

PRIA

GOVERNANCE OF DEMOCRACY

These days, the most frequently used, and perhaps most confusing term in use, is Governance. The term has gained currency for two main reasons. Firstly, it has shown that improving standard of living of the masses in the developing countries, is not in any way related to the amount of development aid they receive. Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Sierre Leone and Madagascar are just some stellar examples. It has been realized that strong, effective and accountable institutions ___ in the government, in the private sector, in the civil society (including media and academia) ___ are crucial for rooted, relevant and sustainable efforts in improving the lives of the masses. Many internationally supported development projects create temporary project structures in the government as well as at a community level in order to by-pass the red-tapism of existing institutional mechanisms. However, such an arrangement is only temporary, and decays rapidly to die with the completion of the Project. Thus effective governance of institutions is an important prerequisite for effectiveness in development assistance.

Secondly, it has been recognized that formal democracy (regular elections, multi-party system, independent judiciary, etc.) in developed countries does not necessarily address the needs and aspirations of all citizens. These institutions get "captured" by organized vested interests and the practice of "majority vote" alienates large sections of the "minority opinion", let alone those large sections of citizens who no longer care to vote. The elected representatives ___ parliamentarians and legislators ___ have become increasingly "irrelevant" in this system of formal democracy. For Example in countries like Britain, India, Australia, the executive function, led by the head of the state and operated by a large entrenched

EDITORIAL

PRIA has consistently endorsed the *gender dimension*, not only within its programmatic interventions and field-based activities but also within the institution and its work culture. While women, their participation, empowerment and upliftment find a strategic focus in PRIA's range of interventions, the gender paradigm that has evolved within the organisation over the years, is yet another pioneering and innovative endeavor. With a strong organisational mandate reflecting a concern for gender issues, PRIA set up a **Committee against Sexual Harassment (CASH)** in 1998, in accordance with the Supreme Court's directive. The committee was also a sincere attempt to discuss issues of gender disparity existing in society at large and to discuss how sexual harassment could be addressed and removed from the workplace. Within two years the CASH Committee evolved into CGAMP (**Committee For Gender Mainstreaming Within PRIA**), which addressed the issue of gender in its wider dimensions. CGAMP catalysed radical changes within the organisation ensuring the formalisation of gender sensitive policies and practices.

Following this strong organisational mandate in pursuit of gender justice, PRIA commissioned a *gender audit* within itself and its partners. Conducted by an external facilitator the study was to document current practices and efforts in mainstreaming gender in PRIA and regional support organisations (RSOs) in order to address the question of how a gender perspective is understood, negotiated and articulated in both formal and informal structures and processes within the organisations. It also aimed to generate recommendations that further promote the gender mainstreaming process within PRIA and help initiate and further facilitate these processes with the RSOs.

And the opportunity could not have been more apt when PRIA celebrated the International Women's Day on 8th of March. Over a hundred women leaders of Panchayati Raj Institutions met in Delhi to share their experiences and interact with a range of stakeholders at the national level. It provided them with a forum to meet their counterparts from all over the country and establish their solidarity in the universal struggle that women face for acceptance and making their voices heard.

We would be pleased to share our experiences on institutionalizing gender and would be keen to have your valuable inputs on the same. Presenting ahead a range of our key district, state and national level activities from all across the country.

Editor

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bureaucracy, is in "supreme" control of all power and authority. Major national commitments (like signing WTO covenants, Security Council Votes, participating in the 'war' against terrorism, etc.) are made by this small coterie of executive authority. The opinions of parliamentarians and legislators (including those belonging to the ruling party) are not even seriously sought leading to many of them feeling lost or alienated from the political processes. The voters do not care for their representatives, as they feel that the real authority seems to be vested elsewhere. Except for a few citizens whose career is in professional politics, others are not even interested in becoming representatives. As a result, the major challenge to formal democracy is the growing disconnection between citizens and their elected representatives. There is a need for a dynamic and constant issue-based dialogue between citizens (not just as voters) and their elected representatives, which can considerably improve the governance of democracy.

It is in this context that experiments in local governance being carried out in nearly 100 countries of the world are creating new possibilities. Local bodies — Panchayats and Municipalities — as institutions of local self-governance are arenas where new practices in governance are being attempted. In several countries of the Commonwealth, these local bodies are being promoted as locally rooted institutions of governance. As newly elected representatives, women, dalits and other socially oppressed and marginalized castes are showing the way in India and are performing their public roles for the first time in history. But in the process they have to face immense hurdles in order to overcome the centuries of shackles of bondage and restrictions placed on their physical mobility and mental thinking. These local parliamentarians in Panchayats and Municipalities are trying to engage citizens in an informed discussion about local priorities and resources. Elected representatives of local bodies are able to promote a

direct dialogue with citizens partly because of the local, face-to-face context, and partly because their relationship is not mediated, or interfered with, by bureaucrats. Citizens' groups have supported women elected representatives in local bodies in order to address priority issues of drinking water, primary education, basic health care, sanitation and livelihood. The positive experiences of effective representation by these elected women is empowering them to continue their public roles as representatives at higher levels of governance in the country.

For citizens, such local bodies create a "proximate" opportunity to participate in governance. Attending meetings, voicing opinions, negotiating differences and monitoring progress of local plans are ways in which such participation in governance is being expressed. The new opportunities for interfacing with elected representatives of local bodies are creating a new democratic dynamic where citizens do not abdicate, and representatives do not manipulate. The interface of citizens and representatives is also enabling greater accountability of the executive bureaucracy, as the "divide and rule" approach of government servant is checked — an approach that in the past has created chronic and dangerous chasms between citizens and their elected representatives in formal institutions of democracy.

These local level experiments in governance perhaps can present interesting principles, approaches, methods and tools for effective governance of democracy at national and global levels. The challenge for reforming global inter-governmental bodies (like the United Nations or the Commonwealth) are essentially the same — how to reform formal institutions of democracy so that the governance function becomes the joint responsibility of citizens and their representatives. Is any one interested?

Rajesh Tandon November 15, 2002

Sharing of Annual Plans

ERIA, for the first time, organised a meeting to share and discuss its future plans collectively with representatives from donor organisations, government, regional support organisations and its staff. The unique event brought together a range of perspectives, at a common platform, on ERIA's future intervention strategy. The three day interaction (3 - 5 March, at ERIA New Delhi) started with an exclusive meeting of ERIA and its partners to obtain a collective clarity on the implementing strategies, intervention mechanisms and reporting structures, among other related issues, for an intensive district based approach. Generation of databases, web based communication, plan outputs, quality control were some of the issues discussed. Also highlighted was the proposed plan of supporting one development issue within a district along with continuing interventions on 'Reforming Governance Institutes' and 'Civil Society Building'.

The discussions over the next two days were attended by representatives from Sida (Swedish International Development Agency), CORDAID, FORD Foundation, SDC (Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation), Ministry of Rural Development and partner organisations. The highlights of the plan document for April 03 - March 07, 'Governance where people matter', were presented. The report of the *Gender Audit* conducted earlier at ERIA and partner organisations, was also shared. This was followed by a detailed presentation on the proposed 'Planning, budgeting and monitoring' and the 'web enabled learning' model being developed to support the new plan. Members from resource organisations appreciated the effort and gave their valuable inputs. They highlighted the complexity of the proposed matrix and the need to focus on monitoring and clearly stating outputs for all activities. The need for standardization and effective use of resources was reiterated. The representative from the government stressed on joint collaborations in the area of capacity building of elected representative, women, dalits and similar groups.

Invisible, Yet Widespread: The Non-Profit Sector in India

PRIA convened a workshop on 10 January, at India Habitat Centre, to share the findings of its nation wide study on the Non Profit Sector. It has been involved in mapping the non-profit sector in India as part of a global comparative initiative of the Institute for Policy Studies, John Hopkins University, USA. The national report released during the event graphically presents detailed data on the non-profit sector including its size, activities, employment, revenue, givers profile and others.

The Chairperson of the workshop, *Dr. Manmohan Singh* (former Finance Minister) hailed the study as clarifying the scope, scale and size of the non-profit sector in India for the first time. He recommended that government policy should facilitate the effective functioning of this vast sector through appropriate tax regimes that provide incentives for charitable giving and its effective use in the country. Commenting on the findings as a panelist, *Shri K.K. Jaiswal*, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, remarked that the Central Statistical Organisation could be supportive of the efforts to modernise, regularly update and disseminate authentic data on the non-profit sector. *Dr. Ashok Khosla*, President of Development Alternatives, commended the study on the new insights it has generated and suggested that new kinds of legal and fiscal frameworks are needed to support new kinds of institutional arrangements that the sector requires. *Shri. Srinjoy Chowdhury* of The Statesman, stressed on the need for mechanisms of accountability of the sector. In his concluding comments, *Dr. Rajesh Tandon*, President, PRIA argued for greater policy attention and support to help modernise systems of registration and database of the non-profit sector. He also called upon the government to initiate concrete steps in this regard.

'Chintan Sammelan', Chhattisgarh

It is estimated that rolling beedis (an indigenous, hand-made cigarette) is providing employment to more than 40 lakh workers belonging to M.P., Chhattisgarh, A.P, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Most of these workers are illiterate, socially marginalized, and exploited by the contractors. PRIA, has been working amongst the beedi workers in Chhattisgarh, in the past. Recently a two-day '**Chintan sammelan**' was organized for the women beedi workers of Rajnandgaon region on, 28-29 January, with an aim to develop an interface between the workers and key stakeholders. More than 200 women beedi workers attended the two-day meet to discuss various problems faced by them. The cases given below are only two of the many in Rajnandgaon district which reflect their plight.

Asha Bai Jagne, a middle-aged housewife, from Ram Nagar, earns a paltry Rs 15 per day making beedis. For this meagre sum, she makes 1000 beedis and spends about 8 hours in a day. Asha's husband is a cobbler and earns about Rs 30 in a day. Their meagre earning, alongwith demands of their four children, has crippled the family financially. Added to this is the adverse impact of beedi making on the health of Asha. **Khelon Bai Tandekar** and her cobbler husband of Shankarpur, earn Rs 40 per day, and barely manage to meet their expenses. The government's health care facility is inadequate and in case of medical emergencies, the family finds itself in deep trouble.

Representatives from the welfare and labour departments, health workers, trade union activists, government, and media attended the meet and shared their perspectives on the issue. PRIA's team provided information on their activities in the region and shared their views and perspectives. They highlighted the fact that though the government has announced various welfare

measures for the beedi workers, their living conditions are going from bad to worse.

Prem Narayan Verma of Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha narrated that due to the hazards of beedi making, many workers are suffering from various diseases. He highlighted that while the government has fixed Rs 52 as daily wages, most of the beedi workers get wages far below the minimum prescribed limit. According to *Thomas Abraham of Christian Fellowship Hospital*, ninety per cent of cancer cases in the globe are linked to the usage of tobacco. He stressed the need for forming a cooperative of beedi workers, to im-



Bidi Shramik Chintan Samelan

prove the conditions of these people and added that NGOs should play a key role in raising awareness about the hazards of tobacco consumption. *Dr Neelam Malhotra* who runs the dispensary for the beedi workers in Rajnandgaon said that most of the beedi workers are uneducated and lack awareness of welfare schemes. This combined with the absence of any union results in their total exploitation. *C S Parate*, the Regional Manager of National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) said that thousands of beedi workers are denied prescribed daily wage (Rs 52 per day) because of the informal nature of their work. He also stressed the need for forming self-help groups among the women beedi workers. *Arpana Chhetri from Swarna Jyanti*, *Shahri Rozgaar Yojna* explained the various labour welfare measures that exist for workers.

The plight of beedi workers often gets neglected and deliberately overlooked especially since a few big contractors totally control the trade. While beedi making is the main source of livelihood for thousands of people, it has a very adverse impact on the health of women, a fact that has been ignored for years. Trade unions leaders in Chhattisgarh believe that there is an urgent need to form cooperatives of beedi workers in order to increase their bargaining power. Simultaneously, there is need to impart vocational training to the beedi workers, for starting alternative business or else they will continue to be exploited and subjugated.

Financial Management

The workshop organized by PRIA and co-facilitated by BASIX, Hyderabad, during 15-16 January, aimed at building capacities of grassroots level voluntary organisations on financial management, and account keeping. Twenty-one representatives of voluntary organisations working in three districts of Warangal Mahabubnagar, and Nalgonda attended the programme. Sessions during the workshop gave information on basics of accounting systems, statutory acts and provisions, budgeting, vouchers, journals, ledgers, auditing and evaluation. The inputs provided gave the participants a complete overview of the various facets of financial management, which would enable them to apply the same in their organisations. The participants found the interaction and the inputs extremely useful. A field level follow up will soon be undertaken by PRIA's team at A.P to ensure the effectiveness of the programme and determine the need for an advanced level training programme.

Conference on Citizenship and Governance:

PRIA held a conference on "Citizenship and Governance: Issues of Identities, Inclusion and Voice, during 12-14 February, at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi. One Hundred thirty participants from different parts of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Uganda and UK representing

academia, practice based institutions, government and industry came together to deliberate on issues pertaining to the social and political exclusion of the marginalized. The two and a half day conference comprised six thematic plenary and twelve individual presentations at focusing largely on issues of dalit leadership, the gender factor in institutions of local self-governance, citizenship, public policy, institutional reform and multi-party accountability. Enhanced practice-research engagement as an important factor in making research a meaningful tool for social development was emphasized. The conference ended with the message that democratization is the key, which could unlock the possibilities and promises for effective operationalization of citizenship and would ensure the inclusion, voice and identities of the excluded in the processes of governance.

Perspective sharing

Members of PRIA's team shared their experiences and ideas on specific issues and gained insights into various concepts during the following events:

- **ASPBAE (Asian South Pacific bureau of adult education) Basic Leadership development Course**, 9 -15 January, Malaysia: The main objectives of the programme were to share, learn and apply adult learning principles and practices, develop leadership capabilities in areas of Project management, policy advocacy and regional networking, enhance gender awareness and sensitivity.
- **Symposium on Capacity development and aid effectiveness**, 14- 16 January, jointly organised by CIDA, UNDP, The World Bank Institute and JICA at Asia Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines: The event aimed at defining capacity development along-with sharing experiences of the World Bank's poverty reduction strategy papers in the context of capacity development and its measurement.
- **Workshop on Environmental and Occupational Health**, 15-17 January, Fairwear Foundation, Mumbai: organized to introduce the concept with which the foun-

datation is striving to promote a safe and healthy workplace environment for the garment workers; and to provide inputs to the same for defining the shape of its future activities.

- **Seminar on International Cooperation for Adult Education**, 23-25 February, Beijing, China: The event was organized to mark the 25 years of ASPBAE. Dr Rajesh Tandon, President, PRIA, delivered the keynote address on 'Understanding The Global Development Context for International Cooperation'.
- **Sharing meet at Sida, Stockholm, Sweden**, 11-12 March: to provide insights into decentralised democracy in India and inputs on Sida's country (India) strategy for the next five years. The meeting was attended by various members from PRIA and Sida head office.
- **Students visit PRIA, New Delhi**, 20 March: 25 students of the Massachusetts Institution of Technology, Sloan School of Management visited PRIA to gain an insight into the voluntary sector in India and its role in improving public policies. They discussed issues related to government, local bodies, academia and foreign funding.

Capacity Building with PACS

PRIA conducted a capacity building programme for the PACS (Poorest Areas Civil society Programme) partners organized by Development Alternatives at Taragram in Tikangarh district of M.P on 13 March. PRIA's involvement in the programme was significant from the point of view of addressing the core areas of work of the PACS partners. A detailed discussion on the understanding of civil society was initiated which sought not only to share the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of civil society but also to take note of the additional debates on this. The participatory exercise was aimed at bringing out the diverse perspectives and experiences of grassroots actors in India. Besides civil society, three substantive thematic areas relevant to the PACS partners were also dealt with. These included strengthening institutions of Panchayati Raj, and social cohesion.

Panchayat to Parliament: Women show the way

Organized by PRIA and The Hunger Project on the occasion of International Women's Day. At *Vishwa Yuvak Kendra* (6 - 7 March) and *India Habitat Centre*, (8 March) New Delhi

Chanda Devi (Rajasthan) has undertaken developmental work amounting to Rs.60 Lakhs in her Panchayat, Malsisar. She has been able to mobilize resources from both the State Government and the NRIs who are natives of the same village. **Kanila Swami** (Rajasthan) has been able to harness UNDP resources in a manner wherein women's opinion mattered. The resources were used in construction of tanks for water conservation and augmentation. **Pushpa Devi** (Chhatisgarh) mobilised the villagers to meet the water demands of the community and collected money to construct a check-dam as a rainwater harvesting initiative. **Praveen** (H.P) has been successful in getting much work done in her village by mobilising the village resources. Despite severe opposition she also got a resolution passed in the village sabha, for timely access of government funds for the beneficiaries. **Durga Tavadi**, a sarpanch in her early twenties bravely faces the impediments posed before her either in terms of conservative mindsets, lack of resources, lack of co-operation from the government functionaries and divided interests.

The above are not just small snippets. They are real life struggles and successes of some of the women elected representatives attending the women day celebration events organized by PRIA and The Hunger Project at New Delhi. PRIA has been encouraging and promoting women participation and leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions for the last seven years. Our grassroots experiences show that the Constitutional amendments have not only involved women in political processes but have also led to their participation in community pro-

cesses, development of leadership qualities and building up their levels of confidence. This event, "**Panchayat to Parliament: Women show the way**" was organized on the occasion of International Women's Day, with an aim to highlight new roles that women are playing as leaders and catalysts and provide them with a forum to share their experiences at the national level.

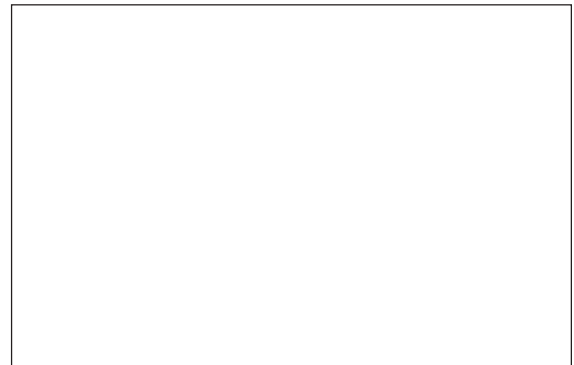
112 elected representatives and grassroots women leaders, (with whom PRIA and its partner organisation have been working with) from all parts of the country came together to celebrate the success of women in panchayats and municipalities. The three-day programme apart from providing the women representatives a platform to share their experiences, also gave them an opportunity to initiate a dialogue and interact with women parliamentarians, women leaders of the civil society and other stakeholder groups like media, academia, corporate, donors and voluntary organisations who attended the event.

The first day (6th March) started with an introductory session wherein the participants were divided into four groups and discussed constraints faced by them in performing their roles as members of local governments. Issues discussed included the two-child norm set by the government to decide the eligibility of the candidates contesting the elections at Panchayat level; positive impact of one-third reservation for women, basic needs (Drinking water, Health, Education), lack of cooperation from bureaucrats and other elected male representatives, interference by male members of their families, low participation of women in Gram Sabha meetings, social constraints and others.

This was followed by a session on Media and Women facilitated by Ms. Anu Anand (Associate Editor, Grassroots (Hindi), Press Institute of India, New Delhi), who gave suggestions on how to interact with the media and the lack of awareness

amongst national level media on the realities of PRIs. She encouraged the women participants to speak out and share with others their struggles, achievements and their resolve for tomorrow.

The delegation was then divided into three groups for visits to different organisations. One group of twelve elected women representatives participated in a panel discussion focusing on "Two Child Norm" held at *National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)* office. Concern was raised over why the norm was set only for the Panchayat level functionaries and not the functionaries at the district and the state level? Many representatives felt that though the norm



Workshop during women day celebration

might be right it should be applicable to government officials and elected representatives at all levels.

Twenty-four participants were taken to participate in the discussion at *Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC)*. Women journalists representing leading newspaper dailies like *The Pioneer*, *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, *UNI* and others attended the meeting. Women sarpanches and leaders narrated the range of issues faced by them in their every day working. A group of thirty-five participants visited *UNI-VARIA*, one of the biggest news agencies in the country, where they got an opportunity to observe the activities of the agency, understand how news is received from all over the country and disseminated to various newspapers and how exactly the media works. Following this the members of *Jan Natya Manch*, *Kurukshetra*,

Haryana, presented a street play at PRIA, New Delhi that focused on the low status of women in the society.

Proceedings on second day (7th March) started with an informal talk on 'Women and Parliament' by Ms. Mohini Giri, Former Chairperson, National Commission for Women. She emphasized on unity amongst women from different communities. She informed the group regarding the formation of a federation of



Mahila Panchayat Members

women sarpanchs from all over the country, which she said would be formed by August 2003.

The group was then taken to the Parliament where they met Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Dr. Najra Heptullah and 18 women MPs, over lunch. While addressing the gathering, she praised the women leaders and applauded the work that they have been undertaking. The women presented a memorandum to Dr. Heptullah stating their problems and asking for support from the higher levels of governance.

The mega event culminated with an interactive session on 'Women show the way' moderated by Dr. Rajesh Tandon, PRIA & Ms. Sumita Ghosh, THP, held at the India Habitat Centre on 8 March. One elected woman representative each from all the nine participating states shared their experiences with the group including representatives from the government, industry, media, and others

Pana Mani Marandi (Sarpanch, Keonjhar District, Orissa) and Shiv Kunari (U.P) of the opinion that women have to face many difficulties while performing

their official duties and while dealing with district officials. Leela Devi (H.P) stated that wherever the sarpanch is a woman and up-sarpanch a man, there is a continuous tussle between the two. The male up-sarpanchs usually tries to create problems for the female sarpanchs so that she is removed and he can take over the responsibility of the sarpanch. Jyoti (only woman sarpanch in Rohtas district of Bihar) emphasized that women may have

entered politics because of reservation and quotas but they should not be reserved while performing their responsibilities. She encouraged all the women representatives to come forward and work towards educating society, which is the only way to empowerment.

Ms. Feroza Mehrotra from UNIFEM shared her experiences of working in Haryana and emphasized how women can achieve a lot once they unite themselves and take a firm stand on issues related to development and betterment of the society. Mr. Orango from Tamil Nadu, the only male sarpanch in the whole group, shared his experiences of working in the Panchayat. He emphasized that there should be sustainable packages for village development especially in the field of employment. He highlighted that Gram Sabha is a strength to the Panchayat system. Taking the clue from the theme of workshop, 'Panchayat to Parliament', he stated that there should be a movement from 'Panchayat to Panchayat' also so that people could learn from each other's experiences.

Retd. Col. Mehta from ASSOCHAM, representing the corporate sector, emphasized the commitment of the industrial sector towards fulfilling their social responsibilities. He informed the house that this association of commerce and industries was committed to help develop villages, and to start with they have chosen four intervention areas - health, education, water and women. Among other government officials who

spoke on the occasion, Mr. Pramod Chakravarty, Joint Secretary, Department of Women & Child Development, spoke about the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). He stressed that Panchayats should work in association with Anganwadis so that more and more children get the benefit of such schemes. Monitoring by the Panchayats would ensure optimum utilization of resources.

Ms. Padma, a guest from Sri Lanka spoke about the situation in her own country, where there is no village level governance. Instead they have three levels of governance- national, province and district and there are initiatives to empower women by linking them up with the district level governing body.

Ms. Anarjeet Ahuja Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development encouraged the women to come forward using the power of Gram Sabha, which would strengthen their voice. By doing so, the officials would have no option but to listen to their voices and work for them. The workshop concluded with a song by women representatives " Hum honge kaaryaab." All the participants were presented with a plant to carry home and spread the message for preserving the environment across the country, starting from their own villages.

Voters awareness Campaign, Uttaranchal

PRIA and fifty local voluntary organisations collectively formed a Pre election Voters Awareness Campaign Network (Samiti) in the state of Uttaranchal. The network in collaboration with the union ministry of rural development organized a series of pre-election voters awareness campaigns, during 7 - 12 March, prior to the panchayat elections, in 12 districts of the state. The campaign approved by the state election commissioner, aimed to create awareness about the importance of panchayat elections amongst the voters, candidates and elected representatives. Various efforts initiated for the purpose of encouraging voters and imparting useful information

about the elections included rallies, street plays, distribution of pamphlets, setting up of voters awareness booths and small group meetings.



Kishori Group of SKS, Uttaranchal

A similar process was also undertaken earlier (January) during the urban local body elections, in the Pethoragarh and Champavat districts. It brought together various stakeholders and provided them with a platform to share their experiences and perspectives. The messages stressed the value of every single vote for ensuring good governance and encouraged participation of the community especially the youth and women for the success of panchayats. The network also mobilized support from local media groups for highlighting their messages.

Urban local bodies, Haryana

PRIA organised a state level workshop on the status of urban local bodies in Haryana, during 20 - 21 January, at Fatehabad district of the state, to share the findings of its summary report on the same. The multi-stakeholder interaction was attended by senior officials of municipal corporations including the State Finance Commission Chair, *Mr. Suraj Bhan Kajal*, district councilor, state district magistrate, councilors, elected representatives. PRIA's team members shared findings of their report and presented its perspective on the issues relating to municipal bodies. Discussions among other issues focused on municipal finances. The district councilor expressed his concern on the lack of information related to various development schemes with the community and the elected representatives and urged organisations like PRIA to take up the information dissemination role. The meeting

was chaired by the *Sheelawanti* (elected chair of Fatehabad municipality) who was doing so for the first time in presence of her husband and other dignitaries.

Citizenship Study, Jharkhand

- The principal aspiration for Santal tribals in the new state of Jharkhand is accessing state provided development resources. To them, the new state represents their own territory where they can rightfully make claims.
- Although government initiated development and welfare schemes abound, a weak, politicized and corrupt state delivery system prevents them from reaching marginalized Santals.
- NGOs and church organisations play an important role in providing basic services, especially where the government is unable to reach.
- Santals society is fragmented along religious, cultural and political lines. These multiple identities (religious, cultural, political) are often negotiated to gain access to development resources. Santals find formal education and collective bargaining particularly helpful in sustaining the struggle for their rights.

These are some of the principal findings of the PRIA's study on "Meanings and Identities of Citizenship amongst Santals in Jharkhand," which were shared at the district level dissemination workshop on 14 March, at Dumka, Jharkhand. The workshop was organised in collaboration with Agrarian Assistance Association, a Dumka based NGO and a partner in the study. Part of a broader research theme "Images and Meanings of Rights and Citizenship" identified by the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, this workshop was the culmination of more

than a year's effort. It was attended by members of community based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs from Dumka, Pakur, Sahibganj, Godda and Jantara. Held in a participatory mode, discussions and debates at the workshop were held in Hindi, Santali and Pahariya. Members of CBOs and people's organisations' argued that for them citizenship would become real only when they were given the right to local natural resources and access to state provided development resources. Participants reiterated the need for widening people's participation in local development and local governance in order to promote citizenship initiatives.

Decentralisation Process, Assam

During the quarter, PRIA concluded its study on the Decentralisation process in Assam and shared the same in a series of workshops. Two district level workshops (at Golaghat on 10 February in collaboration with the Golaghat Zilla Parishad and at Halflong on 11 March, in collaboration with Autonomous Council, Assam) and one state level workshop (at North East Regional Centre of NIRD, 26 March in collaboration with NIRD) were attended by representatives from civil society organisations, CBOs, district administration, elected representatives from local governments and others.

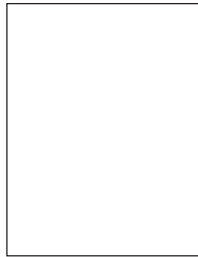
The study aimed to understand the role of decentralized bodies in decision-making, development planning and implementation. The study highlighted that while a legal framework on local governments exists in the state, the decentralization policy and strategy is not clear. It also reveals that though the devolution framework prepared in August 2002 by the government talks about transfer of various department functions to PRIs, in practice exists only on paper and the financial resource base of the decentralized bodies is extremely poor. The study further points out that there is lack of social and economic planning at the Gram Sabha level, the district planning committees are not functional and the existing capacity building efforts are inadequate.

Starting workshop of citizenship study in Jharkhand

LATEST PRIA PUBLICATIONS

Community Monitoring in Water and Sanitation Projects, A facilitators manual:

The manual aims at creating a basic understanding of the concept, principles and steps of community monitoring. It includes cases of social development monitoring project, facilitated by PRIA, in Dharali village, Uttarakashi district of Uttaranchal.



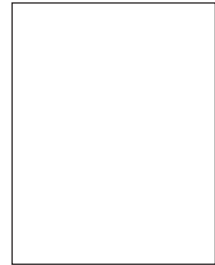
Capacity Building of Southern

NGOs: The report attempts to present the synthesis of lessons and experiences emerged through the initiatives of the International Forum on Capacity Building, during the last three years.



Invisible yet widespread: The Non Profit Sector in India (English and

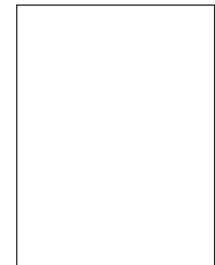
Hindi): National report on PRIA's study of the Non Profit sector in India, (being conducted in collaboration with John Hopkins University, USA) released recently.



Dimensions of Giving and Volunteering in West Bengal:

(Working Paper 7) Part of the series of papers on the study of the Non- profit sector in India as above.

For more information on the above, please contact our publications division at info@pria.org



Organisational Behaviour-A Framework for Non-Government Development Organisations and OSANGO tool.

Centre for Youth and Social Development, PRIA's regional support organisation based at Bhubaneswar, Orissa, released the above publication at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 14 February. The book presents a comprehensive model to assess effectiveness of individual NGOs

in using their available capacities and resources in the light of their respective chosen missions and goals. It identifies six crucial variables with their twenty-three sub variables that can be measured with the help of 'OSANGO' a fully computerised software, available separately. The 'OSANGO' is a user- friendly software package that enables NGOs to undertake survey based self analysis in an economic, autonomous manner while ensuring complete confidentiality.



Snippet corner

☞ Mrs. Kaldate, a senior retired sociologist, Aurangabad narrates "A Muslim woman became the sarpanch of a village for the first time. One of her initial purchases was a large thermos bottle. On asking the reason she said that all the officials who visit her ask for a cup of tea in the beginning. Talk of work begins only after that and by then their meeting time is almost over. Now I keep tea ready in this thermos so as we begin discussing work immediately."

☞ A circular was earlier, during January, issued by the Government of Maharashtra about flag hoisting on 26th January. The circular stated that the hoisting of the national flag was to be conducted by either the woman sarpanch of the village or a senior woman but not by anyone else. The line in that circular is, "the hands that swing cribs will hoist the national flag."

Contributed by Vijay Kanhare, PRIA's team member in Maharashtra

Please send your suggestions and comments to us at :

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