The last five decades have been witness to substantive change in the architecture of the Indian State. We have seen massive public spending - on roads, schools, hospitals and the industrial backbone of the country. Alongside, land reforms and reservation for disadvantaged communities, in education and employment, have attempted to redress imbalances and generate opportunities. Major initiatives to make local governments stronger have taken place through transfer of resources and delegation of power.

But a lot more needs to be done. Institutions and infrastructure are only as good as what they deliver. Governments have achieved partial success in this regard - while Karnataka's performance is better than that of many other states (as described in this issue of Public Eye), the feedback indicates that services need to improve in substantial measure.

The issue today, with basic services, is not one of shortage of investment but of inadequate performance. To assume that a democracy with elected representatives and civil servants will automatically produce the required quality of service is out of place, even with decentralized governance. We need to empower communities to directly interface with local governments. But there is little progress on this front because of lack of engagement and demand by civil society. Arms of the government become accountable and perform better when citizens using services play a watchdog role and challenge abuses. A proactive civil society is a strength of many developed countries. State sponsored institutions often hesitate to play an active role in energizing civil society to play its legitimate role of seeking better governance.

Civil society initiatives taking on watchdog roles need to build bridges with other institutions of the government. The offices of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Election Commission, and the Lok Ayukta, have all contributed in bringing probity and performance in State institutions. An informed and involved citizenry can inspire transparency and responsiveness, which makes administrations accountable, and also lend strength to these oversight institutions. The city of Bangalore has lately developed a tradition of strong civic engagement, and the benefits from this engagement have helped the State and City Government in many ways.

The management of service agencies is also a serious concern. Be it regular supply of drinking water or prompt completion of a birth certificate, we need these duties to be performed with the sense of urgency and commitment. People, across the country, recognize that what they get from government is not an act of charity but an entitlement. They no longer beg but demand service. Governments need to invest in creating the right mindset among civil servants, to also address issues of attitude and behaviour, along with other measures to simplify procedures and make them citizen friendly.

Capacity building efforts also need to address communities. A broken-down hand pump which has not been repaired for two years not only speaks for apathy on the part of the ones charged to maintain it but also on the helplessness and lack of initiatives of the ones who are to benefit from it. Instead of waiting for distant government institutions to spoon-feed them with services, we need communities to rise to the occasion and build with self-help. There are many examples of such innovation and self-help, from which communities across the country need to derive inspiration and conviction.

Suresh Balakrishnan
Executive Director
Public Affairs Centre
RESEARCH

THE STATE OF KARNATAKA’S PUBLIC SERVICES: BENCHMARKS FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

A large number of people in our country, particularly the poor, depend on the government for basic services like drinking water and health care. Every state in the country spends a major part of its annual budget on these services. Karnataka is no different. Rs. 6465 crores (64650 million) was spent on social services during 2001-02, roughly 34 per cent of its revenue expenditure, and the figures are expected to rise. After decentralisation, some of these functions passed on to the Panchayats and the Nagarpalikas, which handled Rs. 575 crores (5750 million) of revenue expenditure in 2000-01. But the major responsibility for the design and the financing of such services still rests with the state governments.

High expenditure does not ensure that the quality of the service will be good; nor does it ensure that the service is equally accessible and effective for all groups of people. This survey was an attempt to measure the quality and effectiveness of basic services from the users’ perspective; the attempt builds on to PAC’s pioneering concept of Report Cards. The enabling idea is that feedback from the actual users would make the government more responsive to people. It would also provide them information on where exactly the shortfalls exist, so that they know where to make the improvements.

This report is part of the nation-wide “Millenial Survey of India’s Public Services”, carried out between May and September 2001. The national survey covered a sample of around 37,000 households in both rural and urban areas spread over 115 districts in 24 states. This study is an effort to work towards accountability of public agencies, the State government being a major provider of basic services. Five basic services were considered in this study - Drinking Water, Health Care, Education and Childcare, Public Distribution System, and Road Transport.

Purpose of this study

- To provide an independent assessment of key public services based on people’s feedback as well as independent observation of the facilities that have been provided. The effectiveness of public services was examined along four key aspects:
  - **Access** – how close is the user to the service provided.
  - **Usage** – to what extent do they use it.
  - **Reliability** – how dependable is the service
  - **Satisfaction** – what is the overall effectiveness of the service.

- To build an independent database and set benchmarks, which will help measure the progress of these services over time. In the long term this could also lead to an improvement in the standard of these services.

- To create public awareness and motivate people to act on the information that the report provides them.

Approach and methodology

In order to collect user feedback and field observations, the survey was conducted in four parts:

- Survey of households to get a rating of selected public services on measures of access, usage, quality, reliability, satisfaction, etc.
- Independent assessment by observing selected public facilities such as primary schools, clinics, fair price shops, etc.
- Village profile study on each village covered in the sample.
Case studies

Sampling

The state was divided into four Socio-cultural Regions (SCRs) of Bombay-Karnataka, Malnad, Karnataka-Deccan and Old Mysore, for purposes of stratified sampling.

Responses were collected from 1919 households selected through multi-stage stratified sampling. The rural sample was drawn from 8 districts in the state of Karnataka, by selecting two from each of the SCRs. Roughly a fourth of the sample was from urban areas including small towns, spread over 5 districts.

The districts included in the sample from each SCR were:

a. Belgaum & Bijapur districts – Bombay Karnataka
b. Bellary & Gulbarga districts – Karnataka Deccan
c. Kodagu & Chikkamagalur districts - Malnad
d. Bangalore & Mandya districts – Old Mysore

The urban sample was drawn from the following towns: Kolar Gold Fields (Kolar district), Tekkelakotte and Harpanahalli (Bellary district), Gangavath (Raichur), Chickmagalur CMC (Chikkamagalur district) and Karkala (Dakshin Kannada district).

Salient findings

The large amount of money spent by the state on public services does not guarantee their easy access, quality or efficiency. Responses from the public indicate just how varied these factors are in different parts of the state.

Karnataka scores over other states in its reasonably good access to facilities like drinking water, primary school education and public transport. People here tend to use public drinking water and public buses much more than the rest of the country, and the satisfaction with the quality and the availability of drinking water is also higher than the national figures.

Where the Karnataka Government seems to have disappointed its citizens is in the area of health care, and the public distribution system. People do not have easy access to healthcare centres; fair price shops are neither dependable nor do they display a list of prices which they are supposed to.

Variations across the regions

The people of Mandya and rural Bangalore appear to have a better deal than the other districts in terms of the delivery of public services. This is perhaps because the area is close to larger cities, making it one of the more wealthy regions. People here tend to rely less on public transport and education as they have other options to choose from, such as private providers.

Belgaum and Bijapur appear to be the worst off. Belgaum fares badly because of the low access its people have to public services. The other districts do well in some aspects and not so well in others. Certain services are extremely good in some districts; for example, primary education in Gulbarga, transport in rural Bangalore and drinking water in Mandya. Other services touch rock bottom in some districts, for instance drinking water (which includes public taps, public hand pumps and panchayat bore wells) in Belgaum, public transport in Kodagu and PDS in Bellary.

If we look at the findings of the survey for each service, in the case of drinking water the state has extended physical access to protected drinking water in a big way. But low levels of overall satisfaction indicate that the government needs to take a closer look at local issues that possibly affect the delivery of this service. On the whole Mandya does the best in terms of the quality of the drinking water service, while Belgaum does the worst. Bijapur also does poorly, whereas the other districts have average service for drinking water.

In the case of health services, the government has been able to place health care services within the convenient reach of just one-fourth of the households in the state. Where it specially falls people is in the high incidence of bribes paid by inpatients in government hospitals. A positive aspect is that the attitude of the medical personnel, who deal with patients, seems to be better
than in many other parts of the country. Once again Mandya heads the list in terms of health services. Bijapur is the worst affected with the lowest usage and the highest incidence of fee payment.

When we consider road transport services, the access to government buses is quite high in many districts. In comparison the usage is low despite the fact that the fares are lower than private buses. Private transport was reported to be more frequent and punctual than government buses. Rural Bangalore is ahead of other districts when it comes to public transport, while Kodagu has the poorest service.

In terms of school education, the government-supported school education system has good reach and is well spread across the state except in Kodagu. The feedback reveals that school buildings lack basic amenities and may discourage girls' education in particular. The feedback also indicates that users are not very happy with the quality of service they get. All districts do reasonably well in education, with Bellary topping the scores, while Gulbarga is at the bottom.

Finally coming to public distribution system, Karnataka has not achieved as much as many other states in reaching out to its people. Few users are satisfied with the different aspects of the service. The supply of food grains is not very regular, though it is better than many states in this respect. Also many people may not benefit from the subsidized prices because there is low transparency on the price to be paid. Rural Bangalore and Kodagu are the best performers in PDS. Interestingly, in Chickmagalur though access is the lowest, usage is the highest.

**Basic services and the weaker sections**

The people who need the services the most seem to get the least. The weaker sections like SCs/STs, poor people and those from small villages are far more dependent on these services, yet the delivery of public services to them is far less. Health care, PDS and pucca roads have not reached the smaller villages in a significant way. Even in the case of SC and ST households, though they do have the same level of access to health care, they are unhappy with the quality of the service. People of lower caste frequently refer to the poor attitude of the doctors.

A positive development is the way certain aspects of the PDS have reached some of the weaker sections. A number of them have ration cards and access to ration shops though they may not be satisfied with the availability of food grains. This makes the government expenditure on the PDS seem futile, because the ultimate aim of the scheme is to ensure that people get a regular supply of food grain at reasonable prices.

Though rural areas have less access to healthcare, their access to government schools is much better.

**Conclusions**

An analysis of the four key aspects of these public services, viz. access, usage, reliability and satisfaction, carried out in this survey, throws up some interesting facts. There are wide variations that exist among the services across different regions in the state. It also helps us determine where Karnataka stands in terms of the different service attributes when compared to the other southern states as well as the nation as a whole.

**Karnataka vis-à-vis national**

The state government of Karnataka has provided its citizens with reasonably good access to drinking water, primary school education, government transport and the public distribution system; here Karnataka performs significantly better than the national average. There is higher use of public drinking water and government buses when compared to the nation as a whole. Availability of food grains was found to be better in the state; satisfaction with the quality and quantity of drinking water was higher than the rest of the country as a whole. On the other hand, in a number of aspects like access to health care facilities, usage of fair price shops, and display of prices at fair price shops, Karnataka scores below the national figures.

Karnataka has made reasonable progress on some indicators but its overall performance on different

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1 Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
indicators remains low. Although access to various public services has been provided, the quality of services delivered is low, and access and quality vary across districts. While regional disparities were inherited when the state was created, it is sad that even after fifty years since independence, the delivery of public services still reflects these disparities. This is seen in the low satisfaction figures for the service delivery across indicators. The same pattern can be observed at the national level as well.

Karnataka ranks third in the country with respect to an overall assessment of public protected drinking water. In the case of health services, Karnataka ranks eighth in the overall ranking of all states. Karnataka fares quite well as far as road transport is concerned and is ranked third among states. Karnataka is ranked fourth among all states in the case of PDS. Regarding primary school education, Karnataka is ranked third.

Implications for public policy and action

1. Redesign the strategy for public service delivery

The evidence this report provides on the state of essential public services in Karnataka suggests the need to rework the strategy for the planning and delivery of public services in the state. There are both positive and negative findings in this report. A majority of the people seem to have physical access to most services. Healthcare is a notable exception. In this regard, Karnataka has done better than several other states. But almost across the board, the people give low marks to the quality/reliability of the services. Spending public funds on civil works is necessary but not enough to ensure the efficient delivery of services. There are several issues that need to be addressed if the Government is to provide efficient and equitable public services to all citizens of the state. The answers to these issues may well call for a reformulation of the state’s strategy for providing basic services to the people.

2. Improve the management systems in services that call for greater human interaction

Regional disparities within Karnataka are nothing new. Often governments try to solve this problem through increased allocations for the development of the more backward regions.

But increased spending may not necessarily solve the problems highlighted in this report, as the contrast between the performance of drinking water supply and healthcare shows. Healthcare depends a great deal on the skills, incentives and attitudes of the people who deliver the services. Better human resource management, tighter monitoring and a reward and penalty system may well improve performance in such cases. There may be similar issues in the education sector too. The findings of this study could be used to benchmark the progress made through such reforms.

3. Plan for optimal use of private service delivery options

The Government should also explore other options for the delivery of public services. The private sector is already playing a significant role in healthcare, education and bus transport. There is some evidence that the public prefer private providers in some sectors for their quality and reliability. The Government could encourage the private option and divert public resources and attention to the locations where the weaker sections are concentrated.

4. Explore the use of successful models of service design and delivery from NGO/corporate experiences to reach remote and small villages

Our data shows that access to and use of some essential services is a problem for the poor who live in remote and small villages. It is the disadvantage of location combined with poverty that aggravates the problem. It may become too expensive for the Government to deliver services in small and remote villages. Finding other options including partnerships that could perform the job better than the Government may be the answer. The experiences and models of many NGOs and corporates could reveal totally different approaches to service provision in more difficult locations.

5. Competition is necessary, but not sufficient to stimulate public sector reform

The popular expectation that competition among service providers will necessarily improve their quality and accountability has been questioned in this study. Private sector competition in the field of health care, for example, has not stimulated public hospitals to be more
responsive to the people. Competition works when the low performers are forced to lose money, jobs or power. This seldom happens in the public sector. Unless the effects of competition are considered while evaluating the performance of government institutions and personnel, they are unlikely to become more efficient or responsive to people.

BENCHMARK SURVEY ON SERVICE STANDARDS: INDUSTRIAL REGULATIONS IN KARNATAKA

Background

In the wake of the liberalization policies and industrial reforms by the government of India, since 1991, there have been significant improvements in the character of the regulatory environment within which enterprises operate. The Government of Karnataka has also initiated the process of liberalization and deregulation a few years ago. It is expected that these reforms would lead to an improvement in the speed and ease with which regulatory functions are discharged by 14 agencies² playing a key role in regulating industrial units in the state.

It is imperative to benchmark the quality of service delivery, prior to the introduction of the reforms, and also to assess the feedback from entrepreneurs. The adequacy and the efficacy of the proposed reforms could subsequently be evaluated after the reforms are in place.

The Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Karnataka requested Public Affairs Centre (PAC) to carry out the benchmarking exercise. The study covered 515 industrial units, from different sectors across six districts in Karnataka. The field survey was jointly designed by Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore and Gallup India. The fieldwork was carried out between February 15th and March 28th, 2002.

Objectives

The output of this benchmark survey is to be placed in the context of the larger purpose within which it has taken place. The overall objectives were:

- To benchmark quality of service offered by fourteen key regulatory agencies in Karnataka, prior to implementation of the deregulation policy.
- Identify the main constraints currently experienced by entrepreneurs in Karnataka vis-à-vis industrial regulations and operations of fourteen key agencies, in their interface with enterprises, prior to implementation of the deregulation package.
- Identify gaps, if any, that need to be addressed in immediate and subsequent policy revisions, to facilitate effective industrial regulation.

Benchmark measures

The quality of service provided by the different agencies to the entrepreneurs has been evaluated across key indicators such as transparency, procedural complexities, responsiveness, efficiency, problem incidence and resolution, nature of problem, corruption, quality of inspections and overall satisfaction.

Findings

- This study has yielded important benchmarks, which can be used for future comparisons.
- Transparency is a problem. Entrepreneurs have found all agencies to be lacking in transparency in their dealings with them. However KUM is rated the highest in terms of satisfaction with clear communication of requirements.
- Despite the Government's efforts in the past few years to simplify procedures, procedural complexities continue to constrain entrepreneurs. Again KUM is rated the best in terms of satisfaction with the number of forms to be filled and KSPCB the worst. Smaller units are also least satisfied with the number of forms to be filled as compared to medium and large ones.

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² Department of Industries & Commerce (DIC), Karnataka Udyog Mitra (KUM), Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd (KPTCL), Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB), Bangalore Water Supply & Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), Labour Department (LD), Inspectorate of Factories & Boilers (IFB), Department of Legal Metrology (DLM), Electrical Inspectorate (Eel), Revenue Department (RD), Urban Development Department (UDD), Commercial Tax Department (CTD), Village Panchayat / Local Authority (VP/LA)

³ In this study for several of the questions where respondents are asked to rate the agencies on various aspects of service quality, a five-point scale has been used to measure the level of their satisfaction (fully satisfied, partially satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, partially dissatisfied and fully dissatisfied). However we use the full satisfaction measure as the benchmark.
A higher frequency of visits and low satisfaction with courtesy of staff, indicate that there is a vast scope for improvement for all agencies in this context.

The fact that nearly one in five respondents have had a problem with agencies that deal with land related issues is an indication of their failure to ensure smooth entry and functioning of industrial units. Further probing into the nature of the problem, corruption and lack of responsiveness are found to be repeatedly cited by the entrepreneurs for most of the agencies.

The study reveals that one in five entrepreneurs have paid a bribe to one agency or the other. Bribes have been paid not only for resolution of specific problems but also for routine transactions. A very high percentage (62-100%) of the people who paid a bribe said it was demanded from them.

In the hierarchy of problems entrepreneurs face the frequency of inspections and their impact on productivity are not the issues of concern whereas corruption, harassment by the inspectors and their courtesy stand out prominently.

Among the agencies respondents have rated KUM as the best, (38%) on all aspects. KPTCL is rated the worst (20%) on most aspects. However the generally low satisfaction ratings show that most agencies need to review their functioning.

Generally small-scale units, service sector units, are at a disadvantage with most agencies, across parameters. However medium scale units encounter more problems with most agencies and also end up paying large amounts as bribes. Larger units seem to cope reasonably well on most counts.

Contrary to popular belief IT and service sector units come out to be at a disadvantage as compared to non-IT sector units with regard to several of the indicators.

Units located in Bangalore find agencies to be more transparent, responsive and efficient as compared to those located in the other five districts. However, corruption is clearly higher in Bangalore than it is in the other districts.

(For further details contact Dr. Sita Sekhar / Arti Pandit, at PAC)

**CITIZEN ACTION**

**children's movement for civic awareness (cmca)-civic education curriculum in schools**

As grooming grounds for future citizens, schools bear a special responsibility for the development of civic competency and civic responsibility. School is the primary agency where children learn civics, government and environment. However, the highly circumscribed role that schools play today seldom prepares the students to address the myriad problems facing their communities. Most schools have often tended to relegate these vital issues to the social studies curriculum where citizenship and democracy is generally taught through lecture and text rather than by engaging young people in actively contributing to the well being of others and society. This is true of issues concerning the protection and conservation of natural environment. Therefore, what is urgently required is to rediscover the essential spirit of schools as learning communities and inject energy and activity into the curriculum on civics and environmental sciences, which is otherwise passive, abstract and distant. The outcomes will be enhanced intellectual capacity, interpersonal skills, social responsibility and active civic participation.

Converging on the notion of schools as learning communities, PAC and SWABHIMANA jointly initiated children's movement for civic awareness. The main objectives of CMCA are to educate and

**Civic Club survey of people's awareness of the environmental hazards caused by polythene bags – 2001-2002**

A highlight during the academic year 2001-2002 was the awareness campaign cum survey on the use of polythene bags in Bangalore conducted by the members of Civic Clubs. More than 700 children participated in the survey. They interacted with 1200 households and 800 commercial establishments. The findings of the survey were widely publicized in the media and prompted the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to speed up the process of enforcing the ban on the manufacture and use of polythene bags which have a thickness of 20 micron and less.
engage young people actively in the process of reclaiming civic virtues and citizenship in Bangalore through civic clubs in schools. In its endeavour to create and transmit civic awareness in Bangalore, CMCA has completed two eventful years with children, filled with learning and excitement. The tremendous response from students, schools, parents and policy makers has been encouraging.

Driven by the spirit of voluntarism espoused by civic-minded citizens, CMCA has expanded its reach to thirty-six schools in the current academic year. Awareness campaigns are expected to touch 20,000 children (and their families) spread across these schools.

The volunteers form the backbone of CMCA in schools. The success of the movement will largely depend on the quality of facilitation and leadership provided by volunteers. In all there are 36 volunteers. Training, orienting and sensitizing the animators to equip and prepare them with necessary skills and knowledge is a major priority of CMCA.

(For further details on CMCA please contact Vrunda Bhaskar at PAC)

INVITED ARTICLE

Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan

Distortions in our electoral system

It is indeed a testimony to the integrity and strength of our constitutional institutions like the Election Commission that they have successfully conducted the polling process in the troubled state of J&K without a murmur of protest even from the separatist camp. The people of the state came out and voted in substantial numbers indicating their desire for change. But, unfortunately the political parties don’t seem to get the message. A full two weeks after the verdict the major political entities are still fighting it over who should be the next CM and what should be the nature of power sharing! It is a tragedy that the democratic political process, which ought to be the answer to our problems, is reduced to a mere game of power and pelf for individual aggrandizement.

The numbers game being played out in Uttar Pradesh is another example of the distortions that have crept into our political system. Despite the anti defection provisions of the 10th schedule, the opposition is scheming on engineering a split in the ruling combine with utter disregard for the legality of the move. All these incidents are symptoms of the deeper malaise affecting our polity. No wonder, majority of the population in this country have lost all respect toward politicians and the political process and look upon them with utter cynicism and some even hope for a Musharraf to set things right! This is a dangerous attitude to have and the answer for the ills of democracy lie only in a better and more efficient democracy.

Even though the parties and politicians are only partly to blame for the state of affairs, they have the highest responsibility to correct it. All parties, and indeed all-true democrats have an obligation to help cleanse the electoral system and restore legitimacy to the political system. The parties and politicians would be wise to focus their attention on a few key initiatives, which will help bring back legitimacy to the electoral process:

1. Transparency/Disclosure: The SC in its judgment of May 2nd, declared that in a democracy the voter has a fundamental right to have information about the candidates choosing to represent the people. The EC’s order in pursuance of the SC directive made it mandatory for candidates to disclose their criminal antecedents if any, and financial details including those of their spouse and dependents at the time of the nomination. Sadly the political establishment has reacted to the ECs order like a trade union under siege and displayed a rare political unanimity in supporting a Bill, which sought to nullify the ECs order and violate the SC directives. Owing to the developments in Gujarat, the Bill didn’t come up for consideration in the Parliament and the Cabinet passed an Ordinance. It does provide for a reasonable amount of disclosure as far as criminal antecedents are concerned, but is completely silent on the financial disclosure part. Lok Satta and other civil society initiatives are fighting the legality of this Ordinance in the SC. Several surveys, opinion polls and ballots showed that an overwhelming majority of people - 95% or more are in favour of full disclosure. The political establishment will do well to exhibit enlightened self-interest and good sense, by responding to people’s concerns and ensuring that the Citizen’s right to know about their representatives is protected.

2. Election expenditure and political funding:
   The results of a study commissioned by the EC to study the election expenditure in 1999/2000 elections were published in the form of “National Election Audit” report. It makes a startling
disclosure that 90% of the winning candidates in the 1999 parliamentary elections are classified as “rich” or “very rich” or “super rich” and their average visible campaign expenditure is Rs. 83 lakhs, where as the legal ceiling is only Rs. 15 lakhs. If we include the visible and underhand expenditure, the actual expenditure could well be double that or more. The public has a right to know the sources of these funds and how they are spent. At least partly, the solution to the spiraling election expenditure lies in introducing mechanisms for transparent funding and public funding based on objective norms. After studying the best practices across the world, Lok Satta has made a few proposals:

a. All individual contributions to candidates or parties should be fully tax exempt and it shall be mandatory for the donor and recipient to disclose the contribution and failure to disclose should entail stiff penalties for both.

b. It shall be mandatory for every political party and candidate to submit an audited statement of accounts and failure to do so should entail de-recognition for parties and disqualification for candidates.

c. Free time shall be given in both state and private media to registered parties as prescribed by the EC.

d. Public funding to parties, which receive more than 10% of the vote, polled. 2/3 of the funding should go to the party and 1/3 to the candidate. Parties can receive 50% advance based on their previous record.

The Bill pending in parliament seeks to achieve the first three of these measures and deserves full public support.

3. Technical flaws – voter registration and tendered vote

Leaving aside the systemic flaws in our electoral system, there are a few technical flaws which can easily be rectified. In a survey, conducted by Lok Satta it was found that almost 40% of the names in the voter lists are flawed in urban areas and 20% in rural areas. These are both errors of commission and omission. The main reason for this discrepancy is the virtually inaccessible voter registration process. This can be easily simplified by making the voter lists available at all post offices and making a provision to register there itself. Coupled with accurate voter lists, mandatory photo ID cards and a provision for re-poll in case of more than 2% tendered votes will immeasurably enhance the legitimacy of the electoral process in the eyes of the voter.

4. Systemic reforms

All the above measures will certainly help, but given the complexity and diversity of Indian society it is imperative that we move to a more representational model of democracy, i.e. proportional representation. A majority of countries which have a democratic polity follow some form of PR and it is only the former English colonies which follow the west minister model of first past the post system. This model perpetuates feudal oligarchies and modern zamindaris, and parties are helpless in countering them. This politics of fiefdoms is perpetuating status quo and undermining democracy. We need to switch over to a mixed system with 50% constituency representation, and 50% chosen through proportional system, with the overall legislature reflecting the popular support to parties. The scenario that is being played out in J & K and UP can easily be avoided by switching to direct election of a chief executive at the state level. Even in states where the governments are seemingly stable, there is constant undercurrent of tension, and a substantial proportion of the energy and time of chief ministers is spent on survival in office. And we need to make our political parties democratic and accountable. Autocratic parties cannot foster and sustain a democratic society. Proportional representation, internal democracy in political parties and direct election of chief executive at state level will bring about a fundamental transformation in the nature of Indian polity and are the right answers for distortions that have crept into the electoral system.

The parties and politicians should seize this opportunity and show the wisdom, courage and foresight to usher in the much-needed reforms. Civil society has a great stake in this transformation. Only clarity, imaginative action, and sustained pressure will yield results. The time for such efforts is ripe.

The author, a former civil servant is the National Coordinator of Lok Satta movement. E-mail: loksatta@satyamnet.in; url: www.loksatta.org
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Safe and efficient drainage of both waste and storm water is particularly important to maintain public health and safety. Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka State, is the fifth metropolitan city of India. It is estimated that the population of the city has reached more than six million and the city covers an area of 225 square kilometres (kms). The average rainfall of Bangalore city is 970 millimetres (mms). The maximum recorded in 24 hours is 179 mms. The annual rainfall is concentrated in four months of the year, i.e. June to September during the Southwest monsoon. The city, with its pleasant climate, has reached the height of vertical growth in population within a short span of time, saturating the entire infrastructure/service facilities to the bare minimum. One such facility is the storm water drain.

Bangalore is at an elevation of 894 metres above mean sea level. It has four major valleys passing through – Vrishabavathy, Koramangala, Channagatta and Hebbal valleys. Many of the major and minor tanks in the city have been breached and layouts (residential and commercial) have been formed. The tank beds, akshaks (land under irrigation) and gardens have now become low-lying areas of the city, without a proper drainage system. Along with the horizontal growth of the city, the existing natural valleys have been converted into storm water drains without integrating them into the overall storm water drainage system. The estimated length of such primary and secondary storm water drains is about 180 kms. Most of these drains are inadequate in dimension, and drain structures are damaged at many locations. Further, siting and dumping of garbage and debris in the existing storm water drains have reduced the capacity of the drain. One of the basic requirements is a good and effective drainage system for disposing off the storm water without causing damage to man and material.

Against this backdrop, Public Affairs Center organised a workshop on July 26, 2002. The workshop was also sponsored by the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (Bangalore Municipal Corporation) and Swabhimana - a citizen-government interactive forum based on partnership between local government, communities, corporates, business groups and voluntary organisations in Bangalore. The workshop was moderated by Mrs. Tara Ajay Singh, Commissioner, Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Agency (BMRDA). The workshop evolved participatory strategies to effectively address the problem of flooding in Bangalore. The workshop also aimed at bringing together all the stakeholders, viz. the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike’s Health and Engineering departments, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. (KPTCL), Bangalore Telecom, Optical Fiber Cable Agencies, citizens groups, etc. It was also decided to constitute a local level coordination and monitoring committee for storm water management in the individual neighborhoods. Special emphasis was laid on interagency and interdepartmental coordination, creation of citizen awareness, and mobilise participation in the planning rehabilitation and maintenance of the storm water drainage system.

On September 11, 2002, the Public Affairs Center organised a meeting of four community groups from low-lying areas of Koramangala and Hebbal valleys. The meeting discussed at length several strategies for local level monitoring and enhancement of public awareness vis-a-vis storm water drains.

On October 19, 2002, the first focus group discussion took place at K.R. Gardens, Murugeshpalya, Bangalore. Meetings are also planned in six to eight chronic flood prone areas covering all the four valleys. Such meetings would involve active residents and officials of the BMP and BWSSB concerned with the management of solid waste and storm water drains. The groups will also keep an eye on building constructions. The main objective of these meetings will be to constitute a local level coordination and monitoring committee for storm water management in the individual neighborhoods.

On October 23, 2002, a visual observation of selected storm water drains was conducted to assess the physical condition of such drains. Sampling was done based on normal statistical sampling procedures. The observation covered a distance of about 10 kms.

(For further information, please contact Mr. Albert Lobo at PAC)
CAMPAIGNS

PROOF: A CAMPAIGN FOR TRANSPARENCY IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

Performance audits and quarterly financial statements are universally acknowledged as essential mechanisms and criteria of and for progress. The Corporate sector, NGOs, CBOs and civil society have not only embraced the concept but also used it as the basis of performance measurement and the foundation of good governance. Today, we need Government to practice it. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) of the USA has asserted that “Accounting and financial reporting standards are essential to the efficient and effective functioning of our democratic system of government.” India, as one of the largest democratic nations in the world surely needs to practice this too.

With this objective, the Public Report of Operations and Finance (PROOF) campaign was launched on 4th July 2002, by four Bangalore based NGOs, namely Public Affairs Centre, Janaagraha, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies and Voices. PROOF will enable Government and citizens to work together and ensure that public money is being used for public good.

PROOF provides an efficient and effective framework for regular performance reporting by local governments. The Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) has already provided the first quarter report and this was discussed at a public debate on the 17th August 2002. The ability of the BMP to respond quickly in furnishing the quarterly financial performance in a user-friendly format is indeed both creditable and noteworthy. It must be mentioned here that the BMP has a state of art Fund Based Accounting System (FBAS) in place. This system has been put in place over the past 30 months by the Bangalore Agenda Task Force, and can now provide up-to-date financial information/reports on all aspects of BMP performance. The State Government proposes to extend FBAS to all the City Municipal Councils, as this system of accounting will greatly reduce the opportunities for maladministration in these bodies.

PROOF is working with NGOs and concerned citizens of Bangalore to generate a set of Performance Indicators to evaluate the services of the BMP such as education, health, solid waste management etc. The 10-month long PROOF campaign endeavours to institute systems to ensure regular and systematic quarterly financial disclosure. These, together with the help of the performance indicators for various services, will enable citizens to evaluate government performance and obtain a better quality of life.

(For further details please contact Sheila Premkumar at PAC)

CAPACITY BUILDING TO IMPROVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Providing support to local community institutions is an integral part of PAC’s capacity building effort. PAC’s focus in this regard is on strengthening local civil society institutions and providing them with the required tools in line with this strategy. A series of interactive workshops have been planned to provide necessary technical support to interested institutions at the local level. PAC usually identifies an organisation at the district level as the nodal institution through which it hopes to carry out its work of capacity building and information dissemination. PAC intends to expose and sensitise the local community organisations to good practices in governance and encourage them to take initiatives for reform at the local level. PAC also provides information on many important issues related to governance. The following themes are discussed with the participants of such workshops:

- Democratic decentralization of urban governance – 74th Constitutional Amendment with an emphasis on Karnataka’s municipal administration and the role of civil society institutions to ensure effective implementation of the Constitutional provisions
- People’s role in Municipal budgets
- The Right to Information Act
- Benchmarking municipal services
- Electoral Interventions – Electoral rolls, Summary and Intensive Revisions
- Elector’s Photo Identity Card programme
- Informed Choices – Disclosure by candidates / The Supreme Court Judgement

The first workshop in this series was conducted at Sindhanur in Raichur district in September 2002. It was attended by 27 participants from 14 NGOs representing both Raichur and Koppal districts. PAC’s clear objective was to broaden the agenda of local organisations to work on governance issues in the future. Commitment on the part of participating NGOs was forthcoming.
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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If undelivered, please return to

Public Affairs Centre (PAC)
578, 16th B Main, 3rd Cross,
Block 3, Koramangala,
Bangalore 560 034, India.
Tel / Fax : 5537260, 5533467, 5520246
Email: pacindia@vsnl.com

Sevasadan Technical Training Institute
8th Main 3rd Block, Koramangala, B’lore - 34
Ph : 5532648, 5505698

is sponsored and run by the Franciscan Missionary Brothers. It is a rehabilitation scheme for the school dropouts and child workers to increase job options and thereby economic independence. The institute has ‘8’ trades namely, Printing, Wood work, Welding & Sheet metal fabrication, Turner, Automobile, Electrical, Plumbing & Tailoring. At present 130 students are being trained in the Institute.

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Consultant Editor: GOPAKUMAR. K
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CYRIL W. VAS

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