Ordering Our Urban Habitat

The roots of urbanisation go deep into Indian history. Since the days of Mohenjodaro and Harappan civilization, urbanisation has been an integral component of the Indian social process. The cities and towns in Indian society have served as very important political, administrative and commercial centres. Though documentation on the planning, architecture and civic amenities is available on ancient urban centres, written material available on their administration are sparse.

During the colonial period too, cities and towns remained very important administrative, political and commercial centers. In spite of this, no attempt was made to provide an elaborate administrative structure giving people the scope of participation in the system of local governance. In post-Independent India, too, urban centers have remained important and the pace of urbanisation has increased manifold. Indian urban areas broadly defined as settlements with a population of over 5000 persons, have today a population of a little over 200 million persons. As per 1991 census the total urban population of the country is 217.2 million, having risen from 159.7 million in 1981. During the 1981–1991 decade, the country’s urban population increased by approximately 5.77 million person per annum, at an average rate of 3.62 per cent, compared to the growth rate of 1.65 per cent for the rural population. Now about 26 per cent of the total population of the country live in about 3609 urban settlements. The urban centres contribute about half of the country’s Gross National Product, at the same time accommodate a large number of poor.

But not much attention has been paid to their administration, people’s participation in their governance, and civic amenities provided to the communities. Many functions performed hitherto by local bodies are now performed by urban development authorities which are state government organisations and other state level institutions for specific purposes. In recent years, even the obligatory functions of local bodies have been taken away in many cases and assigned to state level bodies. It is basically the bureaucracy which has taken control over urban local-self governance. This has happened at all levels of towns and cities including the metropolitan cities. As a consequence accountability has remained out of the agenda; transparency is also not practiced, and participation of people in the system of urban governance has become a distant dream.

Now, this third stratum of government, i.e. local-self government a long cherished constitutional requirement, has been provided by the 74th amendment of the Constitution. While 73rd amendment has attracted wide attention, 74th amendment which is also equally important, has been relegated to the background.

The Constitutional (Seventy-Fourth Amendment) Act, 1992, seeks to provide power to the people, by granting constitutional recognition to a third tier of urban local government. The Act provides for many changes in the structure of the municipality, its composition, its power and functions.
The Act specifically provides for municipal responsibilities to include planning for economic development and social justice. The domain of urban local governments has been broaden to include programmes related to urban poor. It empowers the weaker sections and the women by providing the reservation of seats. The creation of Ward Committees is also intended to reduce the distance between the common citizens and the local government, and this hopefully will make the institution more responsive to the needs of the local community and will ensure accountability.

In spite of the lacunae, this is certainly a valuable Constitutional weapon given to the people bestowing power on them. They have an opportunity to participate in their own governance and put their own habitat in order.

The crucial questions are: will the state elite be willing to part with power? Will the bureaucracy give way to the people: will the state government ensure the transfer of power to the people? Can the weaker sections be empowered enough to assert their needs? These are the real challenges confronting conscious citizens, voluntary organisations, political parties and other people’s groups. The message has to be carried to the people, in general, and urban poor, in particular. The new incumbents from weaker sections including women have to be conscientized enabling them to participate in the new governance system effectively. Attempt by all democratic forces are to be made to ensure implementation of the new Act and appropriate transfer of power.

The new legislation on urban local self-governance has stimulated thinking, reactions and apprehensions on the issue. The theme article tries to capture this variety and “Learning from the Field” focuses on two cases where the citizens have organized themselves to pressurise the bureaucracy to respond to the people’s needs and problems.

In our own limited way, we will be pursuing in the coming period the ideas of people’s participation led local self-governance in urban areas.

- Dr. Nalin R. Jena

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Urban Governance and People’s Participation: Observations from Pune and Bangalore

Jennifer Jalal*

Urban local self-government institutions have operated in some form or the other in post-Independent India. It is only now that the political leadership of the country is trying to provide it with an autonomous independent constitutional identity. The 74th Constitutional Amendment of 1992 also known as the Nagarpalika Act, provides such possibilities.

The objective of the legislation is primarily to strengthen local democracy in India by transferring ‘power’ to the ‘people’ and encouraging their participation and involvement in the decision-making processes at the level of local governance.

The recent growth of people-oriented movements, has been due to the degradation of urban civic services in the cities throughout India. The census reveals that while in 1981 one in four persons, i.e. 160 million were in the urban areas, in 1991, it was marginally above one in four at 217 million. The forecast for 2001 AD says that it would be more than one in three, i.e. 315 to 330 million. These trends have substantially focussed on the accelerating urbanization phenomenon which is visible at present in India. Against this background, governance of these areas and especially the role of people’s participation in the system of governance assumes importance. A recent field visit to the cities of Pune and Bangalore gave some valuable insights into how ‘peoples’ groups are acting as pressure groups on the civic bodies of these two cities. In both the cities of Pune and Bangalore the common citizens have taken up the challenge of monitoring the activities of civic bodies, through organized groups called ‘Residents Citizens’ Forum’ or ‘Mohalla Committees’ as they are popularly known.

THE PUNE EXPERIENCE

Local Self Government was first introduced in Pune in the year 1857. The administration of the municipality used to be run by a committee of the members appointed by the government. The collector was the president of the municipality.

The Pune City Council was converted into Municipal Corporation under the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporation Act, 1949. The first general election was held in the year 1952 and 65 councillors were elected from 25 wards i.e. multiple member constituencies. At present there are 111 councillors who look after an equal number of constituencies in the city.

The main income of the corporation comes from levying different taxes, raising loans with the permission of the state government.

The Corporation’s primary duty is to provide basic civic amenities as well as to provide free education to the students of Pune city. There are two types of duties, one is obligatory and the other discretionary.

Citizen’s Forums

The mismanagement of these services is one of the main reason for the growth of citizens’ forums in cities today. The
Club Resident Citizens' Forum is one such forum which was formed in 1992, to provide protection to their neighbours of the minority community during the riots the same year. It has now progressed to a very organised forum which deals with civic issues which are not necessarily restricted to their immediate neighbourhood.

The membership of these committees is totally voluntary and usually consists of retired citizens, housewives and ex-defence personnel. However, what is most incredible is the professional approach to the whole issue. For instance, minutes of the meetings of the Mohalla Committees are maintained, regular write-ups are sent to the press and local expertise is utilised for, e.g. a map was prepared on the GIS system, which is used with different legends to explain the problems of the area to the concerned agencies.

Their report of the month of May and June, 1995, covers wide ranging issues like stopping the construction of a causeway, nuisance of pubs, encouraging tree plantation, opposing encroachment by slum dwellers on land meant for a 'bird sanctuary', segregation of garbage for easy disposal, encouraging vermiculture, etc.

Mode of Function

These forums usually do not have a standard method of functioning. They take up issues as and when the situation demands. The first step is to discuss the issue with the members of the forum who then collectively present the issue to the ward officer. If no action is taken for long, a representative of the forum informs the corporator (elected representative) of the ward. If that too evokes no reaction, they take their grievances to the Commissioner. The first meeting is followed by a few rejoinders and letters to the press. Eight or nine other such Mohalla Committees spread all over Pune city have been functioning as effective watch-dogs on the municipal authorities.

Role Played by the Press

In fact what has made the corporation and other such civic bodies accountable to some extent, is the dynamic support provided by the Indian Express. The resident editor, Mr. Kardelay's brain child the 'Express Citizen's Forum' has already earned the reputation not only in Pune but all over the country, 'as an unique organization of citizen's acting as pressure groups on behalf of citizens on the civic front'. It has a seven member managing committee and a nine member advisory board, with the resident editor of Indian Express as the coordinator. The forum serves as a strong common platform for committed citizen activists. Some of their prominent activities during 1994, deal with citizen's participation in quality control of road works involving corporate sector in road maintenance, introducing the Pune-Howrah coach, tree plantation in Salisbury Park, new traffic pattern in Pune cantonment area. The forum would continue to take up macro-level issues and leave the locality based micro issues to various neighbourhood/resident bodies. The forum is in a position to provide leadership to the other citizens' bodies and bring them together on common programmes from time to time. Finally, apart from normal 'pressure tactics', it is the 'citizen's pride' in their city owing to historical, socio-cultural reasons which has made the citizens' forums an effective group for monitoring the local urban governance of Pune city.

LESSONS FROM THE 'GARDEN CITY' OF BANGALORE

Bangalore's Municipal Corporation is similar to Pune, however, a fact to be noted here is the involvement of the office bearer of the Bangalore Development Authority, who also holds an office in the Corporation, which has made the experimentation with 'citizens' forums' and self-governance a very unique feature.

Three Citizens' Action Groups

As recent as on June 28th, 1995, three categories of 'citizens' Action Groups' have been informally constituted pending a formal order to this effect by Dr. A. Ravindra, Chairman B.D.A. to facilitate a participatory role for them in their efforts to improve the administration. Thus 'transparency' and
'accountability' are the key words in this issue. The former is in the process of being established through a booklet which is being written under the auspices of the B.D.A. to explain the structure of their organization for the common people's benefit. The activities and programmes of the B.D.A. are no longer a 'secret'. Access to information which should rightfully be furnished on a common citizens' demand, is now treated with respect.

The latter is being established through the mandatory appointment of three ward level officers from the B.D.A. to directly interact with the Mohalla Committees, to address their problems.

Some of the local N.G.O.'s like Maytri, Nagrik, CIVIC, AVAS and PAC have taken the initiative to preside over the meetings between the B.D.A. officers and the residents and also to motivate increasing number of residents to participate in such activities.

Three separate core groups have been set-up, a Planning Group (Group I), a Decentralization Group (Group II) and a Systems Improvement Group (Group III).

Group I will study significant policy documents such as the comprehensive development plan and the Metro Rapid Transit System, besides reviewing the status of development features such as lakes and tanks in order to offer constructive suggestions.

Group II a seven member group is to draw up an action plan that will facilitate N.G.O. participation in the decentralization of services in some of the layouts in the city. They would hold awareness meetings with households and also coordinate the activities of the B.D.A. worker's and the Mohalla Committees.

Group III will deal with System's improvement proposals. It would deal with routing and addressing redressal issues through the B.D.A.'s public relations cell.

The programmes of the B.D.A. are now much publicised items. The Indian Express as in Pune, is giving wide coverage to subjects oriented to people's participation and civic amenities.

CONCLUSION
The learnings from both Pune and Bangalore were a rejuvenating experience as one observed the involvement of common citizens in ushering a 'method in the madness' in the otherwise urban chaos of cities.

The earlier role of people's participation was to meet the legal requirement of publishing notices in the Gazette or newspapers to make it known that a plan was being prepared or some changes were in the offing.

Recently however the activities of organized groups who launch movements against certain projects or schemes have added a new dimension to the process of influencing the decisions. However their role is still restricted to being a 'pressure' rather than an 'advocacy group'. On many occasions it has also been noticed that such movements are dominated by vested interest.

At present the role of the government is that of a facilitator and not of a provider of services. Therefore while it makes provisions for services, the citizens groups/NGOs should be in a position to effectively provide the same.

The role played by such agencies in Pune and Bangalore are laudable. These could be effectively replicated in the other cities in India.

The constitutional Seventy Fourth Amendment Act is a step in the right direction for revitalizing the urban government units for better civic services. With the shifting of the decision making process to the grassroots level, the participative character of the Indian democracy and polity is expected to change dramatically. However as in the past, the sustainability of such movements is a matter of concern.
Decentralization and Development:
Community Participation in Mexico's Municipal Funds Programme

JONATHAN FOX AND JOSEFINA ARANDA
(The following presentation is an abstract of the above study. Abstract prepared by Dr. Nalin R. Jena.)

This research project is designed to contribute to the understanding of the determinants of Municipal Fund community participation and its impact on development projects. As international development agencies and national authorities entrust greater responsibilities and resources to the local governments, around the world, anti-poverty policies increasingly cover decentralization programs. In Mexico, since 1989, the government has channeled significant amounts of resources to municipal governments to fund development projects to be chosen by the local communities. Of the many programs carried out under the National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL) umbrella, the Municipal Solidarity Funds are the most directed toward strengthening the development capacity of local government.

This study had three main goals. The first was to document how the program works and to assess the development impact of these community development block grants; the second was to analyze the decision making process of project implementation; and the third was to explore the relationship between process and outcome, to determine how the nature and degree of community participation affected development impact. In order to highlight the causes and effects of a full spectrum of degrees of local participation, the research design focused on the one state where significant community participation was most likely to be found—Oaxaca.

Oaxaca's system of local government is unique in Mexico, since the jurisdictions are much smaller, both in terms of territory and population, more numerous and relatively autonomous from the rest of the state. This smaller scale combined with longstanding indigenous traditions of active citizen participation in community decision-making favour the prospects for the success of the program.

Background: Poverty and Policy Trends

In contrast to Mexico's successful macroeconomic stabilization, extreme poverty remains widespread. The 1992 United Nations/Mexican government survey showed that the percentage of Mexican living in "extreme poverty", measured by their capacity to buy a minimum basic market basket of food, fell from 14.9 million people in 1989 (18.8%) to 13.6 million in 1992 (16.1%). The absolute number was still higher than in 1984.

While the official survey data revealed few possible explanations in the aggregate, the slightly disaggregated data (urban vs. rural) offer some important leads. The aggregate 1989-1992 drop masked two completely different trends. The number in extreme poverty in urban areas fell from 6.5 million in 1989 to 4.8 million in 1992. At the same time, the number in extreme poverty in rural areas increased from 8.4 million to 8.8 million. The authors view that while national economic growth is likely to have significant anti-poverty spillover effects within urban areas, there is no reason at all to assume that national economic growth will reduce extreme poverty in rural areas.

The Municipal Solidarity Funds represent the confluence of two policy streams in Mexico. The first is a series of innovations in the Mexican government's anti-poverty programs over the past two decades. Successive reform initiatives have tried different combinations of community participation, job creation, community implementation, and oversight of the projects and input into national anti-poverty policy process. The evolution of these various efforts, from PIDER in the mid-1970s to IMSS-COPLAMAR and CONASUPO-COPLAMAR (1979-1982), and now PRONASOL since 1989, has involved significant movement away from traditional clientelist politics toward greater involvement of community participation in the local implementation of those development programs controlled by reformist policymakers. This trend was paralleled by the spread of autonomous organizations of low-income people, usually based on producer, consumer, village and neighbourhood associations. Societal participation in development decisions remained limited to project implementation at the local level.

The other converging policy stream is the process of administrative and constitutional reform to strengthen the municipality. Through the 1983 amendment of Article 115 of the Mexican Constitution, municipalities gained more responsibility in service delivery and town councils were created to decentralize municipal
administration. This reform was partial, since it did not match the new development responsibilities of municipalities with greater sources of revenue, especially in low-income rural areas. The Municipal Solidarity Fund program involved a convergence of these two strands and has the potential to increase the capacity of municipal government to respond to local development needs with greater efficiency and accountability in Mexico’s poorest rural areas.

**State-Wide Findings: Municipal Solidarity Fund Procedures**

FMS program operations are designed to devolve local project decision-making to the municipal and community level. According to the program’s 1992 Technical Guide, the general goal is “to strengthen municipal autonomy and to strengthen their capacity to respond to the community. The program’s specific goal is to carry out small public works that improve the living conditions and permit access to increased income to those who live in low productivity areas, indigenous peoples, and inhabitants of marginal urban neighbourhoods. The Municipal Fund Program is instructed to follow Solidarity’s basic principles: respect for the communities and their decisions, support for organized social participation, co-responsibility in program operations, and honesty, transparency and efficiency in resource management.

The principle of spending the Municipal Funds is to benefit the largest number of least favoured residents. Municipal Funds are not to be spent on projects involving town halls or churches. Once the Municipal Council has been formed and the projects approved, an assembly in each community with a project is to elect a formal Solidarity Committee to take responsibility for the construction, operation and maintenance of the project.

The study finds that in practice, most of the funds reached the local committees directly responsible for carrying out the local projects. The mayors delivered FMS support in cash or cheque, directly to the project committees in 82% of the cases. This implies a major shift away from the traditional centralization of local power in the hands of the mayor. The study further finds that in practice, most of the funds reached the local committees directly responsible for carrying out the local projects. However, project selection did not necessarily prioritize the most pressing basic service needs. A large minority of FMS projects seemed to have little impact on poverty alleviation.

There are a few interesting results which surface in the study. Social and civic organizations rarely participated as organizations in the formal FMS decision-making process. The researchers say, “In contrast to one of our initial hypotheses, the presence of strong grassroots organizations, especially producers groups, had little impact on the project decision-making process. Nor did they appear in the qualitative accounts of municipalities where grassroots groups are known to be active. This absence was not only the result of the lack of dissemination of the fact that productive projects could be included in the project mean; it was also due to the widely held traditional conception of the division of labour between the duties of local government and the role of producer.

One is — the more remote, outlying communities had fewer significant projects and more project failures than the municipal centers. Non-operational projects were disproportionately found in the outlying areas, compared with those in the municipal centres. The other one is — municipalities with competitive political party systems were correlated with significant project impact. The explanation preferred for this is municipalities governed by political parties, whether ruling or opposition are most likely to have clout with state authorities. They would therefore have more access to both technical assistance and supplemental state government funds.

The study concludes that FMS programme is seen positively by the vast majority of municipal leaders and project participants; in spite of the program’s pro-rural targeting measures, municipal centres received consistently larger budgets than outlying communities; local development project impact was also constrained by the lack of adequate technical assistance; project sustainability is a major potential problem; the state government played a central role in programme implementation than other social organisations. Local government is seen to be responsible for service provision, while producer groups are expected to focus on economic activities. In municipalities, where social organizations are strong, however, their members consistently participated actively in FMS projects as individual citizens⁷. Another interesting finding is — unresolved electoral conflict undermined community participation in municipal development projects. It is viewed by the researchers that while independent civic movements are often seen as key forces for encouraging accountable local government, the conflicts provoked by democratization efforts could have a negative effect on municipal project participation. For example,
Towards Urban Local Self-Governance

PREM NARGAS*

The enactment of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 is a landmark in the constitutional history of India. Lord Ripon in May 1882 had initiated elected majorities and chairmen in local bodies—a promise implemented slowly and incompletely in the face of resistance from most provincial bureaucrats. Subsequent reforms by Montagu—Chelmsford which has as its objective, the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government realization carried local self-governance a step further. Despite the fact that many of our leading political figures e.g. Gokhale and Tilak of the Indian freedom struggle cut their political teeth in municipality politics, in 1950, our constitution chose to remain silent on the issue of urban local self-governance.

For the first time since independence, the 74th Amendment has accorded urban local self-governance constitutional status.

The 74th Amendment’s innovative measures are:

• Mandatory elections for municipalities every 5 years. Before its full term expires, however, a municipality can be dissolved only after a fair hearing but elections must be held within 6 months of dissolution.

• 1/3 representation for women and proportional representation for SC/ST/OBC; the chairmanship of a municipality must also represent the above categories.

• Provision for the constitution of a State Finance Commission to advise on financial matters.

• Provision for a State Election Commission.

• Provision for District Planning Committees.

• Provision for Metropolitan Planning Committee.

• The creation of Ward Committees for municipalities with over 3 lakhs population.

The 12th Schedule listing 18 subjects is appended. Significantly slum upgradation, ecological and environmental issues have been included for the first time for local self-governance.

This Act has overcome the issue of supersession which had for long brought municipal activity to a standstill. Its provisions for a State Election Commission, a State Finance Commission and Ward Committees will go a long way in devolving power, if implemented sincerely.

While an effort has been made to include the weaker sections in local governance, it is clearly meaningless to ‘empower’ them without increasing their capacity to govern by educating them in the implications of their roles. The empowerment of the people loses meaning even further when viewed from this perspective.

However, welcome this amendment may be insofar as devolving power to the people is concerned, there are certain lacunae inherent in its structure, that the measure or control accorded to each state contradicts the principal or autonomy for local bodies. Although the states have conformed to the letter of the law by enacting mandatory legislations in tune with the provisions of the Act, they have disregarded the spirit of the law. The experience of municipalities has shown that the states have been unwilling to devolve functional and financial power. Moreover the devolution of power—functional and financial—is meaningless unless the local resource base in also strengthened.

* The author is in PRIA.
through clear financial strategy.

The actual functioning of local bodies also suffers from overlap. The voting rights of MPS and MLAs and nominated members on ward committees, for instance, indicate the interference of one level of government with another. The role and size of wards has also been left undefined. They could be small enough to enable the average citizen to participate in civic affairs.

Although State Finance Commissions are to be modelled on the Central Finance Commission, in practice they defy the norms. A clear demarcation of revenues is necessary if autonomy of municipalities is to be assured.

The criticism of the Act has, however, been taken into account by the Government of India. In Feb. 1995, an inter-Ministerial Committee (Task Force) was set up under the chairmanship of Member-Secretary, Planning Commission to examine -
(a) Urban Perspective and Policy
(b) Planning System
(c) Financing of Urban Infrastructure.

The main aim of this Task Force was to engage in a detailed discussion on the lacunae that emerged in the course of public debate. The agenda includes discussion and recommendation of the following:
- Changes in the legal frame-work, both at the central, state and local level.
- An appropriate frame-work for manpower planning.
- Investment and maintenance required for urban infrastructure.
- The inadequacy of existing financial resources
- The institutional arrangement needed to generate funds required; the involvement of and the participation by the private sector.
- The subject of devolution of finances to urban local bodies.
- Guidelines to State Finance Commissions.
- Preparation of Town/City socio-economic plans and the integration of the district and metropolitan plans with annual plans of the state governments as also with the overall national plans.

The Task Forces initiative in taking cognizance of public concern over the lacunae of the Act was commendable and focussed on the felt public need for essential changes in urban local self-governance and corrective to the Act itself. However, the enactment of the Act and the protracted discussion around it have clearly indicated that social transformation is a gradual show process and cannot be effected without the will and concern of the people. For power to be vested in the people, people's initiatives are essential. Hence, while the government has initiated the 74th Amendment and its subsequent detailed policy planning in cognizance of people's views, it is in the interest of the people to form pressure groups to reflect on the
problems encountered and the policy needed to resolve them. This is necessary to enable groups to not only advocate changes but also to serve as watchdogs in the public interest. Together with an objective and critical media, citizen's groups could ensure accountability and transparency in public life. There is, therefore, a need to mobilise interested citizens nation-wide to focus effectively on local issues and pool in ideas, resources, expertise and energy to maintain a high standard of public ethics and aesthetics besides creating utilitarian services.

An apathetic and demoralized society is reflected in inertia or sporadic public protest. There is a need to develop constructive dissent as critical public opinion is necessary for a healthy democracy. This Act endeavours to include those who have been excluded from the structures of power and alienated from the mainstream. Decentralisation of power is a recognition of the individual's rights. It could be however regulated and controlled by self-governance. The engagement of all categories of people, especially weaker sections and the marginalised in public affairs is necessary for a dynamic and vibrant society. This alone can give a direction to social change.

It is here that NGOs can work effectively to create awareness of citizens, rights and duties and mobilise citizens to advocacy cases. A study of two such groups is presented on pg. 3 of this bulletin.

In the final analysis, we must recognize that power, in whomsoever it may be reposed, has always needed the actively critical citizen to rein it in. A continuous and constant dialogue between government, media and citizens groups in necessary if accountability and transparency are to be ensured. The pragmatics of this process will have to be accepted by all of us if we want 'power to the people' to become a reality.

In order to represent divergent points of view, we interviewed practitioner, a bureaucrat and an academician who have been deeply involved in urban issues. The interviews follow.

With Mr. T.K. Mathew, Executive Director DEEPAHYA, a Delhi based NGO who has done pioneering and sustained work on urban issues

Q. What difference does the 74th Amendment make to your constituencies?
A. The majority of them are unaware of it. An awareness of it has to be created among them, especially the women who are not informed about it. The problem is that as soon as NGOs become active on such issues, they are immedi-

ately branded as entering politics and accused having designs of a political career. I am confident of mobilizing people. Half the battle is won when women are mobilized. This can be done directly/indirectly. The dissemination of knowledge is important. Segments of women can be involved; leadership can be identified. If NGOs need not be in the forefront. Collusion with politicians may take place if NGOs are in forefront. In West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the organising done by Marxist activists has helped to a great extent in mobilising people. We must recognize that existing political forces are at loggerheads. Secondly vested interests often prove a deterrent to people's participation. Often a combination of progressive radical activity boomerangs. How many NGOs can sustain activity in the face of such harassment?

Q. Is it possible to form citizen groups to encourage active participation?
A. This would need a lot of committed workers on the pattern of the Sarvodaya village workers. It would also be very expensive for the poor people to afford. The problem also is — who is giving time? How many community workers are so close to the community as to reorient them? If our workers do it, they may lead to confusion. Organising a community is not easy. In our culturally fragmented society, divisions are easily created and may destroy consolidated work.

Q. What is your experience of dealing with corporations?
A. It is no different from that of dealing with politicians. The idea of NGOs taking up 73rd and 74th Amendments is peripheral and soppy.

Q. Do you think a political/bureaucratic head of the municipalities is feasible?
A. A combination of both can help. Accountability is of great importance. Even the Sarvodaya movement with its ideal of selfless social work failed because of lack of accountability.

Q. Do you think the creation of Ward Committees will encourage people's participation?
A. We already have something on the same pattern. A cluster comprising of 25 families is formed. Each family is represented by one member - male or female. Out of this 5 members form a panchayat. Each panch has the responsibilities of dealing with education, health, conflict resolu-
tion and external relations. 8-10 clusters are represented in a 'samiti' by these panches. This has been working well. Women too are enthusiastic. There are cases of all women 'samitis' too. But this is a process. In Delhi, 34 'samitis' are brought together as a central coordinating committee. This has helped to remove women's inhibitions. This has been the continuous effort of the last decade. Today they are fit to contest elections.

Mr. Mathew felt that the 74th Amendment is the beginning of a process which may take decades to concretize.

Interview with Dr. P.K. Mohanty, Director (UD) Ministry of Urban Development

Q1. Do you think control of the states over the municipalities is necessary? How do you visualise the actual devolution of power to municipal bodies?

A. When the constitution was framed certain functions were put under the state list and some under the central list. But since times have changed, with the rapid rate of urban growth — slum problems, traffic bottlenecks, poverty, crime — there was need to further decentralize the functions of the government.

The municipalities are under the state list, and therefore vary from one state to the other. There are directives provided by the 74th amendment, which ensures a somewhat uniform structure — but exceptions are there, like in the case of Delhi, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir. As only one year time was given to the state government to react to the amendment, it is too early to give any opinion on its (amendments) outcome. However the main aim is to strengthen grassroots democracy and bring in decentralization.

Q2. Some of the objections raised to the 74th Amendment are:

(a) Functional/Financial devolution without provision for an adequate resource base. What is likely to emerge from State Finance Commission (SFC) for financial devolution?

A. It is not very correct to say that there is no adequate resource base for financial devolution. The Constitution has given broad outlines. SFC's are set up and detailed amendment of municipal laws have been carried out. They are to give recommendations — contribute to a national thinking, and then pursue at the state level to amend the laws.

Municipal finances are intricately connected to state finances. Therefore, municipal finance reform will also necessitate state finance reforms. One would have to create resources (before devolution can take place). Policy level changes like the following will have to be brought about:

- Municipal local tax should be authorised.
- User charges levied more heavily
- Inter-government grants to be made more purposive.
- Reward schemes for municipal corporations which do good work.
- Equity for all those municipalities which do not have proper aid.

The 1st SFC has made some recommendations — action is being taken on that. Already Central Finance Commission (CFC) has allocated Rs 1000 crs to local bodies. Considering the magnitude of grants devolution is bound to happen.

Q2b. Size and functions of ward committees are not defined leading to confusion. How will this be resolved?

A. Some amendments have defined the role of the word committees — like in Maharashtra. However Government of India (GOI) is thinking of providing certain guidelines for — composition, finances and functions of wards eg. ward budget, who is to implement programmes, etc.

The state government would be taken into confidence. GOI's immediate concern is to give assistance to SFC — in the form of functional — financial clarity and matching of function and financial activities. GOI would look into Ward committees, Metropolitan committees and district communities. Though states have different programmes, yet there should be some consensus regarding the role of the wards.

Q2c. The fact is that most women in politics are wives/relatives of politicians. How can an independent leadership of women emerge?

A. Socio-cultural reasons have hindered the involvement of women's active role in these kind of
programmes. Just because there is 30% reservation does not ensure their participation. We require to provide motivation for women to involve in civic affairs. It does not matter if women are coming up from a particular well informed section of the community. Prominent leaders would come first (as they are more involved) then followed by connected people and ultimately the common masses.

For example UBSP programmes encourage women's participation. They have provision for 20-25 women to be in the neighbourhood communities which are based on 'pockets' of localities in urban areas. Women could come together to pool in their thinking for welfare issues - to arrange revolving funds to give loans for small business to needy people. This, however, is not universally applicable as it involves community awareness.

The response is more positive in some places than others — because of the NGOs. It is an all-India phenomenon that they are participating in these activities. However, it will take time. But we are happy that it is leading towards the right direction. Ultimately a mature system may emerge.

Q. 2d. The entrenchment of 'dadas/politicians' in slums makes it impossible for the average man to raise his voice. How will power be passed on to the people in these circumstances?

A. The UBSP programme and PM's integrated urban poverty eradication programme talk of community structure and implementation of urban poverty alleviation programmes through community organizations. The community organization would have neighbourhood society (Which would consist of 20 women); these neighbourhood societies would form a community development society

But ultimately government does not guarantee of providing vigilance over these people. The government can only be a facilitator; the people must take initiative at the grassroots level. The government is interested in motivating NGOs to organize themselves to implement these programmes for the people who are not organized themselves. Things are functioning in Andhra Pradesh. Community Development societies are running pre-schools, primary health centers, garbage clearance, organizing cultural programmes, programmes for the disabled, etc. Examples can also be found in Allepy in Kerala, Nasik, and Bunduhar in Maharashtra. This shows how community based programmes can help to do things for the common good of the people.

Q3. How do you view the role of NGO's pressure groups in this context?

A. Liberalization has brought in changes for new thinking. More private initiatives are taken in all development programmes. A scheme called the Megacity programme has been thought of in which 20% would be funded by the central govt., 20% by state govt, and 50% would be raised from capital market as loans — particularly in environmental upgradation and urban poverty programmes. Private capital would also be invested in infrastructure. NGOs and community organizations would be facilitators for people to take initiative.

Just as you can distinguish among officers, and municipalities, you can also distinguish between NGOs. Some are doing excellent work. However this question can be answered at the field level. Sitting in Delhi, on cannot pass judgment. But there are famous examples of SEWA Ahmedabad and SPARC Bombay, which are reputed NGOs.

Just as we are evolving in the decentralization process, the NGO's too are coming up. In future, there would be more collaboration, for example, the PM's urban poverty eradication programme, talks of involvement of NGOs.

Q4. How do you visualise the issue of cadrization (manpower planning) being tackled?

A. A committee has been constituted to look into the entire municipal organization reform. Municipal corporations differ from state to state, so the 74th amendment talks of supremacy of the elected representative. In the past there has been conflict between elected members and bureaucrats.

However since 74th amendment talks of democratic decentralization. So democracy has to be respected. It may take time for the whole thing to be worked out. There are no ready made answers as yet. Cadre rules would be state specific.
which would depend on availability of technical man power, existing cadre, etc. Bureaucracy must be responsive, and accountable; transparency should be there. They should be subservient to the causes of democracy—because it is ultimately the peoples representatives who are the decision makers, the bureaucratic machinery would definitely be there to implement the decisions of the people.

Professor Abhijit Datta, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi

Q. *What do you think about the 74th Amendment? Is it a right step in the right direction at the right time?*

A. It is relevant, although has been piggy-backed on the 73rd Amendment. Certainly constitutional protection of democratic local bodies has been envisaged. Its utility, timeliness and direction is proper.

Q. *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the 74th Amendment?*

A. The strengths and weaknesses of the 74th Amendment should be discussed in the context of the commonalities of the 73rd and 74th Amendments as about 90% of 74th Amendment is similar to that of 73rd Amendment. Hence one act would have sufficed. Its main strength lies in limiting the dissolution provision to 6 months.

Empowerment of weaker sections in local bodies cannot be ensured only through their political representation at the local level without improving their economic and social status.

Substantive elements relating to local autonomy, accountability and management have been ignored in the 73rd/74th amendment. For all practical purposes, the municipality should be the sole authority on urban self-governance. 74th Amendment does not deal with functional delegation. The suggested 12th Schedule of municipal functions is clumsy and is not linked with the 7th Schedule of the constitution.

I suggest that the local domain in terms of functional and financial resources should be clearly specified under a separate local list under the 7th schedule by transferring items from the state and concurrent list.

Q. *What strategy would you suggest to the state finance commissions and what do you envisage for implementation of these suggestions?*

A. SFCs should give their own opinion on the functional domain of local bodies. They cannot just act on basis of existing functional arrangements and start allotting funds. As a strategy, they should give at least 25% of state revenue to local bodies. It you devolve finance, corresponding functions will also be devolved. It depends on the ability and the willingness of a state to reduce its own size and that of its bureaucracy to give space to local bodies.

Q. *What are the possibilities of reducing the influence of the state and giving space to local bodies?*

A. Possibilities exist, but the necessary political courage is not uniformly available among all the states. There is an attempt by some state to privatize civic functions. This should be left for the local bodies to decide. Among the new functions to be devolved there is a choice for the state to privatise some of these and transfer the rest to the local bodies. The major problem of devolution revolves around the issue of staff redundancy of the state governments. Majority of the states do not want to restructure their bureaucracy so quickly. They need breathing time. The pressure of the state bureaucracy on the states is very strong.

Q. *What should be the future mechanisms of accountability in the municipalities — internal and external? Does the 74th Amendment ensure autonomy, accountability and transparency?*

A. The 74th Amendment does not ensure accountability and autonomy, apart from restricted supersedion and reservation of electoral seats. These are the agenda for future reform.

Vertical accountability has to be replaced by internal autonomy and horizontal accountability to local constituents and the market both internally and externally. Transparency is related to horizontal accountability. The idea of secrecy is peculiar to all levels of government. Openness is essential at all levels.

A citizen’s charter should ensure that information flows to the people so that they can move the courts for redressal.
Q. What do you suggest as to how greater participation of the citizens in the governance of their urban habitat can be assured?

A. There is an innovative provision in the 74th Amendment that municipalities with a population of over 3 lakhs have to have Wards Committees. This is a forum where local problems can be discussed and conveyed. It is good beginning. Citizens fora and non-governmental organisations could be represented in such Wards Committees headed by the elected councillor with concerned ward(s). Eventually all municipalities should have such ward and neighbourhood committees.

Q. What do you think to be the next agenda of constitutional reform for local government?

A. Preparation of a local list (4th list) in the Constitution is a must. Local taxes, exclusive functions are to be specified. Specification of the composition of SFCs is also important to make them independent of the state government. Introduction of local political executive is essential to ensure local autonomy; a plural or single executive system could be used, the choice is a matter of detail.

Local bodies should be able to recruit their own staff and deal with their own resources, subject to judicial checks.

All sanctioning power of the state government related to taxation, budget, contracts and expenditure with local bodies need to be abolished to ensure local autonomy.

As far as loans are concerned, local bodies should be credit worthy for loans from financial institutions or from the market. Directed credit to the local bodies needs to be abolished.

74th Amendment is a beginning in the process of reforming local self-governance. Brazil initiated reforms in local bodies in 1946; its constitution has been revised 3 times since then. Nigeria initiated the same in 1976; its constitution has been revised twice. The 74th Amendment Act may also has to be revised periodically. Lastly, since 73rd and 74th Amendments correspond with each other, parts IX and IX A of the Constitution could be integrated.

Art 40 should include local self-government, i.e. the panchayats and the municipalities. Problems of rural and urban a local government should not be dealt separately, but should be seen as part of a process of total decentralization.

Summing up, Prof. Datta remarked that the role of NGO's in wards committees and in creating a citizen's charter is important.

The interviews were conducted by Dr Nalin Jena, Jennifer Jatal and Prem Narges.
Resources

Book and Documents


This compilation of thirty-one articles by eminent academicians and administrators follows the enactment of the 74th Constitutional Amendment - an attempt to incorporate people's participation in the management of their civic activities.

The book provides an holistic overview of the issues related to urban governance. It focuses on aspects related to the challenges to urban government, the problems of slums, pollution, urban housing, the functions of municipal corporations, aspects of municipal finance and the problems prevalent in the present civic management. The document reasserts the need for citizens' participation in urban local governments.

The text is supplemented by case studies from different parts of the country, which provide a practical dimension to the theoretical concepts being discussed. Valuable suggestions are provided for an effective state of urban governance, free from the crisis and lacunae of the past.

An effective guide for bureaucrats, politicians, NGOs, people's groups, academicians and citizens interested in making the urban areas places of healthy, pollution-free and dignified living.


The increasing urbanisation process and the resultant problems have brought forward a need for strengthen the urban local organisations involved in the maintainence of civic amenities.

An attempt has been made by this book, containing a compilation of fourteen case studies, to provide relevant information on urban finance and management, a significant area for effective urban governance. The case studies were presented in two regional seminars, held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in August 1987 and Lonawala, India, in December 1987, jointly organised by U.N. Centre for Human Settlements, Economic Development Institute of the World Bank and National Institute of Urban Affairs, India.

The book is structured in three parts, with each part dealing with one of the three important issues of urban management — urban finance and management; collection of property tax; and financial and managerial innovations.

Each part contains relevant case studies and country papers in the perspective of the Asian countries represented in the two seminars. The viability of urban finance in Malaysia, analysis of the local taxation issues of Thailand, aspects of inter-governmental financial relations in Indonesia, the property tax collection situation in Delhi, waste management scenario in Pune, and an overview of the land development programmes in Korea are some of the salient issues discussed in this important document.

Relevant country specific data, critical analysis of issues discussed and the suggestions put forward make the document an essential reading for those interested in gaining greater insight on urban local management and governance.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT IN INDIA. An Annotated Bibliography - Sharma, R.N. and Devendra Kumar (Compiled by). 1981, Indian Institute of Public Administration. New Delhi. Pp 296 Rs. 80.00

The book is divided into thirteen sub parts covering different aspects of local urban administration — with issues ranging from general studies, municipalities in India, reforms undertaken in municipal corporation, municipal legislations, the municipal organisation, elections, and the issues of citizen's participation in urban local governance.

The annotated bibliography is an important guide for bureaucrats, policy makers, academicians, NGOs, people's groups and citizens who are interested to know more about aspects related to Municipal Government.
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SLUM HOUSING — A STUDY OF BOMBAY
Desai Vandana, 1995 New Delhi, Sage Publication.

The book provides a detailed picture about the housing and services needs of the slum-dwellers in Bombay and the role of community participation in reducing these problems. The study covers various denominations of participation concepts like ‘influence’, ‘power’, etc.

The recent national and international concern over shelter needs for low-income population has firmly placed the issue of slums on the political agenda. Community participation was stressed for better management and cost effectiveness of projects like site and service and slum upgrading. The book tries to focus on the activism of the urban poor, where they reinforce communal solidarity leading to improvements in the standard of living. The study covers three neighbourhood slum areas which vary in location, length of settlement and socio-economic status.

It has been divided in eight chapters. First chapter provides the aims and objectives of the research, while the second chapter provides the review of literature on community participation. The transition of Bombay, in relation to housing facility, has been presented in the third chapter. The fourth chapter provides the characteristics of the units of study i.e. households of the 3 slums. Various arguments regarding attitudes, perceptions and relationships determining community participation have been put forward in the fifth, sixth & seventh chapters. Finally chapter eighth provides a summary of the finding of the research work.

It is a useful piece of work for all those interested in urban development.


There were 30 participants from leading national and international institutions.

The book has been divided in two parts. The first provides the details of the proceedings at the symposium. The second part is a compilation of the papers presented in the symposium. These papers are mainly the case studies on slums of Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore. To facilitate a better understanding of the issues of discussion, the papers were grouped under four major themes, namely, growth of slums/socio-economic profiles, Urban Basic Services, health and malnutrition and theories about slums and their improvement. The issue of ‘Growth of Slums and socio-economic profiles’ highlights the factors responsible for the growth of slums and the existing socio-economic status of the slum-dwellers. The papers on urban basic services provide information about the housing condition and other basic amenities required by slum dwellers. The issue of ‘Health and Malnutrition’ closely looks at the food intake and nutritional status among the slum women and children in particular. Finally the future strategies for the improvement of slums have been put forward in the papers on ‘Strategies for the Future’.

A book not to be missed by those involved in urban development studies.

Workshop/Seminar/Conference Report


The Workshop on Participatory Research was organised by the Women’s Health Advocacy Cell (WHAC) which is an interdisciplinary group comprising mid-career professionals from different disciplines, both from the staff of Baroda University as well as from
NGOs. The Workshop was attended by 24 participants drawn from academic, research institutions and NGOs.

On the basis of their personal experiences of working with the NGOs and/or with the staff and post graduate students of their respective Departments, the core members of the WHAC felt that there was a need for sharing experiences and imparting knowledge regarding various participatory research methods and their effective use in the community. In view of these considerations, this workshop was organised with the following objectives:

1. to understand the concept of Participatory Research, in particular, the philosophy and principles of Participatory Action Research;
2. to understand the various PR methods and develop skills in using some of these methods;
3. to form an action agenda to implement back home, and establish a mechanism to network and share experiences using PR in field situations.

The report compiles the proceedings of the workshop which discusses PR and Participatory methods in a very lucid way. This may be a useful reference for those who practice participatory methods.

For copies contact:
Women's Health Advocacy Cell
Women Households Development Studies Information Centre
M.S. University of Baroda
BARODA-390002
INDIA.


Participatory Rural Appraisal methodologies have been proved effective in mobilising active participation of villagers, preparing joint plans for village development and identifying various linkages in the village system/situation, at a number of places.

This training workshop was organised by the PRA Resource Centre of Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group for the supervisory level field staff of Fatima Social Service Society with the following objectives:

- to familiarise the participants with PRA methodology;
- to familiarise the participants on how to mobilise active participation of the villagers in the programme;
- to familiarise participants with the methods of participatory collection of informations identify linkages that exist in village situation, approaches for joint analysis (villagers & development activists), planning and implementation of programmes related particularly to health, education and nutrition, with the application of PRA tools.

The report cum reference manual is useful material for those interested in PRA.

For details contact:
PRA Resource Centre
Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group
P.O. Box-60, Gorakhpur, U.P.
INDIA


This book suggests that holistic education is the only way of solving most, may be all, the problems of mankind. Some of the features of ‘holistic education’ suggested in this book are: (i) It teaches the students and the teachers to be at peace with themselves by enabling each one of them to work towards unifying his body and mind. (ii) It teaches them adequate skills to live their lives decently. (iii) It teaches them to live in harmony with the local environment as well as to be able to deal with the current realities of the world.

It is claimed that the model of education this book suggests has the potential of dealing with almost all the developmental problems that the rural as well as the urban communities face in our country today. This model does not escape the realities of classroom management, timetable, lesson-plan, examinations, teachers’ salaries and so on, and yet it suggests a process of education which is able to deal with various developmental issues as well as with the nature of human body-mind.

The objective of this book is to set all interested people thinking: parents, teachers, educationists, planners, students, environmentalists and organisations involved in developmental work or awareness generation campaigns.

For copy of the book, contact:
Shri Bhuvneshwari Mahila Ashram
Anjani Sain
Tehri Garhwal
U.P., INDIA.
Newsletters

URBAN LINKS

URBAN LINKS is a current awareness service produced by the Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific (UMPAP) to disseminate news and information on urban issues in the region. This awareness service is the joint effort of the four partner agencies of UMPAP: Asia Pacific 2000/UNDP, CITYNET/ESCAP, UMP-Asia/UNCHS, and MEIP/ The World Bank.

For further information, please contact:
Anwar Fazal
Regional Coordinator,
Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific (UMPAP),
C/O-UNDP, P.O. BOX-12544,
50782 Kuala Lampur, Malaysia.
Phone- 603-255 9122
Fax- 603- 255 2870: 253 2361

CIVIC NEWS

CIVIC NEWS is a newsletter of CIVIC (Citizens' Voluntary Initiative for the City) Bangalore. CIVIC is a voluntary association whose goal is to empower the citizens of Bangalore, so that they can have control over their efforts to achieve a decent quality of life in the city. CIVIC recognises that this is possible through changes in attitude, structures and processes of the city administration that are currently exclusive and distant from the general public. CIVIC's efforts include raising critical issues and developing a working relationship between concerned government bodies and various citizens, including experts in transportation, finance, management, and urban planning.

CIVIC has been monitoring developments related to Bangalore and CIVIC NEWS is a vehicle to bring the important issues to the notice of the common citizen of the city.

Recently CIVIC has been recognised by UN as an Urban Forum — a platform for discussion and debate on urban issues among groups of various actors.

For further details, please contact:
CIVIC Bangalore
C/O-The Bangalore General Education Trust,
25, 4th Cross, Malleswaram,
Bangalore 560003, INDIA
Phone- 366841

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY is a periodical published by the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, University of Bath. The primary focus of this material is participatory research, action research and issues of participation in human inquiry. This intends to focus not only on intellectual discourse and debate on the above theme but also reflects upon its practice dimension.

For the copy, please contact:
Dr Peter Reason
Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice,
University of Bath,
Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY, ENGLAND
Phone- 0225- 826 792; Fax- 0225-826 473
email- PW.Reason@ac.uk.bath

PARTICIPATION IN ACTION

PARTICIPATION IN ACTION is a relatively new bulletin brought out by the PRA UNIT- ACTION AID INDIA. The bulletin particularly focuses on Participatory Rural Appraisal and Rapid Rural Appraisal. These tools have proved to be very useful in development sector. They are not only practiced by NGO staff but also by government officials and other development practitioners. This bulletin is undoubtedly a need of the time.

For further details, please contact:
Sam Joseph
PRA UNIT- ACTION AID
No-3 Rest House Road
Bangalore-560001
INDIA
Phone-2210282; Fax- 080-558 6284

Audio Visuals

NUTAN DIGANTA. (Oriya) 110 MINUTES.
Produced by Institute for Socio-Economic Development

NUTAN DIGANTA is a video production on Panchayati Raj. This is a four episode docu-drama. The first episode gives brief historical account of the evolution of Panchayati Raj in India and suggests that educated youth, both men and women should take interest and

(contd. on inside back cover)

The two day consultation was organised in solidarity with Sunderlal Bahuguna's struggle against the Tehri Dam. Its broad objectives were:

1. To provide support to Sunderlal Bahuguna's meeting with the Prime Minister to be held on 4 July, 1995.
2. To make the Tehri dam struggle a stronger national issue.
3. To establish larger international solidarity on the issue of large dams.

The two day meeting was attended by lawyers, representatives from NGOs and peoples groups from Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Issues discussed were the history of the Tehri dam controversy, the people's struggle against the dam - its rationale and justifications. The safety hazards and the displacement issue related to the Tehri dam was highlighted and an appeal for an open independent review of the dam by a team of seismologists and national and international experts was made.

The participants reviewed and critically analyzed the other big dams in the national and international scenario, focusing on the aspects of sustainability and accountability. The meeting reasserted the need for having development with a human face, with people in the centre of all development initiatives.

WORKSHOP ON “WOMEN AND PANCHAYATI RAJ”. 4-6 May '95. Organised by PRIA and Sahayog, Almora.

The three-day workshop was organised at Hawal Bagh, Almora. Twenty-four participants from various non-governmental organisations working actively in U.P. hills attended the programme.

Based on the expectations of participants the objectives of the workshop were laid down. The programme aimed to impart information on Panchayati Raj system, to develop understanding about the role of women in Panchayati Raj and to create field level awareness in the work area of participating NGOs.

Group discussions, exercises, and role plays were used to obtain maximum participation of the participants. Issues like the existing social situation, problems


The three day participatory consultation, celebrating the initiatives of women groups on issues related to their lives, was well attended by more than five hundred men and women from Maharashtra and six other states.

The participants shared their solidarity with the “Dara Mukti Andolan” — anti alcohol movement and “Amcha Gavat Amhi Sarkar” — Our village, Our Government. The main themes around which discussions and activities were designed were:
1. Women, violence and anti-alcohol struggles.
2. Village planning by people and Panchayati Raj.
3. Women’s health and herbal medicine.
4. Women saving and credit and income generation.
5. Access to water and natural resources: water, land, forest.

The melava activities included five simultaneous workshops on the above themes, along with a variety of cultural events. Resource persons from NGOs in the district facilitated the proceedings.

The three day celebration marked a step towards networking on survival issues affecting the poor women beyond Beijing '95.

WORKSHOP ON “GENDER SENSITIVITY”. 15-17 June, 1995, Delhi. Organised by PRIA.

The workshop was organised around the three broad objectives of:
1. Understanding gender roles, how they occur and are perpetuated.
2. Understanding personal gender biases.
3. Understanding the issue of gender equality in development programmes.

Fifteen organisations from five NGOs attended this training programme.

Amidst lectures, group discussions, case studies, exercises and role plays the group was provided with an overview of sex role stereotypes, their emergence and impact, gender perspectives and the need for and methods of incorporating gender equality in different areas of life. A conceptual understanding of gender in development with focus on gender planning and gender monitoring was also provided to the participants.
related to 73rd amendment and role of NGOs in 73rd amendment were taken up in a very informal, yet effective manner.

The workshop concluded with an intense follow-up programme.

**TRAINING ON ‘LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT’; 22-25 June, 1995. Organised by SSK, Dooamardaga, Ranchi.**

The training was attended by field workers of various non-governmental organisations working in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The main objective of the training was to develop a better understanding about the concept of leadership and its relevance in social development. The programme also aimed to build awareness about self-development.

Issues like formation, development and dynamics of small group, participation, leadership and self development were taken up. Building on these issues, the importance of leadership in the field of social work was highlighted. Various training techniques like lectures, group discussions, fish-ball, exercise, etc. were adopted to make the training as effective as possible.

**WORKSHOP ON “WOMEN AND PANCHAYATI RAJ” 5-8 April, 1995. Organised by RUCHI, district Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh.**

The four-day workshop was organised to develop a better understanding about the Panchayati Raj. Around 24 participants from different NGOs working in different parts of Himachal Pradesh actively participated in the workshop.

Covering the history of Panchayati Raj, a better understanding about the new legislative changes under the 73rd amendment were highlighted. Emphasis also given on the classification of role and responsibilities of various other key actors in Panchayati Raj like NGOs, and Mahila Mandalas. The workshop concluded with a set of recommendations which were forwarded to the concerned government departments.

**WORKSHOP ON LEARNING PROCESS AND MODES OF PARTICIPATION. 23-25 March, 1995. Organised by the Department of Sociology, Jamia Millia Islamia University, and Society for Participatory Research in Asia.**

This workshop was organised to reflect upon the year long experience and effort made by the Department of Sociology and PRIA to frame a teaching curriculum of Participatory Sociology and to explore the possibilities of linkages and meaningful mutual interaction between the non-governmental voluntary organisations and the academia. The process was organised in three phases. In the first phase, a series of extension lectures on the concept of participation and its various dimensions was organised. For extension lectures people from both academia and NGOs were invited. In the second phase, the students along with the faculty members visited NGOs and tried to understand their intervention and the local situation in the background of extension lectures. The students carried their experiences and articulation to the workshop.

Designed as a pedagogical exercise and an exchange between the university and the non-governmental organisations in search of a common ground, the workshop was structured around perspective lectures and case studies prepared by the students based on field trips.

The workshop participated by eminent academicians and NGO leaders sought to embody a vision of participation at two levels - one concerned with the alienation of social sciences from the process of social transformation and the other as a participatory method of learning, the focus of which was participation in social transformation.

In the inaugural address, Prof. Yogendra Singh drew attention to the historical process in which social science has evolved and continues to evolve, and viewed Participatory Sociology as a new development of the subject. It was felt in the workshop that the existing gap between the academia and voluntary sector should be narrowed down through mutual interaction and cooperation.

For copy of the report, please contact:

PRIA
42/Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi-110062

The above programme was organised in PRIA for the teachers of Social Work. Twenty participants from 16 Social Work institutions from all over the country participated. The primary objective of the programme was to orient the Social Work educators on Participatory Research and Participatory Development in India and elsewhere and in the light of these new developments to review the teaching and practice of Social Work. The dialogue was designed intra-professionally, between the educators and practitioners.

Experienced practitioners, researchers and academicians interacted with the participants on the concept, theory and practice of Participatory Research and people-centred development, its various aspects and dimensions. The workshop began with collective critiquing of the development model and strategy adopted in post-Independent India. Subsequent discussions and debate focussed on the concept, theory and methodology of participatory research; people's participation in urban and rural development; people's participation in self-governance institutions; scope and need of participation by marginalised sections including women in the process of development; participatory evaluation and training; and implications of participatory development for Social Work education and practice.

It was collectively felt that the dialogue was very useful and should be extended much widely.

For a copy of the report, please contact:

PRIA
42 Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062


IASC-P, probably the largest and most active academic forum on common property resource, organised its fifth annual conference on the theme-REINVENTING THE COMMONS. About 348 participants from 47 different countries participated in this workshop. The programme consisted of 234 paper presentations in 60 sessions, 4 special sessions and 8 keynote addresses.

The conference focussed on the succeeding theme. Commons have existed through out all recorded history as an integral part of the resources of local communities. With the emergence of the modern state and the capitalist economics, the commons of the local communities around the world found themselves in a loosing battle with the advocates of state ownership or individual ownership. The traditional knowledge embodied in the well established institutional frameworks was not cast in a form comprehended by to the bureaucrats of the state even in the cases where they might be willing to consider them on their merits. And often they were not cast in a form which made them adaptable to a changing environment. The "reinvention" of the commons is the academic exploration and search for deeper understanding of how and why institutions of common ownership can manage resources in an equitable and sustainable way in a changing environment and benefit the local communities depending on them for their survival. This "reinvention" is now well along within the research community. It may still take a generation of teaching to disseminate the "invention" to the bureaucrats most in need of the knowledge. Meanwhile the Association will continue to explore the frontiers of understanding of property rights to educate those who are to teach the next generation of bureaucrats.

The conference attracted not only the academicians, but also a good number of NGOs from all over the globe as well as bureaucrats. PRIA participated in this conference and shared its findings on the consequences of national parks in India.

For the list and copies of papers, please contact:

Conference Secretary
Centre for Sustainable Development
Agricultural University of Norway
P.O. Box-5001, N-1432 A's, Norway
Phone+47 64 94 93 86; Fax+ 47 64 94 93 81
E-mail: sburo@sbu.nhi.no

The above workshop was organised at Baripada, the district headquarter of Mayurbhanj in which Similipal National Park is located. This is in continuation of PRIA’s activities to understand the problems created by national parks and sanctuaries for the local people, highlight the problems and evolve solutions along with the people.

Similipal National Park is also one of the early declared Tiger Reserves. While Similipal is unique in its rich flora and fauna, this is also the only and precious resource base for the local people. For a large number of tribal people, this forest is the means of survival.

About 65 participants from local voluntary organisations, youth clubs, government officials as well as forest officials participated in this workshop and for two days discussed the following objectives;

(i) to understand the problems faced by the people living in and around Similipal as well as the problems faced by the wild animals of Similipal;
(ii) to initiate a dialogue between the local people, groups and the forest officials for better management of the park;
(iii) to evolve solution of the problems.

At the end a comprehensive follow-up plan of action was formulated collectively.

The report is in Oriya.

For the report, please contact:
PRIA
42 Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062.

Announcement

Habitat-II 1996

By the year 2000, half of the world’s population will live in cities. Inspite of the fact that the diversity of skills and cultures in cities has opened new frontiers by generating economic growth, social cohesion and opportunity, an increasing number of cities face growing unemployment, crime, disease and pollution. Habitat II, the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements will be held at Istanbul in 1996. Called ‘The City Summit’ by the Secretary-General of the United Nations it focuses on the future of cities and aims to make the world’s cities, towns and villages healthy, safe, equitable and sustainable.

The agenda includes the following :-
- Shelter and affordable housing
- Governance, Leadership and Participation
- Urban Poverty Reduction and Job Creations
- Environment Management and the “Brown Agenda” for cities
- Disaster Mitigation, Relief and Reconstruction.
- Gender Awareness
- Land tenure, Urban Physiology
- Transport

It has been recognised that the success of the plan of action depends simply on new partnership with other urban actors including local authorities, NGOs, CIVIC and community groups, professionals and Academics as well as business and industry. National Communities have already been or are being established. Governments have been encouraged to involve all actors in their National Committees local authorities. It is anticipated that the conference will be truly broad based and participatory. Those interested should contact their National Focal Point or the Habitat II Secretariat and indicate their interest and commitment.

NGOs and CBOs can voice community concerns at the national and global level and should ensure that these concerns are reflected in substantive decisions.

Global Forum for NGOs

Similar to NGO forums at UN conferences on Environment and Development and Population and Development, this forum will be organized by and for NGOs and CBOs from around the world. The Habitat International Coalition in collaboration with a number of other NGOs is the organizing body for this event. For more information on the Global Forum ‘96 contact:

Habitat II NGO Secretariat
C/o Rooftops Canada
2, Berkeley street, suite 207
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2W3
Tel 1-416-366-1445; Fax 1-416-366-3876.
Email: rooftops.webs.apc.org

For detailed information contact :

Habitat II Secretariat
United Nations Centre for
Human Settlements
(Habitat)
P.O. Box 30030 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel 254-2-62 30 33; Fax 254-2-62 30 80.
participate in the self-governance otherwise the spirit of 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution will be lost in the maze of political intrigue of the Panchayati Raj institutions by crooked politicians. The following three episodes highlight the procedures for elections of Ward members and Naib-sarpanchs; roles, functions, and duties of Sarpanch, Naib-sarpanch and Ward member; procedures for conducting the meetings of Pallisabha, Gramsabha and Panchayat; various development programmes earmarked for the Panchayats; resource mobilisation and management; and reconstruction of rural economy.

For further information, please contact:

Director
Institute for Socio-Economic Development
28/Dharma Vihar, Bhubaneswar
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TU ZINDA HAI. 57 minutes

This film is about women activists of Ekta Parishad—a mass based people’s forum working in the villages of 35 districts of Madhya Pradesh. The women have been challenging structures of authority— the ‘sarkar’, landlord, liquor contractors and abusive husbands. It is about the backlash they face from all these forces and their indomitable will to survive against all odds. But most of all it is about their changing identities and self-perception as women in our society, as women who have stepped out of traditional female role models and are paving new paths on the road towards women’s empowerment.

For the film, please contact:

PRIA
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi - 110 062, INDIA
Phone : (011) 698-9559, 698-1908
Fax : (011) 698-0183

WE SHALL RULE. 70 minutes.

The 73rd Constitutional amendment on Panchayati Raj has given a mandate to women’s political empowerment at the grass roots level. Village women have both hopes and doubts about their participation in governance. Women in general and dalit women in particular gain confidence and hope, if they are organised and made aware of their rights, power and functions. This film tries to capture in docu-drama form, the feelings of village women regarding local self-governance.

For the film, please contact:

Binoy Acharya
Director
UNNATI
G-1, 200 Azad Society
Ahmedabad - 380 01
OR

PRIA
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi - 110 062
PRIA

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) is an independent, non-profit, non-government organisation registered in 1982 under the Society Registration Act 1860. PRIA is based at New Delhi, India.

Over the past twelve years, PRIA has promoted people-centered development initiatives within the perspective of Participatory Research. Strengthening popular knowledge, demystifying dominant concepts and promoting experiential learning, have been the basis of supporting empowerment of the poor and the oppressed in PRIA’s work. Through field studies and documentation, workshops and training programmes, networking and enabling linkages, PRIA has facilitated the strengthening of capacities within grass roots groups, voluntary agencies, NGOs and other formations.

As the cherished mission, PRIA endeavours to promote people-centered, holistic and comprehensive evolution of society characterised by Freedom, Justice, Equity and Sustainability, by

- creating opportunities of sharing, analysing and learning among formations of the Civil Society (in particular, people’s organisations and NGOs);
- engaging in independent and critical analysis of societal trends and issues, development policies and programmes; and
- enabling dialogue across diverse perspectives, sectors and institutions.

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