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PRI

2006

PEVAC

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Introduction

The planning for Rural PEVAC-2006 started in the month of February 2006 when it was planned that the launch of PEVAC would be in mid April and hence preparations for a CSO platform at state level, building government, academic and media linkages and developing a strategy for the campaign have to be initiated.

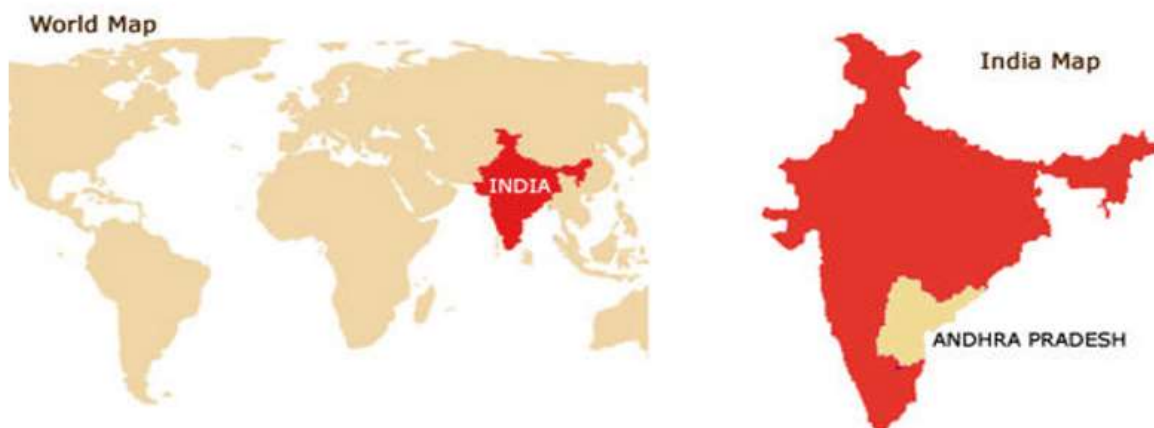
Prior to planning the activities, the colleagues who were part of the Rural PEVAC-2001 and the Urban PEVAC-2005 shared

- 1.The strategy used in the two previous PEVAC's in AP
- 2.The campaign material developed and used
- 3.The partner NGOs at State and District level who joined the effort
4. Linkages built with the Govt (SEC, SFC), academic institutions and media
5. The findings of the impact assessment study conducted after the Urban Elections 2005

This gave a more or less fair picture of the perspective behind PEVAC, its Objectives, the coverage/outreach issue, impact and the qualitative outcomes expected of the campaign. There was also expression to conduct the current Rural PEVAC in an innovative manner, with as many partner NGOs at State and District level as possible and overcoming the various factors that hinder dissemination of the voters awareness message through the campaign in the rural settings.

Documenting the PEVAC process in AP will see implementation of the campaign in a socio, economic, political, cultural and rural backdrop that is different from many other northern states. The purpose of process documentation is, to be able to give a clear picture and rerun of activities that took place throughout the intervention to a reader. Once data is collected and analyzed, it calls for presentation in a form that is comprehensible and attractive to the readers. **The interpretation and analysis is presented in this report form.**

Andhra Pradesh at a Glance



Formation of the State

The state of Andhra Pradesh was formed in the year 1953 separating certain districts from

the erstwhile composite Madras state, with State Capital at Kurnool. Later with the sacrifice made by "Amarjyothi" Sri.Potti Sreeramulu the state of Andhra Pradesh was created with effect from

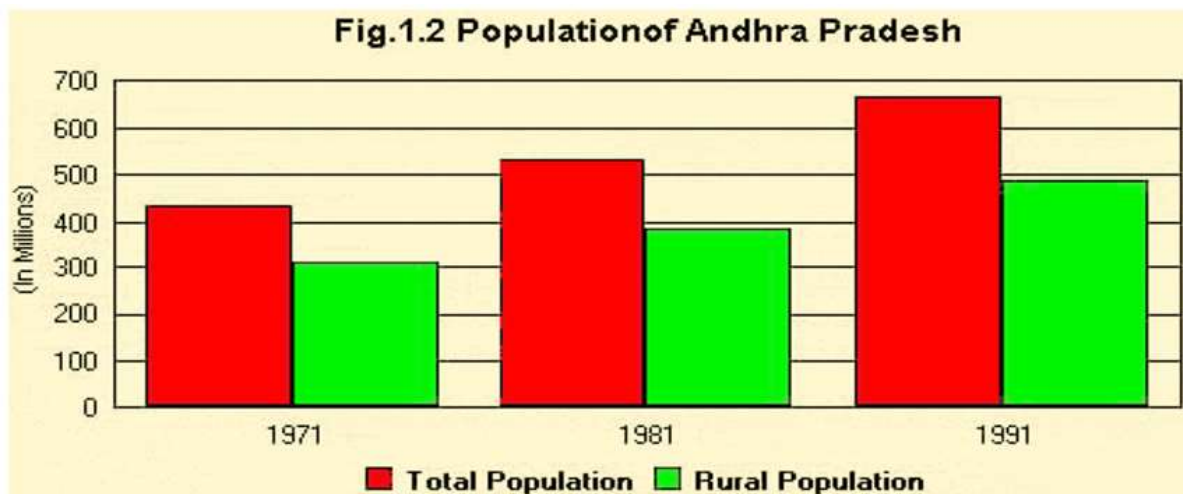
1.11.1956 duly merging the Telangana districts situated in the deccan plateau and delineating Bellary area to merge with Karnataka state. The final shape of the state comprised of 9 coastal districts, 4 Rayalaseema and 9 Telangana districts.

The state of Andhra Pradesh is situated on the globe in the tropical region and is bounded on the North by Maharashtra, on the Northeast by Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, on the East by Bay of Bengal, on the South by Tamilnadu and on the West by Karnataka States. The state has a long coastal line extending over 960 km from Ichapuram sands in Srikakulam district to Pulicat Lake in Nellore district. It is the 5th largest state in the Indian Union both in terms of geographical area and population comprising of 23 districts 1,105 revenue mandals, 29,994 villages spreading over 2,76,814 Sq.Km.

The state enjoys a position of preeminence in respect of crop production particularly food grains and has the distinction of being called the "Rice Bowl" of South India. About 71% of state's population is dependent on Agriculture and allied sectors contributing to more than 60% of the state's income.
Demographic Characteristics

Andhra Pradesh with its population of 435 lakhs (1971 census) and 535 lakhs (1981 census) is one of the most populous states in the country with an annual growth rate ranging from 2.1 to 2.4. The figures of 1991 census reveal the total state population as 665 lakhs. The sex ratio of females to 1000 males is 972 (1991 census). The state had a

population density of 157 persons /Sq.Km. (1971 census) and the density is showing an increasing trend from 193 (1981 census) to 242 (1991 census). The density of rural population is also on the increase from 127 (1971 census) to 148 (1981 census) and to 175 (1991 census). It is highest in West Godavari 256 (1971 census) and lowest in Adilabad 80 (1971 census).



A bar graph showing the population details of AP over 2 decades.

Population details of the State					
Item	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total (In thousands)	35983	43503	53550	66508	75727
Males (In thousands)	18161	22009	27109	33725	38286
Females (In thousands)	17822	21494	26441	32783	37441
Rural (In thousands)	29709	35100	41062	48621	55224
Urban (In thousands)	6274	8403	12488	17887	20503
Scheduled Castes (In thousands)	4974	5775	7962	10592	
Scheduled Tribes (In thousands)	1324	1658	3176	4199	
Sex Ratio (Females per 1000 Males)	981	977	975	972	978
Source: Director, Census Operations, A.P. Hyderabad Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Hyderabad					

Other demographic details	
State Capital	Hyderabad
Area of the State	2,75,100 Sq. Kms
No of Districts (23)	Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasham, Nellore, Chittoor, Ananthapur, Kadapa, Kurnool, Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda and Hyderabad

A. Local Self Governance in Andhra Pradesh

The philosophy of Panchayat Raj is deeply steeped in tradition and culture of rural India and is by no means a new concept. Till the 20th Century, Panchayati Raj provided a system of self- governance at the village level. However, it did not have a constitutional status. The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 provides a framework on which to build the third level of governance-panchayats.

Following is the basic statistical information of PRIs in the state.

Panchayati Raj System- Local Bodies					
Item	1961	1971	1981	1991	1998
Zilla Parishads	20	21	22	22	22
Gram Panchayats	15198	15899	19560	19492	21934
Panchayat Samiti/Mandal Praja Parishads	421	322	330	1092*	1093*
* Mandal parishads					
Source: State Finance Commission, P.R Dept., Hyderabad					

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation once stated, "Independence must begin at the bottom ... it follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs..."

April 23, 1993 is a landmark day in the history of Panchayati Raj in India as on this day, the institution of Panchayati Raj was accorded constitutional status through the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, thereby seeking to transform Mahatma Gandhi's dream of Gram Swaraj into reality.

B. Concept of PEVAC

PEVAC is one of the brainchild of PRIA and impact assessment studies have shown once and again that the campaign increases the motivations, expectations and aspirations of the hopeless, poor, suppressed people to use their vote, for the right candidate and hence get them closer to their participation in local self governance.

The participation of community in the processes of the Panchayati Raj Institutions like gram sabhas, panchayat meetings will help them decide what needs to be done to improve the living conditions like health, education, safe drinking water, housing and sanitation of the villagers using the panchayat funds obtained through the government. This would mean real development for the people in the rural areas, contrary to development in the name of discrimination and modernization. Hence PEVAC is one step towards seeking this long-term change in **'improving the functioning of PRIs' by 'using power to vote' for 'selection of vibrant leadership' to promote 'efficient PRIs'**. This change will not be so easy or soon.

C. Need for PEVAC

Andhra Pradesh is awaiting the rural GP elections due in August 2006, being consecutively held for the third time after the 73rd CAA.

The complex dynamics in AP due to socio, economic, cultural and political variations are preventing political participation of the marginalized sections. Constitutional safeguards such as reservations have become ceremonial. The voters are unable to use their power to vote due to threats, poverty, casteism, groupism and corruption. All along, governments in power have tried to make the PRIs ineffective and irrelevant. The three-tier system has become vulnerable, divided and ineffective due to political apathy. In such a background, rural local bodies are not able to perform effectively as vibrant grassroots units of local self-governance. Proactive NGOs perceive this context is an opportunity to reassure the reference community on the importance and need to strengthen local self- governance institutions.

In this regard, the civil society organisations in the state have joined together so as to educate the voters through Pre Election Voters Awareness Campaign, and actively involve them in the processes of local body elections.

The aim is to

- To make citizens aware on election process for PRIs and to make citizens for best use of their rights to franchise
- To create conducive environment for free and fair electoral processes, focus on maximum participation in exercising franchise
- To promote participation of women, SC/ST, weaker and other marginalized sections of the society, in particular
- To generate awareness on responsible electoral behaviour, thereby checking participation of dummy candidates.

In Andhra Pradesh, united efforts of state, district and Panchayat level CSOs have constituted a Forum for Panchayats Panchayatila Chaitanya Vedika' this time, to take up **Pre -Election Voter Awareness Campaign**, better known only as **PEVAC. Three Cheers to Rural PEVAC-2006!!!**

D. PEVAC Strategy

Implementation of PEVAC is divided into three phases and specific activities are developed in each phase to streamline the operations for effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the campaign. The phases are as mentioned:

- i) Pre-Nomination
- ii) Nomination
- iii) Post-Nomination

Pre nomination

The pre nomination period is crucial for PEVAC. In this phase focus would be on the following activities.

Gram panchayat level

The implementation of the campaign takes place at the GP level. The local CSOs play an important role in implementing the campaign. Following are the responsibilities at GP level:

- o Facilitate the CBOs, VO and Citizen Collectives in Pasting of posters and distribution of pamphlets.
- o Organising and facilitating small and large group meetings on voter's rights and participation and contesting the elections.
- o Development of people's manifesto and special focus on women's issues.
- o Coordinate with local cable TV operators for showing the VCD on kalajatha performance on election processes.
- o Mobilizing PA system or hiring audio system and means of transport for playing audiocassette on election process.
- o Sensitizing the voters on voter rights and election processes through kalajathas (cultural teams).
- o Coordination with local administration (mandal) and local media.
- o Dummy exercise on filing of nominations.

The CSOs will mobilise available local resources such as local kalajatha teams in order to educate the voters.

Nomination

In the nomination phase the main activities will be centred on educating the contestants particularly women, SC and ST candidates on how to file the nomination.

- o Creation of help desk to facilitate on filing the nomination papers

Help desks may be opened in strategic locations such as Mandal Election Returning office/ MDO office. The help desk may consist of CSO representative, known personality who has the knowledge on the election processes.

Post nomination

In this phase the contestant names are declared. The activity focus would be on educating the voter's voter rights and electing the right candidate along with organizing interface exercises between contestants and voters.

- o Interface activities between contestants and voters.
- o Voter awareness programmes through kalajatha, posters, and pamphlets, door-to- door campaigns, small and large group discussions, rallies, slogan writings, and audiovisuals.
- o Report preparation on the implementation strategies, challenges, and success stories.

Proposed Coverage In the forthcoming panchayat elections the out reach will be at least 50% of total 21900 panchayats. These panchayats will be covered through district level NGOs and CSO networks.

Particulars	Total area	Proposed coverage
No. of Districts	23	22
No. of mandals	1104	500
No. Of Gram Panchayats	21900	10000

The Process

-State Level PEVAC Initiatives

A Preliminary meeting on PEVAC was taken up at State Level in order to introduce about it to the partner organisations and assess their interest to be a part of the effort. The selection of participant NGOs was not necessarily based on profile or their involvement in local governance issues. The expertise of diverse working backgrounds is seen as a means to enrich the brainstorming for the campaign this year. There was a discussion on the political, socio, cultural context of AP and rural elections, barriers to the campaign, which ended in surging a positive energy for the campaign in the participants.

It was put forward that whatever be the activities, like planning, launching and actual carrying out of PEVAC, it would be a collective network effort, by coordinating at the state level and with district level CSOs. The name of the platform was decided as '**Forum For Panchayats**', **Panchayatila chaitanya Vedika**.

Mapping NGOs and the districts they lead

Working as a network means mobilizing, contributing and sharing of resources (manpower, material, ideas and money) and working towards the common goal and objectives of PEVAC. PRIA encourages the partner members of the network to utilize their resources, expertise and manpower in the districts where they are operating. Where a state level NGO had presence and hence can take lead in carrying out the PEVAC by coordinating with the district level NGOs, each of the state level NGO was to lead in 2-4 districts.

State level NGO	Districts they lead
CWS	Anathapur, East Godavari, Nalgonda, Khammam, Warangal
APMAS	Chittor, Guntur
CEE	Proposed Rangareddy
DBSU	Nellore, Guntur, Prakasham
APMSS	Medak, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Nizamabad
ACTION AID	Proposed W.Godavari, PESA areas
LOKSATTA	They have district committees in all districts except Ananthapur
COVA	Has networks in all the districts and will work in coordination with all the lead NGOs in respective districts
PRIA	Mahabubnagar, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram Srikakulam

Formation of the state level Committees for PEVAC

a. Campaign Material Development Committee

The main responsibility is to develop the content, design & methodology, and estimate the quantity of material required. The network members who initiated to be part are

- APMSS, PRIA, CWS, APMAS, DBSU

b. Media Committee

The responsibility is to establish contacts with print and electronic media. The network members who initiated to be part are

- LOKSATTA, APMSS, APMAS

c. NGO and Government Coordination Committee

The responsibility of this committee is to contact Department of Panchayati Raj to update about the initiative and seek necessary support. Also to contact SEC to update on the initiative to seek collaboration by endorsing the IEC material for campaign. The network members who initiated to be part are

- PRIA, APMSS, CWS, DBSU

Changes in the Budget

The revised PEVAC strategy /proposal did not have changes as per methodology or coverage of the campaign but there were major changes in the Budget for PEVAC. This budget proposal was followed by series of deductions from the amount cited in the first 2 proposals i.e. 21 lakhs to 6 lakhs. The 6 lakhs was yet to be finalized and to be used only for developing the IEC material for the campaign.

E. Collaboration with SEC

The ongoing consultations by staff from PRIA with the SEC from March 2006, with regard to Devolution of Powers to Panchayats and PEVAC-2006 resulted in the State Election Commissioner Mr. A.V.S Reddy consenting to meet the representatives of 'Forum for Panchayats' (FFP) constituting the various civil society organizations and working towards Pre-Election Voters Awareness in campaign mode, at the Gram Panchayats. The SEC has sent a communication, inviting the Forum to the Commissioners' premises on 15-06-2006 at 11:00 am. He responded to each of the points, of each of the 2 request letters and extended support in the following areas:

1. Approved to provide 12000 copies of 'Moral Code of Conduct' manual, with awareness generation motive.
2. Approved to endorse the posters and pamphlets with SEC authorization
3. Agreed to issue authorization letter to all district level officials to cooperate and support the PEVA Campaign as part of voters awareness

The secretary announced the dates for the ZP and Mandal Parishad elections and expressed that it would be of much significance if the forum could also involve in the voter awareness even for ZP, Mandal Parishad elections. He told to develop a budgetary plan for the same and that the SEC would be willing to fund for the expense. Here the forum clarified that the focus and planning till now was for the GP level only but that they would be happy to take up at the 2 higher levels, with financial support from the SEC.

As promised by SEC they have provided the 2.5 lakh posters for MPTC, ZPTC elections.

And two part payments of 50,000 each for conduct of kalajathas. Regular letters of update have been sent to SEC on the distribution of IEC material for MPTC, ZPTC elections, disbursement of

amounts for conduct of kalajathas, schedules of kalajathas being held and progress of the PEVAC activities in the districts.

Conduct of Kalajathas sponsored by SEC

As soon as the funds were received from the SEC, the Forum for panchayats swung into action by organizing a meeting to discuss the strategy to take up the Kalajatha campaign. Looking into the short duration, geographical coverage, resources available and the cultural teams available with the organizations, efforts were made to identify organizations and develop the script. The organizations that come forward to take up the challenge are DBSU, DUTIES, DNR College, and PRIA as the cultural teams are ready to perform within short notice. A common script was shared with all the organizations to share it with the cultural teams for conduct of kalajathas. Based on the number of performances by each team, a plan of action has been drawn and the funds have been allocated and the details are as follows.

S.No	Name of district	Name of the NGO	No. of performances
1	Guntur	DBS U	12
2	Prakasham	DBS U	6
3	Nellore	DUTIES	20
4	W.Godavari	DNR college	12
5	Mahabubnagar	PRI A	28
6	Visakhapatnam	PRI A	14
7	Vizianagaram	PRI A	2

Coverage and impact of Kalajathas

The kalajathas were conducted in 7 districts covering 104 GPs in AP.

-The impact of the campaign could be seen among the youth, women and adults and elderly be they literate or illiterate.

-The audience was questioning, commenting to the neighbor during the shows, which showed their motivation and interest in the message provided through Kalajathas. They expressed that they would vote for better representatives from among themselves even if the contestant were poor. The use of folk channel like kalajatha in their language style, their level of understanding made the medium more attractive for them.

“Our village needs an awareness programme of this kind and the story presented in your kalajatha is a story of our village”

“Please conduct this kalajatha performance in as many villages and our neighboring village also”

“Candidates have spent almost 3 lakhs till now in our village, and this has to stop”

-Villagers of Mahabubnagar district

-The youth in the village openly expressed that they were very much impacted by the message portrayed through the kalajathas.

-After the show the people expressed that, these self-reflective shows/messages have to bring a good impact on those people who sell their votes for money and liquor.

-Some people said that even though people understand the value of votes, they always try to get benefit in form of money and they accept enticements from the candidates.

-In the tribal area a large number of youth turned up to the watch the shows and at the end of the show, the students appealed to the people to vote for the right candidate and use their voting rights in fair manner in order to see development in their areas.

-People from other mandals demanded that at least there should have been one show in each village.

F. Interface with Government, Media and academia

The PEVAC activities at the district level got maximum mileage by obtaining coverage in popular daily newspapers and local channels. The publicity spreads the Voters Awareness message to a wider population. The media publicity at the state level was during the press meet attended in the State Election Commissioner office on 15th July 2006. Also the daily The Hindu covered the news item that PRIA-AP has initiated the PEVAC-2006 in collaboration with SEC and along with a platform of state level NGOs namely Action Aid, COVA, CEE, CWS, APMAS, APMSS, LOKSATTA and DBSU.

- District level Implementation of PEVAC

PEVAC activities like pasting posters, door-to-door campaigns, peoples manifestos, playing audiocassettes, CDs, conduct of rallies, kalajathas, interface with contestants, small group discussions, distributing pamphlets etc were taken up in 16 districts and 3559 GPs, 259 mandals and with the association of 8 state level NGOs and 250 district level NGOs and village level CBOs.

In each district the lead partner coordinated with the members of the District Coordination Committee who are the local NGOs to increase impact and outreach of the campaign. The linkages with media for coverage of the PEVAC activities in daily newspapers and cable network was also handles as part of the campaign. The collaboration and support of district level administration was sought before venturing into the community.

The coverage, activities undertaken and the media coverage and response of the peoples has been documented separately. This report contains the elaborate case studies of DRC-1 and DRC-2 to understand the strategy of implementation of PEVAC by Forum for Panchayats.

I. Case study of DRC-1

Mahabubnagar is the largest district in Telangana Region and occupies fourth place in state with 18,672 sq.kms of geographical area, having 64 mandals, 1350 Gram Panchayats, 35 lakhs population with 23.61 lakh rural voters.

Mahabubnagar District is identified as a backward (poverty) district in the state and therefore various developmental programs are implemented on pilot basis by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Central and State governments funded by world bank, DFID, UNICEF to improve literacy rate and also create better livelihood opportunities, in order to reduce the characteristics of this region--poverty and migration. Still, Mahabubnagar District remains as one of the famine prone districts in the state due to continuous drought, lack of ground water and hence high incidence of migration.



Elections to PRIs as per 73rd CAA have become more important by providing reservation to women and proportionate reservation to socially excluded sections in order to promote visionary leadership for overall development of Gram Panchayats. Recently conducted elections for 4 Urban Local

Bodies and PRIs i.e., 64 Mandal Parishad and 1 Zilla Parishad have revealed that contestants pumped money and liquor and used casteism to influence voters in order to win elections. This rat race is largely due to tough competition between political parties even at GP level. Migrated communities seek elections as occasion similar to festivals, marriages when they can meet their family members. The contestants contact these migrant communities and meet all necessary travel expenses for their coming to cast their votes in their favor.

In Mahabubnagar District, election for 3rd tenure of PRIs took place in the months of July 2006 and August 2006. Therefore DRC – PRIA has initiated Pre-Election Voter Awareness Campaign (PEVAC) in order to assure free, fair, peaceful and participatory election processes and responsive, accountable leadership in Panchayats.

PEVAC - Implementation process

Keeping in view of spread out of Mahabubnagar district with 5 divisions; 64 mandals; 1350 Gram Panchayats and 2,360,833 rural voters, the PEVAC activities have been planned to cover 960 Gram Panchayats of 58 Mandals under networking concept with the potential Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) functioning. Moreover, the PEVAC interventions have been planned on the core developmental issues of Panchayat for enlightening the voters on functions of PRIs; importance of people's participation in elections for promoting participatory democratic local governance (contesting election and voting votes); requirement of leadership for PRIs in order to implement various development programs for the benefit of community; different tricks and techniques contestants use to win elections etc aspects.

Coverage figures

SL No	Name of the NGO	No of mandals covered	No of GPs covered
1	APMSS	7	254
2	SDEP	7	148
3	COMMITMENTS	5	90
4	ECO CLUB	2	35
5	CONARE	5	73
6	IPWSS	3	35
7	SPARSHA	2	23
6	VIP	4	76
7	COVA	2	30
8	SDDPA	5	95
9	DBSU	10	180
10	ZYSS	1	15
11	GUARDS	1	15
12	Seva Bharati	1	15
Total	12 NGOs	58 mandals	1109 GPs

Elections Notification

Based on State Election Commission notification, District Administration disseminated information on conducting election to 1343 Panchayats (excluding 5 panchayats, which tenure is not ended) in 64 Mandals of Mahabubnagar District in 3 phases covering 5 divisions.

Particulars	First Phase	Second Phase	Third Phase
Voting day *	July 29, 06	Aug 2, 06	Aug 6, 06
Name of Divisions	Nagarkurnool and Wanaparthy	Mahabubnagar	Narayanpet and Gadwal
No., of Mandals	21	19	24
Total Panchayats	394	428	521
No., of Panchayats	26	19	62
Unanimous			
Total wards	3,950	4,186	5,128
Polling centers	4,038	4,292	5,174
Total Voters	777,374	722,502	860,933

District Coordination Committee (DCC)

To initiate PEVAC in 960 Gram Panchayats of 58 Mandals, PRIA formed the District Coordination Committee with 18 Potential Civil Society Organizations namely APMSS, ECO-CLUB, CONARE, SPARSHA, VIP, SEDP, APDS, COMMITMENTS, SDDPA, COVA, DBSU, TOUCH, SPEED, LOKASATTA, ZYSS, IPWSS, GUARDS, SEVA BHARATHI. Two meetings were organized (i.e., June 3, 2006 and June 21, 2006) for bringing common understanding on PEVAC. DCC – PRIA facilitated PEVAC covering 1109 Gram Panchayats of 60 mandals through DCC members, therefore covered 82.14% of GPs out 1350 GPs in the district.

PEVAC Launching

In the district, PEVAC was launched by releasing posters by District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Mr. Abdul Sattar on July 10, 2006 in a meeting organized at Zilla Parishad Office. The DPO called upon Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for educating voters on election and also building the capacities of newly elected representatives in order to understand the role of GP in village development by solving the problems identified in gram Sabha through people's participation. Moreover, he appreciated the work of PRIA doing since four years in Mahabubnagar District. With this, PEVAC initiatives have been officially launched in the district and carried out till completion of third phase elections.

Main interventions undertaken

1. NSS Students Rally as part of PEVAC-2006

Date: 20-07-2006, Khillaganpur

Theme for PEVAC

Use of cultural medium in rural PEVAC increases the spirit, energy, understanding of the community with regard to importance of right to vote, and impacts their minds better. It is a more sensitive and expressive form of spreading awareness and information. Inclusion of youth and students i.e. both girls and boys is the best way of preparing their young minds for the future as well as carry on the message with more enthusiasm to the adults. Emphasizing this, a rally was organized by PRIA-Mahabubnagar in one of the intensive mandals of Khillaganpur with NSS students from the local junior college.

Slogans used

'Vote ante mata kadu, iedella jeevitham!' (Don't take vote lightly; it is five years worth of our life!)

'Manchini gelpinchandi cheduni tharumandi!' (Let us make good win, and chase bad away!)

'Notuki votu manakey chetuu!' (Casting vote for offered money, will destroy our life!)

'Votu viluva thelusuko, manakey melu!' (Know the value of every vote; it will be good for our life!)

Positive Impact of the rally

- ✓ The students interacted with the representative from SRC and shared that they liked participating in such events of social cause, and use of placards, shouting of slogans was a new and proud experience for them.
- ✓ The NSS student monitors were very responsive, responsible and motivated in monitoring the rally and distribution of pamphlets, and their enthusiasm needs lot of appreciation. They were very cooperative to the PRIA team.
- ✓ The NSS programme officers participated actively and encouraged the students to give their best. There was a mood of festivity and excitement that was captured in the camera, handy cam and their faces. They called out to people to come out of their homes and collect the pamphlets. They joined the students throughout the rally. Other school staff also joined the rally that showed their involvement.
- ✓ The principal and staff gave feedback that the event was a success, and they were happy to have this event as the first in their NSS plan for the year.

Constraints faced

- ✓ It was not possible to have a short orientation to the staff and most importantly with the students about PEVAC, (the theme of the rally) due to time constraints
- ✓ It was thought of to hire an auto and mike set to play the PEVAC audio cassette along with the rally, but the mike set was not available on hire
- ✓ The small event before the rally was short as the time was little.

2. Orientation to MVSS on PEVAC (9th June)

PRIA attended BISSA meeting (promoted by COMMITMENTS-an NGO working for Physically disabled in the district), which is a network of NGOs working for physically disabled in five mandals namely, Kosgi, Caulathabad, Maddur, Balanagar and Bomraspet. Around 80 participants attended from the above mandals.

The meeting started with “Jeevithana Gelupannadhi” song. Mrs. Narsamma, President BISSA network started with the self- introduction. After the introduction the PRIA reps started the days program with what is Gram Panchyat and why the 73rd CAA has come into force and the role of Gram Panchayat and what is Gram Sabha. Very few of the participants responded to the above questions.

Much focus has been given on promoting better choice of candidates defining leadership qualities and even educated on right to information act. A few of them are planning to contest in elections if given reservation and or general competitions. Moreover, the participants decided to share this information with members of SHGs, VOs, MMS in which are members by forcibly putting as an agenda point in their meeting. During the interaction with the participants they said.

– If we elect a good person (leader) by unanimous without taking the money and or selling the vote he would perform his duties with more commitment.

Mrs. Balamma

– The village will develop when we choose and elect a good leader by unanimous.

Mr. Narasimha Reddy

- Shared his experience as a Ward Member ' earlier he worked as vidya committee chairman during that period he got good name among the community which helped him to elect as a Ward member.

Mr. Baghawanth (WM)

3. Orientation to APMSS Mahila Samakya

APMSS - DRC – PRIA (15th July, 2006) has taken this opportunity (2 days Mahila Mela around 700 participants gathered from different MMS, VO and SHGs.) The PRIA reps participated in the Mela on the second day at around 11.30a.m. and enlightened the entire gathering on elections-

'The leader must have patience and coordinating skills. If we sell our vote and elect inefficient leader we can't see the development in the village, we can't ask or argue with the sarpanch and/or ward members for the village development'

basically functions of PRIs, importance of contesting in elections by women, collectively canvassing by group members; fighting against flow of money, liquor; casteism etc; choosing right candidate for voting etc. Moreover, the orientation was organized in participatory manner with share of experiences.

In this session; Mrs. Padmamma, Member of District Level Network Committee (promoted by APMSS in collaboration with PRIA) from Utkor Mandal, shared her experience as a Ward Member during 2001-06 and her learning's from Kerala exposure visit including gram sabha etc. Moreover, she motivated other women's who participated in Mela for contesting in elections even other than reserved seats. She expressed that we get recognition, social status, and influence local politics by contesting in election in effectively functioning of PRIs/local

bodies. By the end of the orientation program around 50 participants came forward to contest in local elections.

4. Orientation to SHG members

In order to involve the CBOs in PEVAC process PRIA had initiated to orient the VO's. PRIA oriented around 50 SHG members on 12th June 2006 in GP office, Agaram. PRIA oriented the SHG members about 1.5 hrs on their regular monthly meeting in the village around 10.00 a.m. During these orientations the enlightened women were particular on choosing better candidates by identifying their personal qualities like boldness, education, mingling with others, knowledge on functioning of gram panchayat, awareness of local issues, having linkages with other government and non-government institutions.

5. Orientations to VOs

In Ghanpur Gram Panchayat PRIA participated in the regular monthly meeting of VO-2 on July 2006 when 50 participants and 3 staff members of IKP attended in the meeting. Before starting their own agenda PRIA spoke on the importance of elections, voting, contesting and choosing right candidate etc, role of Gram Panchayat, importance of Gram Sabha and APREGS. During the discussion the major focus was on the functioning of GP and the village development.

Engaging with district administration

In order to take up PEVAC effectively in the district, the following government officials and institutions were approached in order to seek their cooperation.

Approached **District Collector, Mrs. V.Usharani, I.A.S.**, for obtaining permission for taking up PEVAC and also release PEVAC posters.

Obtained letter from **Superintendent of Police, Mr. Srinivas Reddy, I.P.S.**, to extend support by station house officers of 64 Mandals during PEVAC.

The **District Panchayat Officer, Mr. Abdul Satter** has extended support by writing letters to the secretaries of all Gram Panchayat along with MPDOs in the district. Therefore, we involved mandal officials too along with GP secretaries in PEVAC process in 64 mandals of district.

Project Director of IKP and DRDA, Mr. Shajahan has provided space to enlighten the members of Zilla Mahila Samakya and Mandal Mahila Samakyas in the district during their on-going programs/events. And the staff of IKP (i.e., APMs, and CCs) asked to educate the women group on elections too.

Engagement with Media (Print and Electronic)

For educating community massively, disseminated information through print and electronic media particularly the daily local newspapers namely Eenadu, Vaartha, Andhra Jyothi, Andhra Prabha, and parja shakti and electronic media by up-dating them on PEVAC including communication strategy. All the representatives of aforesaid newspapers participated in the press meet organized on July 10 & 28, 2006 and covered extensively.

Village level initiatives

The following interventions have taken up under PEVAC at village level in 1089 Gram Panchayats of 58 mandals in the district.

Small Group Discussions

In 366 GPs, about 4000 members of CBOs (SHGs & VO) were educated on elections in their regular meetings. Trained community health works, anganwadi teachers, youth group members etc were involved in the process.

Help Desks

In 4 GPs, help desks were established and helped the needy contestants contesting from SC and ST communities. In filling of nominations, the retired village secretaries / teachers helped.

Street Plays / Kalajatha Shows

Organized 30 Street Plays in 25 GPs of 9 Mandals by PRIA
Organized street plays in 160 GPs and Gram Sabhas in 254 GPs of 7 Mandals by APMSS
Community responded positively and cooperated for effective dissemination of information through street plays.

Sharing of Opinion by Voters

While conducting Gram Sabha / Kalajatha / Group Meeting provided space for the reflections of the community. This has yielded in motivating the others and bring out an agreement among participants that not to yield for money, liquor etc.

Pasting of Posters

Pasted 3 types of posters in 1109 GPs. Village Secretaries, CHWs, youth group members and Volunteers were involved in pasting of poster.

Posters pasted in important locations of GP i.e., schools, GP office, 4 roads junction, milk centers etc.

However, the posters pasted from collector office to panchayat office located at village.

Distribution of Pamphlets

In 580 GPs, the pamphlets were distributed by making door to Door visits. The school children, youth volunteers, women were involved in distribution of pamphlets.

Audio Cassettes

Audio cassettes were played using the Temple mike sets in 45 gram Panchayats

Positive Response

-Even though it was raining continuously, the community shown special interest for - watching the live kalajatha shows organized in their village;

-The contestants, youth volunteers, etc had come forward for pasting of posters at village level after understanding the theme/concept/message given in the farm of posters;

-To some extent, this campaign had helped the contestants contested for ward members in reducing the flow of money, liquor etc;

-Village secretaries were also extended cooperation in pasting of posters by involving themselves.

-189 candidates won in elections out of 468 contested candidates, who were part/participated/trained in electoral process by DCC members. The details are given below

II. Case study of DRC-2



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF VISAKHAPATNAM

The history of Visakhapatnam or Vizag tells about the transformation of a small fishing village into the major commercial harbor of India. Originally, Visakhapatnam was two separate towns

- the northern and more urbane Waltaire and the southern port town of Visakhapatnam. Gradually both these towns merged together into one.

Visakhapatnam, the Port city is the jewel on the eastern coast of India. The City is a harmonious blend of the magical past and the bustling present with a breath-taking panorama of golden beaches, lush green fields, verdant valleys and splendid monuments from a historically rich and religious heritage.

Matchless in beauty and landscape, Visakhapatnam is said to have derived its name from the deity 'Visaka' (the God of Valour). The history of the town can be traced back to Ashoka the Great (272-

232 B.C) when this was a small fishing village of the Kalinga Empire. Later on this Port town successively passed on from the Andhra Kings of Vengi to the Pallavas, Cholas and the Gangas and then later in the 15th century Visakhapatnam became a part of the Vijaya Nagar Empire. The British took charge of this beautiful land and transformed it into a busy and flourishing Port town.

Demographic Features

Visakhapatnam, a south Indian harbor city is the commercial and industrial heart of Andhra Pradesh's isolated Northeast corner. Andhra Pradesh is the Southeastern state of India.

Item	Unit of Measure	Figure
Area	Sq.Km	11161
Population	In thousand	3789.82
Male	In thousand	1903.89
Female	In thousand	1885.92
Urban	In thousand	1511.84
Rural	In Thousand	2277.98
Population Density (sq/km)	Ratio	340
Literacy	%	59.45
Male	%	68.84
Female	%	49.99

Altitude-15 feet above sea level

Status of PRIs

There are 28 plain mandals and 11 PESA mandals in the district and a total of 42 Mandals (Urban Mandals-3, Rural Mandals-39). The rural Elections were held in 39 Mandals. The total Number of Panchayats is 833, total number of Wards is 9232, total Mandal Parishads is 39 and the total number of Zilla Parishads is 39.

Coordination of the agency (local NGO/CSO, lead NGO) with

They have planned to do an inaugural function at the district with the CEO and other officials but since all the IEC Material did not come at one time they postponed it. But every set of material was given to the District Panchayat Officer and the CEO.

At the mandal level permission was taken from the MRO and MPDO for the campaign.

IEC material was displayed in MPDO office.

Type of CSO/CBOs Mark (Y/N)	Tool/methodology used- Please tick	Participation/ Activities involved in - please tick	Impact of tools used and CSO involvement
Schools Yes	Pamphlets	Distributing Pamphlets	The posters had a major impact mainly to the women and youth groups.
Colleges Yes	Pamphlets	Distributing Pamphlets	The Kalajatha had showed people their value of vote and people felt happy and came to know the hurdles in choosing a wrong person.
Youth orgs Yes	Rallies ✓ SGM	Organize Rallies ✓ SMG	

Mahila mandals/mandal samakhyas Yes	✓ shows ✓ Video SGM	✓ Organize Video shows ✓ SGM	Group meeting to different target groups helped in creating awareness mainly to the girls in the age group of 18-21. In G.Madugulla most of the newly elected panchayats were Citizen leaders with whom we were working in that mandal.
CBOs (SHGs, VO s) Yes	Playing Audiocassettes ✓ SGM	Playing Audiocassette ✓ SGM	
All User committees GP No	Interfaces	Facilitating Interfaces	
Teachers No	Small group meetings	Holding Small group meetings	
Citizen leaders Yes	Wall writings ✓ Group Meetings	Take up Wall writings ✓ Group Meetings	

Coverage of the mandals and name of partner NGOs

Name of mandal	Name of organization
Padmanabham	PRIA
S.Rayavaram	REEDS
Nakkapalli	REEDS
Kasimkota	AWARD
Anakapalli	SEVAJYOTHI
Chodovaram	S.L.D.Y.A
Cheedikada	SEVA
Deverapalli	SEVA
K.Kotapadu	SOWJANYA
Golugonda	CHAITANYA BHARATHI
Bhuchyyapeta	PRDS
Yellamanchilli	TODAY
Narsipatnam	Sneha Youth Association Wisemen Civic Welfare Association (WCWA)
Rolugunta	Lift Rural Development Welfare
Kotavaratla	NAWA
Makavarapalem	GPRKS
Koyyuru	PRATHIBA
Ravikamatham	Swamkrushi Seva Society (SSS)
Nathavaram	Sneha Youth Association

Description of Activities undertaken at Intensive Locations:

1.Pasting of Posters:



Observations People gathered near the places and read the posters. Some of them were the opinion that it was for the very first time they were seeing these type pf Posters. Some illiterate villagers who do not know hoe to read were analyzing the posters and describing them.

Impact People from the hamlets demanded to give posters so that they can paste with their own interest in their hamlets. In the tribal areas people voluntarily pasted posters in the main streets and also in the main centers.

2. Slogan writings



3. Small Group Discussions (SGM):



Observations and responses elicited during small group meetings

Observations of SGM	Responses from SGM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In G.Madugula both Women and Men participation was seen in the meetings. ✓ More citizen leaders contested in the election after the orientation process and others by reading the compendiums of Panchayat Raj. ✓ Women in themselves decided on whom to nominate for the Elections ✓ Less participation from Men in padmanbham mandal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The target group felt very happy that such orientation were like inspirations for them to take a step ahead. ✓ People in Padmanabham were of the opinion that despite such orientaion,it is the monetary factor that plays a vital role in the Elections. ✓ They opined that “more men are been influenced by money and liquor and they will sell their votes at any cost. If this happens and a majority of votes are being sold ,then obviously a contestant who spends more money wins the race”.

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3.Help Desk:



Help desks were organized on 17th -19th July. But the nominations started from 15th July. Help desk was planned only in two centers initially. But looking into the demand for it we engaged citizen leaders to look after these in other Centers. PRIA took responsibility in two Panchayats namely Redipalli and lanada.

Information like Ward Reservations, Code of Conduct, Eligibility criteria, Election Schedule etc were written in charts and were displayed at every Centre. At Redipalli we had set up a small tent for the Booth, but since it was raining we had to display the charts on the walls of the nomination Centre.

In lenada the same information was displayed at the panchayat Office where nomination took place

Queries	Observations	Responses
Contestants asked about the Eligibility criteria like age limit, Weather dealers of ration shops were eligible or not, Contestants having more than two children and the criteria for that, how to fill the property column and some contestants on how to fills the nomination papers.	Most people came with filled nomination papers and gave us for verification. One of the contestant who was contesting for the post of Sarpanch having three children was cross checked by the opposition candidate after the later got information on eligibility criteria through information booth.	The election officer told the contestants to verify their forms in the information booths. He thanked us for setting up the booth and for providing necessary information. Independent candidates were happy to have filled in their forms in the booth.

4. Kalajathas:



To have a wide impact, Kalajatha was performed just two to three days before the Elections so that it will impact the minds of the people before casting votes. Kalajathas were planned to be performed at Mandal Headquarters and places where there will be large gatherings.

Observations

Kalajatha played a very important role in the campaign. In Paderu, people first gathered thinking that there was some accident. When the actual play started People were standing holding their umbrellas to watch the play.

While returning back to their work some Villagers gathered and were taking on how a vote can be useful in making their village a better place.

More men turned up to see the shows compared to women in all the places. People took the play seriously and accepted that such things do happen and after seeing the play they will be against such practices (like taking money and liquor). People who were in their way to canvassing stopped and watched the play

Responses

After the play was over, they opined that this was the first ever Kalajatha they were seeing on Voters Awareness. Some people called the team to their villages to perform the play. Some ward members who were contesting asked the group to perform in the respective ward by taking some fees.

Feedback

People felt that more number of Shows would have brought more impact in the society.

Experiences And Observations of DRC Staff:

1. The campaign had a very positive response from the Election officer in every mandal and they even gave the liberty to paste the posters anywhere we like.
2. Padmanabham mandal MPDO ordered all the secretaries to help us in pasting posters.
3. The partners of the Campaign felt that some more money would have helped to take up the campaign in a large scale.
4. Since the actual budget was very less than the expected budget, there was only 70% coverage in the district.
5. District level inauguration did not take place, as IEC material was not sent at one time time.



Glimpses of voters who lined up for casting votes

Case Study 1

Unanimous choice

V.B.Chandrasekhar, 23 of G.Maduguala in Visakhapatnam belongs to ST Community. He is currently studying his final year Graduation. From adolescence, he was interested in serving the society and he is an active citizen leader with PRIA. The people in the community encouraged him to contest as a Ward member in his ward. But since he wanted to concentrate in his studies he denied contesting the election. After his refusal all the ward people decided unanimously that no support would be extended to any other candidate except Chandrasekhar. Motivated by the overwhelming response of the Ward people, Chandrasekhar contested the elections and also won unanimously.

Case Study 2

Cooperation from officials

In PRIA intensive location Padmanabham the election Officer and MPDO extended a helping hand to make the Campaign successful. The election Officer gave PRIA and Partner NGOs the permission to paste the posters everywhere in strategic places in the village.

They allowed the NGOs to take the help of the secretaries and peons if needed. He consented to give a message to the villagers for free and fair elections on local cable T.V network, to all Cinema houses to support the campaign and use of posters in the Mandal and all the Gram Panchayats offices. The MPDO also suggested PRIA and partner NGOs to take the help of "Talayar" to paste the posters in some interior panchayats explains the relationship of the government and PRIA.

Summary and conclusions

In order to achieve the objectives of PEVAC, the voters were communicated basically on (1) Voter list updation (2) contesting in Elections; (3) participation of women, dalit and weaker sections; (4) procedure in casting of votes (Folding of ballot papers), through networking strategy by involving Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), District Administration, Media and Academia.

The issues like development of the village, solution to problems, the answers to queries of people were also dealt with in the Small Group meeting.

Various officials encouraged the staff from NGOs to take up PEVAC. The MRO, MDO, RDO in many intervention areas have expressed that the posters were attractive, simple to understand and allowed them to be pasted in their offices. In certain areas where the posters could not be put up before the day of filing of nominations, as they hadn't received them, they commented that they must have been pasted before nominations so that more people would have had a look at them.

Some contesting candidates felt that the awareness campaign serves the purpose of bringing the characteristics of a good candidate to the fore. Some shared that even if they are devoted to people's welfare, insecurity that people might vote the opposite person as he is distributing money and valuables makes them also to indulge in such practices. Spreading the message that voting a good candidate is important would reduce their expenses.

Other contesting candidates however disrupted the playing of cassettes, distribution of pamphlets and either tore the posters or stuck their posters on it for fear that people might not accept the alcohol and money and not listen to them.

The Purpose of the DCC meetings were to interact and orient with local NGOs with regard to participation in local panchayat elections, sharing of code of conduct with the organization, facilitating the local organizations to form a District Coordination Committee in order to implement the campaign.

The PEVAC activities at the district level got maximum mileage by obtaining coverage in popular daily newspapers and local channels. The publicity spreads the Voters Awareness message to a wider population. The media publicity at the state level was during the press meet attended in the State Election Commissioner office on 15th July 2006. Also the daily The Hindu covered the news item that PRIA-AP has initiated the PEVAC-2006 in collaboration with SEC and along with a platform of state level NGOs namely Action Aid, COVA, CEE, CWS, APMAS, APMSS, LOKSATTA and DBSU.

Kalajathas comprise the folk media of telling a story, message and moral through song, dance, humor and communist spark. This media serves to convey, register and create impact on the minds of the audience.

Kalajathas were used in Rural Elections Voter awareness campaign for the same purpose. So that people participate in the show, hear, observe and learn from the story of the play and this may bring new motivations in the people. Kalajatha sponsored by SEC were held in the 7 districts of Nellore, West Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Guntur, Prakasham and Mahabubnagar. Around 110 shows were organized in all, covering 120 villages. The kalajatha teams used a common script developed at PRIA and performed in short notice, which is a challenging task. Some troupes have rehearsed for 2 days and gave the performances.

The impact of kalajatha reflects from the onsite interest shown by the audience and the feedback obtained from them. The men, women, children and especially the elderly in many areas have felt that such a situation portrayed in the play exists in their village and that there is need to stop candidates from distributing liquor and money to buy votes. This is one step towards changing their attitude in the long run.

Constraints and recommendation

On the basis of coordination and field level action of Pre-Election Voter Awareness Campaign the following recommendations are made for future course of action.

Added effort in centralized dissemination of message through electronic and print media apart from the district and local stakeholders. Stepped up program and financial support to the district coordinating agencies and mandal level players. Insistence on outreaching village level self- help groups and community based organizations and facilitating their participation.

Starting the campaign program much in advance, at least 3-4 months, and sensitizing communities of people continuously to recognize the need for identifying and supporting right kind of candidates. Partnering with educational institutions right from elementary to university levels to take the message to the voters through their kith and kin from the places of learning. Including the message in the syllabus at high school and college levels. Institutionalizing the Forum for Panchayats at village, mandal and district levels as an eternal effort and perpetual mechanism for promotion of participation of people for democratic governance and should not merely be confined to pre-election voter awareness campaigns

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Participatory Research in Asia
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062
Ph:+91-011-29960931/32/33
Web: www.pria.org