen’s Association A.N. Tiwari, former Chief Secretary of Karnataka and PAC Director Dr. A. Ravindra, Senior Research Officer, PAC, Dr. Sita Sekhar and CYSD Member Secretary, Jagadananda.

Mr. Jagadananda, CYSD Member Secretary stated that this pioneering initiative in Bhubaneswar which draws heavily on the approach of PAC in benchmarking public services in Bangalore and stimulating reforms, should definitely usher a positive change among the service-providers in the city.

(For further information on the study, please contact Dr. Sita Sekhar, Senior Research Officer, at PAC.)

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**THEME ESSAY**

**Social Capital & Collective Action: Some Critical Reflections**

*Avinash Clarke*

Social capital theory dates back around eighty years, although many of the conceptions and assumptions that the theory incorporates date back many centuries, to the superintendent of a school in West Virginia named Lyda J Hanifan who explicated the importance of community participation in enhancing school performances. The theory was later popularised in the 1980's by James Coleman, first, and later by Robert Putnam. Coleman conceived of social capital as a morally neutral and context-dependent concept which was a feature of social relations rather than individuals, while Putnam maintained that social capital was specific to individuals and focused on the associational life which permitted civic engagement and fostered a civic spirit. At a basic level, social capital can be defined as the norms and networks that allow people to act collectively; the common values and formal and informal associations through which we interact with each other and cooperatively act. Correspondingly, there are two primary forms of social capital: structural social capital and cognitive social capital. Structural social capital refers to relatively objective and outwardly observable social structures, including networks, associations and institutions, and the rules and procedures they embody. Examples of structural social capital include tenant committees, debate clubs and sports teams. Cognitive social capital is more subjective and intangible; encompassing shared norms, common values, trust, reciprocity and a collective outlook towards the larger world. Both these forms of social capital are highly

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1 Avinash Clarke completed a six-month internship with the Public Affairs Centre. Avinash graduated from the University of Sydney with a major in Social Anthropology. This short essay is adapted from a major work in progress on exploring the applicability of social capital theories in the Indian context.
interpenetrative, neither is mutually exclusive nor inclusive of the other.

In general, social capital is a neutral concept, which has the potential to instigate both beneficial and detrimental consequence to the quality and degree of our democracy. The positive properties of social capital and the ability of accumulated social capital to inclusively contribute to the public good can often be balanced by its negative aspects and its faculty to privilege one group while, concurrently, disadvantaging another. A common example of the clear negative potential of social capital is the Rwandan genocide. The effectual associations, and consequently effective communication, among the Hutus allowed for one of the most efficiently brutal massacres the world has known; within one hundred days, renegade soldiers and teenagers wielding peshistes, aided by ordinary men and women, murdered 800,000 Tutsis and leading Hutu moderates. Additionally, many of the perpetrators of these murders were convinced that they were carrying out their civil duty (BBC 2004). Here, an accumulation of social capital not only worked in direct opposition to the public good, but it assisted in the elimination of different publics and the destruction of the “civil” in society.

Does social concept theory have the scope and depth to help us understand collective action, especially within the Indian context, and the ways in which collective action can inclusively benefit society? The immense linguistic, religious, ethnic, caste and class variation of the Indian subcontinent usually seems to defy any kind of generalization. It can be said that social capital theory does make some inroads to the understanding of the ways in which formal and informal networks affects the composition, intent and operation of collective action, including insights from the network, institutional and synergy perspectives. However, conversely, two major shortfalls of the theory, which severely limit the dynamism and comprehensiveness of social capital, include its failure to consider the elusiveness, fluidity and context-based nature of associations and shared norms and the underlying power configurations that significantly effect intra and inter group relations, although the bonding and bridging social capital dynamic does provide some insight into the perpetuation of power-holding groups and the means by which they withhold power from other groups.

One of the main associational distinctions which social capital purports, also partially aiding us in distinguishing comprehensively beneficial links from those with the potential for intolerance, is the distinction between the kinds of social capital which binds members of a group together, known as bonding capital, and, alternatively, the kind of social capital which links people of different social groups, known as bridging capital. The formation of bonding capital is inexorable as every individual is accepted in various identity groups at the moment of their birth, who in turn, nurture and shape their growth. However, weak inter-group and inter-community ties, such as those which cross religious, caste and gender boundaries, can allow horizontal ties to become the basis of the pursuit of narrow sectarian interests. Accordingly, the need for bridging capital is vital in order to foster an inclusive and multilateral form of collective action that does not exclude or harm any other groups. Especially within India, the need for bonding capital groups to from bridging associations is very important to combat the communalism and exclusion which characterizes the actions of many identity groups, providing scope for inter-religious, inter-ethnic, inter-caste and inter-class cooperation. Problematically, bridging capital is difficult to foster and the only potentially neutral, at least in theory, arbitrator is the state, which has a gloomy history of supporting one group at the, sometimes violent, expense of another; the disturbing pointers on the role played by the state during the Hindu-Muslim riots of Gujarat in 2002 is a good case in point.

Social Capital theory does make some attempt to distinguish and classify different types of associations, including bonding, bridging and linking social capital, but problems always arise when attempting to generalize about something which is highly contextual. Our ability to assess the positive, or negative, scope of associational life is largely dependent on the effectiveness with which we gauge and grasp the contexts where these associations function. However, the equation is further, significantly, complicated, especially in India, by the elusiveness and fluidity of identity groups. As stated by T. K. Oomen: “Indian society was formed through the process of accretion of immigrants and dislocation of original inhabitants.” This overwhelming historical inheritance has created a countless number of diverse identity groups, all under one political roof, each having different
conceptions of the past, ambitions for the present and visions of the future. Additionally, the boundaries of identity groups based on language, caste, class, ethnicity, sociality, religion, politics and economics is highly blurred and the criterion for belonging to a group is often inconsistent; they are all interwoven in such a complex way that the isolating or differentiating any specific group is very difficult, and sometimes unachievable. For example a Hindu and a Sikh who share the same language, values, customs, class and appearance may shun any notion of a common identity, while two Muslims from completely different ends of the country, speaking different languages, having very different customs and completely dissimilar physical features, may revel in their common heritage. Or, alternatively, an upper-caste Hindu may be more willing to associate with an upper-caste Christian than a lower-caste Hindu. This fluidity of identification can be equally fickle when applied to other qualifying criteria, including language and class, as every person prioritizes different criteria by which they construct their identity. This makes the identification of discrete groups an elusive process where it is difficult to establish what specific identity groups an individual feels associated out of those who's criteria of association he meets. Consequently, not only are we faced with the problem of the contextuality of relationality, but before this, we are also face with a fluidity of identity, making it enough to identify and isolate social groups before we try to investigate the networks in which they are a part. Unfortunately, when we are able to differentiate distinct groups, such as religious or caste groups, they possess a propensity to be exclusive and communal, pursuing their own goals at the expense of other groups.

An additional dilemma that arises from an interrogation of social capital theory is its failure to acknowledge the role decisive of power and power inequalities in associational life. No form of group relations is wholly neutral and there is some form of hierarchy manifest in almost every group relationship, especially religious majoritarianism, caste and class associations. Subsequently, most inter-group associations will inevitably be, at least partially, unegalitarian as society is perforated with all kinds of power equations, including significant inter-caste, inter-class, inter-religious and inter-gender inequalities, which will have a crucial effect on their interaction. As a result, the multilateralism and comprehensiveness which we hope will arise from bridging associations will still host a variety of operative power structures, which will unavoidably contradict and counteract the very mutuality and inclusiveness of the civil and political society which we seek to cultivate.

In light of the above assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of social capital theory, it can be considered that it is a useful way of examining collective action, at least partially, elucidating the types of relations which tend to facilitate multilateral collective action. The problems of elusiveness and contextuality are, largely, unavoidable due to the diversity of the Indian subcontinent and we must attempt to formulate hypotheses and theories that are valid within a feasibly maximum number of contexts. However, the ignorance of power relations and inequality remain a major impediment to the extensiveness and unassailability of the theory, thus an appraisal of power relations must be incoporated into social capital theory if it is to accurately gauge the impact of associations on the inclusive and egalitarian scope of collective action.

Padma Bhushan T. R. Satish Chandran
Former Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India, Tumkur Ramaiya Satish Chandran, has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan (the 2nd highest civilian award in India) for his illustrious work in the field of civil service. An ex-board member of Public Affairs Centre and a retired civil servant, Mr. Satish Chandran, was born in 1929 and educated in Bangalore and London. He holds degrees in physics from Mysore University, Electrical Technology from Indian Institute of Science and Economics from London School of Economics. He has had a distinguished career during which he has been the Governor of Goa in 1998. Prior to this, he was appointed as the Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka in 1983 and in June 1996 as the Principal Secretary to the then prime minister HD Deve Gowda. He has also been Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Change and later took over as the Chairman of the organisation in 1997-98. As a founder member of Public Affairs Centre, Mr. Satish Chandran played a major role in the growth and development of the institute. Public Eye wishes him all the best and congratulates him on this distinction.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Ushering New Hopes

This article explores how informed advocacy and reform interventions are attempting to stem the prevalence of corruption in the government-run maternity homes in Bangalore

Sita Sekhar, Sohini Bagchi & Cyril Vas

Take 1 - Bangalore, 1998: At age 19, Nagamma, a resident of Ejipura slum, had a heart-breaking experience to narrate. She went for a delivery to a government maternity home in Bangalore. The joy of giving birth to a baby soon turned into a nightmare. Recalled Nagamma, “Upon arrival in labour, a doctor refused to pay any attention till she was given money”. My husband in a panic mortgaged my jewellery and paid the doctor Rs.1000. The tragedy did not end here. Once the money was paid, the doctor conducted the delivery but it was too late. The baby had died!

Take 2 - Bangalore, 1999: Maria, a resident of Ambedkar Nagar slum in Bangalore had a distressing experience to narrate. “When I was admitted to the maternity home for delivery, my condition was critical, the doctor told my husband that we have to pay Rs. 500 for the overall expenses as some costly medicines were out of stock. We were disappointed but in no position to run away at that point of time. Even after delivery, I was taken aback by the nurse’s admonition. I was told that only if I pay a sum of Rs. 750, she would show me my baby. We knew we were cheated but did not know where to lodge a complaint,” moaned a helpless Maria.

People across the globe for its medical advances and multi-speciality corporate hospitals, turned a blind eye to its vulnerable inhabitants!

The deteriorating quality of health care for the urban poor prompted Public Affairs Centre (PAC) to carry out an investigation by applying the Report Card methodology in 1999. After carrying out a systematic survey on 500 patients and 70 hospital staff, the Centre found out some hard facts. The most distressing finding was the prevalence of corruption. Payments were demanded or expected by staff for almost all services. Maternity homes were also rated low in terms of cleanliness, as toilets and cabins were dirty. In addition, insufficient water and medicine made life difficult for the inmates. It was also reported that some maternity centres operated only for a few hours in the morning. Doctors and other medical staff posted there presumably found it more profitable to work in private facilities or in their own clinics during hospital hours! Furthermore, the impolite attitude of the staff including some doctors also posed alarming questions in the city maternity homes.

The dismal state of services in maternity homes called for urgent reforms in municipal health care facilities for the poor in Bangalore. In 2000, to stimulate the reform process, PAC assembled several experts and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on urban governance and the health sector such as Sumangali Sevashram, Maya and Community Health Centre to improve its health services to the poor. After several rounds of discussions and a workshop on improving healthcare services, several recommendations were made to BMP, including a pioneering idea to constitute a Board of Visitors to provide a more effective oversight mechanism to monitor the activities of the Maternity Homes. The CSOs also suggested several other reform measures like the creation of a Patients’ Charter with publicised standards of services offered, including timelines, fees, grievance mechanisms in case of problems, and patients’ rights and duties.

In addition to specific recommendations made to improve the quality of health services, PAC also
A Vision for the Future

S G Susheelamma, President, Sumangali Seva Ashram shares her concerns and views on existing health infrastructure for the urban poor and what reform measures need to be pursued.

To most Bengalureans, Sumangali Seva Ashram and its dynamic President S G Susheelamma needs no introduction. From a humble beginning in 1975, Sumangali Seva Ashram has grown into a large institution humming with a variety of activities and programs today. The Bangalore-based Non-Profit Organisation works on a wide range of programmes ranging from empowering women through education, vocational training, health programs, to spiritual and environmental awareness and entrepreneur development programs. In a recent interview with Public Eye, Ms. Susheelamma shares her views and suggestions on improving the state of maternity homes in the city.

Has there been any improvement in the quality of service at the BMP health centres in recent times?
Healthcare services have definitely improved to some extent. These days there are a number of link workers who render services to the poor who approach these health centers. Effective civil society intervention and the formation of the Board of Visitors are encouraging as there is now room for suggestions and improvement.

Has the maternity clinics improved over time?
I feel some improvement has taken place as far the courtesy and behaviour of staff is concerned. Corruption too has reduced compared to what it was even five years back.

So does corruption exist in certain pockets?
Corruption certainly exists at all levels and not been wiped out completely. It is in fact quite rampant in abortion and delivery cases. Female infanticide is another major problem, which needs a whole lot of attention.

What according to you are the key problems the maternity homes are facing at present?
Speed money is one area that needs proper attention. Money is asked for everything, from showing the newborn to the mother to giving

offered assistance to the management to help implement key reform suggestions. This offered a window of opportunity for the BMP to design and carry out agendas of reform. To cite a few examples: To improve cleanliness, the cleaning function was entrusted to private contractors. Similarly, washing of linen was outsourced. Help Desks were set up in select pilot clinics with the help of NGOs, and this guided the patients with respect to hospital procedures and services. User fees have been introduced so that poor women have a right to receive the services and the revenue from this source utilized by the same hospital. A Board of visitors comprising elected Councillors and some prominent citizens was constituted and it is playing a useful overseeing role. At present there are six Boards, each covering a few contiguous maternity homes and they report to the Commissioner or his Deputy. They further ensure that the resources and funds allocated to maternal care are not utilised for other purposes. A citizens’ charter has been created to provide information about available health services and trilingual boards put up in different centres, where information is now available in Kannada, Tamil and Hindi.

Interestingly, the second study on maternity homes, conducted as part of the Third Bangalore Report Card by PAC in 2003 captured the public endorsement of the reform measures by highlighting that the city maternity homes have come a long way in terms of cleanliness and hygiene. In 2003, among those admitted for delivery, 88% of respondents reported that drinking water was available and that toilets were clean and usable as against 46% in 1999. Further 95% reported that a bed was given immediately and that linen was changed when dirty as against 33% in 1999. More than 50% respondents reported on the existence of a complaint box and display of the list of services, 36% noticed the housekeeper duty chart, and 63% noticed the immunisation schedule. The 2003 report card study also suggested that the satisfaction levels of respondents escalated from 33 percent to a whopping 64 percent.

But the battle is far from over. “They still have a long way to go!” remarked Dr. P. Kumar, a gynaecologist associated with a Bangalore-based maternity home. “Speed money is still demanded”. The feeling is echoed by a Director of a reputed health and research centre, “Apparently, a lot of
injection, medicines etc, whereas these services are strictly free in these centres. Secondly, non-compliance of 24-hour service creates a lackadaisical attitude among the staff. Many a time there are reports of non-attendance and carelessness towards patients who are in acute pain during delivery. Often hospital staff are not available even during their duty hours to handle an emergency case such as a caesarean delivery. Another common problem is that the patients are forced to buy medicines and syringes and hand it over to the staff, who keep the new ones for their own use in the hospital and medicate the patient with the old ones. Unhygienic conditions of toilets and overcrowding of wards are other areas that need immediate attention.

What remedies would you suggest to solve the above-mentioned problems?

Whenever a patient comes across any kind of harassment, she should write to the Health Department and notify the same to the respective senior officials, stating her problem, the concerned clinic and their staff. The area counsellor should also be immediately informed about it. A representative from an NGO should be employed at the hospital with salary for constant supervision of the working of the hospital and its staff. Constant vigil and warnings should be given to the doctors, nurses and other staff both by NGO's and the counsellor for efficient working of the hospitals through evaluation meetings.

Awareness is required at two levels. Firstly, it is important to make the general public aware of free services. Secondly, rigorous training should be given to all hospital staff regarding behaviour and service efficiency and also on dealing with emergency situations. Help desks and free health camps as well as follow-up meeting with medical officials would surely make the existing condition better.

What initiatives have Sumangali Seva Ashrama taken to boost the services of maternity clinic?

We are running two health centers and managing a help-desk at the Yeshwanthpur maternity home. We have also link workers who render services at various health centers and to the communities in the surrounding areas. Moreover, a supervisor from Sumangali Seva Ashrama has been appointed as the member at the Central Board of BMP to offer suggestions and advice.

changes are taking place, but money is taken in such inconspicuous ways, that the patients are unable to understand as to what extent they have been victimised. Since lower middle-class women come to these centres, it is very easy to victimise them at two levels, firstly, in terms of their deprived socio-economic background and secondly, in terms of gender, as women are the vulnerable section”. Dr. Vijayalaxmi M, Health Officer, East Zone Maternity/Child Health and Family Welfare agrees that pockets of corruption exist. “The only way we can combat it is by voicing our opinion. However, due to fear patients hardly speak up. But, whenever we come across instances of corruption, we have taken serious action, but very few of such cases are reported. Presently we are bonding with different CSOs to strengthen the board of visitors, so that monitoring is done in a better way. We are open to all kinds of suggestions to combat corruption from different civic groups and media houses.” Interestingly, in one maternity home in the city, a patient was forced to pay a large sum for delivery. Her family immediately reported the incident to an NGO and together they brought the case to the notice of the higher authorities; the doctor was subsequently suspended from service.

An area of major concern is the practice of unregulated abortion and female infanticide, which is widely practiced in these maternity homes and go seriously underreported. As S G Susheelamma, President, Sumangali Sevashram remarked, “Unmarried mothers have to pay a heavier price for their ‘disgrace’. Consequently, doctors use this vulnerability as a platform to blackmail them off the record. Also instead of making patients aware of the fallacy of female infanticide, many doctors still indulge in this evil practice for the sake of money.”
The impolite attitude of the staff including some doctors in many maternity homes continues to be another area requiring urgent improvements. According to Dr. Kumar, “This is due to the lack of training facilities given to the health personnel. The need of the hour is to train them in areas of communication and soft skills. As far as the doctors are concerned, there is no systematic procedure to deal with physicians whose bad behaviour causes problems for patients.”

These problems notwithstanding, the experience from Bangalore shows that informed advocacy and strategic interventions from Civil Society go a long way to trigger an impetus for the reform of public institutions.

**ADVOCACY**

**Register to vote!**

Public Affairs Centre's interventions during the Special Summary revision of the Voters' list

*A scene from the street play ‘Satb Praje’, which was organised to motivate people in Bangalore to take part in the electoral process*

Public Affairs Centre has been supporting the efforts of the Election Commission of India and the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike to improve public awareness about electoral process and encourage more people to register on the voters' list. In the light of the recent special summary revision of the voter's list, PAC carried out a series of interventions:

**Wider dissemination of the information**

Information dissemination on various procedures of revision process to the public plays a key role in the success of the campaign. In the recently concluded Summary Revision, PAC carried out an information campaign through various media.

- **Help lines** – PAC had set up a helpline throughout the campaign period; the helpline received about 700 calls.

- **Radiocity 91 FM** – The leading radio station in the city made announcements about PAC's campaign for three weeks and interviewed PAC. The highlight, however, was a quiz on summary revisions; PAC's publication, “ABC of Voting: A Voter's guide” was presented to those who answered quiz wrongly!

- **Cable TV network** – Two local cable networks - ICE TV and CITI Cable aired messages and promos with regard to the summary revision throughout the campaign.

- **Street plays** – PAC adopted a new approach to educate and motivate citizens to participate in the summary revision. In association of 'Somepoorna', a group of talentted youngsters, PAC designed a street play targeted at youth, who generally abstain themselves from electoral processes. The play was performed at 6 locations in Bangalore. This 20 minutes play was received very well by the public.

- **Leaflets** – PAC distributed about 11,000 English and 8,000 Kannada leaflets describing the key information related to the registration process with the help of Resident Welfare Associations and interested groups.

- **Mass e-mails** - The information was also disseminated through emails to about 500 organizations. Later, when the campaign was extended till November 23, PAC focused on informing corporate sector about the on-line registration process through email. Various corporate houses were contacted and the message was sent to the bulletin boards of Infosys, HCL, Titan, Sholsha Renaissance, Intel, ABN Amro, Standard Chartered, Accenture, APC, GE-JFWTC, CISCO and others.
messages have hit about 10,000 screens to appeal to people to register conveniently online.

**Neighborhood newspapers:** About a dozen neighbourhood newspapers, which are actively disseminating local issues, were supplied with the information on Summary revision. These newspapers are widely circulated in their localities and the information on registration reached thousands of households across the city.

**Implementation**  
**Audit of the revision process**

PAC carried out an implementation audit of the revision process with the help of volunteers from Sunmitra, a group of young volunteers interested in working for a social cause. This exercise was carried out to help smooth running of the campaign. Feedback from the audit was furnished to the authorities to help the concerned authorities understand the ground realities and take action to set right the system.

During the audit, volunteers visited about 101 centres (includes polling booths, ARO offices and delivery post offices) on 9th and 10th of October (Special Campaign Dates) across 11 assembly constituencies in Bangalore and have recorded their observations spending about 20-30 minutes in each of these centres.

The study shows that the system is fairly in place. However, some of the lacunae existing at the field level were reported to the authorities for their action.

**An Open-house meeting**

PAC organized an openhouse meeting on 3rd of December, as a conclusion to its campaign - **Register to Vote**. This meeting was organized to make people aware of the various initiatives taken up, to know the results and to invite suggestions from the groups to improve the same further.

The meeting started with PAC’s presentation on the various programmes carried out by it during the revision process. Later, BMP briefed the gathering about the various initiatives undertaken to encourage voter registration; some novel programmes included:

- Big, catchy advertisements about the revision process with details, dates, places in all major newspapers through out the campaign period.
- Online Registration
- 61 Delivery Post Offices in BMP areas functioned as registration centres.
- Involving Resident Welfare Associations in the process of verification, supplying them with the required parts of the rolls, Forms, etc.
- House to house distribution of the information leaflets
- SMS messages urging voters to verify their names on the rolls were sent to the mobile telephone customers of Airtel, Spice and BSNL.
- Trying out the popular Bhoomi Kiosks (e-centres for land registration) in few taluks of Karnataka as nodes for registering as voters.
- Receipt of Claims and Objections in bulk by citizen groups and political parties at designated offices.
- Help Desks and Control rooms were set up to provide information to the citizens
- Surprise field visits by the authorities to ensure proper functioning of the registration centres.

As a result of these initiatives taken up by the authorities, this time a marked increase (three fold) in the number of registrations has been recorded. (For further details on the campaign, contact **Poornima D G** at PAC)

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
**2005**

Dear Readers,  
‘Public Eye’ wishes you all a great year ahead. We are glad to inform you that the publication has already made some strides in the field of good Governance. On this occasion we would like to thank you for nurturing and supporting this venture. As a matter of reflection we welcome your suggestions, critical comments and ideas to improve the quality of ‘Public Eye’.
**Roving Eye**

**How green is our city**

Garden city Bangalore, once known for its lush greenery, has witnessed a drastic change in the past decade due to destruction of its green cover. To create awareness among Bangaloreans on greening, school children led by Children's Movement for Civic Awareness (CMCA) compiled and presented a ‘Green Report Card’, which was based on findings of a public survey conducted by students on the awareness levels and opinions of Bangaloreans on the declining greenery in the City. The report was presented to a panel at the St. Joseph’s Indian High School auditorium on December 4, 2004. They included a green master plan, maintenance of records of avenue trees, reintroduction of the concept of tree wardens and tree courts and distribution of saplings free or at nominal prices.

The report is the product of hard work and involvement of 2,000 children studying in various schools and representing 50 civic clubs in the city at various levels. The CMCA conducted a workshop for 44 students selected from 19 schools and gave inputs on various aspects of the issues and the methodology to be followed. The presentation was based on field investigation covering 2,716 households. The objective of the survey was to draw the attention of key players such as the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP), the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to the task of keeping the city greener and to seek their views on the issue of declining greenery. A.N. Yellappa Reddy, noted environmentalist, spoke on the importance of environment and ecology.

**An act of active citizenship**

Active citizenship can improve the quality of life in a city. This has been proved time and again through the efforts of more than 2000 children from 50 schools in Bangalore, who are a part of the Children Movement for Civic Awareness (CMCA). Whether it is educating people on rainwater harvesting, planting trees, or cleaning the garbage, these civic club children have always taken the pledge to make the world a better place to live in by being active citizens. In the recent event CMCA-Jaantore, an annual civic club fair and exhibition, held on January 22, these children have put up stalls to display how active citizenship can improve urban life. The club’s activities, posters and reports on various campaigns in the neighbourhood and feedback from school principals were also displayed.

Special guest of honour Rahul Dravid, cricketer and brand ambassador, CMCA, who visited the stalls commented, “If we really followed the models these children presented, Bangalore would have been a much better place to live in.”

Special Commissioner, Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Subhash Chandra was also present at the event, which gave the children a chance to directly interact with government officials.

**Strengthening rural governance**

Thirty-seven civil society groups from different parts of Bidar rallied at a two-day Capacity building workshop organised by Public Affairs Centre, to discuss the various problems of underdevelopment the district has been enduring for a long time. A backward area in South Karnataka, Bidar has been plagued by poverty and subsequently many other social problems such as child labour, school dropouts, illiteracy and seasonal migration. Surprisingly the district has a number of NGOs like Sadhana, Vidyaniketan, and Jagruti, working for various social causes. Besides, there are other organisations, such as education societies, women and child welfare groups, horticulture and watershed development organisations working on achieving specific goals. The main problem is getting funds and much of the efforts go unheard. The groups, also comprising 15 women volunteers and college students, took active part in the workshop and shared their vision on strengthening the civil society in Bidar. The civil societies also emphasised on the use of Karnataka Right to Information (KRIA) as a major weapon to forward applications to various departments.
Guarding the guardians

Non-Governmental Organisations play an increasingly active role in today's political and social arena. According to the 2003 UNDP Human Development Report, nearly one-fifth of the world's 37,000 NGOs were formed in the 90s. Inevitably, the burgeoning growth of the 'watchdogs' on one hand and the rising visibility of stakes on the other, have time and again pinpointed crucial issues of their transparency and accountability. Furthermore, reported misconduct in advocacy, misuse of funds, gender discrimination and nepotism by leading NGOs have further brought to light the issue of accountability in this benign sector. Critics have even condemned that in the course of time NGOs have certainly empowered themselves with structures and buildings, while empowerment of the underprivileged has been rather limited.

Accountability, which basically means 'answerability', is an ambiguous concept for a field as diverse as that of the non-governmental sector. One school of thought defines accountability as the means by which individuals or organisations report to a recognised authority. Others go far to define the qualities of accountability as honesty and efficiency with which resources are used, as well as its impact and effectiveness of the work. According to noted social activist, Bern Meyer, Accountability requires that an NGO provide a professional account of its activities to another stake holding group or individual. It involves the expectation that the organisation will be willing to accept advice or criticism and to modify its practices in the light of that advice and criticism.

A key part of the process of tailoring the right accountability mechanism to the right stakeholders is recognition of context. The context in which NGOs operate is by no means uniform. For example, the right accountability mechanism for a human rights organisation working on labour rights in a European country with high levels of literacy is not likely to be appropriate for one working on labour rights with working children in South Asia where literacy rates are low, child labour remains non-unionised and where obvious activism may carry extreme personal risks. In other words, accountability procedures cannot be realistically expected to be uniform across a wide range of activities and it is also important that the organisation must also meet relevant needs in a changing environment.

The foremost step in any accountability process is therefore to map and analyse the stakeholders in a given situation. Even an initial mapping usually reveals certain conflicting interests between stakeholders. Nevertheless, this analysis becomes the key document with which to design the right accountability mechanisms, be it social audits, evaluations, external regulation, complaints procedures, membership systems, environmental impact assessments, specific stakeholder surveys and so on. For most NGOs, only a small part of this accountability is legally required but increasingly the bulk of it is more professionally, commercially, politically and morally demanded. Although the predominant metaphor of accountability is financial, the actual demands of NGO accountability today are much wider than a financial procedure that ensures that figures tally. Accountability is much more about reporting on relationships, intent, objectives, method and impact. As such, it deals with information, which is quantitative and qualitative, records facts and makes judgements. Accountability can also be achieved by working with other agencies and state apparatus for the better fulfillment of objectives at the grassroots level. This method will help achieve accountability in a greater scale. Furthermore, the need for better leadership in the public interest and for effective governance,
as well as quality to achieve excellence is paramount, if accountability can be transparent. The credibility is also needed to help create institutional arrangements for global governance in a shrinking and interdependent world.

The modern school of thought suggests that a very effective way to meet public expectations would be for NGOs to adopt their own voluntary Codes of Conduct. Codes of Conduct are increasingly widespread among commercial, professional and government organisations but, notwithstanding the tentative moves outlined above, very few NGOs have taken the initiative to establish their own Codes. The Code of Conduct establishing definite standards of ethical behaviour, governance, democratic working systems and financial transparency would enable NGOs to build their support bases and give them greater credibility and authority in their activities. Another way would be for governments to impose such Codes, as has happened in several African countries such as The Gambia, where an NGO Code of Conduct sets out standards of corporate governance and behaviour for local and international NGOs. In South Africa, a legislation was passed in 1998 to facilitate the establishment of non-profit organisations in the post-apartheid era. The legislation provides for a voluntary register of non-profit organisations, and sets out standards of governance, accountability and public access to information.

Finally, accountability mechanisms must be open for all to see. Any accountability system must recognise transparency as criterion for reserving certain information on occasion. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are coming under increasing pressure to improve their transparency and accountability. It is imperative to point out that, accountability is a very illusive terminology in NGO circles. The degree of probity and accountability cannot probably be pigeonholed into a definite criterion. The question of accountability in NGOs should be seen as an on-going process, which needs to be constantly re-examined. The extent to which accountability can be diagnosed depends on a multiplicity of factors such as nature of its activism, efficient management of finance and most importantly, a change in the attitude, wherein the activities should be solely nation-centric and not donor centric.

-- Sohini Bagchi

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If you strongly feel for an issue and have a solution for it, then you can e-mail us to pacindia@wanadoo.fr

### QUIZZICALLY SPEAKING

**Quiz on Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

Test your knowledge by taking the following quiz on the various working of Non Governmental organisation

Match each phrase/word in the left column with a phrase/word in the right column. There may be more than one correct match for each item.

1. Ad hoc committee  
2. Advisory committee  
3. Articles of Incorporation  
4. Bylaws  
5. Leader of NGO's  
6. Mission statement  
7. NGO's governing body  
8. NGO's chief operating Officer  
9. NGO stakeholders

| a. Board of directors |  
| b. Chairperson/President |  
| c. Members |  
| d. Composed of experts |  
| e. Description of an NGO's work/goal |  
| f. Executive committee |  
| g. Executive director |  
| h. Legal document |  
| i. Nominating committee |  
| j. Rules for conducting an NGO's affairs |  
| k. Group is terminated when its tasks are completed |  

**ANSWERS**
Investing in Development: A Practical Plan To Achieve The Millennium Development Goals

Produced by: Millennium Project (2005)

Investing in development is the final report of the UN Millennium Project. It presents the findings and recommendations of the project, which will be reported directly to the UN Secretary-General and the Administrator of the UNDP.

The report makes ten key recommendations:

- Developing country governments should adopt development strategies bold enough to meet the MDG targets for 2015. In order to meet this deadline, all countries should have these MDG (Millennium Development Goals)-based poverty reduction strategies in place by 2006. Existing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) should be aligned with the MDGs.

- MDG-based poverty reduction strategies should anchor the scaling up of public investments, capacity building, domestic resource mobilisation, and official development assistance. They should provide a framework for strengthening governance, promoting human rights, engaging civil society, and promoting the private sector.

- MDG-based poverty reduction strategies should be created and implemented by developing country governments in transparent and inclusive processes, working closely with civil society organisations, the domestic private sector, and international partners.

- International donors should identify at least a dozen ‘fast-track’ countries for a rapid scale-up of official development assistance (ODA) in 2005, recognising that many countries are already in a position for a massive scale-up on the basis of their good governance and absorptive capacity.

- Developed and developing countries should jointly launch, in 2005, a group of Quick Win actions to save and improve millions of lives and to promote economic growth (including for example free mass distribution of malaria bednets and the ending of user fees for primary schools and essential health services). They should also launch a massive effort to build expertise at the community level.

- Developing country governments should align national strategies with such regional initiatives as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and the Caribbean Community (and Common Market), and regional groups should receive increased donor support for regional projects.

- High-income countries should increase ODA from 0.25 percent of donor GNP in 2003 to around 0.44 percent in 2006 and 0.54 percent in 2015 to support the MDGs, particularly in low-income countries. ODA quality should be improved (including aid that is harmonised, predictable and largely in the form of grants-based budget support). Each donor should reach 0.7 percent no later than 2015 to support the MDGs and other development assistance priorities. Debt relief should be more extensive and generous.

- High-income countries should open their markets to developing country exports through the Doha trade round and help Least Developed Countries raise export competitiveness through investments in critical trade-related infrastructure, including electricity, roads and ports. The Doha Development Agenda should be fulfilled and the Doha Round completed no later than 2006.

- International donors should mobilise support for global scientific research and development to address special needs of the poor in areas of health, agriculture, natural resource and environmental management, energy and climate. Total needs are estimated to rise to approximately $7 billion a year by 2015.
The UN Secretary-General and the UN Development Group should strengthen the coordination of UN agencies, funds, and programmes to support the MDGs, at headquarters and country level. The UN Country dreams should be strengthened and should work closely with the international financial institutions to support the MDGs.

NEW RELEASE!!!

Holding a mirror to the new parliament

Public Affairs Centre has recently come out with its new publication: "Holding a Mirror to the New Lok Sabha" - a comprehensive analysis of the affidavits of all the Member of Parliaments (MPs) in the new Lok Sabha. Based on a meticulous research by Samuel Paul and M. Vivekananda of Public Affairs Centre, the study, the first of its kind, not only reveals an interesting all-India pattern about our MPs, but also highlights comparisons across parties, states, caste and gender. Some of the findings are counterintuitive and have important policy implications. The publication contains a systematic analysis of the data from the affidavits of 541 MPs elected in 2004 to the Lok Sabha (The total number of seats is 543). The paper is divided into five sections. The first section presents the demographic profile of the new Lok Sabha. The second section dissects the information on the assets held by the MPs. The analysis of their criminal cases is summarized in section III. Their borrowings from public financial institutions and dues owed to government departments are analysed in section IV. The conclusions of the study and policy implications are presented in the final section.

The full document can be accessed at www.pacindia.org. "Holding a Mirror to the New Lok Sabha" is now made available in Hindi as well. For further information on the publication, contact: Ms. Sohini Bagchi, Media and Publications Consultant at PAC.

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 civic clubs to share information and perspectives through this forum. Please send your contribution to:

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Public Affairs Centre (PAC) is a non profit non governmental organisation committed to improving the quality of Governance in India. Towards this end, PAC undertakes research studies, provides citizen action support and advisory services, and facilitates networking for the creation of sustainable fora.

TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PAC, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT http://www.pacindia.org

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