



EDITORIAL

Released during the past quarter, was the formally approved strategic plan document of PRIA, **"Governance Where People Matter"** which is primarily a statement of PRIA's road map of its journey over the next five years. The document enumerates the overall framework of PRIA's interventions and the strategic considerations that guide the implementation of the thematic programmes. The revised framework is based on model, which promotes a more focused, deepened and converging intervention and recognises the need to enhance linkages with government, academia and media. The overall objective of the intervention is *to improve the standard of living of the marginalized through their active participation in the effective utilisation of development resources*. The 2003 to 2007 intervention, engrossing the experiences of the past and the demands of the present context, is structured at three levels namely *micro* (district), *meso* (state) and *macro* (national and global). The operating programmes have been categorised into the themes of *Civil society building and Reforming Governing institutions* and aim to create "Effective voice of new leadership and Transparent and accountable self governing institutions." The framework also includes addressing one specific development issue at each location of implementation. Guided by the above framework our teams have been reorganised and repositioned and are on their ways forward.

With hope to keep in touch presenting you our varied range of activities in the pages ahead.

Editor

CONTENTS:

3. CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT • Civil Society • **4. LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE** • Capacity building of municipal representative • Study on Urban Local Bodies • Local Body Election, Jharkhand • Gram Sabha Mobilisation, Rajasthan • Workshop for Councillors, Chattisgarh • Forum International De Montreal • Consultation for DFID, India • Child Labours, Jamtara • Gender Sensitization workshop • Capacity building workshop **8. OTHERS** • Village Library Programme • Series of cases on Panchayats

CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

Excerpts from keynote address delivered by Dr. Rajesh Tandon, at 'Commonwealth Asia Regional Consultation: Maximizing Civil Society's Contribution to Democracy and Development' organized by The Commonwealth Foundation and VANI during May 6-8, 2003 in New Delhi.

Let me state my views on the theme of development and democracy and the contributions of civil society and what I see as the possible areas of our collective work in the future.

Development

In this gathering with wide experience of development work, it is highly risky business to define development. But assuming it implies improving the lives, quality of lives, socio-economic and political, cultural lives of all our peoples in our countries could broadly be defined as overarching goal for any development intervention. This country as well as this region, and I am including Malaysia, have a very long and proud tradition of voluntary work in the field of development. That tradition goes back to centuries, where all religions, all cultural norms and values always emphasized individual and collective contributions for the well-being of the society — be it for the help of the poor and the needy, be it for looking after our natural resources, be it in conservation of water and forest. There is a very long and very proud tradition of voluntarism and our work in contemporary context must find reflection of that tradition. But if we take recent years, we take last five decades particularly, a period of history when most of our countries became independent from colonial rule, even in this short period of five decades, the contribution of voluntary initiatives, citizen's initiatives, civil society initiatives have been multifarious.

I want to bring to your notice three types of contributions in particular. The first contribution and perhaps the most dramatic contribution of voluntary initiatives in all our countries has been what I would call innovation. Creative solutions to pressings problems of our time in any aspect of human endeavour — be it mother's health, children's health, education, literacy, livelihoods, social and communitarian approaches to natural resource management, problems of women, dalits, tribals, bonded and child labour, pollution, degradation — any aspect of human endeavour, creative solutions to present problems in micro-settings have been a major contribution of the work of voluntary initiatives. In fact, most of the national and international programmes, be it in the field of community forestry, or water conservation, or women's livelihood or gender justice, today these national/international programmes reflect the lessons learned from those micro, creative innovations led and nurtured by voluntary organizations, civil society groups in our countries; so innovation is a major contribution.

The second contribution is what I am terming as interaction, social mobilization, organization building, informing, conscientizing exploited communities and families in our societies about their rights as enshrined in our Constitution. Enabling conversations across divided communities, be they on the basis of class or gender or caste or religion. Multifarious efforts at promoting interaction have been a major contribution and most national and international programmes of the governments in our countries have acknowledged this as a major contribution. Essential basis of any sustainable, long-term development initiative is the participation and sense of ownership of those for whom such interventions are meant. And it is here in social

mobilization, facilitating interactions and collective organization that voluntary initiatives, civil society organizations continue to make a major contribution.

And the third arena has been the arena of influence. Influencing of public opinion, be it on the issue of child marriage, on the issue of SATI, on the issue of conservation of water. Various public education efforts aim to change the mindsets and attitudes of our people, in particular our people who live in the cities. And the second aspect of influence is continuing efforts in policy advocacy, policy reform. India, and I am sure our neighbouring countries as well, have every possible human rights, development rights, policy and legislation in our statutes. In fact, some times we have such a long list of progressive policies and legislations that a lot of people don't understand how come problems of injustice or poverty or exclusion or intimidation continue in our societies. And they continue because there is a huge gap between the intentions of the policy and their active implementation on the ground. And this is where voluntary initiatives, civil society organizations have played, and continue to play, a major role; a role which is a combination of watch-dog, monitoring role, to track policy implementation or a whistle-blower role. This kind of influence in our society, on our governments, is a continuing important contribution. So my submission to this discourse in the next three days is that as far as development is concerned, voluntary initiatives, civil society initiatives play these three fundamental and inter-related but crucial roles of innovation, inter-action and influence.

However, there are some essential problematiques in playing these roles. Those are not new to a group like this but let me any way alert ourselves to those problematiques. In most of our

societies, over the five decades, we witnessed a development approach, which put the state and the government in the center. Hegemony of the state in defining what is appropriate development, in capturing all the public resources available and in providing a huge and vast development machinery has been the phenomenon of the second half of the last century. But it is now well established that there are state failures in delivering those desirable goals. So from the hegemony of the state, in the last few years, the pendulum has now swung to what I call the 'hegemony of the free market', so called free market, the private sector. And now in our discourse for development, in our discussion of improving the standards of our people, there is an almost blind faith that private, for-profit sector would deliver this economic growth, may be, but distribution, certainly not. So there are market failures. In our countries, there is a long standing tradition of by-logue between two parties, civil society and governments, civil society and private sector and of course in these days government and private sector. But there is very little experience of tri-logue of private sector, market institutions, governments and the civil society coming together to address problems of our time. And this, I would hope, would be one of the issues we address in our context.

Democracy

The second theme of the conference is democracy. This region has an uneven history of democratic governance. India is the largest democracy in the world; we have established formal institutions of democracy, we have parties, we have election commissions, we have parliaments, judiciary, etc. But over this period of five decades, perhaps we have reduced our citizens into mere voters

to occasionally go and cast their vote and after that live in a state of disaffection with democratic institutions. And in recent years, use and abuse of public institutions and resources for private gain has cut across all forms of institutions. It is only in our region that many of these remain undetected and certainly un-penalised. Human rights violations by police and their family members — this morning's newspaper will give you lots of evidences. Judges, again this morning's newspaper, political leaders, bureaucrats there is a very interesting story I read in one of our daily newspapers about a month ago where four very senior civil servants in our largest state of UP, their spouses had set-up NGOs, a phenomena which is flourishing in at least India, and siphoned-off nearly four crores of rupees, about a million dollars, into all kinds of things other than what the projects were supposed to deliver: and following an investigation by Criminal Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the guilt of those civil servants has been established, yet they continue to run the government of UP and CBI has now approached the Chief Minister of UP to allow the prosecution of these civil servants and I do not know how long it will take for the prosecution to be allowed and completed.

Civil Society

I don't want to leave this podium without saying a few words about the state of civil society itself. There are all kinds of associations in our society from very traditional to very modern, very professional. We did a study in PRIA over the last three-four years on the status of civil society organizations and our nation wide estimate is 1.2 million non-profit organizations in this country with an annual turn over of 4 billion dollars and only less than 7.5 % of that money comes from international sources. What I want to mention here is that the scale of the sector, in terms of full time employ-

ment in these non-profit organizations, is equivalent to 80% of all central government employees and more than a quarter of all central and provincial government employees taken together. This is a huge sector but remains invisible and to some extent chaotic. There are internal chisms, which divide the sector. Modern developmental intermediary organizations like PRIA in this world are distanced from traditional, indigenous, local, civic organizations. Professional associations are in the world of their own; so are trade unions and cooperatives.

There is a great talk these days about accountability, legitimacy, I hope we will discuss these but I just want to bring to your attention a couple of very interesting phenomena in our society. I don't know how widespread it is in some other Asian countries but certainly in India, it is asked periodically that what is the basis of civic action. Why should PRIA of this world exist, on whose behalf it speaks? We speak on nobody's behalf. PRIA speaks on issues. It works on issues to demonstrate what is possible in order to change the injustices, change the discriminations in our society and this work is supported. It is supported nationally and internationally. Supported by the governments, supported by same donors, which support the work of various ministries in this country. But in discussions of accountability we only look for audited accounts. Accountability gets reduced to simply audited statements of accounts and if audited statements of account was the only basis to establish transparency, integrity, accountability in any institutions then we are in serious difficulty. Let me give you a couple of examples: We have an institution called CAGI (Controller Auditor General of India). It is a Constitutional authority, independent of other institutions. It tables its reports in Parliament every year. Every now and then, some of

these reports find a way in the media and this morning's newspaper says about one such institution called Municipal Corporation of Delhi, which is a statutory organization. Its' accounts have not been audited for years. There are public sector banks whose accounts have not been audited for years. There are many autonomous institutions in the field of health, education and social well-fare whose accounts have not been reconciled for decades. Is that accountability?

We also have a situation where increasingly international experts are being invited to tell indigenous civil society organizations how they should ensure accountability. And one category of these experts is called Chartered Accountancy Firms of the international variety. These are, believe me or not, "family" enterprises. They never publish their annual reports and their annual accounts are never audited and presented in the public domain. They are going to advise us in the coming period on how we should hold ourselves accountable.

And finally, political parties, trade unions, religious and media institutions. I am eagerly awaiting, despite all the efforts I could make sitting here in Delhi, to get an annual audited report of any of these organizations for the past five years. Has any one of you succeeded in this regard?

In the environment in which civil society efforts are moving today, we need to address two fundamental challenges:

- i. Establishing relationships across the wide diversity of civic action. We are all happy in our little "holes", I would urge that we discuss how this divide could be overcome.
- ii. And secondly that we establish principles of integrity, of demonstrable integrity, to the public at large over and above the minimum statutory requirements of audited accounts.

Capacity Building of Municipal representative, Haryana

PRIA, along-with the local administration and academic institutes, organized a capacity building workshop for elected representatives of urban local bodies on 14 June at Hisar, Haryana, aiming at creating awareness of their roles and responsibilities and on the provisions under the 74th Amendment Act. Faculty members from Hisar Agricultural University (HAU), Hisar and Ch. Devi Lal University, Sirsa, co-facilitated the workshop by providing their inputs on a range of issues. For PRIA the event was also an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice by bringing the group on to a common platform.

Councillors from Fatehabad and Ratia participating in the workshop were told about the importance of local self-governance and the issues of transparency and accountability in the same. The inaugural address given by the Vice-Chancellor of HAU, Hisar was valuable. A lecture by a faculty member of Ch. Devi Lal University, Sirsa explained the main guidelines of the 74th amendment and discussed the lacunae present in the operation of the act. A member from HAU, gave a comparative analysis of Panchayats and Municipalities and concentrated on the budgeting systems. Another faculty member of HAU, spoke on the importance of women's participation in the decision making process.

Dr. R.B Langyan, Deputy Commissioner, Fatehabad discussed the problems faced by the municipalities stressing on issues of corruption and the failure on the part of the councillors to recognize their roles and responsibilities.

A discussion on how the municipality prioritises its issues and how the funds are distributed accordingly was felt useful. In an open discussion councillors put forth their concerns such as lack of training,

knowledge about the act, the problems they face etc. The women councillors discussed the difficulties they face in their daily functioning.

Action by Nari Network

Nari Network, a group supported by PRIA in Haryana, organized two capacity building cluster workshop for women elected representatives of the PRI in Aharvan, (June 19) and in Boda (June 25) at Ratia, Haryana. The main purpose of the event was to make the women panch and sarpanch aware of their roles and responsibilities under the 73rd amendment and to explain to them the importance of women participation in local self-governance. Over 75% of the total elected representatives attended the meet. The participants were explained the importance of women's participation in the decision making process by members of the Nari network. They also discussed the essence of a Gram Sabha and their role as a panch or sarpanch and the scope of 33% reservations for women. Women were encouraged to fight against discrimination and prejudice against them. A discussion on various existing development programmes and schemes was also held.

Study on Urban Local bodies

PRIA released preliminary findings of its study titled 'strengthening municipal finances of small and medium town' which was recently conducted for assessing functioning of municipalities, 10 years after the incorporation of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act as part IXA. It focused on primarily three municipalities across country- Dongergarh (Chhattisgarh), Khairabad (U.P) and Mahendragarh (Haryana) for carrying out the study along existing official data from various institutes.

The study reveals that the urban local bodies in the country have been facing fiscal stress. Lack of financial autonomy and technical capabilities, inefficient accounting and financial reporting practices, absence of accountability and transparency and inability to access

capital market have adversely affected functioning of about 3656 municipalities in the country.

The study said that gap between municipal income and expenditure was significantly high while in many cases funds were transferred from capital or scheme account to finance day-to-day municipal activities. Poor record management and data information system along with the lack of expertise at municipal level adversely affects the functioning of these urban bodies.

Factors such as discontinuation of Octroi in many states, inefficient use of land, poor cost recovery and defective pricing system and inefficient accounting and financial system have crippling affect on the municipal finance. Added to it is the lack of bureaucratic and political initiatives and 'not so cordial' relationship between municipal executive and elected representatives belonging to various political parties.

The study also points to the fact that municipalities generates revenue from only three sources – taxes (54%), non-taxes (14%) and fiscal transfers (32%) while collection efficiency was estimated to be less than 50%," the study said adding that many state governments are encroaching on the taxes to be levied by the municipalities. It observes that no meaningful match between the resources and responsibilities could be affected without first delegating functions and powers to the urban local bodies by the states.

The study recommends that various state governments should delegate power to municipalities for generating their own resources. "This will not only improve the fiscal base of municipalities but improve the functioning of these institutions, vital for urban development," it said. Ironically the constitutional provision for municipal governance is not mandatory; it is for the legislature to decide as to which powers and authority, it may devolve to a municipality.

Local Body Election, Jharkhand

The JPRSSS (Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Swasthan Samnvy Samiti-A network of 106 voluntary organisations initiated by PRIA) organised a day long Dharna on 9 June (B. Birsa Munda's death anniversary) at Birsa Statue, Ranchi demanding an early Panchayat election. 400 people including various networks like Mahila Ekata Manch, networks of NBJK, other tribal networks participated in the same. Many women participated in the event and it was covered by the local media. Information was disseminated through pamphlets and brochures during the dharna. Many local leaders and the Hon'ble minister of science and technology attended the same and shared his views with the people and promised to raise this issue on cabinet meeting. A memorandum was drafted and signed and was submitted to the Hon'ble Chief Minister and others.

Gram Sabha Mobilization, Rajasthan

We are not informed about gram sabha meeting... Men also do not attend.. Sarpanch doesn't come... We are only asked to sign and leave the place... How can we attend the meeting with so many men sitting? ... we want work related schemes ...

These voices of women from different panchayats within Govindgarh Panchayat Samiti Jaipur, Rajasthan reveal the true state of affairs about women's participation in gram sabha meetings. PRIA through its PRC in Govindgarh block has initiated efforts to engage civil society groups for gram sabha mobilization. A series of dialogues were initiated with women elected representatives, women gram sabha members and community based groups in 5 Gram Panchayats (Alisar, Bhuteda, Nagal Kaju, Annatpura (Jaitpura), Maharkalan) between 22 to 24 April with an aim to find out issues that are significantly affecting women's participation in gram sabha meeting and to identify key civil society actors

who could play an active role in gram sabha mobilization. 136 women attended the meetings and shared their experiences and perspectives on range of issues affecting them in their every day life. Non-attendance of women in gram sabha meetings and primacy of women related issues that ought to be addressed by Panchayat were discussed. As many as 48 women leaders of SHGs participated with PRIA in its efforts to mobilise women to attend Gram Sabha meetings and to encourage them to raise their concerns in the forum.

PEVAC, Punjab

PRIA along with its partners launched a Pre Election Voters Awareness Campaign (PEVAC) in the districts of Amritsar, Ropar and Mansa in Punjab, prior to the panchayat elections on 29 June, in the state. A series of large and small group meetings were organised to make the voters aware about their rights during the elections. The campaign also laid stress on women's participation in the decision making process at the lowest level of governance. Villagers including a large number of women took keen interest in a range of information and issues. Casting the vote correctly, why women should be supported and encouraged to participate in panchayat elections, choosing the right candidate and similar topics were discussed. The issue of how liquor is commonly used to lure the voters during elections was raised and how it adversely impacts the contestants who cannot afford this.

Workshop for councillors, Chhattisgarh

PRIA under its ongoing intensive programme strengthening governance in urban local bodies, has been working closely with municipal bodies of Rajnandgaon and Dongargarh in Chhattisgarh. A one-day workshop on identification of capacity building needs of councillors of Rajnandgaon and Dongargarh was organised on 26 April, in Rajnandgaon. 48 participants

including Councillors, nominated representatives of municipal council, government officials and civil society organizations attended the same. The workshop also aimed to bring various stakeholders on a common platform. During the first session findings of a study based on capacity building needs of the councillors conducted earlier, were presented which highlighted that most of the councillors want structured training programmes. It also indicated that a wide gap exists between male and the female councillors on understanding of municipal functioning. Female councillors are less aware than their male counterparts the powers and the duties are the other area in which councillors feel they need to have clear understanding. In the following session, *Dr Rekha Meshram*, a women councillor from Rajnandgaon spoke about women's participation and their role in good governance for urban local bodies. *Mr. Sudesh Deshmukh*, Chairman Rajnandgaon Municipal Corporation shared his views on urban governance and the role of councillors in municipal functioning and development. The Municipal Commissioner of Rajnandgaon *Mr. Ashok Chandrakar* spoke about the 74th Constitutional Amendment and Urban Local Bodies. An interactive group discussion followed where in the councillors expressed the need for training sessions on budgeting and for learning material on 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and related areas.

PRIA based on the above feedback organized a half-day training programme on 20th June, on Budgeting and related issues which was attended by 9 councillors, Chairman Dongargarh Municipality and Chief municipal officers of Dongargarh. The importance of councillors to participate in the process of budgeting was highlighted. They were made aware of the different developmental indicators, issue of giving importance to education and health in budgeting and the various existing urban schemes.

Forum International de Montreal (FIM)

A meeting on 'Civil society and the G8' was organized on 18-20 May, by FIM in Paris, with an aim to take stock of and voice recommendations regarding the various political and institutional challenges faced by NGO/ Civil society organisations in their policy related work around the world. It provided an opportunity to enable a dialogue between Civil society and G8 country representatives in order to contribute to reform processes that are underway as well as submit issues that are related to the main discussion of the Evian summit and the unique role of G8 internationally in June 03.

An interactive session took place on 20 May amongst the G8 representative, *M. Gourdault Montague* (French Sherpa) and other invited G8 countries representatives. Key issues covered were: a) Human security: the necessity of fulfilling promises already made; b) Africa: vital issues for international community and c) Global Governance. *Dr. Rajesh Tandon*, President PRIA, shared the outcomes of the meet in a letter to Prime Minister *Shri. Atal Behari Vajpayee*, who was invited to the Evian Summit in June 03.

Consultation for DFID, India

PRIA facilitated a series of three consultations with civil society organizations for Department for International Development (DFID)-India, with an aim to provide inputs to its Country Assistance Plan (CAP) in India. The consultations organized at Lucknow (on 23 June facilitated by PRIA and SSK Lucknow), Hyderabad (on 26 June) and New Delhi (30 June), drew a total of 90 representatives from 60 civil society organizations from all over the country.

The meet at Lucknow also included 26 elected representatives from both rural and urban local governments (from U.P, Uttaranchal, Bihar, M.P and Chhattisgarh) who joined in the collaborative planning exercise and identified developmental issues, priorities and opportunities.

The introductory presentation from

DFID, India on the draft focal themes and objectives of Country Assistance Plan was discussed. Some of the key issues of concern highlighted by the participants included poverty, basic human rights, inefficient leadership, drinking water crises, migration, GO-NGO relationship, flow of resources, and role of civil society organizations.

The debate on DFID's possible role in the coming generated various suggestions and possibilities. Some of the key areas for the same included poverty alleviation, urban poverty, strengthening local self governance, social mobilization and strengthening citizen's initiatives at local level, community ownership of programs, capacity building and women empowerment, policy review and reform initiatives, research, policy dialogue and advocacy. Participants raised the need for DFID to take into consideration the changing context of international aid in India particularly that of bilateral donors, in designing CAP. Recognizing that DFID is one of the largest bilateral donors interested in poverty alleviation in India, they stressed on the need for DFID to re-examine its 'strategic influencing role' vis-a-vis direct and more intensive role in poorer states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and U.P. It was also suggested that DFID should focus on the poorest of the poor and those who are doubly discriminated such as dalits, women and play a proactive role in implementation of certain schemes that often escape the marginalized groups. It was also felt that DFID could play an important role in the international policy making bodies like the World Bank, ADB, WTO, other UN agencies.

Workshop on Organisational Transformation

The workshop was organized by Sida during 28 -30 May in Ooty, Tamil Nadu, for Sida funded NGOs in Leadership positions. The major objective of the same were: to evoke the importance of management systems

and processes in achieving goals amongst NGOs and to provide a route map to assist the NGOs move towards establishing systems and processes. The workshop entailed to provide space to share learning's and an opportunity for future institutional development action. Representative from PRIA shared PRIA and its partner's experiences on issues related to gender mainstreaming, organizational development and management, LFA, information systems and others.

Child labourers, Jamtara

Lovely Khatoon, seven-year old daughter of a poor umbrella repairer, studies in the child labour school in the morning and works as the domestic help in the afternoon hours. Lovely's father who earns Rs. 40 per day is unable to run his household of 3 daughters and wife. Lovely thus attends the Bal Shramik Vidyalayas (BSVs) being run under the National Child Labour Programme (NCLP) sponsored by ministry of labour. Eight-year old Ramesh Murmu studies in a child labour school as his father works in the brick-making unit. Ramesh works as helper in a small hotel where he earns Rs. 10 per day along with the day's dinner. Same is the fate of Ravina Khaton, who attends the specialized school as she helps her father in carrying bricks to the brick kiln. Similar is the story of more than 500 child labours mostly belonging to Schedule Caste, Tribe and backward castes in this district bordering West Bengal.

There are as many as 11 child labour schools being run in the Jamtara district for binging a large chunk of child labour population into the mainstream of education. This district has high incidence of child labour engaged in *bidi*-making, restaurants, brick-kilns, rag picking and other occupations or trades. These schools allow the students to access non-formal elementary education and as an incentive provide a monthly stipend of Rs. 100 to each student along with a mid-day meal and a monthly health check up. "Unlike regular schools, a class in these special

schools have children of different age groups and special attention is given to each children to bridge the gap that has been caused due to the years the children must have lost," says Rumpti Chandra, who supervises these schools in Jamtara district.

However, due to poor economic condition of the most of the students, many students fail to attend the classes regularly. To bring child labourers into the mainstream educational system and prevent them from becoming labourer again, a Child Labour Elimination Society

Bal Shramik Vidyalay

(CLES) was also formed in Dumka in 1995, which initiated a project for the same. The project provided for running of 40 Vidyalayas in three blocks in Jarmundi, Saraiyahaat and Jamtara respectively. Jamtara becoming a separate district later. CLES, formed with the objective of ensuring smooth functioning of the schools, has membership from various sections of society including administration, NGOs, academics and other groups.

However, gradually the effectiveness of CLES has gone down and now it is almost defunct. "We need guidance and motivation from government to carry forward the good work," Renu Pada Patra, a teacher with a school, says. Under the project, two teachers for each school have been sanctioned and their monthly salary has been fixed at Rs 1500. Often due to low salary structure, teachers take up part-time jobs for sustaining their families. Another problem is the availability of books to the students. Though the project envisages availability of free books to the students but mostly they are not available. Most of the time the parents buy books for the students from stipend money.

In an unique effort, parents of the child labourers, monitor the functioning of these school on three indicators – serving of the mid-day meal, regular health check of students and attendance of teachers. This process has been facilitated by PRIA as part of its Social Development monitoring initiative. The Jamtara experience has been quite unique and will go a long way in eliminating illiteracy and child labour in the country.

Gender Sensitization Workshop

The workshop was organized at PRIA Hyderabad during 21-22 May, to discuss and deliberate on issues related to Gender amongst staff members of PRIA and partners. An effort was made to steer the group through a participative discussion with an aim to gain conceptual clarity on themes of gender discrimination and sensitization, gender in the context of institution, at office and field level, gender mainstreaming, sexual harassment and others. The workshop included a session on the gender policy at PRIA and its perspective on the issue. The workshop was conducted in an interactive manner with various brainstorming exercises wherein participants listed their perceptions and notions about gender and related topics. The process enabled participants a self-analysis and realisation of the dilemmas existing on gender roles and issues within our society. A documentary film "Bund File" on an incident of suicide of three unmarried girls in Kanpur was screened and later discussed.

The phases through with gender sensitivity and gender related programmes have evolved at PRIA and how the organisation is promoting an equal opportunity culture was highlighted.

A brief discussion was also held on its initial Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH) and the current Committee for Gender Awareness and Mainstreaming at PRIA, their achievements and the recently conducted Gender Audit at PRIA.

Also discussed were issues faced by the staff of the organization at the different levels and the existing PRIA service rules. The participants appreciated

the experience and felt more open and comfortable about gender issues.

Capacity building workshops

PRIA organized workshops on Urban Governance (12-13 May) and Financial management (16-17 May) for members of its staff and partner organizations. The workshops aimed at providing collective thematic and operational clarity, particularly in view of the recent reorganization of themes and locations within PRIA's programmatic interventions.

The workshop on Urban Governance aimed to generate conceptual understanding on PRIA's perspective on the theme and the methodology and approaches of work in strengthening urban governance. The workshop brought together field based experiences from various locations. Operational strategies for collation and dissemination of learning at all levels and lessons from PRIA's studies on municipal finance and urban planning in small and medium sized towns were discussed. Key topics dealt with during the workshop included Section IX A, Twelfth schedule, SFC, SEC, DPC/ MPC, town and country planning departments, rural-urban migration and related issues, private-public partnership, municipal finance and administration etc. Programmatic staff was suggested to initiate intervention in urban municipal areas.

The workshop on Financial management facilitated by Mr. Shiv Kumar, *Treasurer and Governing Board member of PRIA and Director of V.K. Foundation, Gandhigram, T.N.*, aimed at providing an overall understanding on various issues related to effective financial management and the importance of the same for non finance professionals.

A range of related topics on fundamentals of accounting systems (cashbook, ledger, petty cashbook, asset register, various types audits (statutory, internal, special), Formation of Non profit organization and related acts, Foreign Contribution Regulation Act and other procedures for financial management at field level, were taken up in interactive sessions.

Dr. Om Srivastava, A source of Inspiration

We were shocked to learn of the tragic and sudden demise of Dr. Om Srivastava on June 15, 2003.

Omji was a visionary adult educator, believing in the capacity of all to learn and grow. His care and concern for learning as a vehicle for empowerment of the marginalised found its manifestations in several fields of action. He played a significant role in the founding years of PRIA, promoting innovations and practice of Participatory Training Methodology. We remember his immense contribution to PRIA fondly and shall miss him dearly.

Our heartfelt condolences to his family and colleagues in ASTHA, Udaipur.

PRI A

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Series of Cases on Panchayats:

- Women Leaders in panchayat
- Dalit Leaders in panchayat
- Finance of panchayat
- Civil Society in panchayat
- Gram Sabha and Panchayat
- Micro Planning and panchayat

Dimensions of Giving and Volunteering in Meghalaya:

Part of the series of the papers on the non profit sector. PRIA has been conducting a nation wide a study of mapping the sector in collaboration with the John Hopkins University U.S.A.

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

Please send your suggestions and comments to us at :
PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia)
 42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062
 Tel: 2995 8508, 2606 0931 / 32 / 33 Fax: 2995 5183
 Email: info@pria.org, Website: www.pria.org

Village Library Programme

PRIA has been appointed as a technical resource agency for the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) library project for northern region, for a period of one year starting May 03. The village library project has been developed to support and strengthen post literacy among people living in rural India and in slums of urban cities. Since the libraries are established in the rural areas, the local people involved in running of the library operations, (librarians, committee members of library) need to be oriented towards the vision of the project and equipped with basic skills to run the library. PRIA's is providing capacity building support to these functionaries for effective running of the libraries, through participatory training programmes and modules. The entire programme is to be delivered in three interlinked phases with distinctive focus for each phase. The *first phase* will focus on building perspective on the roles of libraries and basic management skills. The *second phase* will focus on advance management skills while the *third phase* will concentrate on developing inter personal and inter institutional skills. PRIA conducted a first phase three day capacity building workshop in collaboration with VARUN (local implementing agency) at Naugarh, district Chandoli, Varanasi (U.P) during 20-22 May for a group of 20 participants.

Latest contact information

PRIA, New Delhi
 Phone nos.: 2995 8558, 6908,
 6872, 8508, 6873, 26060931/2/3;
 Fax: 2995 5183/5819
 Email: info@pria.org

PRIA-DRC-Haryana
 187, Model Town,
 Fatehabad, Haryana-125 050
 Phone: 09812063580
 e-mail: fatehabad@pria.org

PRIA District Resource Centre (DRC)- AP

H. Ho: 8-5-12/4,
 Teachers Colony,
 Mahabubnagar - 509 001
 Andhra Pradesh
 Ph: 08542-271326 (pp)
 Email: prcmbnr@rediffmail.com

PRIA- DRC-Chhattisgarh
 Kavita Complex, Flat No, 2
 Ward No. 9, Kourinbhata Road,
 Near Kamla College
 Rajnandgaon-491 441
 Chhattisgarh
 Phone : 07744-227685
 Email: rajnandgaon@pria.org

PRIA-DRC-Bihar

H.no. 277, Ward 16,
 C/o Gouri Shanker Sah,
 Tirhut Colony,
 Madhubani- 847211
 Bihar

PRIA-State Resource Centre
 Flat No.69, Block-4,Phase-I, Sector-I,
 New Shimla
 Shimla-171 009 (H.P.)
 Tel: 0177- 2671309
 E-mail: shimla@pria.org

This newsletter is also
 available on our website at
www.pria.org