Local Self Governance

To govern is to exercise political authority in pursuit of common ideals. In the last 50 years, particularly after the second World War, the task of governing has been left to the government. With the creation of nation-states in formerly colonized countries after the second World War, much of the world began to be governed by these governments. The concept of nation-state has many connotations. Firstly it implies a geographical area with political sovereignty. Secondly it implies a system of government which includes machinery for law and order and judicial system, besides the bureaucracy which conducts the affairs of the government. This concept of nation-state is alien, externally implanted concept. This colonial concept has grown in the history of Europe and North America over several centuries. This is not the concept of government which is rooted in the history of countries of the South, particularly in South Asia, especially India.

Therefore, the present system of government that we have in India is less than 50 years old. It is also a system of government that is inherited from and implanted by our erstwhile colonial masters. So how this vast land and community of people were governed before this concept of nation-state came into being? At some point in our history, different parts of the region were governed through a system of monarchy or kings' rules. Some of these monarchs were exploitative and brutal; several of these kings were humanitarian and paternalistic. They were called the rulers. They appointed their own machinery to rule or to govern.

Yet, at no point in our history we had a system of government like the one we have in the last 50 years. This vast and diverse land and its communities were never ruled by a central position in the 5,000 years of our recorded history. Before this system of government came into being there was no centre of power like Delhi today. There was also never before the size of government machinery that we have today. In its inefficiency, corruption and self-serving nature, this machinery has no historical or contemporary parallel worldwide.

As a consequence of this imposed and alien system of government, the rulers at New Delhi began to systematically delegitimise and marginalise independent and local system of governance which had grown through our history. By declaring this system of democracy and ensuring the right to vote, the rulers created a system which only perpetuated itself over these five decades. Slowly but surely, ordinary citizens abandoned their role in the task of governance and maintenance of public affairs. In fact the government appropriated to itself community and collective resources in the name of 'public interest'. The rulers at Delhi and the corresponding state capitals throughout the country ensured that the government became the controller of public resources and had the hegemony to define 'public good'. Citizens' actions were marginalised and relegated to the 'private' sphere.

The use of public resources for 'private gain' in our country in the last five decades also
has no historical or contemporary parallel
worldwide. Forest, land, water, minerals, taxes,
institutions, infrastructure appropriated and created
in the name of 'public interest' has largely served
the private interests of those who formed part of
the system of government and the rulers of today.
This mockery of governance is obviously not
sustainable in the long run.

It is in this context that the new constitutional
amendments 73rd and 74th provide a unique
opportunity to promote local self governance. This
is not governance carried out through elected
representatives. This is not merely representative
democracy, but governance carried out by direct,
active and full participation of citizens. Thus, the
Gram Sabha in the village is the final basis of
governance of village affairs. This governance of
village affairs includes definition of 'public good' for
all citizens of the village and creation of
mechanisms for managing the resource base, both
natural and human, available in the village. It is
not a system where individuals elected as the
representatives of the village take decisions on
behalf of the villagers. It is a system where all the
villagers create a process of face-to-face interaction,
dialogue and decision making in order to
collectively govern their own affairs. This is the
essence of the concept of self governance and this is
the real meaning of these new constitutional
amendments.

This meaning of local self governance is
obviously in contradiction to the practice of
government for the last five decades as described
earlier. Hence, the entrenched system of
government from Delhi down to districts is
unlikely to allow for the flourishing of a system of
local self governance. This will be possible only
when citizens themselves take control of initiating
and nurturing this alternative system of local self
governance rooted in our own history.

This is the challenge of redefinition of political
authority and meaning of governance in our
contemporary context.

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Contents
Editorial ........................................................................................................ 1

Learning from Field
- Gram Vilas :
  The Rejuvenation of a People ................................................................. 3

Global Voices
- Views on Participatory Development .................................................... 7

Theme
- An Emerging Global Civil Society ....................................................... 9

Resources ..................................................................................................... 18

Reportage ..................................................................................................... 26

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Gram Vikas: The Rejuvenation of a People
PREM NARGAS

JOE MADIATH of Gram Vikas visualises a day when people in the remote villages of Orissa can say “We are the government”. Undaunted by the tortuously slow and sometimes imperceptible process of change, Gram Vikas work has been sustained over the last twenty-five years. Amidst failures and successes he can today confidently say that he aims at 100% employment and 100% literacy for Gram Vikas constituencies. Looking at their past record, one is enthused by the faith and confidence of the team. One can feel the resilience of nature as one views the forestry patch at Tamana—managed exclusively by women—a reaffirmation of man’s faith in himself and his two hands despite all odds. While “small is beautiful” Joe feels “the big need not be ugly”, emphasising on the need and urgency to implement health and environment initiatives on a scale to commensurate with the size of our vast country and the majority of its population which still reel under the impact of deprivation of their most basic needs.

Underlying this aspiration is Joe’s firm belief in people’s participation in all endeavor. It must be a truly people’s programme. The induction of the People’s Participatory Planning Process in all its programmes ensures people’s participation at all stages—planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Village committees elected by the people meet at least once a month to discuss, raise questions, reflect and take decisions. Separate committees for men and women ensure overall participation. While equal representation of men and women in the village committee intends to ensure gender balance, women are sometimes not visible—although men are articulate and active.

Secular in character, the members of Gram Vikas recognise only two castes—the rich and the poor. They cast their lot with the poorest in the most backward district in Orissa. In those districts besides the ever present scourge of malaria and tuberculosis, usury and alcoholism was rampant. The tribals had mortgaged their lands, even their precious trees, to the money lenders and liquor merchants often at 150% interest. They were unaware of legal norms and provisions for redressal.

These marginalised people of Orissa have today learnt the lesson of people’s strength through mobilisation, and have recognized their ability to stand up and demand the fulfillment of their time honoured rights. Having discovered the strength of self-confidence they are no longer in awe of power. It is a long journey from destitution to self-reliance and self-sufficiency but the inroads have been made. The people, though poor, are no longer apathetic and hopeless. When villagers from a new village come to join they are wistful, enthusiastic and charged. A future with basic health and education facilities is now within their reach.

Today Gram Vikas is a forceful voice in public and government fora. It is also aware of its ability to conceptualise and deliver. However as one of its team put it “It is like scratching the surface”. The problem is whether the people are strong enough to sustain the interventions already made. The movement of people from apathy to hope has not been easy. The hills of Kendamals stand eroded. The villages scattered, remote, inaccessible, beset with malaria and lacking basic infrastructure like roads and safe drinking water, make inroads tough. To awaken a people marginalised by historical and socio-economic oppression is difficult. It has required the will and vision of the dedicated core of Gram Vikas and the resilience of the tribal people to sustain this effort.

A Brief History
In 1971, YSMD, a Madras based students organisation sent volunteers for succour in the wake of a cyclone in Southern Orissa. After the relief operations, a team headed by Joe Madiath stayed on for rehabilitation work. They soon got known for their lift irrigation work. In 1973 Anthya, a trained nurse joined them. Thus an entry was made in the area of health. As tuberculosis and malaria patients recovered, faith on the team was established. Soon a grant from EZDEE enabled them to undertake awareness building and educational work.

In 1976 the YSMD team moved to Mohuda in the...
Ganjam district, one of the most backward districts of Orissa. Malnutrition and disease were rife while usury and alcoholism had sapped the tribals. Often their land and trees lay mortgaged to money lenders. After initial interventions in health, the tribals were mobilised to combat the twin problems of illicit liquor merchants called Sundaibis and of land alienation. The Moratorium on Rural Indebtedness (1978) helped in restoring the land to the tribals.

This was the beginning of the Integrated Tribal Development Programme. Today, besides the Kerandimals, ITDP operates in Koipur, Tumba, Rudhapadar and Thuamul Rampur. In January 1979 Gram Vikas was formally registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860.

Programmes

An attempt has been made to integrate health, education, housing and infrastructure building, savings and credit, income-generation, bio-gas, women's programmes, social forestry, etc. under the ITDP. However some of the major initiatives of Gram Vikas have been in the area of bio-gas, social forestry, health and education culminating in the latest programme called the Rural Health and Environment Programme.

Bio-gas

Bio-gas as an alternative energy source has been an important area of work in Gram Vikas. Starting in 1979 it developed into a state wide programme.

Education

Education has always been central to all Gram Vikas initiatives. It entails not the mere transfer of information, numeracy and literacy skills but knowledge which enables the people to evolve meaningfully as dignified and confident people. Self-awareness and awareness of the natural and human environment has been an integral feature of educational policies of Gram Vikas. Non-formal educational centres are run late in the evening, when children are free from their chores. Adult literacy classes are held for women too. Their involvement in day to day activities is motivation enough to imbibe literacy and numeracy skills.

Two residential schools are run at Konkhiya and Koipur. They enroll children who live in remote and inaccessible places and those who are desirous of pursuing higher education till the seventh class. A new building has come up at Konkhiya. It will not only enlarge the school but also intends to balance the male female ratio.

Besides formal education, the children are encouraged to grow a kitchen garden. The teachers are tribals and the school committees are run by the villagers themselves. There is a strong emphasis on inculcating pride in their cultural identity as tribals.

Social Forestry

Commenced in 1985 with assistance from DRDA, Ganjam it continued with assistance from NWDB. In cooperation with NWDB, 2500 acres of wasteland were reforested in Ganjam, Gajapati and Mayurbhanj districts under a project called "Growing the Kerandimals". Today social forestry is an integral part of ITDP and RHEP programmes. Helping villagers to gain access to land is at present a major aspect of the programme.

Species are chosen for their fuel, timber and fruit potential. Local species along with the people's knowledge of them is encouraged.

At present, Gram Vikas has five social forestry teams operating in five districts of Orissa: Mayurbhanj, Bolangir, Koraput, Kalahandi and Gajapati. It is proposed to cover 5460 acres by the end of 1995.

At several places social forestry has been exclusively developed by women. They have done the digging, pitting, planting, maintenance and guarding of their
patches. One of the oldest projects was at Tamana, in the Kerandimals. It helped them organise socially, and motivated them to become literate.

This scheme has enabled Gram Vikas to offer employment opportunities to the people during the rainy season when other forms of employment are usually not available.

The creation of tree cover has become a primary activity. Apart from economic consideration, this enhances increase the availability of bio mass which will be a major input for the manufacture of organic manure in compost.

The Rural Health and Environment Programme (RHEP)
The RHEP focuses on the impact of environment on people and vice versa. It envisages the people-environment relationship in a holistic perspective, balancing health and environment. Providing the people with a sense of health through education is crucial if they are to be positive change agents. Frequently malnutrition and a lack of basic infrastructure like safe drinking water and sanitation cause the low health status of the people. Changes are aimed at through education and awareness building to create an ecologically conducive atmosphere. Hundred percent sanitation coverage is attempted to ensure a clean environment.

RHEP is an integrated programme of activities aimed at improving overall village health and environment. The main components of the programme are:
- provision of adequate and safe drinking water to all households
- provision of universal access to sanitation
- promotion of composting as a form of organic waste disposal and of alternative fertilizer to inorganic ones in use at present
- formation of women's groups in which health and hygiene education can be imparted amidst other activities.
- immunisation of all eligible children
- non-formal education for eligible children
- adult education
- preventive health programme
- monitoring the health status of the village
- establishing income generation schemes which also promote optimal use of resources of the village environment – e.g. pisciculture and agro-forestry activities.
- strengthening of community organisations such as village committees, at all stages of the programme.

A corpus fund in the village is necessary to initiate the programme. The fund remains intact and the interest is used to extend the programme to new immigrants to the village.

After identifying a community, Gram Vikas workers introduce the idea of RHEP. This leads to interaction with the villagers. They are encouraged to analyse their ideas, their strengths and weaknesses and how this programme will help them. Very often this is a slow process as people debate, sometimes doubts and suspicion surface about the nature of the work to be done. Thus the organisational process starts in the village. The richer and influential sections of the village are encouraged to integrate and accommodate the poorer and marginalised sections to benefit from the programme. Slowly the concepts are concretised as specific activities are determined. The implementation has strong bearing on people's participation as it involves people automatically, thus enhancing their role.

The Programme is unique in so far as for the first time in the history of development the unit of analysis is the community. It integrates the entire community irrespective of caste, economic status or political affiliations. For example at a meeting on the construction of toilets the village community processes the material, loads, unloads, and finally stores it. The unskilled labour is contributed by the villagers. They sit down together and identify the work schedule. The amount of material to be used per toilet, the distribution of material, the supervision of construction and working out of any problems that may arise is also determined by them. Every unit is evaluated at every step by the village committee. Accounts are maintained at people's level. This also starts a processes of self-reliance and confidence building. As owners of the infrastructure, they develop a vested interest in it, a sense of responsibility towards it is inculcated. Consequently people tend to think of their capacity utilisation (more than earlier) for the improvement of their quality of life at the community level.

The Gram Vikas team is of the view that the subsidy programme of the government brings the development of the community; their own contribution to their resource base cannot be substituted by extraneous help. They feel that the existing mechanism of the government can attain better results if implemented the Gram Vikas way, i.e. the beneficiaries be consulted and be encouraged to contribute from the conception to the
delivery of a programme. Gram Vikas's role in this process is catalytic.

RHEP aims not only to educate people but bring them into the process of education. People are aware of activities and responsibilities which will bring change into their lives.

Considerable achievements have been by the Gram Vikas Team. The sanitation programme covers 100 percent of the families in the village. The bio-gas programme is extended to families which have adequate cattle strength. Each individual house has a compost pit.

All public and private wastelands are also being brought under social forestry to ensure needs of fuelwood, small timber, etc. are met by village forests while income is augmented by sale of fuelwood and fruits. In Mathamukundan, some young men were toying with the idea of setting up a food processing unit.

Village ponds have been extended/excavated for pisciculture. The local Fisheries college has been helping actively. Nonformal Education for children under 12 along with health education is an important component of this programme. Village teachers and health workers are being trained.

Besides monitoring children's growth pattern and running mother and children services, Gram Vikas also have an immunisation programme to inoculate all children against communicable diseases such as cholera, TB and whooping cough.

Separate general bodies, for men and women have been organised to ensure total representation of the village. Equal representation of women along with men in the executive committee to strengthen the promotion of women were provided for. However in practice, women still shy away from appearing in village meetings.

Samiapalli - A typical RHEP village profile

The village has a total population of 339 people. Out of 76 households, 72 are Scheduled Caste, and 4 are of general castes. Most of the villagers are daily wage labourers with men being paid Rs. 13 and women Rs. 8 per day.

In this village 77 toilets have been constructed, along with one dug-well and three bio-gas plants. Twelve hectares of land are under social forestry and one acre of land has been renovated for pisciculture. The profits from pisciculture are estimated at Rs. 8000. The fingerlings are provided by the local fisheries college. They are fed and monitored by the village committee and will eventually be harvested by them.

For the construction of toilets, the stone material up to plinth level and mud for the wall was provided by the villagers. All the unskilled labour for construction was also provided by them. Along with family members, they also decided on the respective sites for construction. The project was managed by the sub-committee members. The people also held the responsibility of maintenance and use of the toilets.

With hundred percent sanitation and an adequate water supply, the village can now look forward to an enhanced environment.

Today Gram Vikas constituencies have come a long way from apathy to self-confidence and self-reliance. There is continual effort to decentralize planning and decision making processes. The Bio-gas team is being diverted to the RHEP programme. Perhaps the success lies in the fact that Gram Vikas initiatives were never viewed as charity to be doled out but the gradual, sometimes tortuously slow reinstatement of the morale of a people who had long been downtrodden by the unscrupulous elements in our socio-economic system. From apathy to hope and an enhanced self-esteem is the story of the transition of the people. The success of Gram Vikas cannot be gauged by statistics or mere economic terms. The restored dignity of the people who have put their mite - what seems to us the abysmally low sum of Rs. 3/- sometimes - to build a future for themselves restores our faith in human endeavour, be it be so small.

To break the shackles of apathy and hopelessness to dynamism is the sum total of Gram Vikas initiatives in Orissa.
Views on Participatory Development

This is an interview with
DR. ALAN FREDERIK FOWLER

Alan Fowler from England has comprehensive practical development experience. Formerly a World Bank Visiting Fellow, he is a consultant, analyst and writer in the areas of management, institutional development and governance, specialising on non-governmental organisations (NGOs), people's participation and reform of public administration. Formal education includes studies in the politics, organisation and management of development, rural extension, education and electronic engineering. Professional experience has been gained through fourteen years in Africa working as a donor programme officer, as founder-director of a local development consultancy firm and as manager of an integrated rural development project. Fowler has additional experience in French, Dutch and Arabic speaking countries as a teacher, a manager in a multi-national company, and as an engineer.

**Q. How will you define Participatory Development (PD)?**

A. So much has been written and said on Participatory Development in the last 15 years that one cannot really say anything new about it. However, essentially participation has to be defined in terms of power and control, and PD has to be in recognition with power difference; who controls; who makes decision and who benefits?

**Q. What are the salient features of PD?**

A. Control over decision making about resource distribution is the fundamental feature of PD. It refers to power to influence decision and distribution of resources.

**Q. What are conditions which are crucial for practice of PD?**

A. There are basically two conditions; external and internal. External conditions are related to -how power difference reflects in society; how much is the power difference. In certain societies power difference is considered to be normal. The people accept the fact that this is the way it should be. Hence, this guides their understanding of participation and also practice.

Besides power difference, market economy which is a new variable, and polity also determine participation. Both economy and polity, hand in hand, play a crucial role in the matters of PD. Internal conditions are basically the culture of the organisation, power structure within, leadership and how the organisation functions.

**Q. How internal conditions influence external conditions and vice versa?**

A. They influence each other in a number of ways. In this regard culture is important. Every organisation has a particular culture and the people in the organisation bring in their own cultures, and the culture that evolves from the conglomeration of people, may be of different natures. Hence, one finds two types of cultures associated with every organization, i.e. culture of and culture in the organization. This is very important.

The NGOs who receive foreign funding have an overlaying of foreign culture, its expectations, its norms, and what it thinks how decision should be shared? etc.

Another dimension of such interplay of internal and external condition is through reflection of outside power difference in the organisation.

**Q. What are the organisational features essential for practice of PD you would put on priority?**

A. Where is decision making allocated in the organisation? The systems of planning and budgeting. How much flexibility do they give to resource allocation and decision-making? How far does the culture of the organisation permit decentralisation?

**Q. How do you envisage the role of NGOs in development vis-à-vis that of state?**

A. State can legislate and play multiple roles in relation to its citizens. It governs, it protects them, taxes them and facilitates development, whereas organisations extend their influence outside through negotiation. And NGOs cannot and do not want to assume the roles of state. NGOs have a very unambiguous role in terms of facilitating development. The NGOs have enormous potential to do this.

**Q. How should NGOs understand the nature of their intervention in development process?**

A. Development is not a linear process but a contingent and complex process, in which intervention is just one thing. Sustainability of development demands that intervention becomes a part and parcel of an ongoing process. Linear approach to development cannot...
produce sustainable outcome. Intervention has to be linked to the ongoing process and eventually your additional input no longer becomes necessary. One of the challenges is how far you can modify logically framed approach of development, that development is an unilinear process and intervention leads to better development. The NGOs must realise that they as the manager of development, are not the producer of development, but the people 'out there' produce it.

An organisation should incorporate participation. In fact, lot of organisation are trying this. My sense is, some of the Southern organisations are probably faring better than Northern NGOs.

Q. How can NGOs influence society to become participatory?
A. NGOs can influence policy. NGOs can link their grassroots experience with policy formulation. They can influence pro-poor and pro-participation policy. NGOs can provide evidence or testimony from grassroots on the impact of policies such as Structural Adjustment Programme on the people. NGOs can influence to change policy environment so that participation takes place.

Q. What is happening in African countries?
A. Most of Sub Saharan Africa is essentially aid dependent. For example, in India aid may constitute one or two percent of its budget, but in African countries it may be above 40 to 50 percent or even more. The government is aid dependent as well as the NGO community. Hence, in Africa participation is contingent upon aid approach. Aid dependent NGOs are following logically framed approach and those who are not aid-dependent, whose number is limited are following a more complex participatory approach.

Q. How is participation related to governance?
A. Participation is inextricably linked to governance. Participation has real meaning if it is translated into governance. Now through participation in various forms, people are demanding share in political decision making. It is manifested through world wide assertion of indigenous identities, sub-nationalities and emergence of informal sector, which need to be recognised and strengthened.

Q. What are the emerging trends of governance?
A. There is a general assertion of subnationalities. The role of nation-state is changing. Boundaries of states, today, have become much more permeable because of globalization of market and information and technology change. In the same way transfer of people and ideas are much more easier today. It may be a response to alienation because of spread of market and individualisation of market. The demand for political decision making is much more today.

Q. Do you think the NGOs have the capacity to address themselves to the emerging challenges of participation and governance.
A. As a matter of fact, NGOs do not have the capacity at this moment to perform the role. Let me just focus on the NGO scenario today. NGOs have witnessed phenomenal growth and expansion in the recent period. The expansion has taken place beyond their capacity. One can discern three clear cut effects of such growth and expansion; (i) steamroll effect, (ii) piggyback effect and (iii) the medieval torture effect. Steamroll effect is the result of acceptance of too much fund beyond their capacity to handle. Piggyback effect occurs when NGOs just expand to other areas of activities without serious thinking about their own capacity. Hence, more and more expansion results in collapse. The medieval torture means how the organisation is pulled apart because of diametrically opposite demands by funders.

However, NGOs have enormous potential to effectively address the challenges of participation and governance. They have to be trained adequately, though training is necessary but not enough to strengthen the capacity of the NGOs. What is needed is a continuous facilitative and guiding role from outside. This is being attempted in Africa. At international level, efforts are being made to form an International Association of Professionals who will support NGOs to professionalise.
An Emerging Global Civil Society

MIGUEL DARCY DE OLIVEIRA* AND RAJESH TANDON**

“Our world cannot survive one-fourth rich and three-fourths poor, half democratic and half authoritarian, with oases of human development surrounded by deserts of human deprivation.”

[Human Development Report 1994]

“Neither Prince nor Merchant: Citizen.” Written seven years ago by Marc Nerfin, these words capture the emergence of an unprecedented worldwide phenomenon - men and women, group and individuals, getting together to do things by themselves in order to change the societies they live in. In the last two decades, people of all classes, and ethnic backgrounds have organized themselves to defend democracy and human rights, to fight for more equitable development and a safe environment, or, more simply, just to help those in need or improve the quality of daily life in their neighborhoods and communities.

People coming together and helping each other solve problems is by no means a novelty. Since time immemorial, human beings have banded together for caring and mutual protection. Compassion for one another is a distinctive attribute of humanity. Solidarity and cooperation have always characterized relationships and social ties within families, communities, and friendship networks. The concerns and obligations that we feel toward our relatives, friends, and neighbors are not determined by self-interest nor imposed by an external coercive authority. We help those close to us on a spontaneous, sympathetic and reciprocal basis.

What is distinctive about today is the extension of these virtues of solidarity and responsibility to the public sphere on a global scale. True enough, faith and revolution also had a global outreach. Missions of different religions inspired many to leave their homes to bring conversion and, therefore, salvation to strangers. The socialist internationals tried to link all the oppressed in their quest for a “promised land” in the here and now. In both cases, the global drive was promoted by a centrally organized institution, be it a church or a political organization, spreading its compass to the periphery.

Today’s massive, almost universal movement toward greater citizen participation and influence is a new phenomenon. It is not being promoted by one all-encompassing structure. It has no fixed address. It seeks neither converts nor political militants. Its target is not state power. At its center is the figure of the citizen. And there are many citizens, with their myriad faces, concerns, and sources of inspiration in today’s world.

Citizen action is as multidimensional as the diversity of human endeavors. It may be local or global, small or massive, permanent or ephemeral, highly dramatic or almost invisible, confrontational or collaborative, spontaneous or organized, promoted by association of like-minded individuals or by large civic movements. Or any combination of these, depending on the needs of the moment.

Its breadth and diversity range from women in India hugging trees to save them from being felled to global environmental organization lobbying governments to come to terms with ecological imbalance. From students in Scandinavia donating the proceeds of their voluntary work for educational projects in the Third World to the mothers of political prisoners in Argentina barchandezly confronting a ferocious military dictatorship. From Polish workers challenging a totalitarian regime to entire villages in Asia mobilizing for self-governance and self-development. From medical doctors disregarding national frontiers to rescue the victims of civil strife to millions of Americans reading

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for the blind, collecting money for a health charity, or doing volunteer work in the local library, art gallery, or soup kitchen. From courageous Arab women standing up for their rights to citizens worldwide demanding the safeguard of the physical integrity of persecuted people whose names they can hardly pronounce and whose political beliefs they often do not share.

The sources of inspiration may be spiritual, religious, moral, or political. The common thread, however, in this ever-changing guilt is to be found in the realm of values: solidarity and compassion for the fate and well-being of others, including unknown, distant others; a sense of personal responsibility and reliance on one’s own initiative to do the right thing; the impulse toward altruistic giving and sharing; the refusal of inequality, violence, and oppression.

These are the compelling moral values that generate people’s social energy and enhance the texture of civil society. The themes and concerns vary from place to place and from time to time, but citizen movements are now a constant, global phenomenon.

In counterpoint both to the power and the impersonal rules of governments and to the quest for profit and personal gain intrinsic to the market, a third sector—nonprofit and nongovernment—now coexists in practically every society. All over the world, civil society now interacts with and exercises a countervailing power to markets and government.

Yet the richness and diversity of citizen initiatives still far outweigh their public visibility and recognition. “Private action for the public good” is a new concept in many parts of the world. Despite the recent multiplication, at the local and national levels, of innovative experiences that cut across the boundaries of class and culture, cross-sectoral partnerships and interactions among the different components of the nonprofit sector are still the exception rather than the rule.

In the countries of the South, NGOs possess a rich history of solidarity and collaboration with popular movements, but have so far had little contact with the emerging initiatives of corporate philanthropy. Private foundations and development agencies have been actively supporting civil society associations, but donors and donors hardly ever share equal responsibility for joint programs on issues of common concern. Only now are the government and business sectors, the academic world and the media beginning to acknowledge the role and potential of the third sector. Many countries lack the appropriate legislation to encourage citizen action, private giving, and volunteering.

Challenges and Paradoxes of Globalization

These emerging needs represent opportunities for citizen action in a world in transition. CIVICUS’ international initiative coincides with the growing realization that neither the market nor the state alone can meet the challenges of equitable and sustainable development.

In many areas of the world, governments in the past tended to oppose civil society. The collapse of the communist regimes and of many repressive military dictatorships in Latin America and Asia, combined with the crisis of the welfare state in the North and of state-promoted development in the South, has given rise to a much more open and complex political environment.

Government’s traditional suspicions regarding NGOs, often accused in the past (because of external funding) of pursuing a non-national agenda, are gradually being replaced by a recognition of the role of civil society institutions as agents of change and partners in development. In Latin America, for instance, where NGOs built their institutional identity in open resistance and opposition to an authoritarian state, recent trends point to experimentation with flexible, innovative forms of interaction and partnership among civil society institutions to deal with social reform and poverty.

Under heavy criticism for their bureaucracy and inefficiency, and confronted by a shortage of funds and credibility, governments can no longer pretend to monopolize the development process. Systems and structures of governance have lost most of their credibility and legitimacy worldwide. The question to be asked is whether this withdrawal of the state is only opening space for the affirmation of unbridled market values. Or whether it also creates unprecedented opportunities for the global emergence of a third sector.

Globalization confronts us with the paradox of an expanding international consensus in favor of democracy, pluralism, and respect for human rights co-existing with unprecedented levels of human suffering and environmental degradation. Rapid technological change is leading to growing structural unemployment. Patterns of production and consumption are depleting the planet’s life-support systems. The preeminence of western paradigms of politics, science and economics are fostering, in reaction, the phenomena of religious fundamentalism and ethnic exclusiveness.

Two or three decades ago, people in the North looked at the South, at the emergent societies in Latin America, Africa and Asia, as sources of inspiration and
commitment. Solidarity with the Third World and its struggles for liberation was a powerful mobilizing force. This generous view of a common future for all humankind is being replaced by pervasive feelings of indifference toward and rejection of the outcasts.

In the same sweeping movement by which capital and technology, abolishing distances and frontiers, tend to integrate national markets into a single all-encompassing global market, the logic of profit and the imperatives of technological competition fracture into every society, generating an overgrowing number of useless people.

In terms of the global economy, we all live indeed in one world; in terms of the human condition, however, a new dividing line, larger and deeper than the traditional East-West and North-South rifts, separates those who live with freedom and dignity from those who cannot satisfy their most basic survival needs. These two worlds not only coexist, they are drifting farther apart. Our global village has an expanding slum area. And many of those who live in the world’s affluent neighborhoods are either indifferent to or afraid of the poor.

It is as if the poor themselves—whenever they are—North or South—had become a problem, not to say a threat. They are the ones to blame for over-population, environmental pollution, illegal immigration, narcotics trafficking or religious fanaticism. In view of their reckless behavior, they must be closely watched and controlled. Their migration to the rich neighborhoods of the world must by all means be prevented. Their economy is to be structurally adjusted and monitored to ensure that they do not mismanage resources and do not leave their debts unpaid. Even their sexuality is considered too exuberant; their very numbers threaten the fragile limits of the Earth.

The weaker, the more vulnerable, the powerless, those who do not produce or consume anything of value for the world market, those who can hardly be privatized or internationalized, are becoming expendable. Their labor is useless, their buying power is negligible. They are no longer even worth exploiting.

In Africa, the entire population of some countries is facing the threat of extinction, in the same way as, in the past, indigenous civilizations were wiped out in the Americas. What is being done to prevent this human disaster? How can we understand the widespread apathy about this major sociological and ecological catastrophe?

Social fragmentation, economic instability, and uncertainty about the future are breeding prejudice, intolerance and racism. Peace and democracy are not compatible with ever-increasing poverty and exclusion. The social and geographic segregation of a growing number of individuals can only fuel ethnic tensions and violence. From the moral and ethical standpoint, global apartheid is absolutely unacceptable.

The same processes that globalize problems also globalize their possible solutions. Global civil society is a new concept. Will it be capable of generating the energy and resources needed to cope with global problems and concerns? Recent history gives us reasons for hope. And hope can also be strengthened by inspired, principled human action.

Civil Society, State and Market

Civil society institutions may be fragile but they are many and have been growing steadily in scope and reach during the last two decades. The breathtaking peaceful revolutions in Eastern Europe, the democratic transitions in so many countries of the South, and the dramatic changes in South Africa all bear witness to the strength of civic action.

Governments are showing greater openness to cooperation with citizen associations. The matter of corporate social responsibility has gained space on the agenda of private enterprises. These changes are paving the way for broader, innovative forms of interaction between civil society, state and market.

For these partnerships to materialize, it is also necessary for civil society institutions to overcome some ingrained prejudices and misconceptions. We must be cautious not to idealize and therefore falsify the reality about what the third sector is and what it can achieve.

Power and money also play a role within civil society.
associations. "For all their much-vaunted flexibility," notes Lester Salamon, "nonprofit organizations remain organizations. As they grow in scale and complexity, they are vulnerable to all the limitations that afflict other bureaucratic institutions — unresponsiveness, cumber-
someness and routinization, lack of coordination. Non-
profit organizations may be less prone to these disabili-
ties than government agencies, but they are hardly immune to the inevitable tensions that arise between
flexibility and effectiveness, grassroots control and
administrative accountability." Hence the urgent need
for the third sector to define its own ethical standards,
patterns of openness and accountability, as well as the
means to enforce them.

The bitter experience that many NGOs and civil
associations had of fighting authoritarian regimes led
some to equate state authority with repression. Times
have changed, however, and democratically elected
government have a legitimacy that cannot be overlooked.
The collapse of governments can only lead either to
chaos and anarchy, as in some African countries where
central authority has practically ceased to exist, or to a
radically laissez-faire economy, where the unchecked
prevailing of market values would transform every social
good into a commodity.

The drastic slashing of public expenditures and the
total deregulation of the economy, advocated by the
neoliberal approach, can only undermine the capacity of
both state and society to reverse the trends toward
increasing national and global poverty. Recalling that
support for the voluntary sector has at times been used
to rationalize assaults on government social welfare
spending, as was the case in the United States in the
1980s," Salamon calls attention to the risk of rhetorical
praise for the nonprofit sector serving as a smokescreen
for indiscriminate anti-state crusades.

Private initiatives for the public good are evidently not
incompatible with responsible and efficient public
policies. In fact, for the non-governmental sector to
function properly, it is essential that the governmental
sector also fulfill its irreplaceable role in the provision
of the most basic social services, from health and education
for all to public safety and protection of the environment.
Not less, but more and better public initiative is needed
in today's complex societies.

The same rethinking of basic assumptions is valid for
the relationship of the nonprofit sector to profit-making
corporations. In many countries of the South, NGOs
allied themselves with popular movements to oppose the
state while, for all practical purposes, ignoring the
market and its institutions. The transition to democracy
and the magnitude of the post-authoritarian social
agenda is giving rise to a new climate where past mutual
prejudices are gradually being overcome. Indeed, as the
Human Development Report 1993 aptly put it, "the
ideological battle lines of the past are being replaced by
a more pragmatic association between the efficiency of
the market and social solidarity."

It is quite true there are at least two things that
markets cannot guarantee on their own: equity and fair
competition. The pressure from civil society and the
regulatory authority of the state are both indispensable
to promote social justice and balance the power of private
monopolies. But it is equally important to acknowledge
that, in the same way that they often aggravate poverty
and inequality, market mechanisms are also capable of
injecting vitality and dynamism in society by taking risks
and promoting innovation.

For this to happen, however, it is essential that global
economic mechanisms do not overwhelm and stifle the
dynamics of local and regional development. The global
market accounts for one relevant dimension of economic
activity. It cannot, however, subordinate to its logic the
infinite diversity of people's strategies for generating
wealth and well-being. There are as many markets in the
world as the circuits linking producers and consumers.
Some are rigidly structured; others are informal and
barely visible. Here again, a dynamic balance and
complementarity must be explored between the formal
and informal sectors as well as between the local, national, regional and global levels of economic activity.
There is no reason whatsoever for relieving the private sector and its institutions from addressing the challenges of citizenship and social responsibility. On the other hand, the exploration of opportunities for cooperative action does not imply that citizens should renounce their right and duty to question and oppose corporations - and states - whenever their behavior proves detrimental to the common good. In any case, labor disputes and conflicts over environmental or consumer issues will hardly disappear from the agenda of civil society.

In the last five years, we have been consistently moving beyond the market-versus-state polarization that was intrinsic during the cold war and closer to a less doctrinaire, more action-oriented approach. The narrow ideological alternative between market and state can now be transformed into a broader, contextual kind of questioning: What kind of state? What kind of market? And, therefore, what kind of third sector?

The Case for Global Civil Society

Given the global interconnectedness of contemporary civilization, the prevailing movement toward poverty, ecological imbalance and exclusion cannot be reversed by action taken only at the local and national level.

Global market mechanisms and structures of world governance can only be democratized through concerted global citizen action. This is the lesson the popular movements have learned in their long struggles to democratize government, the market, and society within each country. The challenge to planetary citizenship is, therefore, to expand to the global arena the struggle for democracy and human development that has so far been carried out basically at the national level.

It is also true that civil society institutions so far have not reacted quickly enough to the challenges of globalization. Even though still lagging behind transnational corporations in terms of building a capacity to act at the world scale, citizens have been trying hard in the last 10 years to build their own linkages and mechanisms for consultation and joint action.

Regional coalitions and sectoral networks have recently been formed in many parts of the globe to address specific themes and concerns such as protection of the environment; human rights; adult, nonformal and popular education; and so on. Networking has become the key word for the emerging global civil society.

As stressed by Marc Nerfin, networks, in contrast to the international mechanisms created by corporations and governments, tend to operate horizontally. Their centers are everywhere; their peripheries, nowhere. Similar to local civil society institutions, they exercise an inner power over themselves. Communication is one of their primary concerns. Leadership is shifting. There is no networking for networking’s sake. Their rationale is not in themselves, but in a job to be done. Networks adjust quickly to changing circumstances but are also transient. If and when they are no longer needed, they disappear.

Women have taken the lead in this process. For two decades now they have been pursuing, with energy and consistency, an action agenda of their own targeted at the elimination of gender-based discrimination. Similarly, the actions of Amnesty International in the defense of political prisoners and of Médecins Sans Frontières in favor of civilian victims of armed conflicts have broken new ground in terms of affirming the right of the world citizen community to overcome claims of national state sovereignty when human lives and people’s essential rights are at risk.

An innovative experience in terms of coalition-building comes from the Asia-Pacific region with PP21, the People’s Plan for the 21st Century. Cutting across different categories of sectors within civil society, PP21 has attempted over the past five years to gather citizens, women, indigenous peoples, workers, human rights groups, and social activists in an alliance to propose an alternative development paradigm.

On another level, the global networking and advocacy efforts of NGOs to influence the agenda and outcome of major U.N. global conferences have produced some landmark events. The most comprehensive and best planned of these processes was developed in preparation for and during Rio’s Global Forum and Earth Summit in June 1992. It is fair to say that citizens at those events not only educated the public about the issues at stake but also and, for the first time, really asserted their right of sharing responsibility with states for the governance of the planet. Similar mobilization drives were carried out for the Vienna Human Rights Conference and the Cairo Population and Development Conference, and are being implemented in 1995 for the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen and the Beijing Women’s Conference.

The process of building such global networks is also occurring in relation to the institutions of the market. Besides lobbying and calling for transparency and accountability from multilateral development banks, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, strong associations of consumer groups are also acting at the global level. The International Organisation of Consumers’ Unions, for example, has contributed significantly to ensuring greater public
accountability of market enterprises.

The fact that parts of the North are also being exposed to the global phenomena of structural unemployment, urban violence, drugs, AIDS and environmental degradation is paradoxically providing untapped opportunities for more horizontal international cooperation among donors and donees beyond the grant-making/grant-seeking pattern.

All these changes indicate that the time is ripe for citizens to act boldly to strengthen the trends toward global solidarity and planetary citizenship.

Implications for Global Citizen Action

Expressing this new global spirit in deeds is one of the foremost challenges to citizens and civil society institutions. Private action for the public good has been lost in the shrill cry of public for public good or private for private good. Citizens’ actions for public good are conceptually and qualitatively different from private, profit-oriented initiatives. Likewise, the government is not the sole repository of all wisdom, concern, and capacity to act for the common good.

Citizen initiatives aimed at addressing public issues and problems are no longer to be considered residual actions. They are now in the center, not the periphery. The actors of civil society are not following the prescriptions of the state or of the market, but creating their own initiatives. In this sense, the nonprofit sector can be said to be not the third, but the primary sector of society.

Global citizen participation is rising at a time marked by the sharp decline, especially in the North, of many more traditional forms of political participation, such as voting, party affiliation, and labor union membership. While the struggle in the South is to extend newly gained democracy and citizenship to the economic and social spheres, the North is confronted with an increasing drift toward civic disaffection and apathy. There is a growing disillusion with politics. Many citizens feel that they have lost control over the political and economic mechanisms that determine their lives.

Threatened by processes that seem beyond their understanding and capacity to influence, suffering from the alienation produced by global cultural homogenization, many react defensively by going back to ethnocentrism and parochialism. A renewal of the sense of concern and solidarity among citizens could be a powerful alternative to both social fragmentation and the aggressive affirmation of ethnic or religious identities.

This sense of common belonging, however, cannot be sustained by ignoring differences in cultures, religions, languages, or ethnicity. Cutting across traditional boundaries of caste, class, religion, and nation-state, the notion of global citizen action, rooted in a common set of values, implies the acknowledgment and acceptance of diversity as one of the most distinctive characteristics of humankind.

Articulating morality is another emerging challenge for global civil society. In the transition to postmodernism, the traditional value system has almost crumbled. A new ethical and moral code has not yet been universally established. In many parts of the world, the dominance of the state and governmental bureaucracy has promoted a culture of dependence, apathy, secrecy and corruption. The recent dominance of market enterprise has also resulted in individual self-centeredness, profit-over-people orientation, and widespread alienation.

The reassertion of the primacy of civil society calls for the articulation of a set of universal human values. The current crisis of morality is being countered by inspired and value-based citizens’ actions worldwide. The source of inspiration for human response to the needs and suffering of individuals and groups is essentially spiritual throughout the world. Spontaneous and committed citizen initiatives are premised on love, compassion, concern for others. These values and inspirations provide meaning and substance to people.

In a world where material acquisitions and consumptions are becoming the dominant ethos, there is an urgent need to bring spirituality to the core of human endeavor. This will constitute the fountainhead of a universal moral code based on our common humanity.
always be marked by tension and complementarity. The conceptual novelty here is that tension, or even conflict, does not mean negation or exclusion of the other. Nor does it preclude synergy and cooperation. Each of the three sectors of society is autonomous of and interdependent on the other two.

The roots of civil society, however, are at the local and national levels. Hence CIVICUS' first challenge is: How can a global alliance support emerging national and regional agendas to strengthen civil society? How can local and national initiatives be reinforced by linkages with global problems and influence distant economic institutions and structures of governance?

Broadly speaking, these are not challenges merely for CIVICUS as a citizen alliance but for global civil society as such.

CIVICUS cannot be a centrally organized, all-embracing formal institution. It cannot be the equivalent of the United Nations for civil society nor the network of networks. Governments have a mandate to represent their nation in the field of international relations. No equivalent formal representation exists for the nongovernmental sector yet.

The many institutions that compose the third sector follow very diverse organizational patterns. Some are connected to well-established hierarchical structures; others are extremely zealous of their autonomy. Some cherish egalitarian legal structures; others follow charismatic leaders. Some deal with specific questions; others have a broad, cross-sectoral agenda. Some have grown through decades of institutional building; others have recently been formed in response to emergent needs. Some are large membership organizations; others are flexible action-oriented small groups.

Any attempt to amalgamate all this diversity under a single umbrella organization runs the risk of giving rise to hollow structures. Nor is there any point trying to bring together this immense variety of citizen groups and initiatives in order for all to pursue a common global course of action. Revolutionary parties, in the past, invested themselves with the task of organizing the whole people around a cohesive political project. History has delivered stinging blows to such arrogant grand designs.

CIVICUS cannot pretend to be the one and only legitimate representative of the third sector or of any of its constitutive segments. If CIVICUS has no reason for seeking to control or vertically integrate a process that is too diverse, complex, and unpredictable to be handled by any one organization, what can it hope to achieve? CIVICUS is what it does, and its legitimacy can only
be validated by those who feel it provides them with a useful tool of action.

Its role might be described as that of a catalyst. In chemistry, catalysis occurs when a given element acts as a starter of a molecular reaction, thus being the determinant of a change into a new and very different condition. Maybe the notion of a planetary third sector and, within it, a citizen alliance such as CIVICUS might be understood in similar terms - not as an objective reality, whose existence is a given fact, but as an open, evolving possibility; not as a solid structure, but as a powerful dynamic process. We have learned that, sooner or later, "all that is solid melts in the air." On the other hand, the interplay of certain elements, under certain conditions, can unleash interactive chain reactions that would indeed give substance and shape to an emerging global civil society.

To be a catalyst is not to be an overall, ever-present organizer. The sector is made up of countless initiatives, experiences, projects, movements, and networks that are happening simultaneously in different places, cadences, and levels. Such a phenomenon can hardly be coordinated, let alone centrally controlled.

Communication is a more appropriate operational world for CIVICUS than coordination. New channels can be opened to foster dialogue, exchange, and cooperation among the institutions of civil society at the different levels in which they function: local, national, regional, global. For such communication to take hold, however, a single language or unidimensional symbolic code is not enough. Communication within the sector will have to overcome the differences of culture and class. It will also have to open channels for a creative interaction between the cosmopolitan discourse of modernity and the many local voices of tradition.

The polarities of the cold war accustomed us to thinking in terms of inflexible ideological dualities. Within this frame of mind, allegiances were exclusive, all-encompassing, and durable. This paradigm has been shattered, but we are still relearning how to engage in simultaneous, multiple, partial alliances. Partnerships, both within and outside the sector, depend on the parties involved, the circumstances, and the needs at stake. Confrontation does not exclude compromise and cooperation.

In such a volatile, changing field, citizens' common values—peace, responsibility, solidarity, compassion—are the safest compass to chart CIVICUS' course of action. There is much that a global citizen alliance cannot do but it is also true that values are of no use if they are not put into practice. Therefore, CIVICUS has a duty to take a stand on limited cases, on extreme situations, whenever essential values are being threatened or negated.

Beyond emergency action on test cases, CIVICUS will have to develop its own action agenda. This most likely will be as open and evolving as the needs and concerns of civil society itself. It will also have to find the most appropriate balance between support for ongoing local, national and regional processes and the promotion of fresh global initiatives.

CIVICUS is moving forward in a still largely unchartered landscape. At this point, the most we can do is to outline some challenges and opportunities for action to be explored by this emerging global citizen alliance.

- Enhancing the sector's visibility. Our sector is what it does. The most profound messages of human courage and compassion are propagated through the stories of inspired and exemplary human action based on moral and spiritual grounds. The human face of citizen action demands greater visibility insofar as the very essence of planetary citizenship is the initiative of inspired and committed people.

At the local and national level, innovative forms of interaction within the sector and of partnerships with governments and business around burning social issues are increasingly being explored. The systematic dissemination of information about these groundbreaking social experiments would also enable the media, decision-makers, and the general public to gain a clearer understanding of moral texture and potential of civil society.

- Promoting interaction and partnership. The diverse components of the nonprofit sector are not used to talking to each other, let alone cooperating in flexible, creative ways. In some parts of the world, NGOs and popular movements see themselves as the cornerstone of civil society. In others, there is a strong tradition of volunteering, private giving, and corporate philanthropy, with no equivalent elsewhere. Many charities and service organizations operate informally at the community level, with effectiveness but little visibility.

This absence of dialogue within the sector can be countered by the opening up of new opportunities for cross-sectoral meetings and interaction. Person-to-person exchange of knowledge and experiences would enhance cooperation and mutual
learning, thus helping build a common sense of identity and purpose among the institutions of civil society.

- Encouraging private giving and voluntarism. The significance of voluntary efforts is getting lost in modern utilitarianism. Giving of time, energy, capacity, and resources for the promotion of the common good is the cornerstone of the sector. Some countries have a rich historical experience of large campaigns to enhance private giving and voluntarism. This includes public pressure and advocacy geared to removing legal barriers and devising tax inducements to private giving and corporate responsibility.

Sharing of knowledge and information about these matters would help the nonprofit sector launch national drives aimed at building the cultural and political environment most favorable to spontaneous citizen action and philanthropy.

- Promoting and nurturing an enabling environment. Since many countries and regions do not have the appropriate legal, political and fiscal environment for the development and growth of civil society, CIVICUS could play an effective role through sharing experiences and examples of good practice. CIVICUS could also promote effective policy advocacy and policy formulation with governments, regional and international agencies and other key decision-makers to promote an enabling legal, political and material context (such as registration laws, tax laws, public policy on government posture toward civil society and so on) for the evolution and strengthening of actors in civil society.

- Promoting research and outreach. As noted earlier, private action for the public good is a new concept in many parts of the world. In the same sense, civil society and the third sector have not yet been widely acknowledged as objects for in-depth study. Relevant information is dispersed and often unreliable. Issues are not clearly defined. Alternatives are barely beginning to shape up. Hence the need to map the contours and dimensions of the sector as a means of understanding its importance.

- Building the information and knowledge basis about the sector would give added credence to citizens' claims about the role and responsibility of a vibrant civil society in strengthening democracy and human development. It was not until Independent Sector in the United States began research in 1988 that the amazing figures of more than $85 billion worth of annual household donations in that country and over $184 billion worth of voluntary hours came to light.

- Engaging in dialogue with major international agencies. Agencies of the U.N. system, multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks and global business associations are creating mechanisms for consultation and, eventually, joint policy initiatives with institutions of civil society. CIVICUS, as a global citizen alliance, can play a significant role in terms of being a counterpart to these large institutions, giving voice to the sector's needs and exploring new forms of international cooperation.

- Enhancing citizens' power to act. People have the power to act as citizens. This is not power over other things or beings. It is the power to create, to innovate, to engage with other citizens. This power carries with it a responsibility toward nature, toward future generations. The power to act responsibly is rooted in the spiritual and moral fabric of global citizen action. It is not derived from the state or the market. Its inspiration comes from deep within the human spirit.

Citizen associations' programs are increasingly combining direct involvement in projects at the microlevel with participation in large-scale processes of change. This expanded, more complex action agenda requires qualitative organizational improvements. Sharing of knowledge and expertise in areas such as leadership training, management skills, fund raising and self-enforcement of ethical standards are capacity-building needs that could also be addressed by CIVICUS.

Being a tool for citizens' empowerment is the basic reason CIVICUS exists. Translating these concerns into a plan of action is the task of the First World Assembly of CIVICUS.

Citizens are at the center of the global drama unfolding today. They are the lead actresses and actors in building global democratic governance and human development. The state and the market and their related institutions, must serve the citizen, not the other way around. The security of our common future lies in the hands of an informed, inspired, committed, engaged citizenry. This is the dream of CIVICUS. This is our hope.

The book is the outcome of a long process initiated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, to share a broad picture of civil society in action among the civic actors themselves.

The volume is certainly an unparalleled one. After preparing and presenting six regional studies, e.g. Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, Africa, the Arab region, North America and Eastern and Western Europe, CIVICUS has compiled these into one volume under the above title. Hence, it is rightly spelt in the Preface of the book that it is a collective effort to capture the almost impossible: the common trends behind and beneath the richness and diversity of the Third Sector activities in various parts of the world.

Besides carrying independent but coherent treatises on the status of civil action in each of the regions, the book also includes two other important essays. One is "Threads of Planetary Citizenship" and the other is "Humanity in Trouble but Hopeful".

The book not only aims to inform but also to mobilize people. The fundamental premise on which the report is based is citizen’s participation in solving the global issues facing humanity. This is inevitably essential and cannot be done by government and market alone, nor by actions undertaken only at the national level. The actors of civil society such as voluntary organizations, civil groups and social movements are to be invigorated to assert for a just social formation. In order to do this, what is required is a thorough understanding of the voluntary sector, its present status and the future challenges ahead of it. The book rightly and appropriately accomplishes this objective.

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CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ARAB WORLD.
Kandil, Amani., 1995. Published by CIVICUS,
Washington D.C. Pp 140.

The book with its interesting five chapters, based on a survey on the status of citizen action in the Arab region is part of a global study conducted by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. CIVICUS is an international alliance of organisations and individuals to strengthen citizen action and influence the world through voluntary initiatives, philanthropy and community service.

This is a pioneering report on the status of the "Third Sector" in the Arab region within an Arab regional context. It is unique in the sense that it presents a broad canvas on voluntary sector, covering the whole region which is otherwise conspicuously absent. Literature dealing with this sector is scarce and when available is focused on specific countries.

The book begins with a delineation of the socio-economic context within which the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) in Arab countries operate. The author then draws the profile of the sector; analyses its activities, throws light on the interaction of the "Third Sector" with other sectors such as Government and Private sector; focuses on globalisation of the sector and puts forward the future vision.

The report reveals that the history of volunteerism in Arab world can be traced back to the 19th century but during the last two decades Voluntary Organisation or Private Voluntary Organisations are found to be very vibrant. The main features of the third sector
in each Arab country are determined by the socio-economic conditions as well as political systems in that country. However, organisations which have religious orientation have a basic role to play in third sector activities. Along with the size and level of development of the third sector, amount and source of funding differ from one country to another. The size and diversification of the third sector is greater in countries undergoing a democratization process such as Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco. As far as activities are concerned, the PVOs are primarily attempting to fill the gaps in the provision of public services, particularly for the disabled, and in health and education services. Women’s issues, protection of environment and human rights have also figured on the agenda of the PVOs during the last decade. It is noticeable that the PVOs with religious inclinations have received wider acceptance by the broad public.

The report also finds out that intra-sectoral cooperation and coordination among the PVOs is encouraging. As far as relation with the Government is concerned, it assumes many forms varying from cooperation at one extreme to tension on the other. But a new trend may be detected in governmental policies pertaining to the third sector. This is manifested in the elimination of legal obstacles and the provision of financial and technical support.

Being viewed within the context of globalisation, the third sector in Arab region has developed sound linkages with more international organisations rather than being a part of regional networks.

The study identifies a series of cultural, social, economic and political changes, whose interaction shaped definite characteristics of voluntary organisations, whether in terms of their size, nature, role effectiveness or prevailing types. The study concludes that PVOs are undergoing a crucial stage in the Arab World as a result of regional and international changes.

For copies, contact: PRIA or CIVICUS

IN QUEST OF EMPOWERMENT:

"In quest of empowerment" is a research study carried out in rural Bangladesh. The rural women’s participation in Grameen Bank and the resultant impact on their role in decision-making in the areas related to household, fertility control, health care and political participation, forms the main focus of the study.

The book, classified into six compact chapters, gives an overview of the structure and function of Grameen Bank, and provides an interesting insight into the socio-economic, political and cultural forces in Bangladesh in relation to their impact on the status of women. Review of a number of relevant studies on women’s marital decision making powers make a useful contribution to this important issue in family sociology. The research methodology is described in considerable detail.

The findings hold significant implication for family sociology theories and social policies of Bangladesh. The author voices the need for the government to enhance employment opportunities, health care services and educational facilities for the women. The expansion of Grameen Bank branches and the enhancement of women’s political participation are other important issues highlighted in this interesting document.

The book would interest practitioners and professionals involved in the quest of women empowerment.


The book presents a collection of papers which emerged in a three year programme of research support and institutional collaboration, entitled ‘Beyond Farmer First: Rural People’s knowledge, Agricultural Research and Extension Practice,’ launched by International Institute of Environment and Development.

Intensive case studies and discussion papers are presented which examine the interplay between formal and informal knowledge system and assess the implications for agricultural research and extension practice.

The book is divided into three parts, the first part is on theoretical considerations, the second on methodological challenges, and the third on institutional innovations. Each part has a broad introductory overview which sets the groundwork for the case studies and discussion papers in the section. The papers compiled lay emphasis, elaboration and empirical evidence on aspects related to power and pluralism of knowledge, behaviour patterns, interaction, methods and working patterns of institutions.
The book carries the vision of achieving sustainable livelihoods based on agriculture. Besides complementing the achievements of 'Farmer First', the book aims to supersede it by investigating the category of people who know, who have access to and control over resources and processes. It also tries to present and compare experiences with new participatory methodologies and outline the new perspectives and means in relation to change in institution and policy.

A book worth reading for those concerned with agricultural research and extension. It opens up the issues, presents evidence of what is being accomplished, and supports those who work for change.


The book is a compilation of 27 writings of Brian O’Connell which has been written at different points of time having a common logical thread of voluntarism.

With various articles related to philanthropy, relationship between voluntary sector, government and the business sector, role of advocacy, empowerment, leadership and many other related aspects, the book highlights the importance of the voluntary sector. The writings put forward the need for partnership between the government, voluntary sector and commercial sector. At the same time, emphasis is also laid on the realization of the strengths and limitations of each sector. There is a need for the voluntary sector to maintain its independence and contribute to innovation, advocacy, criticism and reform - which in turn would promote the accountability and effectiveness of the government. The author also highlights the importance of religion and philanthropy in the voluntary sector. All these, and many more aspects form the crux of voluntary sector in America.

This is a useful piece of work for those who want to study the voluntary sector in general, and the American situation in particular

**ACTION GROUPS: BEGINNING OR END OF A DREAM? Legal Resources for Social Action.** Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu. Pp 177. Rs.150 (individual) and Rs. 175 (institutional)

The book is a compilation of a number of articles written by various scholars and activists on action groups and NGOs, reports and the speech of the Prime Minister of India.

Over a decade or so, a debate was generated on the action groups in India. The debate to which many noted thinkers and practitioners contributed concentrated mainly on the conceptualization of action groups as a new social reality, their nature, form and role in social change in the Indian context. The conceptualization ranged from utter pessimism to elated optimism.

A deliberate attempt has been made in the book to capture the essence of the debate and also to focus on the recent emerging trends such as NGO-Government collaboration, the issue of employment security in the NGO sector, etc.

For copies, contact:

Legal Resources for Social Action (LRSA)
P.O.Box No. 20, 191-A, Nehru Nagar, Thirupurur Koot Road, Vallam post, Chengalpattu-603 002, Tamil Nadu, India.


After obtaining the draft document on Forests and Environment prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests towards framing a new forest law, many efforts by various quarters have been made to diagnose the document and to offer alternatives. This document under discussion is also a similar attempt to suggest an alternative frame of forest legislation.

In this booklet, Prof. Roy Burman has examined the document section by section and in some cases even the subsections and the clauses. He does so with a view that if unchallenged, the document, which is seemingly a brainchild of an old school technocracy or a die-hard conservationist, is likely to influence thinking of many policy planners. Along with critical comments, the booklet also includes his approach paper to forest and matters ancillary thereto. The author also proposes to draw up an alternative bill later in consultation with like-minded friends.

For copies, contact: PRIA


"... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours .....“ is the essence of the Commission's report.
The report is a result of the collective effort of various international leaders whose vision of tomorrow is of peace, economic growth, social advancement and global governance.

The proposals put forward varied from global governance built on common set of values, global security concerning people and the planet, management of economic interdependence to provide balanced sustainable development, the need to make UN more representative and therefore more effective and strengthening the rule of law world-wide to create an international court as a genuine arm of international law.

The need expressed here is for credible and sustainable leadership, global governance, genuine internationalism and a new world order that secures ascendancy of global neighbourhood over divisive nationalism.

**IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME (SAP) ON POOR HOUSEHOLD'S ECONOMY: A Case Study Of Gujarat.** Action Aid India and Unnati. August 1994, Draft.

The study is intended to assess the impact of Structural Adjustment Programme, which has been in operation in India since 1991, especially on the poorer sections.

Three areas particularly (i) Wage and employment, (ii) Access to education, health, PDS and credit and (iii) Agriculture, are identified for investigation.

Three implications of the study are enumerated: (I) to contribute to the scarce empirical evidence of the impact of SAP; (II) to influence policies on the basis of the empirical findings and to understand its implications for different actors in development, more particularly Donors and NGOs; (III) to create a database for the NGOs working towards eradication of poverty.

This draft summarizes only the broad findings of the first round of data collection. At this stage, it deliberately refrains from connecting the data and its trend with the policies implemented under SAP. However, three areas of concerns, as follows, are pointed out in the draft; (i) Social indicators of development of a family are closely linked to employment, loss of which affects accessibility to health, education, etc.; (ii) food security of the poor which is affected by growing land alienation; (iii) the last area of concern is social welfare sector, which needs to be strengthened.

For further information, please contact:
Mr. Binoy Acharya
UNNATI
G-1,200 Azad Society, Ahmedabad - 380 015
Phone - 079-646145

**Manuals**


The book synthesizes the learning of a series of workshops. This is the follow up to David Marsden and Peter Oakley (eds.) Evaluating Social Development Projects (OXFAM Development Guidelines No. 5, 1990). It builds on the conceptual developments of the earlier volume, but the focus of the current book is primarily on the practical applicability of these developments for undertaking the evaluation of social development.

In the six chapters which the book contains, attempts are made to synthesize the major issues and to identify the major themes in Evaluation of Social Development. The basic premise on which the book is grounded, is that evaluations themselves provide important moments in the lives of all development projects, when opportunities for the 'negotiation of values' might be centrally addressed. To see evaluations as negotiating points in the process of development offers opportunities for furthering our understanding of the operationalisation of a participatory agenda and of building blocks in the development of effective partnerships between donor agencies and recipient institutions and communities. With these thoughts, it attempts to suggest ways in which future work might be taken up.

According to the chapterwise presentations, Chapter 2 provides a partial literature review of material that has been fed into the current analysis in one way or
another. Chapter 3 consists of three case studies and summaries of the discussions of the major issues raised by them. Chapter 4 examines a variety of approaches to the evaluation of social development. Chapter 5 provides a preliminary set of guidelines for such evaluations. This is followed by a concluding chapter which attempts to draw the various threads together and point the way towards future developments in this important field.

This book is an important asset for NGO development practitioners and funders.

For copies, contact:
INTRAC
R.O. Box 563
Oxford OX2 6RZ, UK

A RESOURCE MANUAL FOR TRAINERS AND PRACTITIONERS OF PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA). Papers in the Administration of Development. No. 49.

Robert Leurs has brought out this resource manual as an effective information and training guide on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as an alternative research methodology in rural development work. It is developed mainly for consultants and staff within government and non-government development organisations who are interested in teaching or applying Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques in their own work.

The manual, structured in a modular form, consists of seven chapters, along with an explanatory introductory chapter, an informative appendix and bibliography, and a list of important sources on Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal. The chapters can be broadly categorized into three sections. The first section focuses on the philosophy and principles of Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal, the second section deals with the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal and the final section highlights the lessons learnt by the author along with the plans succeeding the training.

The modules on philosophy and techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal are presented in an organised and easily comprehensible manner. They provide an integrated outline of the introduction to the techniques, the possible approaches to training, along with information about useful training material. The supplemented visual aids and field-based examples and illustrations enhance the conceptual clarity of the reader.

It makes for an effective training package for the application and popularization of the Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques in the development scenario.

For copies, contact: PRIA
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi - 110 062
Phone- 6989559, 6981908
Fax: (011) 6980183

RRA NOTES: Special Issue on Participatory Tools and Methods in Urban Areas.

Human Settlements and Sustainable Agriculture Programme of International Institute for Environment and Development, have jointly compiled and edited this special issue of 'RRA Notes'. Thirteen papers consisting of case studies and discussion papers focus on the use of participatory methodologies for research and project implementation in community development programmes in urban areas.

The document presents a collection of papers from authors having long experience of working in urban areas as well as those who are more familiar with rural tradition of participatory methodologies and are experimenting with their use in urban areas. Covering the entire domain of community development experiences of Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is inferred that in all the three continents – Rapid Rural Appraisal, Participatory Rural Appraisal and related approaches are getting popularity in urban programme. The issue of urban – rural differentiation, which inhibits the flow of ideas, information and methodologies between rural and urban practitioners have been highlighted. It is expected that this issue would overcome this urban – rural divide.

Certain crucial questions and key issues have been raised in this document, which can initiate a formal process of information exchange and start a more constructive and creative relationship between those working in urban and rural area.

For copies and comments, contact:
International Institute for Environment and Development
3, Endsleigh Street, London WC1H ODD
Phone (+44 171) 38821177
Fax: (+44 171) 3882826
E-mail: iiedagr @ gn. apc.org

22 Participation & Governance Vol.2 No.3 March 1995

This draft report is an outcome of the research and consultation process which was initiated in 1991 and will culminate with the Second Commonwealth NGO forum to be held in New Zealand in 1995. To develop such programme of assistance to the Non-Governmental Organisations, the Commonwealth Foundation was recommended by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Harare later in 1991.

The research and consultation carried out in 1992/93 had two aims:

(i) to develop guidelines for good policy and practice on how NGOs can best function and better relate to and be supported by governments, funders and the public in their work; and

(ii) in order to provide a context for such guidelines, to prepare an accurate and up-to-date account of the current role and functioning of NGOs in Commonwealth Countries.

The report presents the results of research and consultation on the above two objectives.

For comments and suggestions or copies, contact:

The Commonwealth Foundation
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HJ
Phone: (44) 71-930-3783
Fax: (44) 71-839-8157


This volume is an outcome of the Dutch Ministry of International Cooperation funded project. The purpose of this task was to make available to the participants of the Ministry's projects and other interested parties a relatively short publication describing the nature and methodology of Participatory Research, practical experience in its use and its application potential.

With an interesting introduction which deals with conceptual and theoretical issues in Participatory Research in a very lucid manner, the book in its first part presents a number of articles that have been previously published elsewhere, however, they are arranged in a specific sequence to demonstrate some of the methodological problems which may be experienced in Participatory Research. In the second part of the book (chapter 3) examples of Participatory Research are presented. This illustrates some of the general and methodological observations that have been made. Special efforts have been made to select examples of projects from different sectors and continents. In chapter 4 an impression has been given of the problems from the donor's side in initiating a research programme based on the country's needs instead of on the priorities of research institutes. Finally, there is a list of addresses of institutions with considerable experience in Participatory Research and network activities.

The book proves to be a good guide for any one who is interested in Participatory Research, its methods and application. The book propounds Participatory Research in a non-deterministic way. Though it emphasizes upon Participatory Research, it does not intend to reduce the conventional research and other methods to irrelevance. It stresses that each of these streams has its usefulness with the proper context and purpose.

Seminar/Conference Report

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN HEALTH PROMOTION.

Korrie de Koning has compiled the proceedings of the above symposium in which participants from 26 countries participated.

The aim of the symposium was to enable health professionals and other workers, with interest in Participatory Research, to share experiences, know different perspectives and practices in Participatory Research and provide mutual support for using Participatory Rural Appraisal in health promotion.

The proceedings have been effectively organized to include the full text of the four keynote addresses and summaries of the introductions to the workshop. The keynote addresses cover different perspectives in exploring Participatory Research, including issues like
contribution of feminism to Participatory Research theory and practice, historical roots and contemporary influences in Participatory Research and evaluations of participation and research in health, along with a case study of Participatory Action Research in a women’s health programme.

The 37 introduction summaries have been organised under 16 broad headings, each indicating specific perspective, activity setting or health issue. Training in and integration of Participatory Research in government services projects, establishing community based need assessments and health information systems are some of the interesting themes discussed. Case studies and field experiences provides helpful illustrations to the issues discussed.

The compiled proceedings would be of immense help for practitioners and academicians interested in studying and making use of Participatory Research in health care and promotion.

For further details and copies, contact:

Education Resource Group
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
Pembroke Place
Liverpool L3 5QA, UK

Training

Centre for Youth and Social Development based at Bhubaneswar, Orissa offers the following training courses in the Calendar Year 1995.

A. 1. Training : DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COURSE (DMC)
   2. Thematic Constituency : Development Paradigms, Changing Faces and Trends in Macro Development Planning, Strategic Planning, Organisational Values, Vision, Mission, Goal Setting, NGO Culture, Pro-active Leadership, Participatory Techniques, Project Formulation and Management, Enhancing Team Effectivity, Sustaining Self and Organisational interdependence, etc.
   3. For Whom : Senior and Middle-Level Functionaries from NGOs who have at least 5 years experience in running and managing field-based programmes, and are required to assume higher level managerial and strategic respon-
   ibilities in the organisation. Language skills in English is essential.
   4. Duration and Date : 4 weeks (19th June-15th July ’95)
   5. Last Date of receipt of Nomination : 18th May, 1995.
   6. Language Used : English
   7. Course Fees : Rs.4,000/- (Per each Nomination)

B. 1. Training : TRAINING OF TRAINERS & FACILITATORS (TOT)
   3. For Women : Trainers, HRD Functionaries, and Project managers and members who are holding an advisory position and intend to improve the commitment of different parties involved through a more effective communication within a project or organisation, Project Functionaries who want to steer participatory evaluation and planning process. Freelance development workers who want to steer process consultations.
   4. Duration and Date : Ten Days (1st-10th August ’95)
   6. Language Used : English
   7. Course Fees : Rs. 1,500/- (Per each Nomination)

For details, contact

Coordinator, DRTC
Center for Youth and Social Development
A-70, Saheed Nagar,
Bhubaneswar - 751 005
Orissa, India
Tel : +91-674-411963/405428
Fax : +91-674-410195/411087

A two-day workshop was held at PRIA on the occasion of the visit of Dr. Pieter Damen, Asia Director of CEBEMO and his team. It was attended by 24 Voluntary Development Organisations from all over the country.

Presentations were made by Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Executive Director, PRIA on "Civil Society in the New Global Context", by Dr. Pieter Damen on "Emerging Challenges for Northern NGOs", by Ms. Margriet Nieuwenhuis on "NGOs and Women's Development: Gender Issues in India and the North". Since the two-day workshop brought together a host of representatives of various non-governmental organisations, the discussion focussed on a gamut of issues ranging from emerging trends of Civil Society to systematic exploitation of Dalits, tribals and women to the needs and problems of networking. The participants also made efforts to redefine parameters on the basis of experience and perspectives.

For report and further information, contact : PRIA

PANCHAYATI RAJ CORE GROUP

‘Panchayati Raj Core Group’ is an informal group formed by the Organisations working on Panchayati Raj issues. This group holds a monthly meeting in which the members share their experiences, activities and the latest developments on Panchayati Raj. The December meeting was organised at PRIA where the discussion focussed on information sharing, documentation and networking on Panchayati Raj.

CONSULTATION ON "WOMEN, SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT".

The two-day consultation was part of the All-India Consultation with NGOs and CBOs on UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II), to be held in Turkey in June 1996. Participants from all over India included field activists, NGOs, researchers and others involved in work related to women, shelter and settlement in urban, rural and tribal areas.

Main focus of the consultation was to highlight and discuss gender issues in relation to shelter, settlement and livelihood, audit public programmes and NGOs/ CBOs initiatives and document processes that enhance women’s participation in planning and decision-making. The outcome of the discussions would contribute to the National Consultation on Habitat II, organised by YUVA (4-6 January), the National Report on Habitat II and the UN Fourth World Conference on Women Development, Beijing, 1995.


The main objective of the workshop was to deliberate on areas of community perception, preparedness and response in respect to natural disasters in the post-Yokohama period of IDNDR (International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction). Over 45 representatives from various Government Departments, (IMD, DRDO, Ministry of Agriculture, officials from State Government involved in relief rehabilitation activities), along with administrators, academicians and Non-governmental Organisations working in this area participated in the proceedings. In the workshop, deliberations were confined to four different natural disasters like earthquakes, storms, landslides and floods, some of which heavily affect the Eastern and North-Eastern regions of the country. The workshop started with a presentation by Dr. Edmund Humbley, President, Institute of Civil Engineers, UK on “Risk Assessment and Natural Disaster Response” followed by State reports, NGO reports and presentations by various Government Departments. After these presentations, participants were divided into groups to discuss the details of the Natural Disaster Manual. Four broad areas were identified for this manual: (I) Anticipation; (II) Mobilization; (III) Recovery and Reconstruction; (IV) Awareness, Education and Training.

At the end of the workshop a detailed outline of the manual was prepared. In between the session special lectures were also organised on this issue. As follow up, workshop report and Disaster Response Manual are being prepared.

For further information, contact : PRIA

Resource Persons  Coordinated by
Dr. L. David Brown, IDR, Boston  Dr. Nalin R. Jena  PRIA, New Delhi.
Dr. Rajesh Tandon  PRIA, New Delhi

PRIA, in collaboration with Institute for Development Research, (IDR) Boston, is organising four phase workshops spanning over one year, on studying the realities of popular participation in development projects. The purpose of the workshop is to develop conceptual and empirical understanding of popular participation on the basis of the eight studies on Participation, to know whether popular participation in our country is a myth or reality and to build the research and analysis capacity of the participants. Eight groups from seven States are participating in this four phase workshop-cum-training programme.

Workshop III was in continuation of Workshop I and Workshop II. Workshop I focused on research process and the issues involved in popular participation. Workshop II was a step towards an in-depth understanding of hypothesis development, research methodologies, and aspects of research design including methods of data collection. These were in context to the preliminary overview studies conducted by each team during the interim period between Workshop I and Workshop II. Detailed data collection succeeded Workshop II.

The participants’ data analysis skills were further sharpened in Workshop III, along with practical application of the acquired knowledge on the data collected by each team. Introduction to qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques, along with understanding and application of SPSS (Special Package for Social Sciences), a computer data analysis package, formed an integral part of the agenda.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA. January 23 – March 31, 1995. Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, India.

PRIA has started this new educational programme in the current year. PRIA has been conducting short-duration educational programmes for capacity building of non-governmental development organizations. A study conducted by PRIA revealed the need for long-term human resource development interventions to strengthen the capacities of grass-roots voluntary development organizations in South Asia. This programme on Development Management is an outcome of this process.

The purposes of this ten week residential programme is to help (i) prepare practitioners of grass-roots development undertaking key leadership roles; (ii) strengthen the conceptual and analytical base of practising programme managers; (iii) build a holistic framework of people-centred development and its organizational imperatives; (iv) create an opportunity for reflection and systemization of experiences; and, (v) promote self-awareness and personal growth in the context of leadership development.

WORKSHOP ON “WOMEN EMPOWERMENT”: Some Social, Economic and Political issues.” 8 – 10 March,1995, Palampur. Organised by New HOPE and PRIA.

The workshop organised to commemorate the International Women’s Day was attended by over hundred women representing fifteen village women groups (Mahila Mandal) and three local income generation groups.

The focus of the workshop was to bring about clearer understanding of women’s role and contribution in the family, community and society at large and to provide participants with an opportunity to increase their understanding and awareness about different women development programmes. Issues focused were: the Government Poverty Alleviation programmes, the roles and functions of Mahila Mandal and the emerging role of women in Panchayati Raj.

CONFERENCE ON URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALISATION: 10-12 March, 1995, Bangalore. Organised by Citizens Voluntary Initiative for the City (CIVIC), in collaboration with Max Mueller Bhavan and HIVOS.

Experts from Germany and India, NGO representatives and concerned citizens participated in the conference.

The conference commenced with keynote address on “The New Constitutionalism and Urban Government impending Transformations”. Some of the important themes for discussion were “Local Self Government and Direct Democracy: Traditions and Experiences”, “Financial Autonomy and Decentralisation”, and
Karnataka Nagarpalika Act. Issues discussed ranged from the local government models and process in Indian states, role of women, local NGOs, neighbourhood associations and ward committees in Urban Governance to the International experience and the role of elected representative and town commissioners in the Nagarpalika Act of various states.

As a follow up Public Action strategies at the state and national level were discussed and follow up activities taken up.

For further information, contact:

Mr. S. Manjunath  
Coordinator  
CIVIC  
No-25, 11th floor, IVth cross Malleswaram,  
Bangalore - 560 003.

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Dear friends,

Thank you for your overwhelming response to the previous two issues of Participation & Governance.

I would like to reiterate that as in the past, a Bulletin of this kind cannot be produced by us primarily on the basis of our own work. We need your support, contribution and feedback, if this Bulletin has to serve as a meaningful vehicle of mutual learning and dialogue, then your active contribution is urged. Its continued publication and dissemination in this form also requires resources, and we solicit that support from you.

We are excited about and committed to this initiative. And we are confident that you will join us in this venture.

Rajesh Tandon

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PRIA

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

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

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

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

Society for Participatory Research in Asia
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