

LOCAL GOVERNANCE WATER EDUCATION HEALTH MARKET ECONOMY
PUBLIC SERVICE VOICE CIVIL SOCIETY WATER INCLUSIVE EFFICIENT
DUTY SHARED VALUE GENDER EQUITY HEALTH
EFFICIENT DEMOCRACY POLICY SAFE
WATER SHARED VALUE LOCAL GOVERNANCE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS WATER
EFFICIENT RIGHTS POLICY VOICE INDEPENDENT MEDIA
ENGAGED CITIZENS PROGRESSIVE ROADS
EFFICIENT SPEEDY JUSTICE WATER COLLABORATION RIGHTS POLICY SERVICE DELIVERY INDEPENDENT MEDIA
DUTY GENDER EQUITY SAFE POLICY SERVICE DELIVERY SAFE



GOOD TO GREAT

Taking the Governance Leap in India

INDEPENDENT MEDIA DEVELOPMENT LIVELIHOODS PROGRESSIVE EFFECTIVE
POLITICS GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVE ROADS WATER COLLABORATION
WELL-FUNCTIONING RIGHTS LIVELIHOODS





DASRA

Dasra is India's leading strategic philanthropy foundation. Dasra works with philanthropists and successful social entrepreneurs to bring together knowledge, funding and people as a catalyst for social change. We ensure that strategic funding and capacity building skills reach non - profit organizations and social businesses to have the greatest impact on the lives of people living in poverty.

www.dasra.org

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Where the mind is without fear

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore

FOREWORD

In the past few years, India has witnessed growing momentum around matters of 'governance'. Tracing this journey, one could well relate it to the actions (or inaction) of governments, activism from the judiciary, increasing attention from citizen advocacy groups and media, and generally a better informed electorate. The nascency of this phenomenon is however reflected in India's dismal ratings on various global governance indices.

This report by Dasra is thus a timely effort toward building greater awareness on a critical subject and suggesting action-oriented solutions. While there has been a lot of action around the Right to Information Act and bringing transparency in the electoral process, it's important to realize we have a lot more on *our* plate. And I say *our* plate very consciously, because beyond just the government - citizens, businesses and media have an equal role to play in nation-building. The manner in which this report succinctly pulls together the various building blocks needed to establish a strong and effective governance framework for India is very informative and thought provoking.

To me, robust governance is a means to an end. I believe the current status of India's human development indicators is largely an outcome of our poor governance record - whether on the quality of our public education, access to good primary healthcare, or leakages in our public distribution system and livelihood schemes... it can all be traced back to weaknesses in the policy and operating architecture. At the same time, we do see islands of excellence in government and among civil society organizations.

This report does an excellent job of highlighting the work of several such non-profit organizations that are positively contributing to strengthening governance in their respective focus areas. These span a diverse range of issues - lack of accountability and capacities within the executive, poor citizen awareness and participation, lack of platforms for active public engagement, the need for an independent and inclusive media and several others.

But no government or one civil society organization can fix it all. The investments required are both, time- and effort-intensive. This is where the role of philanthropic capital assumes great importance. We need to build an ecosystem that encourages Indian donors to play an active role in any of the intervention areas highlighted in the report. Unless 'we' step up - to create a robust governance framework - working in close collaboration with the government, the transient benefits of other philanthropic interventions in education, healthcare, sanitation etc. will be frittered away.

Creating a long-lasting and sustainable impact for any chosen development indicator pre-supposes a supportive founding structure - governance may just be the answer. I leave you with this thought as you explore the recommendations of this report.

Ajay G Piramal
Chairman, Piramal Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India's startling contrasts...

We are

The world's largest democracy

The authors of the landmark Right to Information (RTI) Act, ranked 2nd best in the world

Ranked 2nd on AT Kearney's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Confidence Index in 2012

But we are also

38th among 167 countries on the Index of Democracy, 2013

85th among 175 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, 2014

142nd among 189 countries on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, 2014

...are equally mirrored in its development challenges



HEALTH

Despite having the 2nd largest number of trained doctors in the world, 200 children under age 5 die every hour in India.



EDUCATION

Despite having a Right to Education Act (2009) that guarantees free and compulsory education to all children aged 6-14, 6 million children in India still don't go to school.



FOOD SECURITY

Despite having the world's largest school-feeding program, India ranks 65 out of 79 nations on the Global Hunger Index.



LIVELIHOODS

Despite guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment annually to rural households, the NREGA - the world's largest social security and public works program - has actually been able to provide less than 50 days of employment on average per household.



“

Intuitively, I feel we [India] are at the cusp of one of the biggest changes since 1850. If I take the period 1850 to 1950, the World War was not the biggest change for India; it was a big change for the world. So was the Second World War. Independence was the big change for India, and I think we are sitting on the cusp of what could be the second biggest change.

*R Gopalakrishnan,
Tata Sons*

”

After nearly seven decades of independence, India continues to lag on all aspects of the human development index. Despite its growth spurts, the country continues to battle economic cyclicality, weak infrastructure, a challenging business environment, and poor education and health outcomes, among other things. Dasra's report, *Good to Great: Taking the Governance Leap in India* attempts to redefine our national ambition by providing an overview of the governance sector in India, and making a case for funding non-profit organizations that can transform our potential to achieve that ambition.

Crossing the chasm

At the core of the governance challenge is our colonial legacy, with its deep-rooted culture of centralization, as well as administrative, police and judicial structures that have not progressed at the pace called for by a democratic India. In such an environment, the country's citizens also struggle with their own basic indifference towards a system that they have little faith in.

It is increasingly understood that governments cannot nation-build in isolation; there is a need for civil society and the private sector to partner with and support governments in order for communities to thrive and nations to grow.

The complex interplay of stakeholders and potential solutions will require a simultaneous strengthening of – and collaboration between – all three pillars of democracy: legislature, executive and judiciary, through active participation by State, market and civil society. Consequently, over the last two decades, many impactful non-profit organizations have emerged, closing the capacity gaps of these critical players and better preparing us to take the governance leap. This report profiles the work of 26 of the most promising organizations that Dasra came across during its research.

India's governance status

This report uses the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs) developed by the World Bank and Brookings Institute to evaluate India's governance status. The framework considers governance across six key dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.



From 1996 to 2012, India's standing declined on five of the six indicators. The country needs to improve on these particular indicators not only for the sake of 'governance' but also to achieve its desired development and economic outcomes. For example, when the WGI scores are improved by just one standard deviation, infant mortality declines by 2/3rds and incomes rise about three-fold in the long term. Similarly, a 1 point increase in the Government Effectiveness (Kauffman) Index increases the FDI/GDP ratio by 4%.

Challenges as opportunities

Through conversations with over 30 experts and by mapping 120 non-profit organizations and social businesses working to strengthen governance, Dasra has identified nine key interventions that span a diverse spectrum. These can broadly be understood to focus on working with the government - i.e. the supply side, or civil society - the demand side. Relating back to the governance indicators, the interventions most directly impact 'voice and accountability', 'government effectiveness', 'control of corruption' and to some extent, 'rule of law'. They encompass broad themes such as capacity building, leveraging technology, mobilizing citizens, providing policy inputs and facilitating greater engagement between citizens and the State. Non-profit organizations are relatively less able to directly improve performance on 'regulatory quality' and 'political stability' - functions that fall more squarely within the government's domain.

Four key themes for the governance leap

To achieve the scale of transformation needed for the governance leap, stakeholders must focus on building the capabilities needed to integrate the following four themes into the governance ecosystem. These themes are explored in greater detail in Chapter 2, including evidence on how this impacts governance.

Develop media as a key stakeholder

By keeping governance standards in the public eye and creating an open sphere for public discourse, independent media plays the complementary roles of watchdog, agenda-setter and gatekeeper. High levels of media freedom are associated with low levels of corruption. Greater media freedom is also significantly related to an increase in public spending, particularly on key sectors such as health and education, and overall improved delivery of public services.

Strengthen local governance

In 1993, the landmark 73rd and 74th Amendments decentralized resources, tasks and decision making powers from the Centre to local government bodies. Strengthening local governance is at the heart of the people's voice being heard; it is an impetus for greater local accountability and responsiveness.

Advance women-centered leadership

Given the clear imperative to increase women's participation in the public process, there is a case for legislated reservations for elected women representatives in India and around the world. Once elected, they need training and support to understand their roles, responsibilities and powers, gain confidence in their abilities, and effectively lead governance improvements.

Leverage technology

India is well placed to reap the fruits of technology not in the distant future but now. With a 63% mobile phone penetration - 30% of the monthly increase coming from rural India - and internet penetration growing at 30% year-on-year, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) clearly present a tremendous opportunity to enhance citizen engagement and vastly improve access to good governance across the country.

The non-profit's role in making the governance leap

Dasra has identified over 120 non-profit organizations and social businesses in India that adopt a variety of approaches to strengthen governance. While slotting organizations in the governance space into air-tight compartments is challenging, Dasra has suggested the following indicative grouping for ease of understanding the spread of work:

Research and policy includes national-level focus or sector-specific policy research and advocacy, with a varying degree of focus on implementation.

Citizen journalism and independent media includes mainstream and hyper-local print journalism, voice-based media platforms, and media watchdogs.

Transparency and accountability includes advocacy for enabling legislation, free and fair elections, budget analysis and tracking.

Local governance includes focus on building both, citizen and local government capacities.

With the passing of the 73rd and 74th amendments creating a third tier of local government, the 1990s saw the beginning of much activity around the formalizing and strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the last decade, most organizations have focused on enhancing local governance, transparency and accountability. Urban governance, citizen journalism and media as a tool for strengthening governance have more recently gained momentum.

A further analysis of 67 of these 120 organizations revealed that three-quarters of them emerged in the 1990s and 2000s, as the civil society movement for better governance gained momentum with key policy milestones. Over 60% of the organizations are based in Delhi and Bangalore. In terms of absorption capacity, over 55% have annual budgets of less than INR 2 crore and 15% greater than INR 5 crore.

How to act on this report

India is poised to achieve both, economic growth and human development, with better alignment between the three key stakeholders: civil society, the private sector and the government. Dasra's research shows that the development sector - primarily funders and social sector leaders - will need to collaborate with these key stakeholders to take the governance leap towards meeting our nation's aspirations. Those stakeholders interested in moving from good governance to great governance will need to collaborate, fund and lead the development of a robust governance ecosystem.

How can you support collaboration, funding and leadership in a new way? Dasra recommends convening sector leaders, creating collaborative funding platforms, partnering with the government and engaging civil society.

No single citizen, non-profit, philanthropist, government official or judge can carry India from good to great governance unilaterally. Taking the governance leap will call for a collaborative glue that binds us all to the common purpose of building a nation of equality, progress and opportunity. This engaged and collaborative approach needs us to lay aside egos, politics, religion, tactical disagreements and distractions.

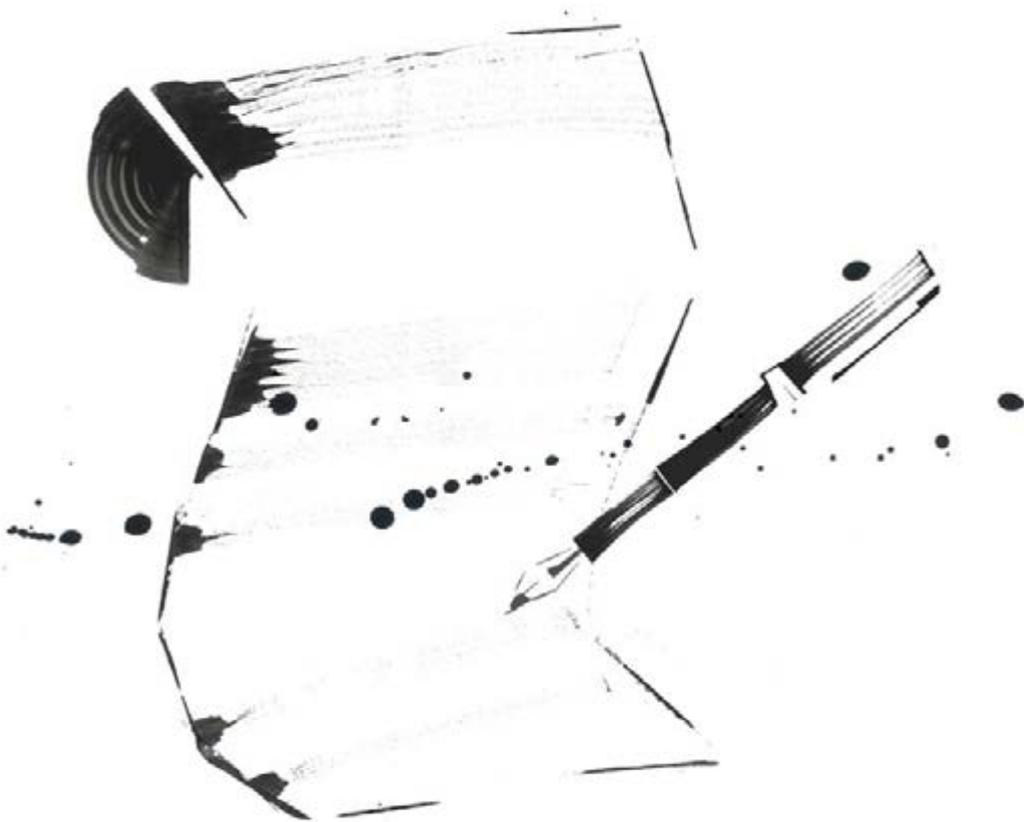
If we are to leapfrog development in India through governance, we each have a role to play - vote, be better informed, fund a game-changing opportunity, collaborate with others, perform civic duties - the list is extensive, as is the impact you can have on accelerating development by participating in the Governance Leap.

“

Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.

Nelson Mandela

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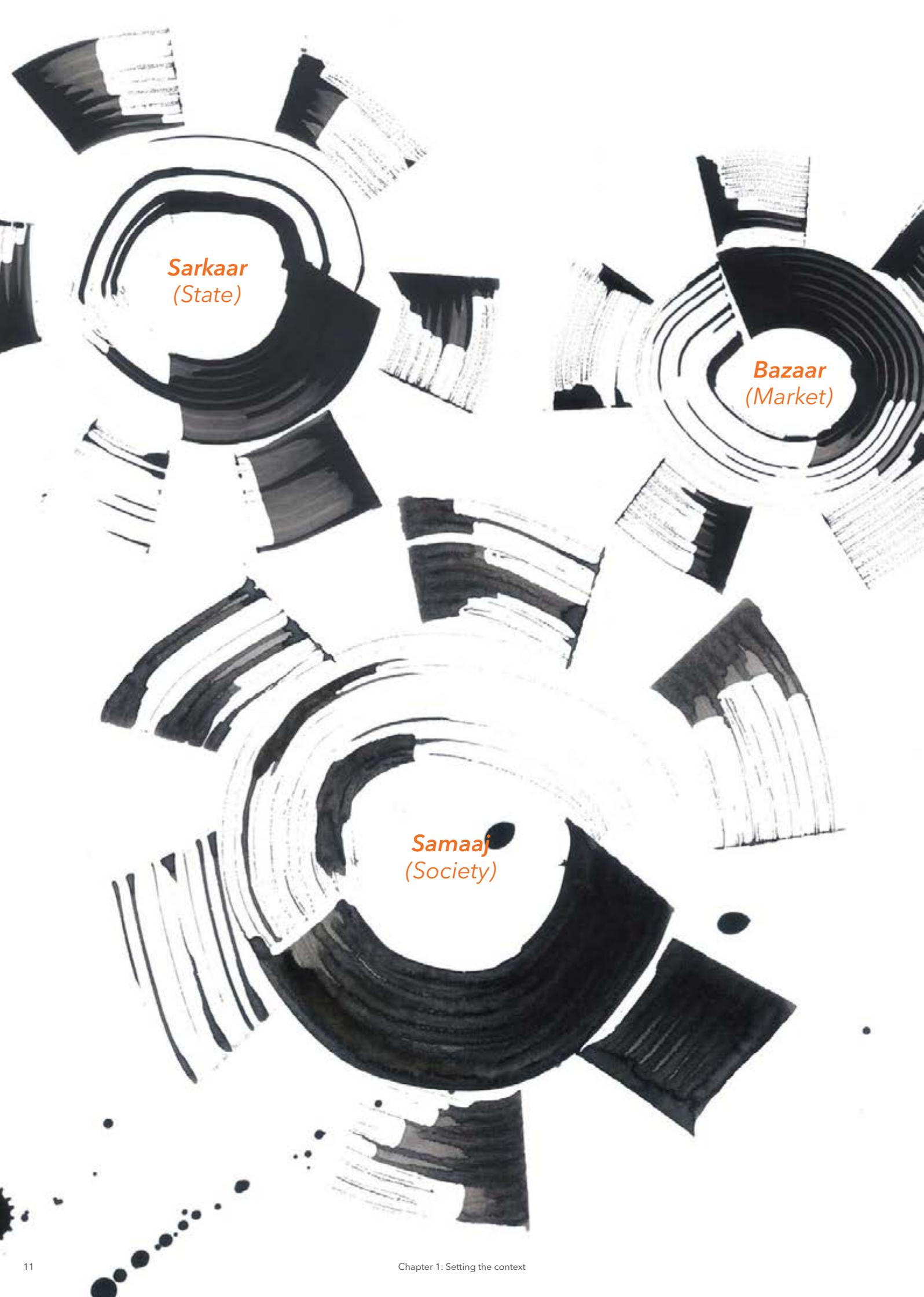
Acknowledgements

Dasra would like to convey its deep appreciation to all the amazing individuals that we spoke with, who contributed to this report through their expert insights on the sector, and provided critical direction and analysis throughout our research process.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the non-profit organizations and social businesses that are working relentlessly to strengthen the governance ecosystem in India. We are humbled by their commitment and deeply appreciate the time they spent with Dasra - sharing ground realities, sector insights and program strategies.

We are also extremely grateful to the enlightened citizens whom we met and who, with their active participation in public affairs, are slowly but surely bringing change to their communities and to the country.

It is only due to the dedication and generosity of these supporters that *Good to Great* has been able to articulate the criticality of strengthening governance in India, and recommend clear, action-oriented approaches for the future.



Sarkaar
(State)

Bazaar
(Market)

Samaaj
(Society)

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Introduction

India has constantly surprised the world with its enduring growth; overcoming challenges seen as insurmountable - a colonial history, burgeoning population, and enormous diversity. The democracy at the core of our governance architecture has allowed opportunities for participation, new leadership and a consistent churning of hope.¹

Yet India is also far from realizing its full economic and social potential - which it can unlock only if we strengthen the country's underlying governance framework.

“

Addressing governance issues is important because whichever silo you work in, be it education, microfinance, sanitation, food or health, you would eventually hit (the) governance deficit. The reason we don't have equity and stability is because somewhere our governance failures catch up with us.

*Rohini Nilekani,
Philanthropist and Author*

”

But what exactly is governance?

While a slew of differently nuanced definitions exist, it is now broadly accepted that the meaning of the term 'governance' has evolved from being the sole domain of the government to being the responsibility of three broad stakeholders - market, State and civil society. It is increasingly understood that governments cannot nation-build in isolation, without support from civil society and the private sector. Sustained and good governance will result if there are mechanisms that can ensure a creative and dynamic balance between these three actors, as they go about their affairs.



The biggest task before all of us is to engage the people of India in the craft of citizenship, since the ship of democracy is actually run from the engine room of citizenship.

*Ramesh Ramanathan,
Co-founder, Janaagraha*



A definition of Governance

Governance refers to the “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (a) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (b) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (c) the respect of citizens and the State for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.”

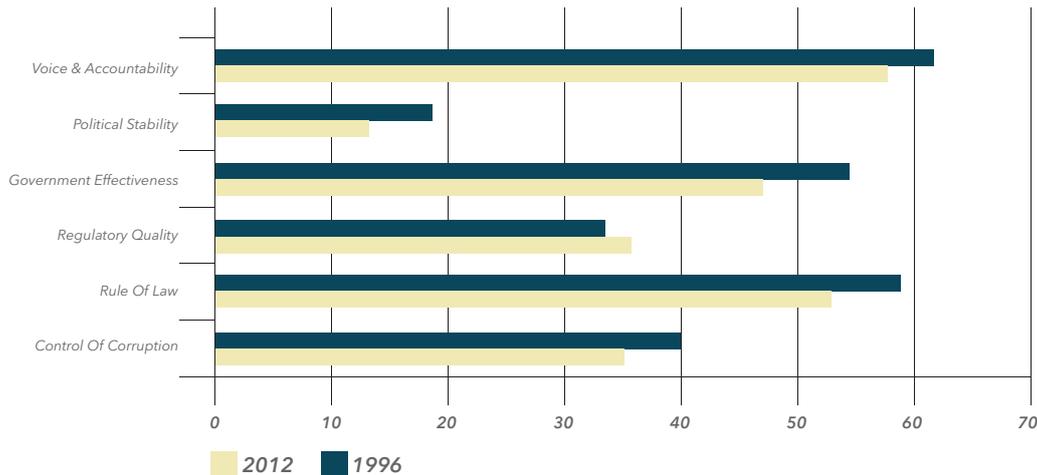
World Bank

In order to compare and measure where countries stand on their quality of governance, Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, in a landmark project supported by the World Bank and the Brookings Institution, developed the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs) in 1996.

These WGIs measure governance across six dimensions, which link back to the above definition



India's percentile global ranking on the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs)



From 1996 to 2012, India's standing declined on five of the six indicators. For instance, on Rule of Law, India measured higher than 59.33% of the countries sampled in 1996, which deteriorated to measuring higher than 52.6% in 2012. Similarly on Government Effectiveness, its ranking has fallen from 53.66% in 1996 to 47.37% in 2012.

Why is strengthening governance in India critical?

Policymakers, scholars, civil society and business broadly agree that good governance is a fundamental ingredient of sustained progress and economic development.

When good governance is guaranteed citizens go about their pursuits with enhanced expectations.²

-
- India has over 250,000 municipal (local) governments, of which 35 preside over a population of 1 million or more; eight of these are metro cities with a population of over 5 million.
 - The UN estimates that by 2050, India will have overtaken China as the most populous country in the world.
-

This intuitive understanding is backed up by a body of evidence that points to a strong positive relationship between governance and development. For instance,

- When the 'world governance indicators' are improved by just one standard deviation, infant mortality declines by 2/3rds and incomes rise about 3x in the long term.³
- Similarly, a 1 point increase in the Government Effectiveness (Kauffman) Index increases the FDI/GDP ratio by 4%.⁴

Given India's significant development challenges - whether in relation to poverty, food security, education, health, sanitation, gender equity, or livelihoods - investing to strengthen governance becomes an imperative to achieve our development goals.

What are India's key governance challenges?

Using the WGI as a backdrop, a snapshot of some of India's major governance challenges is presented in the following pages. The complex interplay of these problems and their potential solutions will require a simultaneous strengthening of - and collaboration between - all three pillars of democracy: legislature, executive and judiciary, through active participation by State, market and civil society.



1) VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.

We illustrate India's performance on this indicator through three essential components - participation in elections, the independence and quality of media, and mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.

Participation in Elections

While India's voter turnout has been the highest ever (66%) in the 2014 election, and therefore the largest in absolute numbers that the world has ever seen, we have some distance to go before voting becomes a ubiquitous exercise in citizenship. Urban India - ostensibly the more educated part of the citizenry - has historically not voted in numbers or percentages commensurate to rural India.

A study comparing the 20 most rural and urban constituencies showed a 15% gap between rural and urban voter turnout in 2014.

Indiaspend, May 30, 2014

Through their Jaagte Raho initiative, **Janaagraha** became the first non-profit organization to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Election Commission aiming to achieve 100% accuracy on the voter list and to maintain a clean voter list on an ongoing basis. The final quarter of 2013-2014 saw the Jaagte Raho team collect 1 lakh voter forms, and have them processed by the electoral roll officer in charge - enabling approximately 90,000 new voters to participate in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in the city of Bangalore.

GROUND
UP

While electoral participation is on the rise following efforts by non-profit organizations and the Election Commission of India, the influence of media as a governance watchdog has progressively weakened.

Independence of Media

Several phenomena plague the independence of and public trust in media in India. Of these, paid news, and the control of major media houses by corporates interests are the most prominent.

'Paid news' refers to the practice of accepting funds in exchange for favorable reporting by mainstream media. A Press Council of India report (2013) commissioned on the subject suggested that the problem is now both, pervasive and highly organized.⁵

“

The media can play a more constructive part in keeping the reality of India persistently in the view of the public. The bias in coverage... contributes quite heavily to political apathy about the urgency of remedying the extreme deprivation of the Indian underprivileged.

*Amartya Sen,
Nobel Prize-winning Economist*

”

Additionally, the dominance of ownership by select, powerful companies has led to increasing complaints by journalists of interference in the reporting and editing process, with many indicating they are being steered away from criticism or reportage on any subject which may harm the owner's interests.

Voluntary self-regulatory industry agencies like the News Broadcasting Standards Authority and the Broadcasting Contents Complaints Council have been unsuccessful in curbing the rise of sensationalism and slander in the media. Compounding this is the fact that statutory regulators like the Press Council of India and the Electronic Media Monitoring Centre also lack the punitive powers to have impact even in cases that may be brought to their notice.

Nevertheless, the media in India is still home to some of the country's brightest minds and sharpest investigators. Time and again, they have guided the nation towards improvement, often at great personal risk. They have demonstrated that the potential for a vibrant public discourse exists, but it requires a move from sensationalism and rhetoric towards informed, balanced debate. Insulation from vested interests is also critical for the media to effectively serve out its duties of oversight.



The country's first and only publication devoted to narrative journalism, **The Caravan** occupies a singular position among Indian magazines, showcasing artfully constructed stories based on months of research and reporting. Unlike publications that focus solely on breaking news and opinion pieces, *Caravan* presents a rich and nuanced picture of contemporary India in all its complexity - combining quality storytelling with reportage on essential political and social issues. Since its re-launch in January 2010 under Delhi Press, a publishing house of national repute, *Caravan* has emerged as one of the country's most independent publications.

Transparency and Accountability

Where the media has faltered, the campaign for greater transparency and access to public information has scored numerous significant - and potentially long-term - gains. With the passing of the Right to Information (RTI) Act in 2005, the government committed itself to an unprecedented level of transparency.⁶ However, the realization of RTI's full potential has been plagued with an overall lack of awareness, a mounting backlog of requests and administrative inefficiencies.

A study in 2014 reported that the collective backlog at 23 information commissions in India was around 1.98 lakh as on 31 December, 2013. If an RTI application were to be filed with the Madhya Pradesh information commission today, the appeal would come up after 60 years; in West Bengal it would take 17 years.⁷

Following the RTI Act, innovative monitoring and tracking mechanisms such as social audits and citizen report cards have also been pioneered by non-profit organizations. A social audit is a process in which financial and non-financial information used by public agencies for development initiatives is shared with citizens, often through a public platform. Mandated as part of NREGA (the government's employment guarantee program), mechanisms such as these have boosted people's bargaining power and allowed them to evolve from pure activism to partnership with government for resolution of issues.

Jan Jagaran Shakti Sangathan, a union working for unorganized workers in Bihar, has been the pioneer of social audits in the state. After finding success in conducting these audits for the employment guarantee scheme of the government, they partnered with the Ministry of Social Welfare in Bihar to conduct a similar exercise with the anganwadi scheme - piloted by conducting social audits of 100 anganwadis. This led to several revelations about corruption and blockages within the state system, following which the government has mandated social audits for anganwadis across the state.

GROUND
UP



2) POLITICAL STABILITY

The likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means.

Through its long history of changing rulers, and during its nearly 70 years as a sovereign nation, India has functioned under differing degrees of political stability and relative vulnerability. We rank lowest on this dimension of governance, worse than some of our neighbors - Bhutan, China and Sri Lanka - and behind several African countries. A big factor here is the persistent threat of terror and insurgency, in various parts of the country.

"WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE,

social, economic and political;

LIBERTY

of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY

of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all;

FRATERNITY

assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION."

While the '26/11' terror attack on Mumbai is perhaps the most audacious and well-known external attack on Indian soil, it was by no means an isolated instance. India - with a 7,000 km coastline and 15,000 km of land border to defend - on several occasions has seen war, as well as violence primarily on account of religious and ethnic differences.

Despite all this, our ingrained democratic values, combined with a system of regular elections, and a clear separation of the armed forces from executive power have ensured that the scales do not tip far enough for the government and the Constitution to be under serious threat.

Ultimately, while all governments must work hard to reinforce the secular and democratic values promoted by the Constitution, it is also the work of citizens to bring the values of fraternity and equality into their homes and communities, which in turn would feed the strength of the nation.



3) GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS:

The quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

The WGI measuring government effectiveness covers a broad range of issues dealing with the performance of the government, including delivery of services and formulation of policy. India's performance on this indicator is suggestive not just of the quality of work done by successive administrations but also of India's historical legacies, which partly explain why the basic framework within which the government operates is itself sometimes limiting.

British Legacy: A Centralized System of Governance

During British colonial rule, India's traditionally decentralized governance structure was replaced with a command-and-control system designed to extract tax and related forms of revenue, with little concern for service delivery.⁸

“

In the long period of colonial rule, civil servants had enjoyed vast powers, especially at the local level, and this has continued (even increased) after the transfer of power to Indians. We have a classic situation of moral hazard because of the vast distance and multiple layers of agents between the principal who is the ordinary citizen and... the de facto rulers.

Vinod Vyasulu,
Centre for Budget and Policy Studies

”

After independence, this centralized system was retained in order to ensure growth with social justice, stemming from Dr. B R Ambedkar's belief that "the union, distant from caste and other conflicts of rural India, staffed by urban, Western-educated, upper-caste men was more likely to be just and impartial in its treatment of our oppressed minorities than the rural, elite-led state governments."⁹

73rd and 74th Amendment: The Beginning of Local Governance

The early 1990s saw the passing of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, permanently changing the structure of Indian governance from a two-tier to a three-tier system with union, state and panchayat / nagar palikas (rural / urban local agencies). The architecture for a decentralized system of governance was put firmly in place, and India made its first strides towards empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and municipal governments to handle their own affairs.

In the last two decades, our states have had differing levels of success in transferring funds, functions and functionaries down to local governance agencies for effective implementation of programs on the ground.

“

My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbors for its own vital wants, yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity.

Mahatma Gandhi

”

One of the primary bottlenecks has been access to funds. A World Bank report measured the relative importance of local governments in 10 developing countries on: local expenditure's share of consolidated public sector expenditure, and local expenditure as a percentage of GDP.¹⁰ On both counts, India has the smallest share - 3% of expenditure and 0.75% of GDP. In contrast, local governments in China had the largest share - more than 51% of consolidated public expenditure and 10.8% of GDP. In OECD countries, local expenditure makes up 28% of public expenditure and 12.75% of GDP on average.¹¹

Without such devolution of funds, even with adequate functions and functionaries in place, PRIs would not be in a position to fulfill the needs of their communities.



Madhya Pradesh has made democratic decentralization central to its development and social service delivery strategy. It has greatly expanded access to education with a rights approach, linked to an Education Guarantee Scheme and decentralization of primary education. McCarten and Vyasulu (2004) find that between 1992/93 and 1998/99, children from the poorest 40 percent of households, classified by wealth-holding, achieved a major increase in access to schooling. The probability level for completing grade 5 increased by 21 percentage points in Madhya Pradesh versus 5 percentage points nationally. Madhya Pradesh used the district planning committee provision of the 74th amendment to de-concentrate government and pass decision-making powers to districts. It also empowered the gram sabha to carry out the functions of gram panchayats through numerous committees under the gram swaraj.

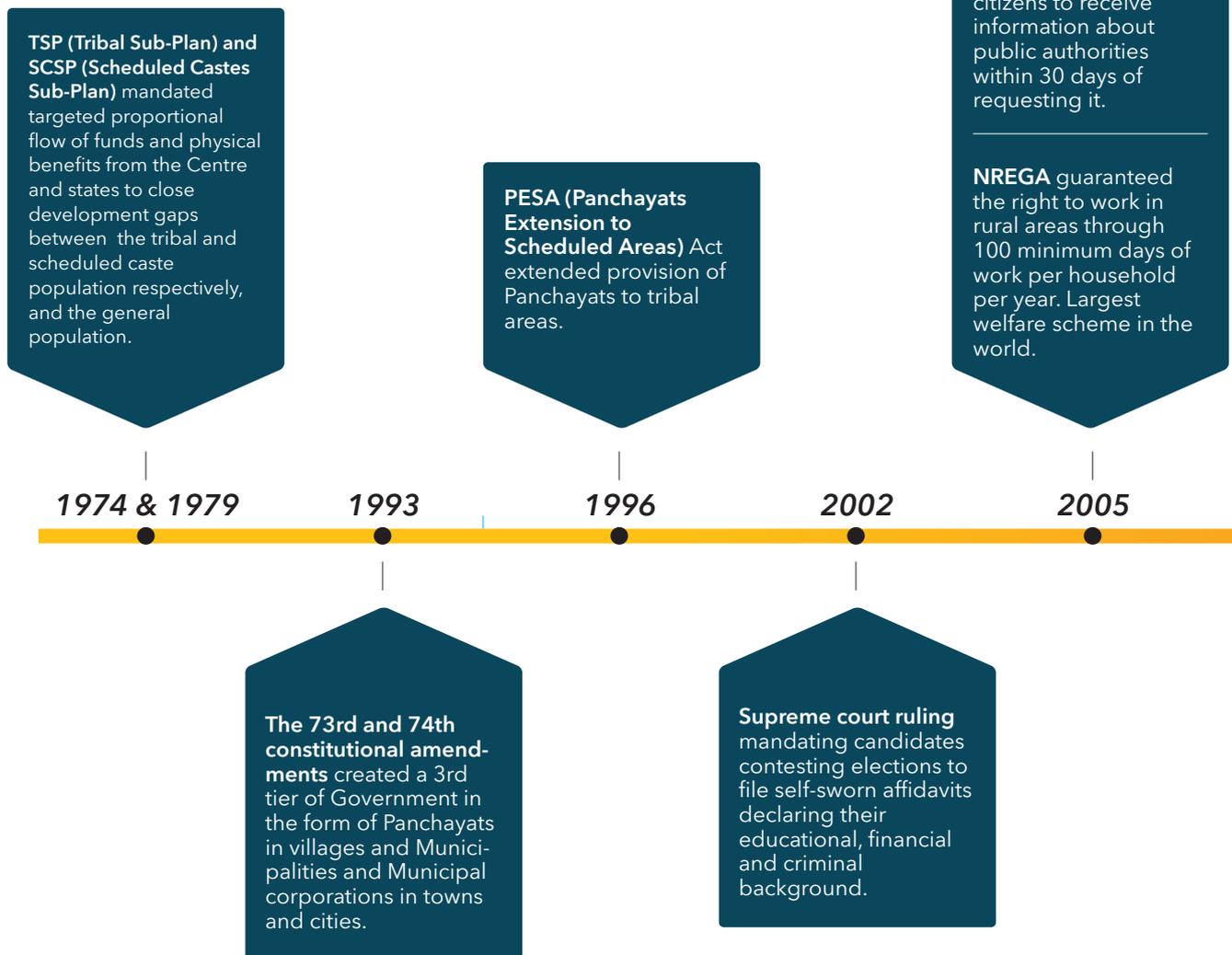
Economic and Political Weekly, 25 June 2005

Policy Design and Implementation

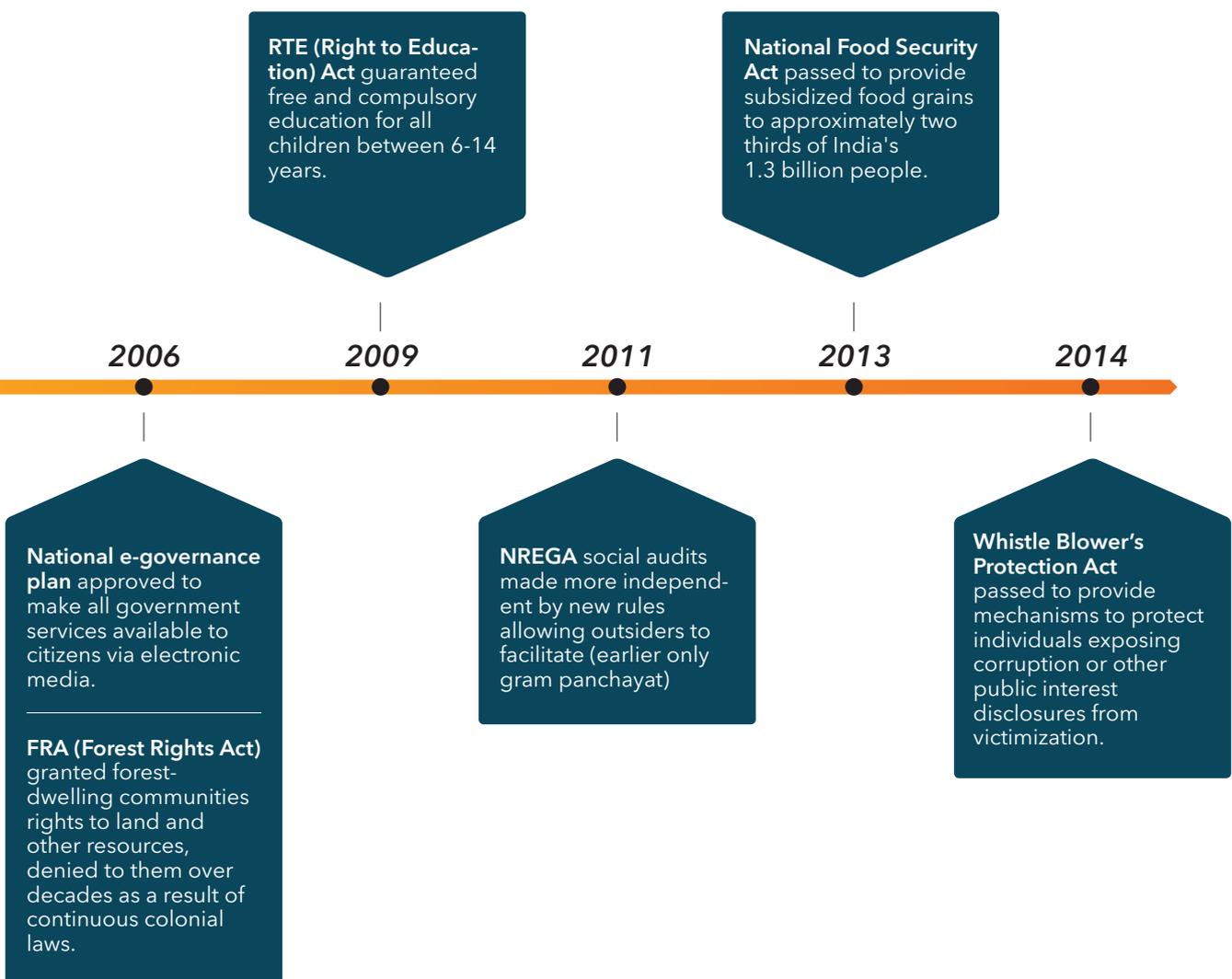
For efficient implementation of centrally-sponsored schemes (CSSs), which are at the core of the government's poverty reduction efforts, these bottlenecks need to be resolved. These schemes include wage and employment guarantee programs such as NREGA, universal elementary education programs such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and even the public distribution system for food.

CSSs account for the largest number of specific-purpose grants extended by the government to the states. As of 2013-14, the Centre had allocated over INR 2,00,000 crores for 156 such schemes.¹² Some of these have been subsequently merged, resulting in 66 CSSs at last count. Given the size and diversity of the population across states, and the degree of variation in how these schemes could create impact, the implementation of CSSs becomes a massive exercise undertaken by state governments every year.

Key governance and policy milestones in India



One of the challenges posed by the CSSs is the fact that the system exacerbates the issue of 'tied funds' from the Centre to the states. While delivery of essential services - health, education, sanitation or urban infrastructure - is largely the job of state governments, these are also areas addressed by the Centre through the CSSs. And while central funding to states has proved to be a boon as well as a necessity for states to implement programs, when tied to a CSS, it also has the potential to compromise the state's autonomy and efficacy. For example, if the Centre puts up 70% of the funds for a scheme, the state is required to contribute the remaining 30% - forcing it to divert its own resources towards a program that may have little regard for local conditions, and over which the state has little control.¹³



Urban Pressures: Migration and Infrastructure

While India's geography is largely rural, the country is also urbanizing at a rapid rate on the back of accelerated privatization, a surging service economy and infrastructure growth, which have expanded job opportunities, disposable incomes and ultimately aspirations. Between Census 2001 and 2011, India's urban population grew from 280 million to 375 million, while the number of census towns grew from 5,000 to close to 8,000.

According to an expert committee constituted by the Ministry of Urban Development, our cities will need over INR 50 lakh crore to meet their infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. During 2007-2008, Urban Local Body revenues were barely INR 50,000 crore across the country, accounting for less than 1% of GDP, compared to over 6% in South Africa and over 7% in Brazil, two comparable developing countries.¹⁴

The quality of life issues faced by urban citizens - garbage, traffic, pollution, sanitation - are symptoms of deep-rooted problems within our city-systems. Addressing those problems would need an amalgam of top-down policy changes and bottom-up solutions. Take India's waste management problem as an example - we have complications at the collection stage, transfer stage and disposal stage - each comes with its own requirement for human resources, accountability and inter-agency coordination. However, none of India's premier educational institutions have had urban planning as a core subject until 2002 - which partly explains our significant deficits in the know-how and capacity needed to plug these gaps.

“

Today, a private sector company that employs 200-300 people will have at least two HR specialists. The government, despite being the largest employer in the country, has none... our central government... employs 120-130 people per 1,00,000 of the population, whereas in the US the comparable figure is around 800.

*Shailesh Gandhi,
RTI activist, former Central Information Commissioner*

”

Janaagraha has executed two world-class pilot roads in Bangalore under its Tender S.U.R.E. program. The program involves the preparation of standards and plans for projects to renovate and redesign roads, aimed towards vastly improving their usability for both motorists and pedestrians. The Karnataka government has now allocated INR 500 crore to execute 45 roads in Bangalore, according to design standards prepared by Tender S.U.R.E.





4) REGULATORY QUALITY

The ability of government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.

Regulatory quality is the only WGI where India has shown a marginal improvement. The objective of regulatory reforms is to remove unnecessary obstacles to competition, innovation and growth, while ensuring that important social objectives are efficiently served.

In a report by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, India recently topped the list of the most overregulated countries in the world. Repealing laws that are identified as unnecessary in the modern context is an urgent priority.¹⁵

“

Labour reform is vital, as is the reform of environmental laws, including the set of Forest Acts. These have to be adapted to enable India to break the cycle of poverty, reminding ourselves that in the ultimate analysis, abysmal poverty is the primary cause of environmental degradation. Although Indians are respected the world over for their entrepreneurial spirit, the business environment in India has sapped their energy and demotivated most.

*Harish Salve,
Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India*

”



Inspired by the fundamental vision of creating an effective legal framework for an equitably growing and humane India, the **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy** launched a Briefing Book for the new government, identifying 25 reforms that ought to figure prominently on the agenda, with specific emphasis on the legal changes necessary to effectuate them. Four broad reform actions are suggested: Renew basic institutions - revitalize institutions fundamental to democracy and economic growth; Clear the thorns – deregulate overregulated sectors with overlapping rules; Regulate the new India – update laws and provide legal frameworks to confront new challenges; and Build a possible India – assert India’s place in the world as a model constitutional democracy.



5) RULE OF LAW

The extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, police and courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.

Designing and enforcing just laws is the basis of a fair society, providing the necessary checks and balances to protect the weak against the strong.¹⁶ While India's Constitution enshrines a democratic legal framework, many laws, particularly those affecting individual rights and protections, are poorly enforced.



Every element of India's rule of law supply chain – including the legislators who draft laws, and the police, prosecutors and courts that enforce them – is problematic. Indeed, the supply chain, never strong to begin with, has become deeply broken, threatening not only the rule of law but a belief in the value of law itself.

*Devesh Kapur and Milan Vaishnav,
Academicians and Authors*



For instance, India ranked 96 on 'order and security' out of 97 countries according to 2012 World Justice Project data – a testimony to poor procedural effectiveness. "The size of the gap between the law on the books and its access by and application to all levels of a society is one crucial indicator of a country's progress on the rule of law continuum". By this measure, India – with many rule of law principles still at a nascent stage of development – while not outside the purview of restructuring, is still in the process of building itself up.¹⁷

India ranked 186 among 189 countries on "enforcing contracts" by the World Bank in its 2014 Doing Business report.

Moving on to those whose role it is to interpret and uphold the laws, India's legal executive agencies – the police and prosecutors – have also become politicized and starved of resources, infrastructure and leadership.¹⁸ The already limited force is further burdened with duties beyond ensuring the security of the general public – for instance, more than half of Delhi police's headcount is tied up in guarding either VIPs or government offices.¹⁹

While the Indian judiciary – including the Supreme Court – has on several occasions stepped in to take on and fast-track a range of issues that have needed legal intervention, the reality is also that India's courts face severe challenges, ranging from vacancies to choking backlogs.

India has only 125 police officers for every 100,000 population against the 230 prescribed by the UN.

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The Indian judiciary would take 320 years to clear the backlog of 31.28 million cases pending in various courts, including the High Courts, in the country.

*Justice V V Rao,
Andhra Pradesh High Court*

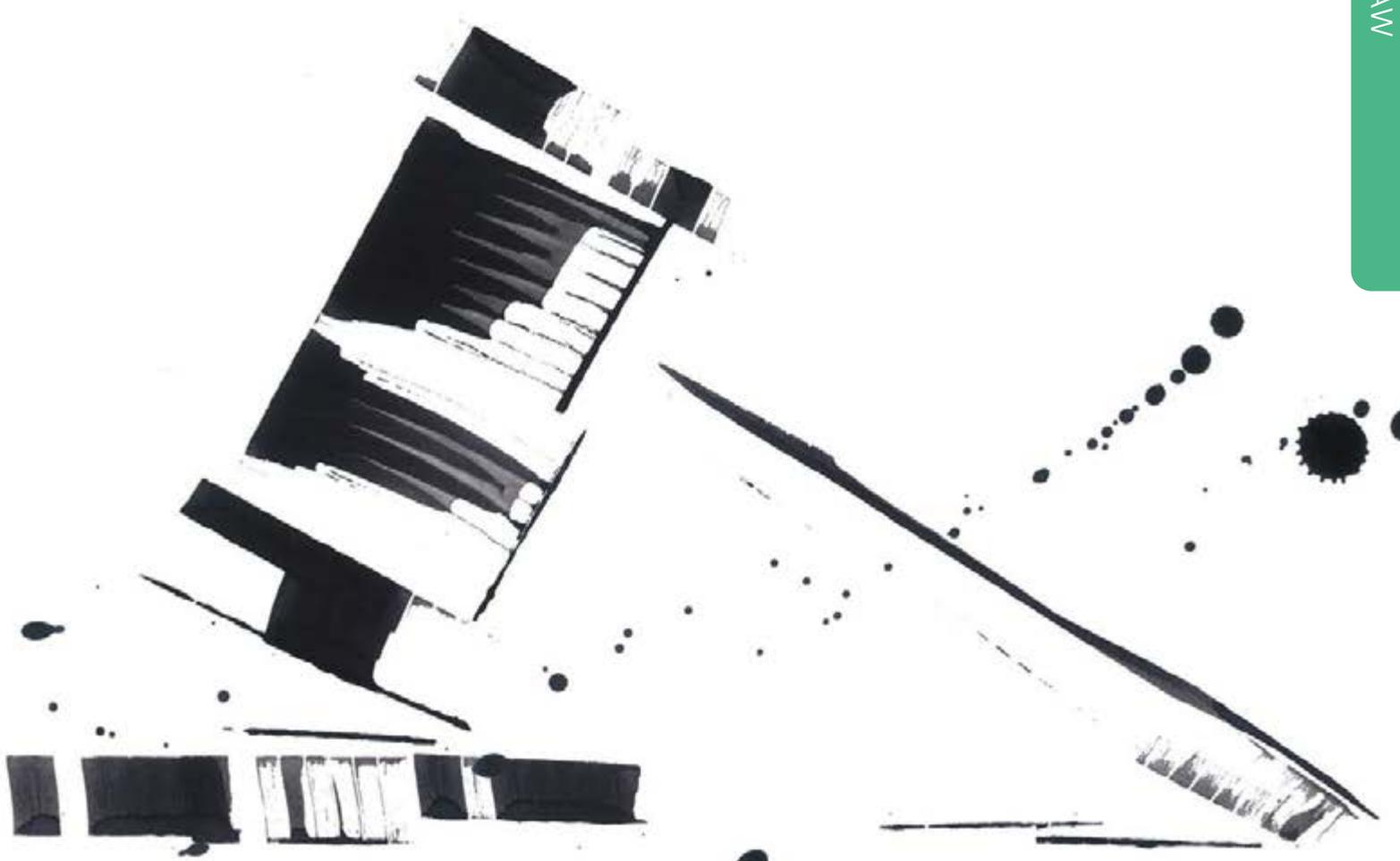
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This disquieting state of affairs is further exacerbated by the fact that over the past few elections, nearly a third of state and national legislators - the very representatives charged with writing our laws - faced criminal charges at the time of their election.²⁰

Despite all these challenges, the work of public interest and human rights lawyers has shown that the law can and does provide a potent vehicle to attack social and economic inequities and create change at a fundamental level.



Founded in 1989, **Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)** is one of the foremost organizations in the country working on access to justice. Over the years, HRLN has provided legal aid to thousands of individuals across the country, who would otherwise not have access to the Indian justice system due to socio-economic barriers. Their work extends to training in human rights law, legal reform, monitoring and investigation into human rights abuse and 'know-your-rights publications'.





6) CONTROL OF CORRUPTION

Capturing perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.

In 2011-12, India showed its most effusive outpouring of support on the streets, backing an anti-corruption movement led by social activist Anna Hazare. The merits and demerits of the outcome of the agitation aside, the sheer volume of the movement signaled a unanimous desire to uproot corruption from the country.

So what allows corruption to thrive? Among the gamut of answers, the one that stands out for India is the lack of accountability, stemming from poorly developed systems for shining light upon the activities of government and business.

In 2014, India ranked 85 out of 175 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.²¹ The Index respondents regarded virtually all of India's key institutions, both private and public sector, as being corrupt or extremely corrupt. At the top of the list were political parties (86%), police (75%) and public officials/civil servants (65%) as well as the parliament/legislature (65%).²²

A study by Ernst and Young and FICCI showed that between just October 2011 and September 2012, India lost INR 36,400 crore due to corruption.

This year, we have done somewhat better on this index. India is now ranked 85, improving nine places over last year. It also now ranks better than all its South Asian neighbors except Bhutan.



Following years of ground work, a handful of new civil rights tools, notably the RTI Act and social audits, have begun - in small steps - the reengineering of India's governance architecture into a more transparent and accountable set-up that serves - not rules - its people. The vigilant citizen can finally become an enabler of good governance.



lpaidabribe.com is a platform created by **Janaagraha** for online reporting of bribes from across India. It archives when, where, and by whom the bribe was solicited as well as the amount. It allows people to share their stories as well as look for help in resolving their grievances by sharing the incidents with the media and government officials. At last count, 27,953 reports had been filed from 714 cities amounting to INR 225.48 crore.

The Role of the Non-Profit

It is overwhelming to even acknowledge the scale of India's governance issues. Fortunately, a host of non-profit organizations and some social businesses have risen to the challenge, working to create change from inside and outside the system. In some cases, their unparalleled ability to connect and build bonds of trust with communities has given them a position of influence with both citizens and the State, and therefore a strong chance at brokering 'good governance'. In others, the strength of their knowledge and expertise has made them worthy partners for decision-makers in government.

For several decades now, non-profit organizations have played a multiplicity of roles - advocate, enabler and implementer. Their approaches have included:

- Partnering often resource-constrained governments and fostering their ability to deliver good governance.
- Ensuring that the right candidates are elected, through widespread voter education and awareness.
- Bridging the gap between laws, policies and schemes on paper and their implementation on the ground.

Despite their diverse range of approaches, what these organizations have in common is a desire for an India whose citizens can realize their full potential. The coming of the information age; a framework for local governance in place; the tools to exercise accountability available; and a rapidly expanding citizen voice - have together created an unprecedented environment conducive to good governance. India stands at the cusp of a transition from electorate to citizenship.

“

A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

Jawaharlal Nehru

”

CHAPTER 1: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The meaning of the term 'governance' has evolved from being the sole domain of the government to being the responsibility of three broad stakeholders - market, State and civil society. The complex interplay of its problems and stakeholders needs a simultaneous strengthening of - and collaboration between - all three pillars of democracy: legislature, executive and judiciary.
- This report uses the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs) developed by the World Bank and Brookings Institute to evaluate India's governance status. The framework measures governance across six primary dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.
- Despite an increasingly involved civil society, as well as active legislation and key governance-related policy milestones, especially over the last decade, India's performance on the WGIs highlights gaps with respect to all actors involved.

Voice and accountability

Low levels of voter participation and uninformed voting behaviors are hampering the effectiveness of elections as a powerful democratic tool. Diminishing media independence is increasing the risk of reporting bias, as well as of under-reporting of relevant local and developmental issues.

Political stability

India ranks lowest on this parameter; a big factor is the persistent threat of terror and insurgency in various parts of the country.

Government effectiveness

Our government structures are still constrained by the legacy of the British system of administration, which focused on revenue generation rather than development. Our local governments remain weak because of inadequate decentralization of funds, functions and functionaries from the Centre to state governments and further to local governments.

Regulatory quality

We are one of the most overregulated countries in the world - which is an important reason why India ranks 142 among 189 countries on the World Bank's 2014 'ease of doing business' index.

Rule of law

A wide gap persists between the law on the books and its application on the ground. The efficacy of the police and judiciary is also impeded by a resource crunch, severe backlogs and structural challenges.

Control of corruption

In 2014, India ranked 85 out of 175 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.

- Dasra's research yielded numerous impactful organizations working with citizens, lawmakers, implementing agencies and the media to drive policy and law reform, improve service delivery, and actively engage citizens in the democratic process.
- Given India's significant development challenges - whether in relation to poverty, food security, education, health, sanitation, gender equity or livelihoods - investing to strengthen governance is imperative to achieve development goals. By way of evidence, for example, when the WGI scores improve by one standard deviation, infant mortality declines by 2/3rds and incomes rise about three-fold in the long term.

STORIES *of* IMPACT

How non-profit organizations have been playing a role in improving governance in India

1)

Power to citizens. 'Informed voting' made possible.

As voters, India's citizens have operated in a black hole of information about political parties and candidates - rendering inadvertent authority to these otherwise 'public' entities. The relentless efforts of one non-profit organization, **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)**, over fifteen years, have paved the way for a fundamental transformation in how the people of India go about choosing their elected representatives.

ADR's Public Interest Litigations (PILs), RTI petitions, and public awareness campaigns have resulted in some momentous judgments.

In 2002-2003, two Supreme Court judgments made it mandatory for candidates contesting elections to file affidavits declaring their educational qualifications, assets and even criminal records. In 2008, the Central Information Commission (CIC) made available, publicly, income tax returns of political parties, followed by another landmark judgment in 2013 that has brought 6 national political parties under the ambit of the RTI Act as 'public authorities'. A Supreme Court ruling in 2013 also debars sitting MPs and MLAs from holding office upon being convicted in a Court of Law.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Some key themes for strengthening governance

Governance is an issue that cuts across nearly the entire spectrum of government and non-government delivery systems, encompassing all sectors within the socio-economic, legal and political arenas of society.

Based on evidence from both India and across the world, and insights from over 30 expert consultations, Dasra has identified four key themes that stakeholders must focus on integrating into the governance ecosystem, to achieve the scale of transformation needed for a governance leap in India.



1) Develop Media As A Key Stakeholder



2) Strengthen Local Governance



4) Leverage Technology



3) Advance Women-Centered Leadership

Each of the following sections provides insight into what these themes entail, critical success factors, and case studies illustrating impact on governance from around the world.

		Key Governance Themes			
		Develop Media As A Key Stakeholder	Strengthen Local Governance	Advance Women-Centered Leadership	Leverage Technology
WIGs	Voice and accountability	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Political stability				
	Government effectiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Regulatory quality	✓	✓	✓	
	Rule of law	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Control of corruption	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key themes mapped to the corresponding Worldwide Governance Indicators (WIGs) which will be influenced as a result of work in these areas.

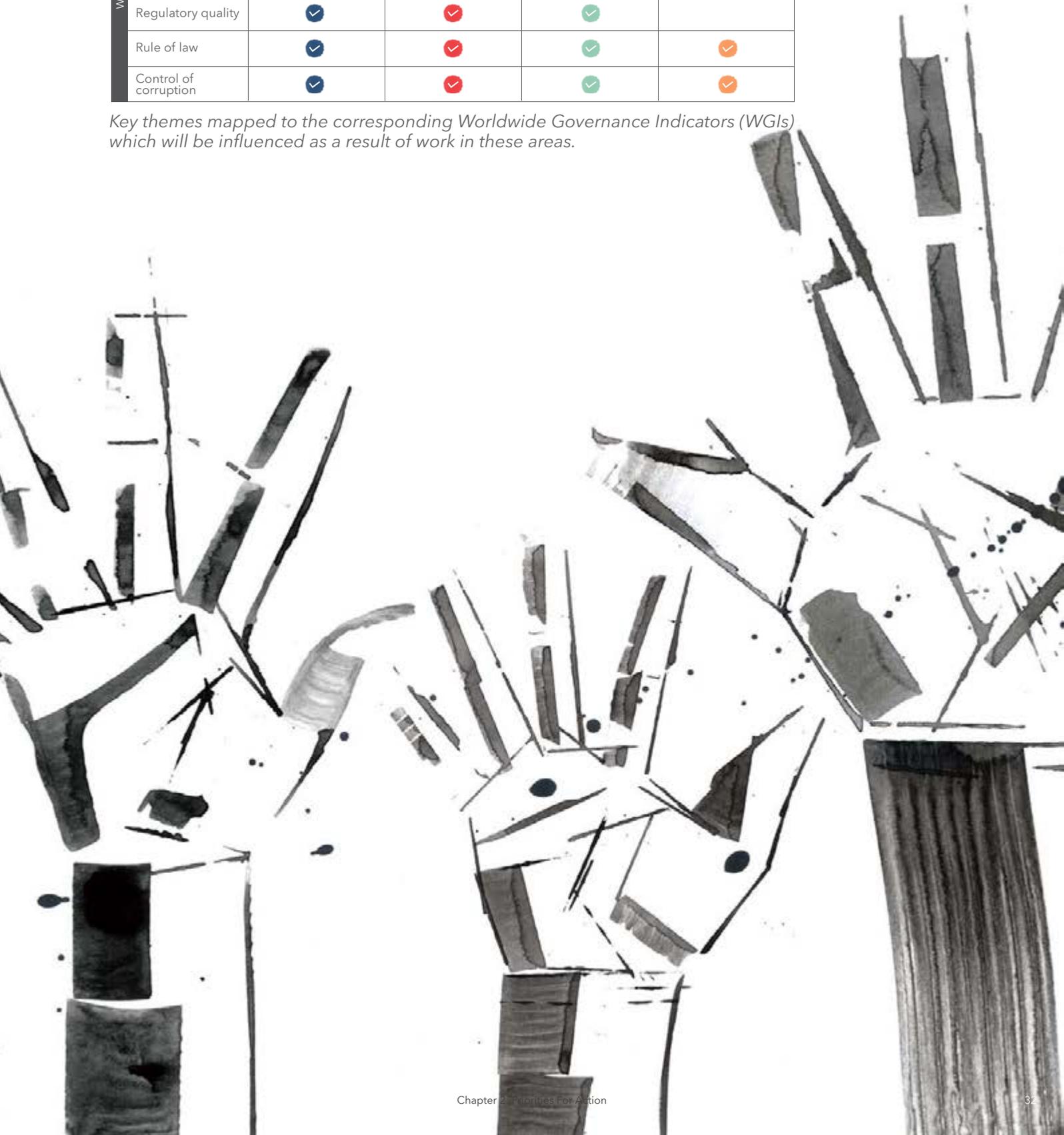




Photo credit: Khabar Lahariya



1) Develop Media As A Key Stakeholder

Media is often called the fourth pillar of democracy because of its vital role in disseminating knowledge, spotlighting common-interest issues, and shaping public opinion – sometimes even public value systems. It enables citizens to better understand local, regional and national issues, and allows critical public scrutiny of the government’s response to and performance on these. On the other hand, elected leaders also require accurate information about public concerns to be responsive to development challenges and thus improve policy outcomes.²³

However, for the media to realize this potential, independence, wide-spread access and a plurality of voices and perspectives are critical success factors.

Freedom of the media is one of the key tenets of democracy that drives government transparency and accountability.²⁴ High levels of media freedom are associated with low levels of corruption, even when controlling for other important determinants of corruption.²⁵ In democracies like ours, media freedom is also significantly related to increased public spending, particularly on key sectors such as health and education, and overall improved delivery of public services.^{26,27}

“

Countries where much of the public has access to the free press usually have greater political stability, rule of law, government efficiency... regulatory quality, and the least corruption.

*Pippa Norris,
Professor at the Harvard Kennedy School*

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Equally important is media access for the majority of the population. For instance, a World Bank quoted study found that in regions where the media is stronger and more accessible, informed citizens can match their policy preferences more accurately against the political choices available in an election – and are thus – by casting their vote – better able to hold the government to account for its actions.²⁸

In furthering democratic governance and creating a vibrant public sphere, an independent media plays the complementary roles of watchdog, agenda-setter and gatekeeper.

“

When information is out there, it is harder to cheat.

*Abhinandan Sekhri,
Journalist*

”

As a **watchdog**, the media guards public interest by exposing any malpractice or corruption in government, thus driving accountability and making bad governance harder to get away with.

In 1995, only a fifth of the money allocated to schools in Uganda actually made it to the schools. The government of Uganda initiated a media campaign to enable schools and parents to monitor the handling of school grants by local governments. By 2001, 80% of the allocated funds were spent on the schools.

A study of 16 Indian states found that Indian elected officials are more responsive to problems in states where newspapers are more active. In particular, a 1% increase in newspaper circulation brought a 2.4% increase in public food distribution and a 5.5% increase in calamity relief expenditure.

'Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform', World Bank

As an **agenda-setter**, the media leverages its influence and reach to create awareness and draw public attention to pervasive and often under-reported developmental challenges. This gives voice to the neglected and creates an imperative for a stronger government response to these public concerns.

Rajasthan Patrika: From information to change

"Many, many public interest reports of the *Patrika* (a widely circulated hyper-local newspaper) are converted into PILs (Public Interest Litigation) by the court itself, after judges read (the story in the newspaper)," said G S Bapna, advocate-general of Rajasthan.

For instance, in 2003, the editor-in-chief wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, based on a running campaign in the *Patrika*, to highlight the fact that Jaipur's urban planning norms were being constantly changed under political pressure. Judges from the Court converted the letter to a legal case. The Court recently ordered that changes to Jaipur's master plan require a gap of five years, and each change has to be justified in court.

"Hindi paper finds success going hyper local"; The New York Times, 4 July 2013



As **gate-keepers**, the media brings plurality and diversity in voices and perspectives presented - thus enriching the public discourse and advancing more equitable and inclusive governance.

In most parts of the country, radio remains the main source of news and entertainment. The ability to broadcast locally relevant news and information in local languages is especially important in a multi-linguistic, multi-religious country like India, which has more than 4,000 castes, tribes and nomadic communities. A study, quoted by the World Bank, on community radio in India reported improved participation, with powerful examples of marginalized groups sharing issues connected to their health and social well-being.²⁹ It also presented cases of deliberation, with community radio allowing hyper-local groups to discuss problems and develop solutions that they could enact themselves or pressure the authorities to implement.

'Nirbhaya' - the media's role in influencing legal reform

The media's focused coverage on the gruesome rape and eventual death of the 23-year-old physiotherapy student - whom it christened 'Nirbhaya'- on December 16, 2012, in Delhi, catalyzed a massive public outcry, pressuring the government to strengthen sexual assault laws. In less than a week, the government appointed a judicial committee headed by J S Verma, a former Chief Justice of India, to submit a report, within 30 days, to suggest tougher amendments to criminal laws. As a result, just over three months after the incident, on 21 March, 2013, the government enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, which broadens the definition of rape, increases protection for rape victims and makes punishments harsher.

'On rape, from silence to justice', The Hindu, 15 June 2013





STRENGTHEN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

An open panchayat in progress in the village Sonayeecha in Uttar Pradesh.
Photo credit: Comeback India



2) STRENGTHEN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

“

In the long run, every government is the exact symbol of its people, with their wisdom and un-wisdom; we have to say, like people, like government.

*Thomas Carlyle,
Scottish philosopher³⁰*

”

Governance is most tangibly and practically experienced every day at the local level - in the village, neighborhood or city - where citizens live out their lives and interact with government and public service delivery systems that are crucial to their well-being.

India has one of the oldest traditions of strong local self-governance, with local government more extensively in operation in India than anywhere else in the world during the pre-Mughal era.³¹ Subsequent wars and most notably British colonial rule weakened India's local governance by centralizing power - until in 1993, the landmark 73rd and 74th amendments created a system of constitutionally mandated local democratic institutions at the rural and urban levels.

Strengthening local governance is at the heart of people's voice being heard; it is an impetus for greater local accountability and responsiveness.

Local governance is defined as the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. Thus, it encompasses:

- *The direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as*
- *The roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighborhood associations - in pursuing collective action, by defining the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services.*

World Bank

This requires strengthening local governments, i.e., Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies, through appropriate decentralization of resources, tasks and decision-making powers from the Centre to local governments. As Dasra found reiterated in its research, equally important is evolving a culture that promotes citizens' participation in planning and development processes that affect them - beyond the act of casting a vote every few years.

A World Bank study found that decentralization is improving the performance of Ethiopia's public education and health services, mainly through decentralized expenditures with greater local control. The study estimated that one incremental dollar of local expenditure led to a 3.6% increase in the net enrollment rate, or an 11.3% increase in deliveries by skilled birth attendants.³²

Citizen participation in Porto Alegre, Brazil: Improving access to and quality of public welfare amenities



As a result of a participatory budgeting process that began in Brazil in 1989, between 1989 and 1996:

- The number of households with access to water services rose from 80% to 98%.
- The percentage of the population served by the municipal sewerage system rose from 46% to 85%.
- The number of children enrolled in public schools doubled.
- In the poorer neighborhoods, 30 km of roads were paved annually since 1989.
- Because of transparency affecting the motivation to pay taxes, revenue increased by nearly 50%.

The number of citizens involved in Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting process reached 40,000 per year in less than a decade. The success of people's participation in controlling the use of public welfare funds in Porto Alegre has inspired over 140 municipalities in Brazil to follow suit.

Economic and Political Weekly, 25 June 2005

Proximity of citizens to the decision-making process and a larger space for the citizen voice serve to make programs and plans more responsive, equitable and relevant to local needs - thus also positively influencing policy-level outcomes.

For instance, decentralization in Bolivia shifted a significant portion of municipal public investment out of infrastructure and industry (~65% of public investment), and into primary social services such as education and water & sanitation (~79% of municipal investment) in response to local priorities that were quite markedly different from those of the central government. Evidence shows improved education outcomes, among others, as a result.³³

This proximity and more direct engagement with local authorities also ensure that they are much more accountable to their constituents and experience fewer incentives and opportunities for the abuse of power.

“

The single most important form of checks and balances in any society is the dispersal, or fragmentation, of political power. Without question, the creation of strong regional and local governments is critical to that development.

UNDP

”

Importantly, empowered and participative local governments are more efficient service providers and better at resource allocation and utilization because they can take quicker decisions and be more flexible.

A study of education costs in Canada concluded that local control regimes were more successful in controlling overhead costs than provincial ones.³⁴ Another cross-country econometric analysis by the World Bank showed that decentralization leads to lower unit administration costs for road services.^{35 36}

Moreover, Dasra's field research revealed that competition between local governments encourages innovation and continuous improvement.^{37 38 39}



Kerala: A determined effort at democratic decentralization

Following the Panchayati Raj Act (1993), the Kerala government launched the "People's campaign for decentralized planning" in 1996.

All 1,214 local governments in Kerala - municipalities and the three rural tiers: district, block, and gram panchayats - were given new functions and decision making powers, along with discretionary budgeting authority over 35-40% of the state's development expenditures. According to a World Bank report, this represents the greatest degree of local expenditure autonomy in India, and second only to Colombia in the developing world.

Among its successes are watershed master plans prepared by 600 village panchayats in the state to improve the quality of implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), which have been accepted as a national model.

While it may not be possible to credit this process of decentralization alone for Kerala's performance, the state has been a frontrunner in achieving many of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and has done exceptionally well on social indicators, with the highest literacy rate (94% against national average of 74%), life expectancy (75.8 years - 10 years more than national average), sex ratio (1,084 females for every 1,000 males) and amongst the lowest infant mortality (12 deaths per 1,000 live births) and maternal mortality (66 deaths per 100,000 live births) rates in India.

"Building Local Democracy: Evaluating the Impact of Decentralization in Kerala, India", Patrick, H., Harilal, K.N., and Chaudhari, S. (2007)





A women-led village council prepares a "social map" of the local community. Photo credit: Naimul Haq



3) Advance Women-Centered Leadership

“

We want deeper sincerity of motive, a greater courage in speech and earnestness in action.

*Sarojini Naidu,
Indian independence activist and poet*

”

India ranked 113 among 135 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, 2011.⁴⁰ While on average, only 20% of parliamentarians in those countries is a woman, in India, this under-representation is an even more dismal 11%.^{41 42}

The absence of the female voice from structures of governance inevitably means that national, regional and local priorities - i.e. how resources are allocated - are defined without meaningful input from women, whose life experience gives them a different awareness of the community's needs, concerns and interests from that of men.⁴³

Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women.

Excerpt from 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation

Towards greater gender diversity

There is compelling evidence to show that men and women have different policy preferences - thus lending credence to the need for more equal representation across all three pillars of democracy: legislative, executive and judicial.⁴⁴

For example, a multi-country study showed that women are far more likely to spend family and community resources for improving health, education, nutrition, community infrastructure and the eradication of poverty, as opposed to spending them on the military, alcohol or gambling.^{45 46} They also tend to draw stronger attention to issues concerning the well-being of women and children,⁴⁷ as well as social issues such as domestic violence and alcoholism.

Several studies have shown that increasing female representation in the police force positively impacts the reporting and incidence of crime, particularly in the case of domestic violence and sexual assault.⁴⁸ In Canada for instance, in 1993, 8% of police officers were women, compared to 20% in 2013, during which time the crime rate fell by more than 40%.⁴⁹

Similarly, women's participation in the judiciary is important to establish a judicial system that is reflective of the society whose laws it interprets. Gender diversity allows for a more balanced and impartial perspective, and people are more likely to put their trust in courts that represent all of the individuals that constitute a society.⁵⁰

There is also a large body of evidence that points to a worldwide gender difference in tolerance for corruption, with women found less likely to bribe, be bribed or condone such behavior.^{51 52}

A World Bank study of 150 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia came to the conclusion that women in government are more trustworthy and less prone to corruption than men.

Source: "Are Women Really the Fairer Sex? Corruption and Women in Government", World Bank Working Paper Series No. 4 (1999)

A case for reservation

Women in India make up a mere 3% of legislative, management and senior official positions.⁵³ Given the clear imperative for women's participation and the hitherto poor success in this area, there has been a push towards reservation for elected women representatives around the world. From Nepal to Costa Rica, Rwanda to Spain, wherever quotas have been used to boost the number of women legislators, it has resulted in the passing of progressive laws on land rights, violence against women, health care and employment.⁵⁴

In India, a 1993 constitutional amendment established quotas to reserve for women 33% (increased to 50% in 2009) of seats and leadership positions in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). A World Bank study credited this change for increasing the provision of clean water, sanitation, schools and other public goods in villages, and for lower levels of corruption.⁵⁵

A UNICEF study found that in villages reserved for women Panchayat leaders (sarpanch) - there are more public goods, of an equal or higher quality than in unreserved villages; villagers are less likely to pay bribes; rates of immunization for children under five are higher, attendance at childcare centers is better, and children's health improves due to higher investments in clean drinking water; health care providers are less likely to be absent from work in health facilities; and girls' attendance at school improves.⁵⁶

Incidentally, having women local elected representatives is also beginning to transform gender relations and challenge rigid traditional patriarchal attitudes at the village level. Old prejudices are dissolving, and new partnerships between women and men are developing.⁵⁷

Sustaining momentum

Encouraging India's nearly 1.5 million elected women representatives to become a truly powerful force for change will require a keen understanding of their circumstances and needs. As Dasra's research highlighted, once elected, women need skills - to listen, speak, negotiate, collaborate and realize the potential of their position.⁵⁸ They need training and support to understand their roles and powers, gain confidence in their abilities, and effectively lead local governance.⁵⁹





The story of Fundibai Meda, Sarpanch

Gram Panchayat: Sarangi, Block: Petlavad, District: Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh

Year of election: 2010 and 2005 for the post of sarpanch, 2001 for the post of Ward Member

Fundibai has been associated with the Panchayat for the past 12 years. In 2005, she was elected sarpanch from a seat reserved for adivasi women. She set to work despite the challenges of a feudal set-up, understanding Panchayat functioning, funding and administration for the first time.

She focused on inclusion of the poor and marginalized in her village. She ensured that the elderly and widows got their pensions without delay, and that all laborers got their wages on time. She accessed MGNREGS funds and implemented it in the dry season to prevent migration. She successfully took up road construction and repair, digging of new wells, monitoring of anganwadi centers, schools and ration shops.

Re-elected sarpanch in 2010 by 170 votes against four male candidates, Fundibai now focuses on women's empowerment and creating Self Help Groups. She has also made provisions for safe drinking water in her Panchayat by installing a double filter plant at a cost of INR 0.50 Crore.

'Claiming rights, bringing change' The Hunger Project





LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

Photo credit: Kuntal Kumar Roy



4) LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

“

The number one benefit of information technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential.

*Steve Ballmer,
Former CEO of Microsoft*

”

In a country like India, with a 1.3 billion population and an 814 million electorate, scale is critical. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can be a powerful enabler of good governance and are perhaps the most effective and elegant means to achieve scale at speed.

E-governance is the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of:

- *Improving information and service delivery,*
- *Encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and*
- *Making government more accountable, transparent and effective.*

E-governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services.

UNESCO definition

India is well placed to reap the fruits of technology not in the distant future but now. With a 63% mobile phone penetration⁶⁰ - 30% of the monthly increase coming from rural India⁶¹ - and internet penetration growing at 30% year on year⁶², ICTs clearly present a tremendous opportunity to make good governance accessible to everyone in the country. Further, given our huge mobile phone user base, m-governance - based on mobile or wireless technologies, and a sub-domain of e-governance - can expand the reach of e-governance by making public information and governance services available "anytime, anywhere" to citizens and officials.⁶³

Dasra's research shows that on the supply side, ICTs bring greater efficiency to government systems and interactions through IT-upgraded back-end functions covering, among other things, administrative efficiency, expenditure and revenue management.

As an example, studies from India found that utilization of NREGA funds increased by 25% once payment reliability was improved through e-payment initiatives.⁶⁴ Reliable e-payments also build user trust and increase utilization of government services, thereby expanding public service reach.⁶⁵

The e-seva project in Andhra Pradesh, India

This scheme provides more than 100 services, ranging from utility bill payment to motor vehicle registration. E-Seva was launched with 43 service centers in Hyderabad city, then expanded to 213 towns and later rural areas. E-Seva completes over 1.6 million transactions per month in Hyderabad alone.

"New ICTs for Development", Governance and Social Development Research Centre, 2010

ICTs also have a big role to play in creating a culture of transparency, which enhances accountability through more readily accessible information.

E-procurement systems, which have been used in Chile, Brazil and Indonesia, publish public sector purchasing information online, and require online and open bidding. The system provides a check against corrupt purchasing practices by allowing citizens to monitor public interest projects.⁶⁶

In June 2013, the government of Kerala state in India, launched an Android mobile application that serves as a 24*7 Service Delivery Platform and provides information on the state government's 90-odd departments.⁶⁷

Information-sharing for better coordination, analysis and monitoring also positively influences policy making and public service delivery.⁶⁸ ICTs offer an opportunity to revolutionize public service management by capturing information efficiently in shared databases accessible to all government agencies (such as a national database of electronic and biometric identification of citizens).⁶⁹

The Bhoomi Electronic Land Record System in Karnataka: Transparent and convenient service delivery

The Bhoomi project has been supported by the National Informatics Centre of India, computerizing 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the state of Karnataka.

The system is estimated to have saved 7 million farmers 1.32 million working days in waiting time and `806 million in bribes to local officials in its first few years. Under the old system officials, asked for bribes in roughly half of all cases - under the new system only 1% report having to pay bribes.

'Making services work for the poor', World Bank, 2004; 'New ICTs for development', Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, 2010

Crowdsourcing for good governance

A well-known example is **Ushahidi**, a web and mobile platform that collects and visualizes citizen-reported information on a map to increase public awareness and drive accountability. It was created in the aftermath of Kenya's disputed 2007 presidential election to enable the collection of eyewitness reports of violence sent in by email and text message, placing them on a Google map, and thus catalyzed effective crisis responses.

It has since been used to track elections in India and Mexico. Al-Jazeera used it to collect eyewitness reports during the 2008-09 Gaza war; and it was used to track pharmacy stock outs in June 2009 in several south-east African countries, among other applications.



Towards an active citizenry

Civil society often plays a key role in both advocating for greater 'openness' with respect to government data, as well as leveraging ICTs for widely disseminating information in order to maximize impact. For example, myneta.info is a Web and mobile-based service in India, which provides information on the academic, financial and criminal backgrounds of all Parliamentary and state Legislature candidates, compiled from affidavits submitted by them. As a result of this increased transparency, in the 2008 assembly elections, the percentage of candidates with pending criminal cases came down from 20% to 14% in the states of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Mizoram.^{70 71} Most significantly perhaps, ICTs help change existing power relations between the government and its people and promote collaboration and citizen participation, making services more responsive and better targeted.

In Malawi, participatory mapping using GIS (Geographic Information System) was used to correct a census, highlighting a major underestimate of around 35% in official figures for the rural population.⁷²

Interesting examples of platforms in India for greater citizen-government engagement include interactive Web-portals such as www.mygov.nic.in - an online collaboration initiative of the Government of India; virtual interactions through Google Hangouts and social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook; and online grievance redressal systems.



ICT for good governance: Gyandoot - a government-to-citizen, intranet-based service portal

Launched in 2000, the Gyandoot project aimed to establish community-owned, technologically innovative and sustainable information kiosks in the Dhar district - a poverty-stricken (60% BPL), tribal-dominated rural area of Madhya Pradesh. The network of 31 kiosks covers 311 Panchayats (village committees), over 600 villages and a population of around half a million (nearly 50% of the entire district).

Among the services offered at the kiosks is updated information on government grants given to village committees, information on government programs, a forum for school children to ask questions, and e-mail. This information makes the functioning of government more transparent. Agricultural produce rates, land records and grievance services (with a mandated 7-10 day turnaround) are the most popular features of the kiosks, accounting for 95% of usage. In the very first year, the 31 Gyandoot kiosks were used nearly 55,000 times.

In an evaluation of Gyandoot, 50% of users interviewed said that, through Gyandoot, they had quicker access to government officials than before, their requests were given due priority, follow-up on pending issues was initialized quickly, and that corruption levels had gone down.

"Use of ICT to improve parliamentary processes", World Bank; "Gyandoot Project: ICT Initiative in the district Of Dhar, Madhya Pradesh", IIM Ahmedabad and World Bank

CHAPTER 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Based on evidence from both, India and across the world, and insights from over 30 expert consultations, Dasra has identified four key themes that stakeholders must focus on integrating into the governance ecosystem, to achieve the scale of transformation needed for a governance leap in India.

- **Develop media as a key stakeholder**

By keeping governance standards in the public eye and creating an open sphere for public discourse, independent media plays the complementary roles of watchdog, agenda-setter and gate-keeper. High levels of media freedom are associated with low levels of corruption. Greater media freedom is also significantly related to increased public spending and consequently improved delivery of public services. For instance, a study of 16 Indian states showed that a 1% increase in newspaper circulation brought a 2.4% increase in public food distribution, and a 5.5% increase in calamity relief expenditures.

- **Strengthen local governance**

In 1993, the landmark 73rd and 74th Amendments created a system of constitutionally mandated local democratic institutions at the rural and urban levels. However, this calls for a strengthening of local governments, i.e. Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies, through decentralization of resources, tasks and decision making powers from the Centre to local governments. Expert opinion also reiterated the importance of greater citizen participation in planning and development processes for policies that directly affect them - beyond the act of casting a vote every few years. This is critical for resources to be used efficiently and to deliver the most locally-relevant services.

- **Advance women-centered leadership**

There is compelling evidence to show that men and women have different policy preferences - which underlines the need for more equal gender representation across all three pillars of democracy: legislature, executive and judiciary. Women in India make up a mere 3% of legislative, management and senior official positions. That is clearly a case for reservation for elected women representatives in the country. Once elected, they need training and support to understand their responsibilities and powers, gain confidence in their abilities, and effectively lead local governance improvements. Improving women's participation and leadership in governance structures has been shown to lower corruption, improve policy outcomes in health and education, and increase attention to social issues.

- **Leverage technology**

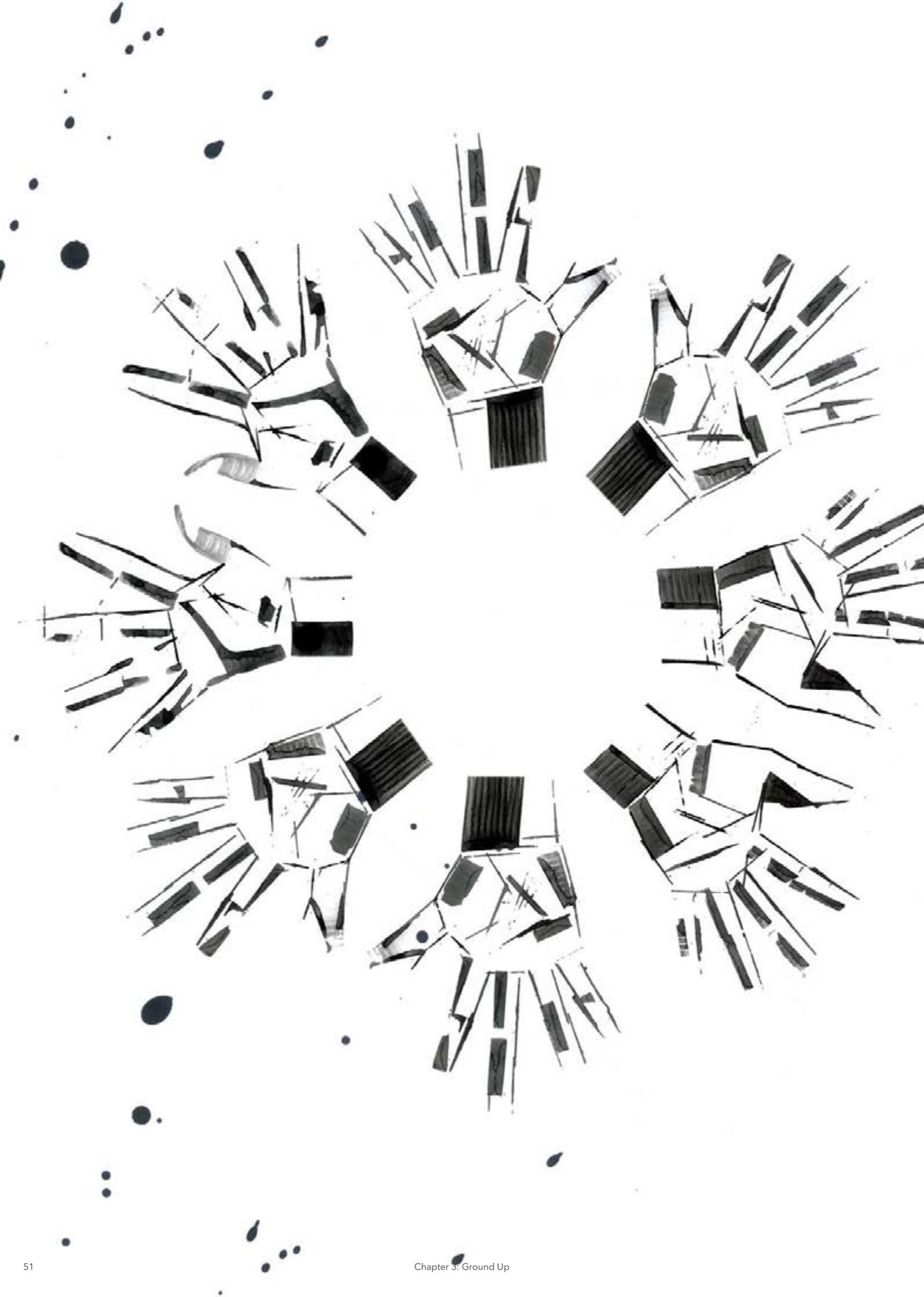
India is well placed to enjoy the fruits of technology not in the distant future but now. With a 63% mobile phone penetration - 30% of the monthly increase coming from rural India - and internet penetration growing at 30% year-on-year, ICTs clearly present a tremendous opportunity to enhance citizen engagement and vastly improve access to good governance across the country. Technology can bring greater efficiency to government systems and interactions, which should result in improved access to both, government services and public data, as well as enhanced dialogue with the government.

STORIES *of* IMPACT

2) It's legal - the 'right to know'.

In the early 1990s in Rajasthan, in response to irregularities in wage payments, non-profit organization **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan** (MKSS) began to demand that copies of all documents related to public works be made available to the people, for a people's audit. These would be read out and explained to the local villagers, in open public hearings or *jan sunwais* where people gave evidence for non-payment of wages or corruption, and public officials were invited to defend themselves.

What began as a local demand for transparency - in MKSS's bid to draw attention to the underpayment of daily wage earners and farmers on government projects - snowballed into a landmark civil society movement led by the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) - a collective of over 100 civil society organizations. After a decade long campaign involving activists, journalists, lawyers, professionals and various non-profit organizations, the Right to Information Act was passed in 2005. A watershed success for civil society, this Act "has come to be known as the most radical legislation since India's Constitution." (Wajahat Habibullah, India's first Chief Information Commissioner).



GROUND-UP

Interventions to strengthen governance

The previous section described some key focus areas that have proven to significantly strengthen governance. In this section, Dasra renders a more practical translation of those themes, illustrated using ground-level work being done by some of the non-profit organizations and social businesses involved in this sector.

Based on research on and off the field, and conversations with over 30 experts, Dasra has identified nine key interventions that these organizations are using to strengthen governance in India. The interventions span a diverse spectrum that can broadly be classified as demand side, supply side, or both. The 'demand' side of governance includes citizens, civil society organizations and the private sector, while the 'supply' comprises the State, and all the individuals and bodies that make up the governmental structure at the national, state and local level.

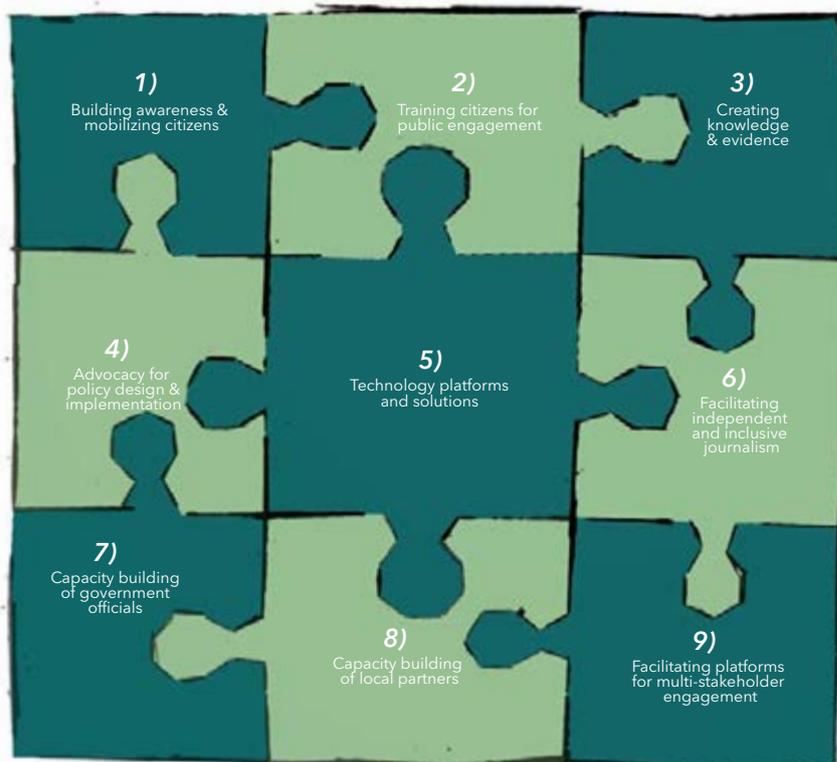


Figure 1: Issues of governance in India are complex and can be likened to a jigsaw puzzle that needs a variety of pieces to fit together.

These interventions have the potential to directly influence India's performance on one or more of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs). Figure 2 maps the interventions across the WGIs. Not surprisingly, most of the interventions most directly impact 'voice and accountability', 'government effectiveness', 'control of corruption', and to some extent 'rule of law'. Non-profit organizations are relatively less able to directly improve performance on 'regulatory quality' and 'political stability' – functions that fall more squarely within the government's domain.

Whether focused on the demand side or supply, the complementarity of governance work is critical and worth emphasizing. When used in the right combination and tailored to the specific needs and circumstances at play, these interventions form a value chain or continuum that ultimately brings about systemic change, which otherwise seems difficult and complex to achieve.

For example, building citizens' awareness of their rights and entitlements is essential, but their lives can really change when they are collectivized to be able to demand what is due to them from the State. Similarly, all demand for better governance will come to naught unless we have enough supply side capacities to respond and deliver.

While think tanks and research organizations provide nuanced insights and inputs on key issues, and the best approaches to addressing them, this knowledge must be made accessible to and consumable by the State or civil society. When used to engage with policy and decision makers, and disseminated through journalistic media or technology and other platforms, this knowledge creates greater public engagement on issues and drives better informed policy-making. Several organizations are also increasingly leveraging knowledge for evidence-based policy advocacy, complementing the more traditional rights-based approach.

Stronger governance will emerge from sustained efforts in all of these critical, complementary areas. The following pages describe the work of several non-profit organizations and, where specified, social businesses to illustrate the broad universe of interventions on the ground.

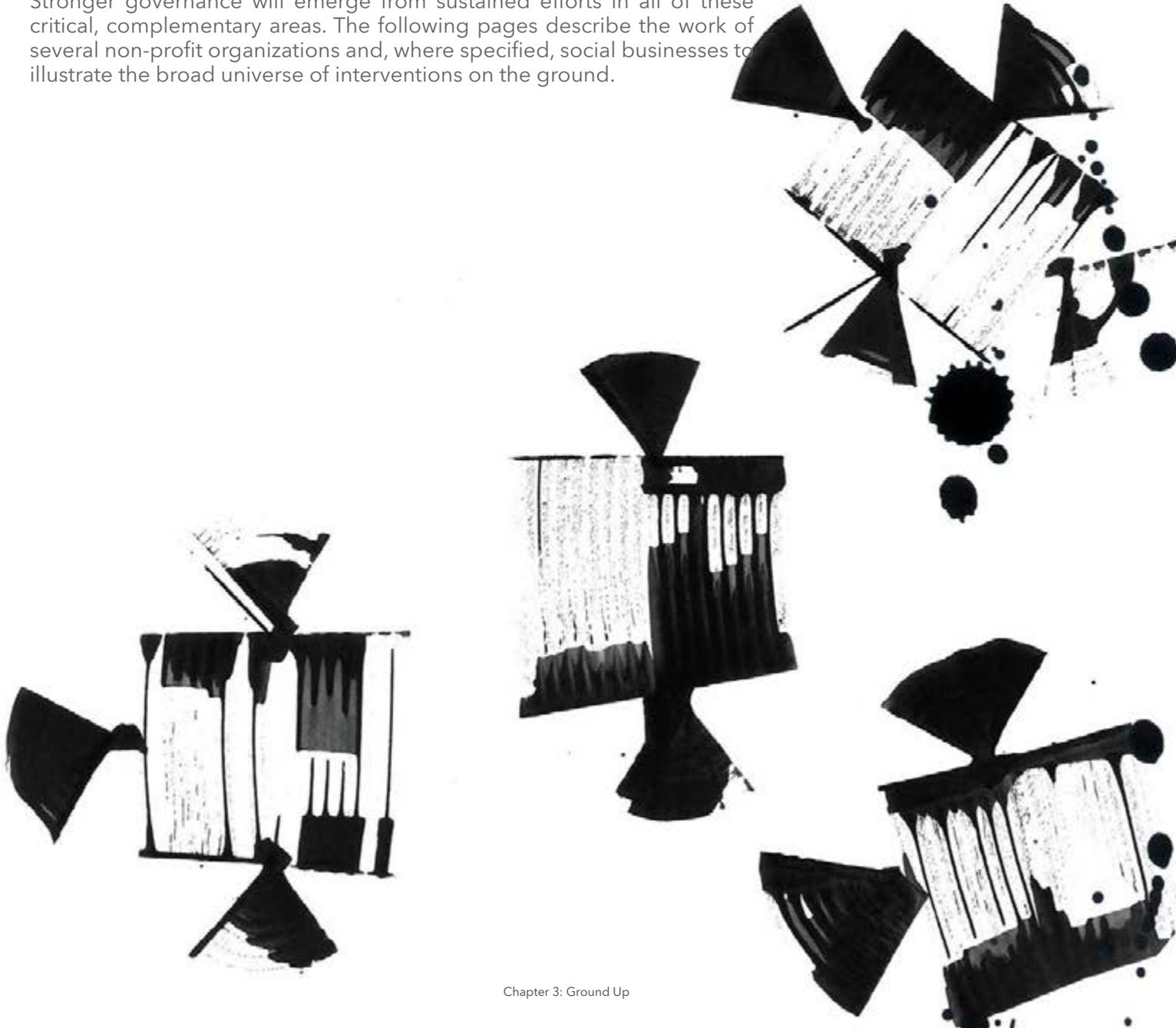


Figure 2^a : Interventions by non-profit organizations and social businesses have the potential to improve India's performance on several of the following Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs):

Voice And Accountability

- Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
- Creating knowledge and evidence
- Technology platforms and solutions
- Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
- Capacity building of local partners
- Training citizens for public engagement
- Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

Government Effectiveness

- Creating knowledge and evidence
- Technology platforms and solutions
- Advocacy for policy design and implementation
- Capacity building of government officials
- Training citizens for public engagement
- Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

Control Of Corruption

- Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
- Creating knowledge and evidence
- Technology platforms and solutions
- Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism

Rule Of Law

- Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
- Creating knowledge and evidence
- Technology platforms and solutions
- Capacity building of government officials

Political Stability

- Creating knowledge and evidence
- Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism

^a The WGIs are interlinked, not discrete. For instance, improved 'voice & accountability' can have a positive impact on 'government effectiveness' through simply serving as a feedback loop. Similarly, 'control of corruption' is not a standalone indicator and would overlap with the other WGIs at various levels and in varying degrees. The linkages depicted between the WGIs and interventions are indicative in nature, owing to a) the complex interplay between the WGIs themselves and b) the cascading impact different interventions could have on the WGIs, through varying degrees of separation. No one intervention alone may drive a sudden, significant improvement in a WGI, but collectively have the capacity to drive strong improvements.

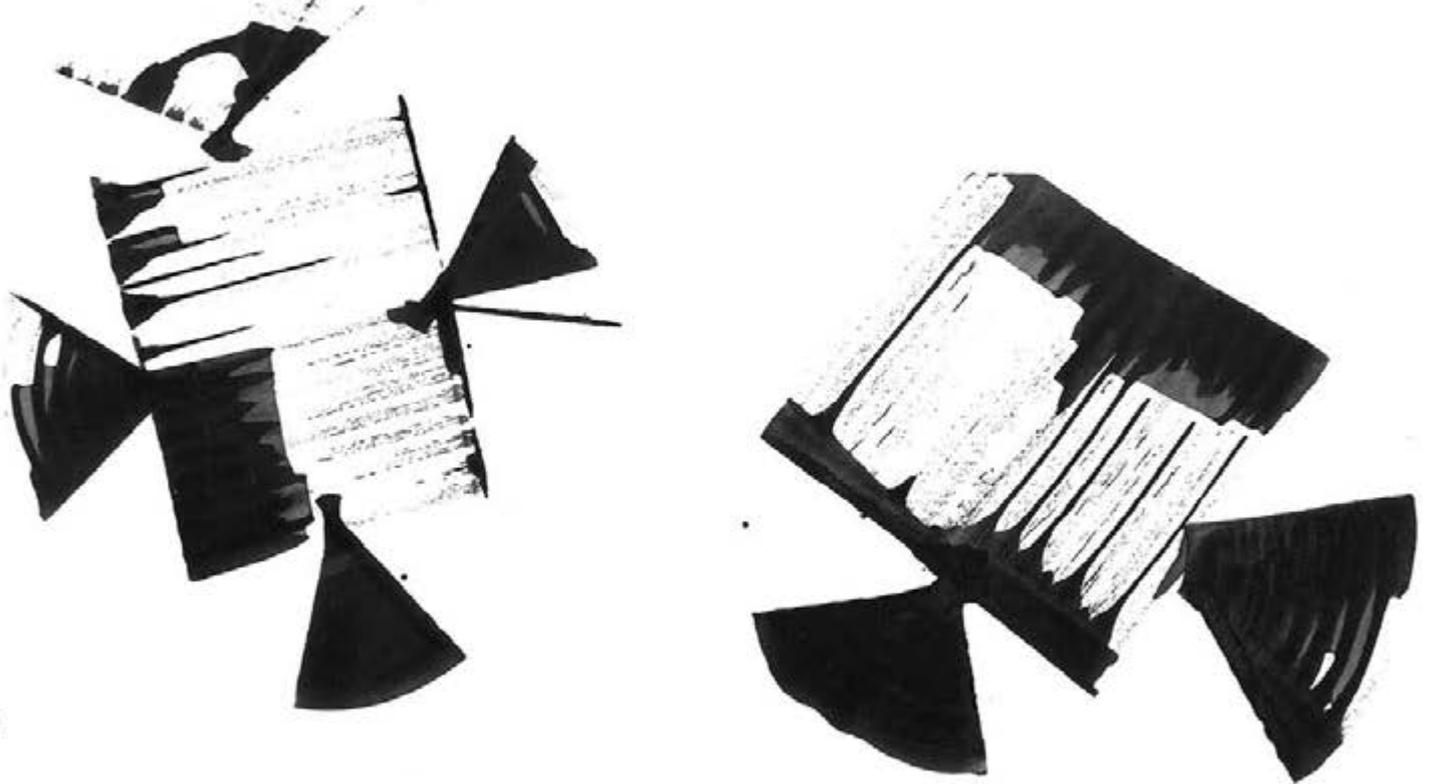
I. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens

If people better understand their rights and entitlements as envisaged under law and government schemes, as also their civic duties, they can take the first step towards becoming more participative citizens. To this end, non-profit organizations educate them through mass-media campaigns, workshops, local awareness drives, even technology-driven modes such as digital panchayats and e-kiosks.

Further, by collectivizing citizens, the organizations bring together a range of individual voices, making them a unified force that is far more capable of articulating its concerns to the government, and driving it to action.

The Mahila Housing Trust (MHT), based in Ahmedabad, fosters the creation of community-based organizations (CBOs) in slum clusters, and builds grassroots women's leadership. It assists CBOs in organizing demand for basic facilities in their communities, such as running water, energy and sanitation; and in procuring rights to develop their living spaces. It establishes and mentors citywide federations of these CBOs, termed *Vikasinis* - training them to actively engage with government authorities in their cities. As a result of MHT's efforts, the *Vikasini* in Ahmedabad is now a key stakeholder that the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation engages before the start of any development-related work in the slums of Ahmedabad. MHT was recently invited to provide inputs to the Corporation's City Sanitation and Zero Waste Management plans.

Action Research in Community Health and Development, based in Vadodara, Gujarat alongside the **Liberty Institute**, based in New Delhi, has been mobilizing tribal groups to claim their entitlements under the Forest Rights Act (2008). The organizations train them in the use of GIS technologies to map their land and property - thus creating evidence to back their property claims - and subsequently build their capacities to actively interface with local governments to act on these claims. As on date, the two organizations have assisted the tribals and authorities in processing over 30,000 claims to landholdings across the states of Orissa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bihar.

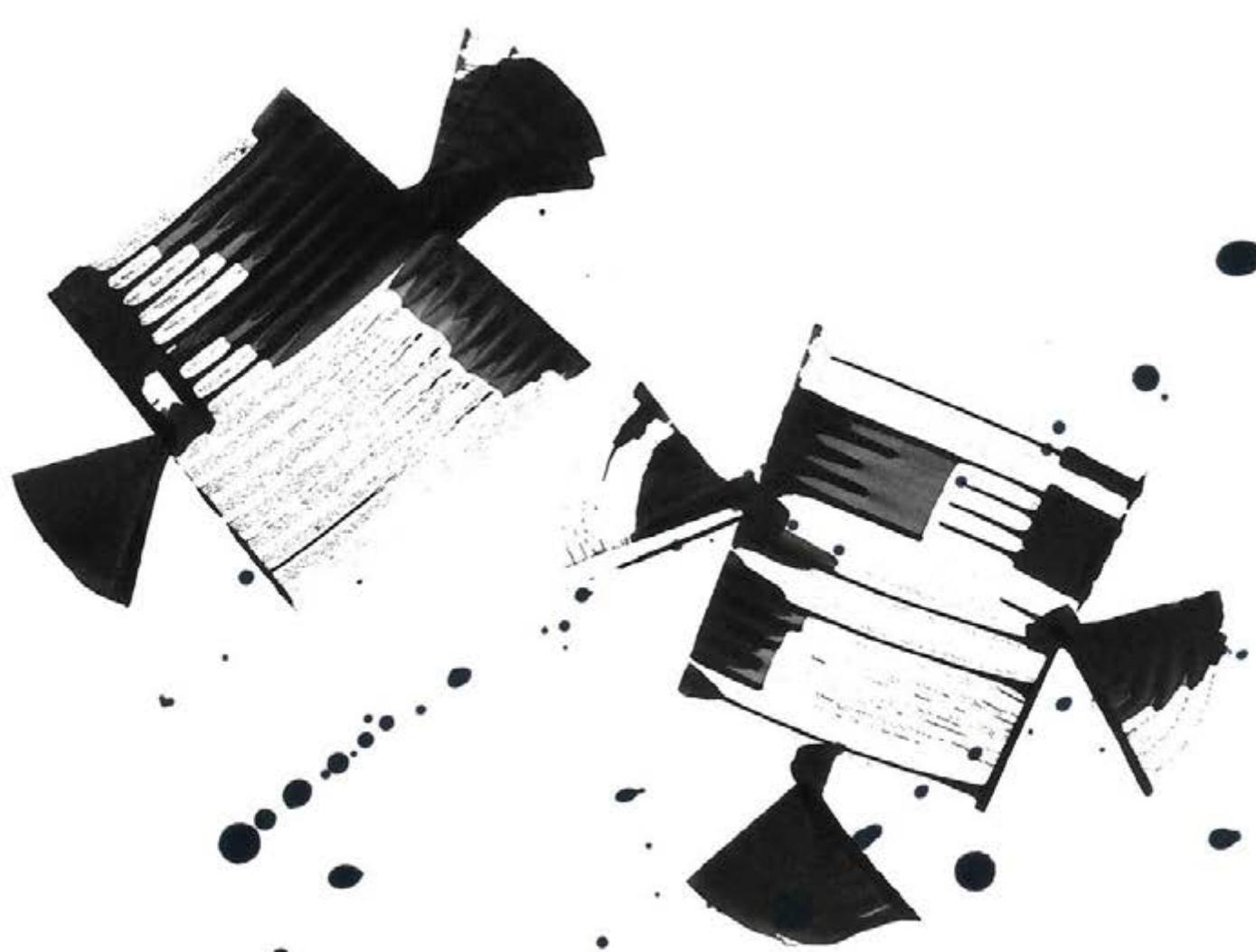


II. Training citizens for public engagement

Several non-profit organizations are working to give citizens a deeper understanding of public policy matters and governance issues. The aim is to cultivate a desire to actively contribute to a more effective process of governance. This could involve formally working in government, supporting it in a professional capacity, or engaging with it as informed, responsible and active citizens.

The **Centre for Civil Society (CCS)**, based in New Delhi, runs the CCS Academy, which engages students, young professionals, journalists and lawyers. Through its iPolicy and Researching Reality initiatives, it builds their awareness on policy matters, imparts academic principles to allow in-depth research into problems on the ground, and encourages participants to actively engage with issues, harnessing the policy education they have been imparted. The academy has over 10,000 graduates - several of whom have subsequently started their own organizations in public policy, or have joined government, development agencies, academia, and related fields.

The **Bangalore Political Action Committee (B.PAC)** is a non-profit trust looking to transform urban governance by promoting active citizen engagement with political leadership. Through its B.PAC Civic Leadership Incubator Program - developed along with the **Takshashila Institution**, also based in Bangalore, it trains citizens to enter electoral politics at the local level, equipping candidates with skills in public policy analysis, municipal administration, and an understanding of election campaign dynamics as well as the political landscape.



III. Creating knowledge and evidence

Quality research and analysis on the governance sector provides important insights that can assist the government and policy makers in shaping and implementing effective legislation, and improve overall decision-making. It also provides the public the tools to gain a better understanding of the process of governance.

On the demand side, access to clear, accurate and up-to-date information on government performance and use of public resources drives greater accountability in public systems. Non-profit organizations and some social businesses help make this information available using tools such as Right to Information requests, public-interest litigations, citizen report cards, social audits and expenditure tracking. They may also go a step further and critically analyze the information gathered.

Centre for Policy Research (CPR), based in New Delhi, is a leading think-tank in India, that researches a number of areas, including law, regulation and policy, accountability and governance, urbanization, security, and foreign policy. CPR aims to develop substantive policy options on matters relevant to the Indian polity, economy and society; to provide advisory services to governments, public agencies and other institutions; and to disseminate information on policy issues through various channels. The government regularly invites CPR's academics to be part of various standing committees and to contribute to new policies.

Organizations such as **Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)**, based in New Delhi, and **Centre for Youth and Social Development**, based in Bhubaneswar, Orissa work on budget and policy analysis, and assess how development priorities are reflected in budgets. Their work helps demystify allocations and the use of funds across government programs and schemes. The government has acknowledged the importance of this function - CBGA was invited to provide inputs on gender-responsive budget allocation in the 12th Five Year Plan.

IDinsight is a social business based in Patna, Bihar which is engaged by government agencies to conduct evaluations of government programs, identify issues affecting implementation, recommend potential solutions, and assist the government in piloting reformed programs and schemes. In one such study in Bihar, on the efficacy of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in addressing malnutrition, its baseline study in 2012 showed that 53% of the government's funds were not utilized effectively, and represented 'leakages'. Following this, it has recommended solutions to decrease wastage in the distribution and delivery of nutritional supplements. The system it has developed seeks to ensure that the \$200 million set aside by the Bihar government for its Supplementary Nutrition Program (SNP) reaches its intended recipients.



In a democracy, data that reflects citizens' perceptions of government performance can also be a powerful driver of accountability. Pioneered by the Bangalore-based **Public Affairs Centre** (PAC) in 1992, 'citizen report cards' generate objective and credible citizen feedback on issues related to the delivery of public services on parameters such as quality, reliability, corruption and satisfaction. PAC consequently analyzes government data vis-à-vis data gathered from the report cards, and encourages public debate on the issues raised.

Bangalore-based **Daksh** and Delhi-based **iForIndia** also use voter surveys and citizen report cards to collate citizen feedback on the performance of government officials across a range of services. Daksh's national survey has covered over 2,65,000 citizens, and iForIndia's digital media campaigns have engaged over one million Indians.

IV. Advocacy for policy design and implementation

Policies set the context for laws, reflect state priorities, and provide the highest point of leverage to create positive systemic change. To ensure these are fair and progressive, non-profit organizations work to influence policy makers and implementers at various levels - from elected representatives and bureaucrats at the national level all the way down to the block development officer who is actually involved in service delivery at the last mile. An increasing trend is the use of evidence-based advocacy through field research, budget analysis, and citizen surveys to more effectively influence policy across levels.

The Kerala Police Act (2011) is an excellent example of advocacy in action. It was the result of advocacy efforts by the **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative** (CHRI), based in New Delhi, which called for making policing a public issue, using a consultative pre-legislative process. On CHRI's recommendation, the State Chief of Police of Kerala invited feedback on the draft Bill through the Internet. Extensive publicity through the media resulted in a high level of public participation. CHRI provided a detailed critique and many of its suggested amendments were accepted. The Kerala Legislative Assembly then referred the Bill to a Select Committee headed by the Home Minister of the state, which held town hall meetings in all 14 districts in Kerala, for further feedback. Following this, 240 of the 790 suggested amendments were passed in the House. The process followed by Kerala resulted in one of the best Police Acts in the country, and is an excellent model for other states to consider.

V. Technology platforms and solutions

73% of Indians use mobile phones, and the Indian Internet user base grew by 42% in 2013. Technology is thus a critical lever to promote citizen voice and active citizenship in India today. Non-profit organizations and some social businesses in India today are leveraging mobile phones, community radio and internet-based portals to inform and interact with citizens, build their capacity to seek governance-related solutions, and foster a participatory approach to democracy.

Gram Vaani, a social business based in New Delhi, develops media platforms to reach the marginalized, and partners with over 80 organizations to deploy its voice-based technologies. People use its media platform, Mobile Vaani, which is easily accessible through a phone call, to share experiences and information on local issues, and to seek redressal of public grievances. Today, Mobile Vaani gets over 5,000 calls a day, and has over 400,000 unique users.

Janaagraha, based in Bangalore, runs a portal called I change my city, presently in the city of Bangalore. The portal gives citizens information at the ward level through interactive maps. This includes information on public services available, quality of life indices, as well as local municipal government functionaries, civic bodies and elected representatives. Citizens also use it as a platform to lodge complaints and seek resolution on civic issues, by interfacing with local authorities on the portal. As on date, 5,260 of 12,995 complaints have been resolved, and over 3,000 are in the process of resolution.

Technology can also transform the way the government delivers services, and interacts with the private sector and with citizens. Several other such organizations help the government enhance its efficiency by developing performance management systems, platforms that track expenditure and revenue, and portals to provide services to citizens as well as invite feedback and grievances.

Bangalore-based **eGovernments Foundation** provides tailor-made software solutions that improve government performance across a range of areas, including expenditure and revenue management, citizen services and administrative efficiency. Currently, its software has been implemented across 275 municipalities; over 0.40 crore births and deaths, and 0.22 crore grievances have been registered using its software. At current estimates, nearly 35,000 government employees are using software developed and supported by eGovernments Foundation.

The **Urban Management Centre**, based in Ahmedabad, trains municipalities across Gujarat to use an online portal to track the quality of water, sanitation and health services provided. All 167 urban agglomerations in Gujarat have agreed to use this software to track these services, and several are actively entering data on service provision in their towns to track their own progress.





VI. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism

An unbiased and inclusive media is critical to effectively highlight under-the-radar issues that affect the country in deep and potentially harmful ways, and assist in addressing them by shaping public discourse and driving the development agenda.

Delhi-based **Khabar Lahariya** is a weekly local language newspaper run by a collective of rural women journalists trained to report on local news and on politics, development and women's issues in media-dark zones in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The women collect information directly from the villagers, and actively follow up with local government officials to drive accountability for local issues. For instance, in 2012, a special issue exposing poor health services led to the suspension of the chief medical officer in Banda, Uttar Pradesh. Khabar Lahariya has a readership of around 120,000.

Gurgaon-based **Charkha Development and Communication Network** works to bring attention to marginalized communities in remote locations and conflict areas. Presently working in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), it empowers communities by building their capacity to articulate their issues at local, state and national levels, and to serve as social advocates within their communities. Charkha has facilitated the publication of roughly 600 articles over the last year, in partnership with local newspapers in J&K, newswires such as Asian News International (ANI), and economic dailies such as Business Standard.

Mumbai-based IndiaSpend is a journalism initiative that analyzes data on a range of public interest issues at the central and state levels. Through regular 'fact-checks', it promotes the importance of correct reporting of data, which also drives those making 'statements of fact' in public to be more discerning.

While the media has conventionally been seen as holding a mirror to society, **Newslaundry** and **The Hoot**, both based in New Delhi, have turned the mirror on to the media itself. They analyze biases in mainstream reporting, and share perspectives on the news of the day, providing key insights and views that take non-mainstream perspectives into consideration and drive greater accountability within mass-media.

VII. Capacity building of government officials

If the government, across levels, has access to the best talent and knowledge, then it is better equipped to address the needs of a country of the size and complexity of India. Recognizing this, non-profit organizations are working with government officials, from the gram panchayat at the base of the structure to senior bureaucrats and Members of Parliament, providing them expertise and context-specific solutions. Their capacity-building support ranges from leadership training to providing clarity on roles and responsibilities, project implementation support, even research to identify needs and gaps.

PRS Legislative Research, based in New Delhi, provides objective, easy-to-use analysis to MPs and MLAs on key legislative issues. It facilitates the interaction of experts with MPs and MLAs who are keen to gain a deeper understanding of policy matters. As of date, over 400 MPs - across party lines - have reached out to PRS for inputs on a range of policy and legislative issues.

Swaniti Initiative, also based in New Delhi, provides elected officials, including MPs and MLAs, knowledge and on-ground project implementation support on issues including health, education, gender and livelihoods in their constituencies.

The Regional Centre for Development Cooperation (RCDC), based in Bhubaneswar, Orissa sensitizes panchayat leaders on their responsibilities and trains them to serve their panchayats better. RCDC assists panchayat leaders in adopting integrated planning methods, which allows them to better address poverty and food insecurity. It also assists them in implementing development and welfare programs efficiently and transparently. So far, it has worked in over 1,000 villages across 15 districts in Orissa.

VIII. Capacity building of local partners

Non-profit organizations with innovative and established programs are able to scale their work much faster by harnessing the potential of community-based organizations (CBOs). Spread across the expanse of India, CBOs have a constant pulse of issues on the ground, and they enjoy the trust of the communities they work with. Non-profits mentor and train CBOs, and also provide assistance with funding, partnerships and communications by leveraging existing relationships. Local partner organizations thus replicate and scale the programs, allowing for expertise to percolate down to the grassroots and magnify impact.

Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), based in New Delhi, strengthens local governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies by building the capacities of government staff, elected representatives and local non-profit partners, through a training-of-trainers model. It trains grassroots organizations to use participatory approaches to development, and strengthens them institutionally. Over the last 30 years, PRIA has trained over 125,000 elected representatives, and built human and institutional capacities in over 15,000 NGOs and CBOs in India and abroad.

The Hunger Project, also based in New Delhi, works on strengthening the leadership of women representatives in panchayats, helping them develop a nuanced understanding of their roles and powers, which in turn creates an enabling environment for them to perform effectively. It has scaled its work in this domain to seven states, by training 40 local partners to undertake similar leadership building in their respective geographies.



IX. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

If the key players in governance - including government, civil society, non-profit organizations, media and academia - engage in open discussion, then problems can be solved and development priorities identified collaboratively, faster and more easily. Non-profit organizations in the sector convene forums where the government and key stakeholders engage on a range of issues. Formats for these discussions include national-, state-, and grassroots-level consultations, round tables, conferences and public hearings.

Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) engages multiple stakeholders in its drive to strengthen governance in India. For instance, over the last year, PRIA has been running a Pre-Election Political Awareness campaign on urban governance and urban poverty issues in different states in India, to encourage their inclusion in the election manifestos of different political parties.

Seven state-level and three city-level consultations were organized, attended by members of all major political parties, along with elected representatives from urban local bodies, civil society organizations, academia, slum improvement committees and the media. Coalitions of the urban poor were center stage in these deliberations, putting forth their issues related to identity, dignity, social security, land tenure, housing designs and standards, financing options and service delivery. These assemblies provided a rare opportunity for the urban poor and political parties to speak on the same platform.

To drive youth engagement in politics and governance, **Swaniti Initiative** organizes smaller, more informal interactions called Swaniti Talks between parliamentarians such as Jay Panda and Dr Subramaniam Swamy and the youth - giving them a platform to ask questions and be heard. Over 1,000 youths have attended these talks so far.

CHAPTER 3: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Through a mapping of 120 non-profit organizations and social businesses working to strengthen governance, Dasra has identified nine key interventions that span a diverse spectrum. These interventions can broadly be understood to focus on the 'demand' side, 'supply side', or both. The 'demand' side of governance includes citizens, civil society organizations and the private sector, while 'supply' comprises the State and all individuals and bodies that make up the governmental structure at the national, state and local levels.
- The nine interventions most directly impact 'voice and accountability', 'government effectiveness', 'control of corruption' and to some extent 'rule of law'. They encompass some broad themes such as capacity building, leveraging technology, mobilizing citizens, providing policy inputs and facilitating greater engagement between citizens and the State. Non-profit organizations are relatively less able to directly improve performance on 'regulatory quality' and 'political stability' - functions that fall more squarely within the government's domain.
- The complementarity of governance work among different stakeholders is critical. For instance, while think tanks and research organizations provide deep insights and inputs on key issues, and the best approaches to address them, this knowledge must be made accessible to and consumable by the State as well as civil society. When used to engage with policy and decision makers, and disseminated through journalistic media, technology and other platforms, this knowledge enhances public engagement on issues and drives better informed policy making. Several organizations are also increasingly leveraging knowledge for evidence-based policy advocacy, complementing the more traditional rights-based approach.
- If key players - including the government, civil society, non-profit organizations, media, and academia - engage in active and open discussion, then problems can be solved and development priorities identified collaboratively and with ease. Dasra sees a growing trend of non-profit organizations convening forums where government and other key stakeholders can engage on a range of issues. Formats for these discussions include national, state and grassroots-level consultations, round tables, conferences and public hearings. This enhances both awareness and opportunities for collaboration.

STORIES *of* IMPACT

3)

Fixing India's cities.

Economically speaking, well-run cities are critical for states to be able to attract talent and investment. With 220 million people expected to be added to India's urban centers by 2030, the need to overhaul urban infrastructure and governance is urgent.

A critical first step in this direction has been the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) launched in 2005 - the largest urban scheme in India's history with a \$25 billion capex for 63 cities.

Janaagraha, a Bangalore based non-profit organization, has played a key role in the design and evolution of the JNNURM at various levels, right from advocating for such an initiative at the national level, to influencing its design as a member of the National Technical Advisory group (NTAG) and playing a central role in the inclusion and drafting of critical state level reforms such as the Public Disclosure Law and Community Participation. So far, over 20 states have enacted both these laws and are at various stages of implementation in their respective urban local bodies.

Janaagraha was also instrumental in the creation and institutionalization of Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs) for key civic services under the JNNURM. Over 4,000 cities and towns are currently in the process of publishing their SLB data.



FUNDING OPTIONS

Profiling high-impact and scalable non-profit organizations

Over the course of its research, Dasra identified more than 120 non-profit organizations and social businesses in India that are adopting a rich variety of approaches to address the governance deficit.

An analysis of about 67 of them revealed some interesting facts. Only a tenth of the organizations were born in the 1970s and '80s; three-quarters of them emerged in the '90s and 2000s as the civil society movement for better governance gained momentum. With the passing of the 73rd and 74th Amendments creating a third tier of local government, the '90s saw the beginning of much activity around the formalizing and strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The focus on urban governance and the use of media as a tool for strengthening governance are fairly recent themes that have gained traction over the last decade. The short-listed organizations have an annual median budget of INR 1.5 crore, and range from under INR 1 crore to INR 20 crore.

Figure 1: Organization headquarters

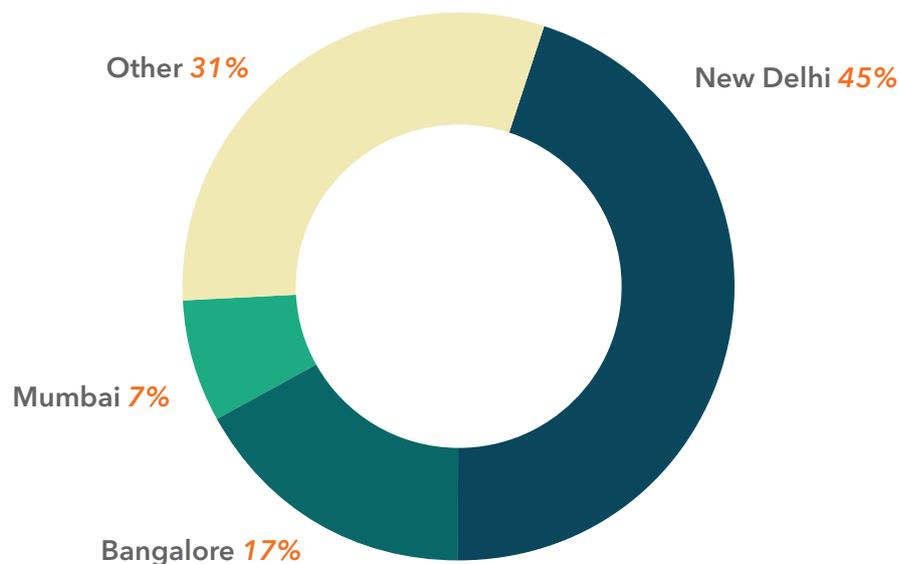


Figure 2: Organization year of founding

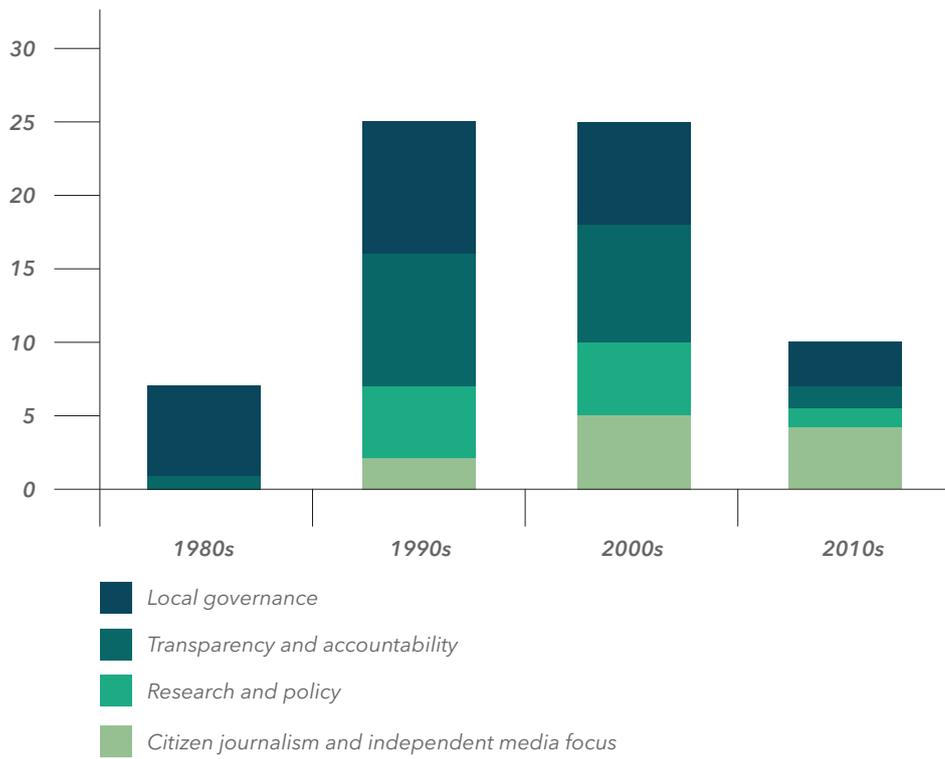
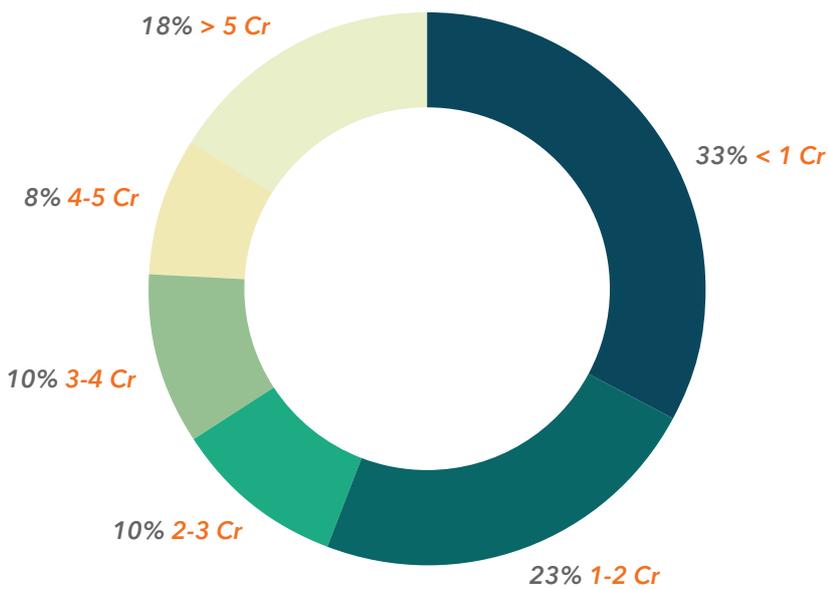


Figure 3: Organization annual budget (INR)



The diverse spread of non-profit activity ranges from efforts focused on rural communities and villages to those tackling issues of urban governance; from grassroots organizations that work directly with their beneficiaries to those that spend their energies advocating for change at the policy level.

Given that the nature of their work is broad and often overlapping, it would be limiting to classify organizations into singular, discreet categories. However, for the sake of analysis, an illustrative grouping – by no means exhaustive or definitive – is presented below.

Research and policy focus

Equipping decision makers with quality research and technical inputs enables them to frame laws and governance mechanisms that are broad-based, robust and responsive to the needs of citizens.

These organizations are a mix of think-tanks, typically at the national level, focused on broad matters of public policy – such as **Centre for Policy Research** and **Public Affairs Centre**; those focused on a specific sector or interest group – such as **Centre for Health and Social Justice**; and those that work directly with legislators and policy makers, providing knowledge and implementation support – such as **PRS Legislative Services** and **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**.

Citizen journalism and independent media focus

Providing unbiased content and platforms to bring out the citizen voice drives government accountability and creates engaged and empowered citizens by shaping public opinion, driving the development agenda, serving as an interface between citizens and the State, and playing the role of watchdog.

These organizations include both, traditional print and newer media organizations taking innovative approaches to reporting, such as long-form investigative stories, data journalism, and hyper-local reporting on politics and governance – they include **Caravan**, **Rajasthan Patrika** and **Khabar Lahariya**; those that provide voice-based and other media platforms to democratize access to news and information in media-dark areas – such as **CGNet Swara** and **Gram Vaani**; those that serve as a resource for other media organizations, often working to mainstream important development-related stories – such as **Inclusive Media for Change**; and those that serve as media watchdogs – such as **Newslaundry** and **The Hoot**.

Transparency and accountability focus

Equipping citizens with information on government performance enables them to hold the State accountable to its promises, and promotes effective public service delivery.

These include organizations that advocate for policies and legislation that enhance transparency and accountability – such as **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan** and **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative**; those that push for electoral reforms – such as **Association for Democratic Rights**; and those that supply information on the performance of elected representatives and the government – such as **Praja** and **iForIndia**. There is also a group of organizations that use budget transparency and tracking at the Union, state, local or sector-level to drive accountability – such as **Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability** and **National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights**.

Local governance focus

Building capacities within local governments and making them accountable through an empowered and engaged citizenry will promote equitable and sustainable development of cities and villages.

These include organizations at the rural and urban levels that work on the citizen side to enhance local self-governance and mobilize demand for better governance and service delivery – such as **Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, ARCH Vahini** and **Bangalore Political Action Committee**; and those that work on the supply side to build capacities of local government and advocate for policy change – such as **Society for Participatory Research in Asia, Hunger Project** and **Janaagraha**.

The following pages profile 26 of the most promising organizations that Dasra came across over the course of its research.



STORIES *of* IMPACT

4)

Local change, achieved locally.

Large parts of rural and tribal India are 'media dark' with little or no access to newspapers or news on the internet. The tribal belt of Gondwana which includes parts of Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh, is one such region. Many poor, rural people who live here cannot read and do not speak Hindi or English, the main languages of the Indian media. They live in remote villages, often without running water and schools. For them, a media platform called **CGNet Swara**, has been a vital tool for listening to and sharing locally relevant news stories in their local languages, using a piece of equipment they could readily access - the mobile phone.

In the true spirit of 'media for and by the people', communities elect their own moderators who are trained by CGNet on skills such as fact checking and verifying stories before they are broadcast.

Stories are varied and range from a report that a forest ranger asked for bribes, to another about teachers' absence from a village school, while a third reported on high numbers of blind and mentally ill children in an adivasi village. Days after the report about the numbers of blind village children, a health team arrived to find out more, and the ranger has now repaid his bribes.

Each day, CGNet Swara receives about 500 calls, of which 50 are recorded. After checks, five stories are broadcast.

This table represents a mapping of the organizations profiled by Dasra to their governance-related interventions, as defined in Chapter 3.

INTERVENTIONS	Building awareness & mobilizing citizens	Training citizens for public engagement	Creating knowledge and evidence	Advocacy for policy design and implementation	Technology platforms and solutions
Accountability Initiative		✓	✓	✓	
Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)	✓		✓		✓
Caravan			✓		
Centre for Budget & Governance Accountability (CBGA)			✓	✓	
Centre for Civil Society	✓	✓	✓		
Centre for Health and Social Justice	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Centre for Policy Research (CPR)			✓		
Charkha Development Communication Network	✓				
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
eGovernments Foundation					✓
Gram Vaani	✓				✓
Gujarat Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT)	✓	✓		✓	
IndiaSpend			✓		✓
Janaagraha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Khabar Lahariya	✓				
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)	✓		✓	✓	
National Foundation For India (NFI)		✓	✓	✓	
Praja	✓		✓		✓
PRS Legislative Research		✓	✓		
Public Affairs Centre (PAC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)	✓		✓	✓	
Swaniti Initiative			✓		
The Hunger Project (India)	✓	✓		✓	
Transparent Chennai	✓		✓	✓	✓
Urban Management Centre (UMC)			✓		✓
Vidhi Center for Legal Policy			✓	✓	

INTERVENTIONS	Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism	Capacity building of government officials	Capacity building of local partners	Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement
Accountability Initiative				
Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)			✓	✓
Caravan	✓			
Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)			✓	✓
Centre for Civil Society				✓
Centre for Health and Social Justice			✓	
Centre for Policy Research (CPR)		✓		✓
Charkha Development Communication Network	✓			✓
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)		✓		✓
eGovernments Foundation		✓		
Gram Vaani	✓		✓	
Gujarat Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT)		✓		✓
IndiaSpend	✓			
Janaagraha		✓		✓
Khabar Lahariya	✓			
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)			✓	✓
National Foundation For India (NFI)			✓	
Praja		✓		
PRS Legislative Research		✓		
Public Affairs Centre (PAC)		✓	✓	✓
Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)		✓	✓	✓
Swaniti Initiative		✓		✓
The Hunger Project (India)		✓	✓	
Transparent Chennai		✓		✓
Urban Management Centre (UMC)		✓		
Vidhi Center for Legal Policy		✓		

Founded: 2009 | **Head Office:** Delhi | **Coverage:** Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh | **Full-Time Staff:** 22 **Budget (2013-14):** Organization - INR 1.9 crore; Governance - INR 1.9 crore

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Accountability Initiative (AI) is a research group housed within Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a leading public policy think tank. AI's mission is to improve the quality of public services by increasing transparency and driving greater accountability for their delivery. It looks to achieve this by conducting rigorous grassroots research on the implementation of government programs and linking evidence with citizen-led action.

THE PROBLEM

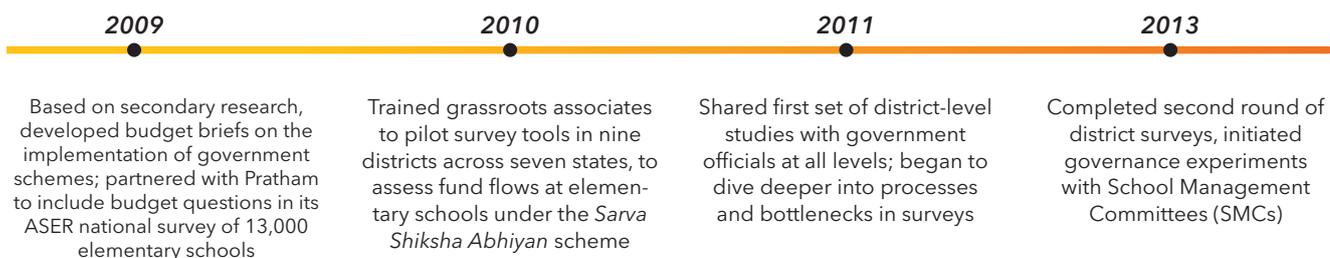
Despite increased financial outlays, the quality of public service delivery remains weak in India. There has been little systematic research to understand the causes and identify evidence-based solutions. Lack of transparency in implementation limits citizen engagement and demand for accountability.



AI's RESPONSE

AI tracks the budgets, implementation systems and flow of funds for public services at the grassroots. It uses this research to catalyze change by engaging citizens in the process of research and monitoring of government programs, and to inform the government on ground realities and bottlenecks in implementation.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

District-level studies: Under its flagship project, PAISA, it has developed innovative tools to monitor and strengthen the delivery of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) scheme for elementary schools:

- A comprehensive 32-page survey has been developed to highlight issues such as the timely delivery and use of funds, and the state of school infrastructure and governance.
- The survey is conducted every two years, by volunteers who go through a three day residential training camp; in 2013, they collected survey data from 1,300 schools across nine districts.
- PAISA associates support volunteers, work at the grassroots to build linkages between schools and district officials, and are trained through a four-week public finance course over two years.
- District-level reports, which combine survey findings and secondary research, are shared at a national launch as well as through block-, district- and state-level meetings with government officials.

Budget briefs: AI annually publishes mini-reports on 7-8 flagship government schemes, which are disseminated widely to government officials directly and to citizens through media (eg. partners such as Live Mint).

Accountability research: AI also publishes papers and policy briefs examining the implementation and outcomes of various accountability efforts, such as participatory budgeting, social audits, Right to Information and citizen report cards. It provides practical policy recommendations to strengthen these tools.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ The PAISA survey tool tracked almost INR 2,700 Crore of SSA funds allocated for 2011-12 in nine districts
- ✔ There has been strong demand to replicate PAISA survey tools for use in other sectors:
 - In 2012, the Ministry of Human Resource Development commissioned AI to conduct a PAISA survey on the Mid-Day Meal scheme
 - In 2014, AI was commissioned to undertake an in-depth PAISA survey of four flagship government programs for education and early child care, in partnership with UNICEF and the Chhattisgarh government

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next few years, AI wants to focus on both, institution-building as well as expanding beyond its core work in the elementary education sector. Some of its planned activities are to:

- Increase focus on dissemination of its research with both, government and citizens, including more proactive engagement with media and use of social media, to drive greater transparency and accountability
- Leverage comprehensive PAISA course on public finance fundamentals to educate external stakeholders such as non-profits and activists, to increase their ability to use budget analysis in their work
- Apply PAISA framework to increase tracking and accountability for panchayat finances
- Evolve its pilot with SMCs to find effective ways of increasing grassroots participation in governance

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



The PAISA report showed us our weaknesses, and the gaps in our structure. Based on these findings, we informed all districts that funds under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme must reach the intended beneficiaries on time.

- State Administrator, Madhya Pradesh



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Yamini Aiyar founded and leads AI

- Has worked at the World Bank and Ford Foundation.
- Has master's degrees from London School of Economics and Cambridge University, UK.
- Yamini is a TED fellow, a member of the International Experts Panel of the Open Government Partnership, and a member of the World Economic Forum's council on good governance.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Hewlett, Ford Foundation and Omidyar Network.
- Advisors include T.R. Raghunandan, former Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- Key program partners and advisors include Pratham, National Institute of Public Finance Policy, Arghyam and Centre for Global Development.

"Accountability failures lie at the heart of the abysmal state of governance and public services in India. Our work at AI is an effort to identify the bottlenecks and constraints inside government, and build solutions that are anchored in reality and evidence. At the heart of our work is a belief that citizens are central to change. We use our research to engage, inform and enable greater citizen participation in the demand for improved accountability and access to quality public services."

- Yamini Aiyar, director

citizenvoice **policy** law **servicedelivery** thinktank **transparency** RTI
 elections **budgets** urbangovernance panchayatiraj accesstojustice
 technology humanrights independentmedia

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)

www.adrindia.org

Founded: 1999 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 32

Budget (2013-14): Organization - INR 4.1 crore; Governance - INR 4.1 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

ADR was founded in 1999 by professors of IIM-Ahmedabad and Bangalore, who were concerned about the lack of information on candidates contesting elections. Since then, ADR has worked to create an informed citizenry, providing detailed analysis on the background of candidates and financial details of political parties. ADR's efforts are supported by a nationwide network of over 1,200 organizations called the National Election Watch.

THE PROBLEM

- Large number of criminals in Parliament and state legislatures in India
- Influence of money in politics: buying votes, policy lobbying, above-limit campaign expenses
- Lack of transparency and accountability in political parties

ADR's RESPONSE

Provides access to information that enables informed voting and results in cleaner elections with stronger candidates and more accountable political parties. This will ensure improved governance indicators, and the formulation and implementation of strong developmental policies.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Election Watch provides authentic and unbiased information on candidates' backgrounds. The program covers all Parliamentary, state Assembly and in some cases, municipal and panchayat elections. It supports partners 6-8 months before an election, to host awareness events such as *yatras* (walks), seminars and other outreach activities.

Background data of candidates is usually available 15-20 days before an election. ADR uses its online tool to analyze the data and make it available for dissemination through different media such as its website, a mobile application, and on-ground campaigns by its state partners at least 10 days before the date of polling. Information on assets and criminal records helps voters make informed decisions, and analysis on performance of candidates pressures political parties to nominate good candidates. The availability of candidate information on candidates has also positively influenced voter turnouts.

Political Party Watch is aimed at fostering more transparency and accountability in the functioning of political parties. ADR analyzes income tax returns, donation reports and election expenditure declared by political parties. ADR has analyzed information on 43 political parties since 2002.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Two milestone judgments by the Supreme Court in 2002 and 2003 as a result of ADR's PIL resulting in the disclosure of candidates' criminal and financial records before elections.
- ✔ In 2008, the overall percentage of candidates with pending criminal charges in state Assemblies reduced from 20% to 14% for five Indian states.
- ✔ Numerous candidates with pending criminal cases lost the '09 and '14 Lok Sabha elections.
- ✔ Landmark judgment by Central Information Commission in 2013, declaring six major political parties as public authorities subject to Right to Information, as a result of ADR's advocacy efforts.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Election Watch:** Cover 17 state elections, by-elections and Rajya Sabha elections in the next three years, analyzing data such as criminal details, election expenditure, asset declaration, and voter share of representatives.
- **Political Party Watch:** Work towards developing a software tool to analyze IT returns, and expenditure of national and regional parties. ADR will also release a comprehensive report on party expenditure during 2014 Lok Sabha elections and all upcoming national elections so as to hold parties accountable.
- **Monitor and support all PILs filed on electoral and political issues** by individuals and organizations so as to collectively pressure political institutions for better governance.
- **Focus on strategic communication** to reach citizens via available media channels.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



There are two extraordinary things about ADR: (1) That they are a collective, they are low key. It's not one charismatic individual as is often the case with most NGOs capturing the whole space.

(2) Reforms advocated by ADR can make our democracy even more optimal. They are a long-term thinking organization, with extremely creative, constructive ideas on how to reform Indian democracy. They are not a one-shot phenomenon, they are long-distance runners.

*- Ramchandra Guha,
Eminent historian and author*



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- Trilochan Sastry, professor at IIM Ahmedabad and Bangalore, and Jagdeep Chhokar, former professor and Director-in-charge at IIM Ahmedabad, were among the founders of ADR.
- Maj Gen (Retd) Anil Verma - ADR Head served in the Indian Army for 37 years before joining ADR.

Partnerships

- Funders: Omidyar Network, Ford Foundation, Hivos.
- Program partners: 1,200 partners across India as part of National Election Watch support ADR's outreach work. For example, Manthan, an NGO in Jharkhand, launched a "campaign on wheels" to create awareness among local train passengers for the 2014 elections.

Endorsements

- NDTV Indian of the Year Award for public service, 2014
- Times of India Social Impact Award, 2013

"Governance is too important to be left to the government. The people of this great country have to be involved in governance on a much more regular basis and that is my appeal to everybody. Changes in voter behavior are perhaps the best guarantee for de-criminalization and good governance."

-Prof Trilochan Sastry, founder and trustee

citizenvoice policy law servicedelivery thinktank **transparency** RTI
elections budgets urbangovernance panchayatiraj accesstojustice
technology humanrights independentmedia

The Caravan
www.caravanmagazine.in

Founded: 2010 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 25
Budget (2013-14): Organization - INR 5 crore; Governance - INR 5 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The *Caravan* is India's only monthly magazine devoted to narrative journalism, i.e., publishing articles combining months of research and reportage with compelling storytelling. It is housed in the Delhi Press, one of India's oldest publishing houses. By consistently covering a variety of issues from politics and governance to culture and art, the magazine brings a cross-section of topics from across India to the forefront of public debate.

THE PROBLEM

The mainstream media often reports stories without providing historical context or the long term view of an issue, cultivating knee-jerk responses in readers. It is also common for reporters to be under pressure to provide biased opinions depending on the ownership and advertising interests of the publication.



CARAVAN'S RESPONSE

By providing the space for in-depth reflection on topics, the time to do months of research, and most importantly, the editorial freedom to present a balanced view of an issue, *Caravan* provides a rare space in India for writers to engage the public in a nuanced debate. This also promotes thoughtful readership.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Reportage and Essays: *Caravan* works with some of the finest writers across Asia to produce reporting on issues of public interest:

- Stories on governance, public policy, conflict, business, politics, foreign policy, health, education and profiles of prominent business leaders, politicians, and other figures of national importance.
- The gestation period for each story varies from three months to a year. A staff member is dedicated to the story through this period or a freelancer is paid a substantial fee to allow them to immerse themselves in the production and reporting of the story.
- The story then takes from a fortnight to a month to process, going through a rigorous process of rewriting by editors followed by copy edits and fact checking. This requires an investment in terms of editors that far exceeds the norm in India.

Eg. Prominent individuals profiled include former prime minister Manmohan Singh, RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, steel magnate Naveen Jindal.

Books, Poetry, Fiction and Photo Essays: Fiction, non-fiction, poetry and photography from across the country is showcased, providing exposure to new voices and forgotten talent from across India.

Print and Online Publication:

- *Caravan* brings out a monthly print issue of high quality design.
- All articles are available free of cost on its website.
- Public conversations with leading writers and academics are held and shared online on a dedicated YouTube channel.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
- 3. Creating knowledge and evidence**
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
- 6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism**
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Articles published in *Caravan* have received national and international recognition:
 - Rohini Mohan's "The Defeated" was recognized as the best print media article on humanitarian issues by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Press Institute of India in 2012.
 - Vinod K Jose's 'Falling Man'- included in the compilation, 100 Great Stories by Columbia School journalists.
- ✔ *Caravan* has a readership of 4-5 lakh, its website receives 1.5-2 lakh unique visitors each month and the average *Caravan* cover story is shared 3,000 times on Facebook.
- ✔ *Caravan's* print circulation is at 40,500 copies per month along with 3.2 lakh monthly online page views.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Reporting and Writing Workshop:** *Caravan* wants to organize an annual reporting and writing workshop with the Columbia Journalism School for 25 young aspiring journalists under the age of 25.
- **Editorial Fellows:** It aims to institutionalize an editorial fellowship where editors get trained for six months at *Caravan*, followed by six months at either the *New Yorker*, *The Atlantic* or Columbia Journalism School in the United States.
- **Staff Writers:** *Caravan* also aims to increase its number of staff writers at all levels.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



I'm an admirer of it for three reasons... first, in-depth analytical articles that give a fairly full picture and understanding of the subject; secondly, it's extremely well-written; linguistically its style is easy to read - that I applaud; thirdly, it's a journal that evokes a wide cross-section of views so it doesn't have an ideology or a particular standpoint, apart from perhaps for the quest of truth.

- **Karan Thapar**
Indian TV commentator



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- **Anant Nath:** Director, Delhi Press Group; Managing Editor; *The Caravan*; MBA (IIM); MA, Politics from Columbia University
- **Vinod K. Jose:** Executive Editor, *The Caravan*; Bollinger Presidential Fellow, Columbia Journalism School
- **Hartosh Singh Bal:** Political Editor, *The Caravan*; former Political Editor, OPEN magazine; author of *Waters Close Over Us: A Journey Along the Narmada*

Endorsements

- Vinod K. Jose's *The Rise of Narendra Modi* and *On the Success of Ethics* cited for reporting excellence by the Osborne Elliott Prize for Excellence in Journalism on Asia

"The *Caravan* for the past five years has been doing path-breaking journalism in India. We have broken grounds in the quality of reporting, the quality of writing, the quality of editing, the quality of thoughts and analysis we've put out from month to month. *Caravan* is as close as you can get to independent journalism in mainstream publishing in India."

- **Vinod K. Jose, executive editor**

citizenvoice policy law servicedelivery thinktank transparency RTI
elections budgets urbanguovernance panchayatiraj accesstojustice
technology humanrights **independentmedia**

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)

www.cbgaindia.org

Founded: 2002 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 24

Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 3.7 crore; Governance – INR 3.7 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

CBGA is a policy research and advocacy organization promoting people’s participation in the discourse on public policies and government finances in India. It draws the attention of the government to policy issues such as the magnitude and quality of public expenditure in social sectors and budgetary strategies for social inclusion, and advocates for greater transparency, accountability and space for public participation in budget processes.

THE PROBLEM

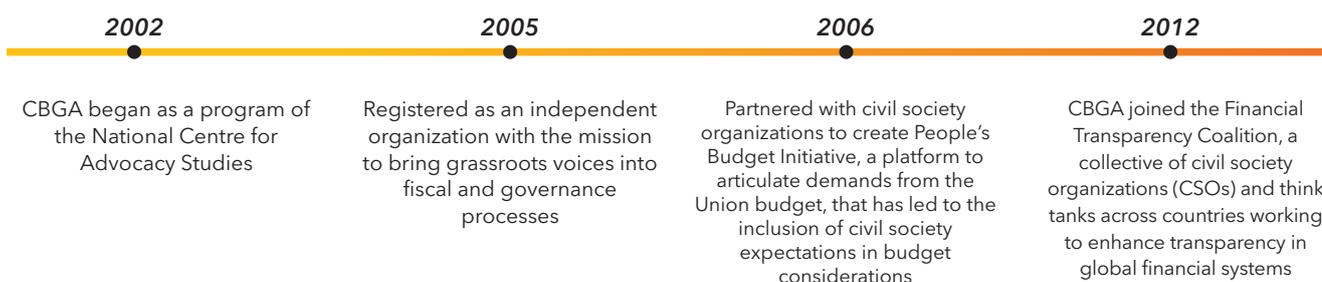
CBGA believes that the government’s fiscal decisions and budgetary allocations are often unresponsive or inadequate to address the needs of the poor and marginalized sections of society.



CBGA’s RESPONSE

CBGA works closely with civil society groups, and gains insight into ground realities, which it combines with research to advocate for more responsive fiscal policies. Its substantive research on policy issues reveals gaps in poorly designed budgetary decisions and suggests necessary reforms.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Research on Policy and Budgetary Issues

CBGA’s research encompasses issues such as:

- How responsive government programs / schemes are to regional and social diversity and challenges in the country,
- Whether pro-poor public policies are being backed with adequate budgetary resources or not, and
- Institutional and procedural bottlenecks in the implementation of programs / schemes.

CBGA’s research is consistently shared with various ministries, legislators, media, academia and CSOs through the organization’s publications and advocacy events.

Engagement with Civil Society Organizations

- People’s Budget Initiative: CBGA serves as the Secretariat of this coalition of CSOs that convenes every year to discuss gaps in public provisioning. They arrive at a common set of prioritized policy and budgetary demands, which are shared with policymakers and members of legislature at the national level.
- Capacity building workshops: CBGA helps CSOs, local budget groups and non-profits incorporate budget analysis and advocacy as a tool to strengthen their existing interventions, particularly looking at budget assessment as a way to understand the priority accorded to various sectors by the government.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. **Creating knowledge and evidence**
4. **Advocacy for policy design and implementation**
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. **Capacity building of local partners**
9. **Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement**

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

CBGA has had a strong influence on the public discourse on budgets in India. Its work has contributed towards:

- ✔ Strengthening the voices of civil society stakeholders in debates and discussions on government budgets.
- ✔ Greater attention to the needs of vulnerable sections of the population in state and Union budgets.
- ✔ Enhanced transparency in the Union Budget, e.g. inclusion of figures for actual expenditures on schemes in the Union Budget since 2011-12 (earlier the Budget only included estimates of expenditures on schemes).
- ✔ Deepening of methodology of Gender Responsive Budgeting by Union Government ministries.
- ✔ Introduction of a scheme for effective implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

WHAT'S NEXT?

To maintain long-term sustainability, CBGA will build a corpus fund to support its core activities over time. Additionally, some of the focus areas for CBGA in the coming years include:

- Research and advocacy on issues relating to Centre-state fiscal relations and fiscal decentralization, i.e., how to improve the transfer and disbursement of funds given by the Centre to the states for development purposes.
- District and sub-district level budget tracking exercises focusing on a number of schemes (eg. MNREGA, Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan), i.e., developing appropriate methods for tracking budget allocation and utilization.
- Reorienting the approach of policymakers towards fiscal policy strategies for vulnerable sections, through working on Gender Responsive Budgeting, Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, Tribal Sub-Plan and other programs for minorities.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



We want to thank the CBGA team for the excellent job done on both sides of the pension question - expenditure and resource mobilisation.

Looking at resource mobilization has certainly allowed us to get into this aandalan (movement) with a sense of confidence of how to approach this question.

*- Nikhil Dey,
Prominent social activist (on CBGA's support to the Pension Parishad campaign)*



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- Subrat Das, Executive Director, is an expert on issues of government finances in India, with decades of experience in research and training.

Partnerships

- Funders: Ford Foundation, IDRC Think Tank Initiative, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, European Debt and Development Network, National Foundation of India.
- Global partnerships with Financial Transparency Coalition, Oxfam and Christian Aid among others.

Endorsements

- 2014-15 Budget Speech of Gujarat's Finance Minister acknowledges CBGA and the study on budget transparency, which it led.
- CBGA contributed a chapter on Child Budgeting for the Annual Reports of the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development for five consecutive years.

"CBGA is fostering the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the debates and discussions on budget related issues by demystifying the technical details underlying those issues, and it is generating relevant evidence for policymakers through its in-depth research on design and implementation of public policies meant for the poor."

- Subrat Das, executive director

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ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Centre for Civil Society (CCS) is a think tank seeking to advance social change through public policy, by promoting choice and accountability. The organization conducts research and advocacy, primarily in the education and livelihoods sector, with pilot projects for these in Delhi, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. CCS also focuses on creating future leaders in public policy through trainings and seminars for students, journalists and young professionals.

THE PROBLEM

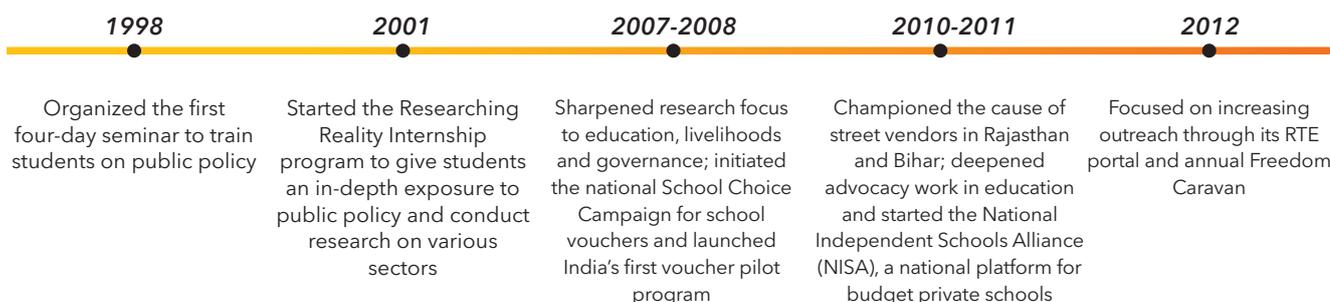
CCS believes that poor policies are the cause of every persistent social problem. Policies in India are largely uncompetitive with rigid regulations, which limit economic activities and choice for public services. Further, citizens are ignorant of policy gaps and unequipped to advocate for change.



CCS's RESPONSE

CCS develops market-based policies that provide citizens choice and holds institutions accountable. It then demonstrates the effectiveness of these policy ideas to the government through pilot programs, research and advocacy. CCS also trains the youth on public policy, to increase their engagement in policy matters.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Research, Advocacy & Pilot Programs: CCS conducts research to gain evidence to support its policy ideas. It demonstrates these ideas through various pilot projects and then engages with the community to drive advocacy for strengthening these policies.

- **Education:** This is CCS's primary sector of focus, with several initiatives to make the Right to Education Act more effective. Its work includes promoting choice through school vouchers; ensuring reservation of 25% seats in private unaided schools for economically weaker classes; strengthening the voice of budget private schools through NISA, and improving their quality.
- **Livelihoods:** CCS championed the Street Vendors Act, which was passed in 2014. Currently CCS is piloting a program, in partnership with the Maharashtra government, to promote choice in skill development via a voucher system.

Policy Training: CCS Academy conducts policy training and outreach programs for students, young professionals, academics and government officials.

- **iPolicy:** Through this certificate course, CCS introduces participants to comparative institutional analysis. Over 7,000 individuals have been trained; with many more being reached through the annual Freedom Caravan seminars in colleges.
- **Researching Reality:** This six-week internship for students provides them the chance to analyze public policy implications and develop their skills in research, writing and analysis.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
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5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ CCS has been successful in popularizing the idea of vouchers for schools and skills training. Its school vouchers program was a first in India; CCS's pilot for skill vouchers in Maharashtra (Vikalp), has been included in the model for the National Skill Development scheme.
- ✔ CCS has strengthened governance in education by starting initiatives such as the National Independent Schools Alliance, a platform for budget private schools, which has grown to 36,000 schools across 20 states as of 2014.
- ✔ Its advocacy was key to achieving Central and state-level legislation (Bihar & Rajasthan) for street vendors.
- ✔ 10 CCS Academy alumni have started public policy organizations and around 75 are working in this sector.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Deepen focus on education** over the next few years. As part of this, CCS plans to create a K-12 data portal, an open-source, consolidated 'one-stop shop' for all education data, with the aim of increasing transparency and having uniform data. CCS also plans to expand the reach of NISA to all states.
- **Expand presence** to Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra over the next three years, while continuing its national advocacy-related work in Delhi. CCS plans to strengthen state-level research, outreach and advocacy in the education and livelihood sectors.
- **Scale the pilot Vikalp program** for skill vouchers and expand its reach to 10,000 voucher beneficiaries.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



Centre for Civil Society is playing an important role in guiding policy reforms in the field of education.

- Arvinder Singh Lovely,
Former Delhi Education Minister



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- Dr. Parth J. Shah founded and leads CCS; has published extensively in international and Indian journals.
- Member of the Mont Pelerin Society, which consists of government officials, Nobel Prize recipients, journalists, etc. from across the world, with the aim of firming the principles and practice of a free society.
- Member of the Court at Central University of Tamil Nadu and the Central University of Himachal Pradesh.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Atlas Network, Acumen, Dell Foundation, Central Square Foundation (CSF), Edelgive Foundation.
- Advisors: Ashish Dhawan (CSF), Amit Kaushik (Pratham), Gurcharan Das and Premila Nazareth.

Endorsements

- A 2013 University of Pennsylvania study ranked CCS among the top 50 think tanks globally and the first in India.
- Four-time recipient of Atlas Foundation's Templeton Freedom Awards for outreach and advocacy efforts.

"All persistent and widespread social problems have their root causes in either wrong or absent public policies. CCS's policy research, pilot projects and advocacy in education and livelihoods aim at developing sound policy reforms. The policy training for college students, journalists and government officers promotes principles of choice, competition and accountability."

- Parth J. Shah, president

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Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ)

www.chsj.org

Founded: 2006 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 34

Budget (2013-14): INR 3.2 crore; Governance - INR 1.3 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

CHSJ focuses on health and gender justice, with the objective of enabling good governance and accountability from the perspective of social justice. It seeks to strengthen accountability of public health systems and health governance through community empowerment, resource support, capacity building for local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), research and advocacy. CHSJ also seeks to develop ways to engage men for gender justice.

THE PROBLEM

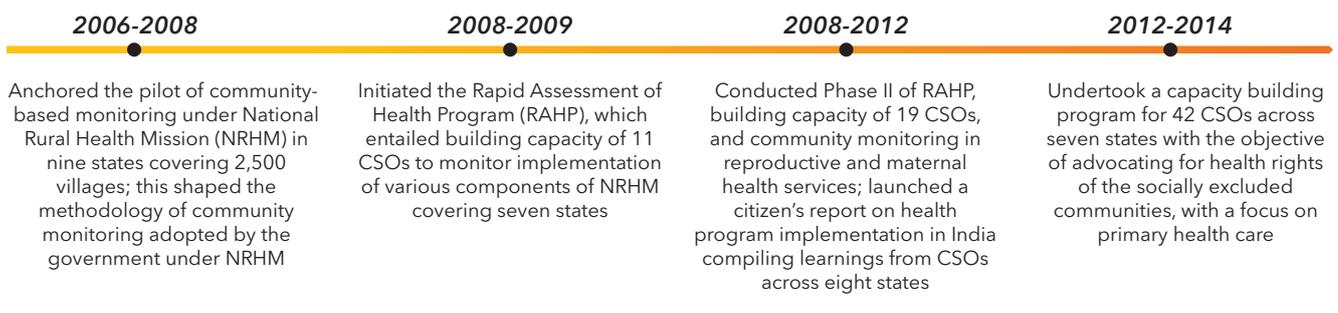
Marginalized communities, including women, in India are deprived of their basic health rights, despite constitutional entitlement under government schemes. This is due to structural barriers and lack of accountability in health systems, which deny them their dignity and rights.



CHSJ's RESPONSE

CHSJ seeks to facilitate community-based monitoring to leverage citizen participation in accessing health rights. It uses community mobilization and community-based research to advocate for the health rights of marginalized communities in order to drive effective implementation of the National Health Mission.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

CHSJ advocates for people-oriented health governance by:

1) building capacity of communities and CSOs to monitor implementation of public health programs, 2) community enquiry and research to generate evidence, 3) holding events and workshops, and using social media and technology to disseminate research, 4) building partnerships and networks to influence policy making, and 5) providing feedback to government on functioning of health systems under NRHM for further improvement. Community-based monitoring of health services is core to CHSJ's work and includes the following elements:

- Forming and strengthening of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), and Planning and Monitoring Committees (PMCs), and training of their members.
- Creating community awareness on NRHM entitlements, and roles and responsibilities of service providers (such as ANMs).
- Community enquiry and community report cards on the functioning of the health system.
- Evidence-based engagement with the public health system.

CHSJ has put together an online resource kit and a step-by-step guide for state governments and partner CSOs that can be trained in social accountability and community monitoring of public health services. It has also published international papers and research products on public health governance, health and human rights, and accountability around health rights, among others.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
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8. Capacity building of local partners
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WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ CHSJ's advocacy efforts have led to formalizing the design of community-based monitoring under the 'Communitization' components of the framework of NRHM.
- ✔ CHSJ, as part of the National Coalition against Two Child Norm and Coercive Population Policies, has been able to successfully advocate with various state governments on the removal of the two-child policy and is currently advocating at the national level for this change. It has contributed to a study on the two-child norm, its ill effects, and the opportunities to combat such population policies.

WHAT'S NEXT?

CHSJ wants to continue with its work on citizen rights for health and dignity for which accountability-based health governance is a pre-requisite. With social justice as its driving force, it will focus more on the health rights of communities socially excluded due to socio-economic and political marginalization and social prejudices. It will continue to engage in understanding the role of social exclusion as an important social determinant and focus on:

- Empowering communities in engaging with the public health system to bring accountability within the system, particularly for marginalized communities.
- Raising concerns of social exclusion and health at a larger scale through national and state level advocacy, networking and community centric policy research.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



Earlier, the doctor was not coming regularly. A monitoring committee was convened in the presence of all sections of people including daughters-in-law and young girls. It was discussed in the monitoring committee that the doctor should be requested to come and inform the people on the facilities available under NRHM in our PHC.

- Megharay Hembarn is a Sarpanch (Village Head) of Kakabandh village, Rasgovindpur District, Odisha, where CHSJ introduced community-based monitoring and built the capacity of the community to exercise its rights under public health programs



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- Abhijit Das (Director), doctor with training in obstetrics, pediatrics and public health.
- Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Partnerships

- Funders: AJWS, Ford Foundation, BRAC, Open Society Institute, MacArthur foundation, DFID-PACS, OXFAM.
- Networks: CHSJ serves as the secretariat of the National Coalition against Two Child Norm and Coercive Population Policies at the national level, global secretariat of the Community of Practitioners on Accountability and Social Action in Health (COPASAH), and Madhya Pradesh state secretariat of Maternal Health Rights Campaign (MHRC).

Endorsements

- CHSJ's work was recently featured on the nationally aired TV show, Satyamev Jayate.

"Citizen participation is key to the effective implementation of any public policy. The systems and policies do exist. All you have to do is empower people with knowledge. Knowledge that they can use to negotiate their rights with the State on their own."

- Abhijit Das, director

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Charkha Development Communication Network

www.charkha.org

Founded: 1994 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, Chhattisgarh

Full-Time Staff: 9 | **Budget (2013-14):** Organization - INR 1 crore; Governance - INR 1 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Charkha works towards the social and economic inclusion of marginalized communities in remote and conflict areas through the creative use of media, working closely with youth. Many of these areas are highly inaccessible and socially, economically and politically vulnerable. It currently provides on-field support in Jammu & Kashmir and remote guidance in Bihar and Chhattisgarh; it has previously worked in eight other states.

THE PROBLEM

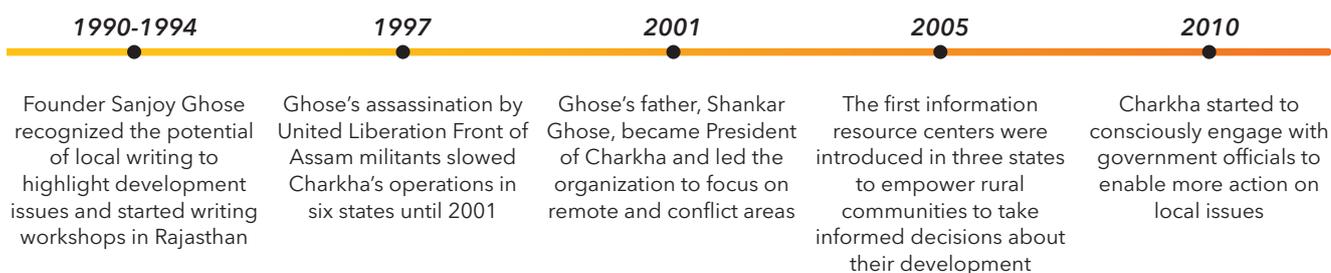
Rural communities, especially in remote and conflict areas, are extremely isolated. They typically get poor media coverage, so local problems often go unnoticed by the government and stakeholders who can make a difference. They also have poor access to information to help them obtain their rights.



CHARKHA'S RESPONSE

Charkha aims to empower communities by building their capacity to write at the local, state and national levels and to advocate for their rights. It provides them with resources to obtain their entitlements and facilitate engagements with government and other stakeholders who can help address local issues.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

- Before entering a community, Charkha liaises with multiple stakeholders to assess demand and gain community buy-in; Charkha spends at least two years in each area.
- Charkha conducts five-day skill building workshops for youth, with each participant undergoing a cycle of three workshops; the first two train participants to report and write on local issues, the third builds their capacity to become social advocates.
- Based on demand, information and communication networks are established with involvement from citizens and government; they are anchored in resource centers that hold information on public services and act as a platform to bring together various stakeholders motivated to create social change.
- The 12 existing resource centers collate local writing and transmit it for publication by Charkha's trilingual feature services' in Delhi (English, Hindi and Urdu); since 2004, Charkha has engaged with 159 villages and 369 local writers.
- These articles are edited, translated and disseminated to various national and regional print media; in 2013-2014, 604 articles were published in local, state and national newspapers.
- Talented writers are recognized for their work; writers can apply for a year-long media fellowship with Charkha.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

Charkha's work in conflict areas is especially unique due to the high-risk nature of these environments. Its success is evident in the numerous outcomes achieved using story publishing and advocacy efforts, which include:

- ✔ Improving service delivery to areas susceptible to firing across the border and strategically sensitive areas: fixing water and electricity connections; school, bridge and road construction.
- ✔ Helping citizens obtain their entitlements from the government, typically pensions and disability benefits.
- ✔ Facilitating cooperative relationships between citizens and government officials to enable social change in conflict areas where relations between the two have historically been strained.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Charkha plans to expand its operations and outreach, as well as focus on institution building.

- Expand operations to new conflict areas, prioritizing based on local demand.
- Return to Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand to deepen engagement with the community.
- Leverage mobile and digital technology in partnership with innovative organizations to improve connectivity in isolated areas.
- Create a large network of writers from different conflict areas and establish a robust platform where they can share knowledge and experiences.
- Build team size and capacity in order to scale effectively and implement systems to improve impact assessment.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



On reading my published article on the difficulties caused by the absence of roads in my remote mountainous village, I received a call from the Deputy Commissioner. He congratulated me on my writing and suggested I see him directly regarding such issues instead of going to the media. I pointed out that meeting him was difficult for the common man, and that the media was our last resort. He assured action on the concerns I had raised in my article. It is to Charkha's credit that I am now a strong votary of the responsible role that writing can play.

- **Noor-e-Ilahi Nakshbandi**
From District Poonch, Jammu & Kashmir



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Anshu Meshack; CEO of Charkha

- Nine years of corporate work experience with HCL and Tata Tea and nine years in the development sector.
- Has a post-graduate diploma in Business Management and a Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Partnerships

- Key funders: British High Commission, Unnati Foundation India.
- Key program partners in J&K: Deputy Commissioner's Office; Operation Sadbhavana of the Armed Forces.
- Publication partners: Leading local dailies such as *Udaan* and *Kashmir Times*, Asian News International, *Business Standard*.

Endorsements

- Awarded the UNFPA-Laadli Media Award for Gender Sensitivity (2009-10).
- Limca Book of Records record holder for India's only Trilingual Feature Service.

"Charkha's world begins where the highway ends. We work with those whom the governance mechanisms have simply forgotten, either because they're too remote to count or because it is too much of a risk and effort to reach them in conflict-affected areas. We give such people a voice and teach them how to be heard. We give them the information, skills and resources to actually change their circumstances themselves. We tell them, 'We don't do charity. You must take charge of your own development.' "

- **Anshu Meshack, CEO**

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Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

www.humanrightsinitiative.org

Founded: 1987 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India, South Asia and Africa

Full-Time Staff: 40 | **Budget (2013-14):** Organization - INR 4.5 crore; Governance - INR 4.5 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

CHRI's work centers on human rights education and advocacy in Commonwealth nations. It particularly focuses on improving people's access to justice and information, through research, capacity building, and litigation when necessary. CHRI relocated its headquarters from London to India in 1993 in order to establish its presence in South Asia. In 2001, CHRI set up an office in Ghana to expand its work in Africa .

THE PROBLEM

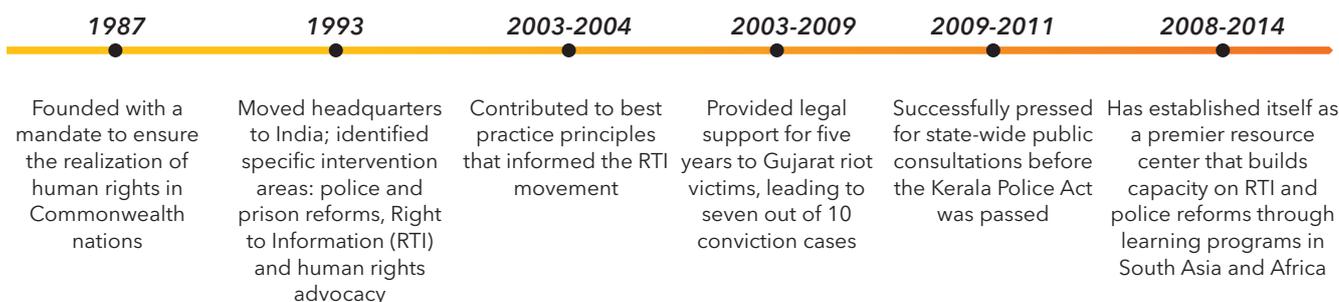
A citizen's access to justice and information is crucial for a robust democracy. But states fail to ensure this, which prevents public participation in good governance, perpetuates poverty and threatens the rule of law.



CHRI's RESPONSE

CHRI creates demand for systemic changes that will improve citizens' access to justice and promote people's "right to information". It ensures participation by citizens, thus creating accountability and transparency in governance and upholding the rule of law.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Police and Prison Reforms: In India, CHRI works towards:

- Building capacity of police forces so that they are more responsive and accountable to the public. CHRI does this by engaging with state governments and the police, and educating the public. It monitors performance and compliance with law and provides information at all levels of government to the media and the public through over 92 publications and reports. On the ground, it focuses on building knowledge amongst police constables through a monthly broadsheet called *Lok Police*.
- Reducing undertrial population and improving prison oversight: CHRI represents suspects at early stages of a trial, partners with legal aid authorities and law schools to run legal awareness camps in jail, and documents jail review and external oversight mechanisms.

Right to Information: CHRI provides technical assistance to develop and implement RTI, creates coalitions, monitors the working of information commissions; and undertakes strategic litigation to resist negative developments in RTI. It has trained over 7,000 key development professionals and public officials on implementing RTI.

Strategic Initiatives: CHRI ensures that Commonwealth countries adhere to core principles in the charter. It reports on human rights concerns and reviews the performance of states.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
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WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Contributed to the crafting of the six directives issued by the Supreme Court in 2006, to strengthen police reforms, most significantly to the setting up of the Police Complaints Authority to examine police misconduct.
- ✔ Initiated the appointment of non-official visitors to check prison operational standards in India, and revived the prison review committee that ensures the release of prisoners after completion of their term of imprisonment.
- ✔ Contributed to key features of RTI : (1) The inclusion of a multi-member information commission equipped to handle RTI complaints and (2) The imposition of penalties for non-compliance on the RTI Act.
- ✔ Premier resource agency - organizes learning programs in India for practitioners from South Asian countries.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the next few years, CHRI will concentrate on:

- **Police Reforms:** (1) Building a critical mass of informed citizens that demands better policing, through media and citizen activism, (2) Improving police response to the public; in particular to women, especially in cities; (3) Promoting systemic reforms for effective citizen-centric policing and more police accountability.
- **Prison Reforms:** (1) Reducing the detention period of undertrial prisoners through reforms in court practices, specifically in Rajasthan and West Bengal; (2) Reviving prison oversight mechanisms in the country.
- **RTI:** (1) Using RTI to make police functioning more transparent to the public; (2) Building capacity of civil society in other countries to adopt and implement RTI.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



Its [Right to Information's] effect on the popular consciousness has been electric. So deeply embedded and popular has the law become in India that any attempt to amend it or roll it back have been defeated by a fierce public defence of the law. CHRI has been at the forefront of ensuring the law's defence as well as its dissemination far and wide. It has taken its advocacy into South Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

- **Wajahat Habibullah,**
Chief Information Commissioner, India



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Maja Daruwala, Director, CHRI

- Practised as a lawyer, including at the Supreme Court.
- Currently on the Board of Civicus, Open Society Justice Initiative, and Oxfam GB, among other organizations.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Open Society Foundation, Ford Foundation, European Union.
- Partnerships in India: National Law University Delhi, Praja, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS).
- Global Collaborations: Transparency International (Maldives), Human Rights Network (Uganda).
- Conveners of South Asia Right to Information Advocates Network (SARTIAN) and Network for Improved Policing in South Asia (NIPSA).

Endorsements

- Accredited with special consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
- In 2010, Maja Daruwala was awarded the Nani A. Palkhiwala Award for Civil Liberties

"The merest glance around the Commonwealth found much wanting: two-thirds of the Commonwealth lived on under \$2 a day. We believe the presence of so much poverty is not an inevitable condition but a clear sign of bad governance. Too many governments ignore their people's wants and needs, keep them uninformed, excluded and distant from justice. CHRI makes strategic interventions to bring about systemic changes that will improve human rights and governance in the Commonwealth"

- **Maja Daruwala, director**

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ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

CPR is one of India’s leading public policy think tanks housing renowned academics and policy experts who produce some of the most insightful analysis and tools guiding policy in India today. As one of the country’s first independent non-profits focused on creating robust public discourse, CPR has been creating multiple platforms for dialogue between academia and policymakers since 1973.

THE PROBLEM

Academics in India often lack the independence and resources necessary to produce substantive research about the various subjects that affect governance. Even research that does get produced by experts is often ignored in public and policy discourse and is therefore unable to have significant impact.



CPR’s RESPONSE

CPR provides leading academics the support and freedom necessary to produce high-quality research. It also provides platforms for these experts to engage with the media and policymakers, which improves public knowledge and enables better decision making by public officials.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Research and Policy: Scholars at CPR produce research within one of its five focus areas: a) Economic policy analysis b) Environmental law and governance c) International relations and security d) Law, regulation and the State e) Urbanization.

Initiatives: The flexible and supportive structure of CPR has allowed for intellectual entrepreneurs to create several unique initiatives enabling dissemination of research and platforms for engagement:

- *The SARCIST:* Focused on building a virtual knowledge platform for policy advocacy on issues of regional cooperation.
- *Namati Environmental Justice Program:* Engaged in a range of research activities particularly looking at coastal governance, and compliance by industries on regulatory conditions.
- *Climate Initiative:* Focused on research and analysis on the links between the global climate regime and domestic laws, policies and institutions. It seeks to create a platform where scholars and activists can engage in policy debate on climate change.
- *Governance and Public Policy Initiative:* Focused on tailor-made academic programs for Indian public officials with top universities around the world, using existing partnerships with Yale, Princeton and Oxford University, as well as organizing domestic roundtables and seminars in India with legislators (MPs and MLAs).
- *Accountability Initiative:* Aims to improve the quality of public services by strengthen accountability gaps within their delivery.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

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WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ CPR has consistently provided platforms to Parliamentarians across the political spectrum to discuss different views and concerns, and engage with think tank analysts, civil society groups and experts.
- ✔ CPR's academics are regularly invited by the government to standing committees to contribute to new policies.
- ✔ CPR's policy work at the national level includes contributions to the chapter on environment and climate for the 12th Five Year Plan and development of a policy framework for climate change.
- ✔ CPR has produced widely-cited studies on flagship social sector schemes including MNREGA, JSY, and NRHM.

WHAT'S NEXT?

To strengthen its impact further in the domain of policy research, and to expand further academic discourse around governance, CPR aims to:

- Increase the number of fellows affiliated with it, by instituting endowment chairs to attract strong talent.
- Strengthen its communications strategy, to effectively leverage its considerable research and build debates and discourse around this research in the public sphere.
- Develop an independent repository of data to ensure unbiased and accurate information across a range of areas.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND

“

Today, few would argue with the 39-year-old CPR's claim to being a "premier" think tank on public policy – it has vastly expanded its ambit and established a reputation for intellectual rigor, flair and, most critically, independence that makes it the go-to institution for serious social sciences academics.

- Business Standard

”

QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Dr. Pratap Bhanu Mehta is the president of CPR

- Professor, Harvard University, New York University and Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- Malcom S. Adishehshiah Award, 2010; Infosys Prize for Social Sciences (Political Science), 2011; Amartya Sen Award, 2013.
- Member-Convenor, Prime Minister's National Knowledge Commission.

Partnerships

- Funders: Ford Foundation, Asia Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Gita Piramal.
- Faculty partner on an environmental justice project with Namati, an international non-profit dedicated to legal empowerment.

Endorsements

- CPR is one the winners of the IDRC Think Tank Initiative, a multi-donor program dedicated to strengthening independent policy research institutions.

“CPR is a collection of vibrant academics and policymakers working to bring some intellectual order to a contentious and fast changing world. In a democracy, citizens are engaged in public conversation on subjects ranging from the economy and the environment to the structures of our laws and the policies of our government. This deliberation can be enriched and clarified by the kind of well-thought-out arguments and soberly assessed evidence produced by CPR's community of scholars.”

- Dr. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, President

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ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

eGovernments Foundation (eGov) is an information technology solutions provider for local government, to enable e-governance. It was founded to improve the functioning of urban administration, thereby leading to efficient delivery of services to its stakeholders. eGov’s software solutions are currently deployed across 275 municipalities across India.

THE PROBLEM

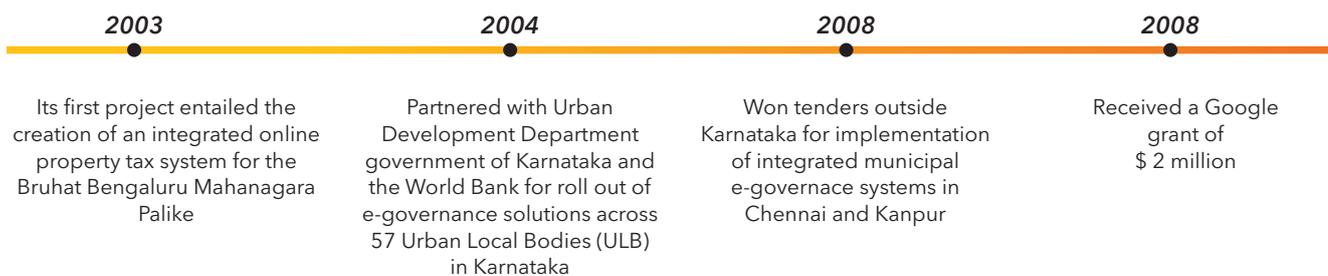
Urban administrations are not in a position to meet basic citizen needs due to weak institutional capacities that hinder the effective delivery of public services. This leads to inefficiencies and a lack of transparency, which eventually prevents citizens from accessing rights and entitlements.



eGOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE

By leveraging technology, data and government process reengineering, eGov empowers local governments to improve their internal processes and systems, which enhances their capacity to deliver efficient, transparent and reliable services to all their stakeholders (citizens, businesses and employees).

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

eGovernments Foundations’ software solutions and systems encompass components such as revenue collections, financial accounting and budgeting, employee information and master data management. Its product offering is divided into four parts:

Expenditure Management: Assists the government in the development and implementation of its spending plans. Modules include public works, asset, payroll, pension and inventory management systems.

Revenue Management: Helps the government to raise and collect taxes. Modules include property tax, trade license and land-estate management systems.

Internal Efficiency: Enables governments to realize efficiency gains. Modules include employee, file and legal case management systems.

Citizen Convenience: Helps citizens efficiently interface with the government. Modules include public grievance/redressal, birth/death certificates and building plan approval management systems.

Municipalities have the option to choose from various packages and combinations of modules. eGov does not charge for the cost of product development, but clients do have to pay for integration of the modules with their systems. ULBs can also enter into a maintenance contract with eGov for the upkeep of their systems.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. **Technology platforms and solutions**
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. **Capacity building of government officials**
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

eGov measures the impact of its work in terms of efficiency gains realized by citizens and municipal employees:

- ✔ As waiting time for the issuance of birth and death certificates has reduced from 4-5 hours to less than 1 hour, the 47 lakh certificates issued through eGov created systems have resulted in 948 man-years saved for citizens and 406 man-years saved for government officials.
- ✔ Property tax systems created by eGov have resulted in a 25-800% increase in revenues for ULBs by bringing over 40% of un-assessed properties into the tax net.
- ✔ eGov grievance redressal systems have enabled the registration of over 22 lakh citizen complaints.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next four years will see eGov focusing on new product features that will lead to an enhancement of revenues

- Open source software solutions will bring in best practices and attract volunteers who can contribute to modules thereby making them more robust.
- Creating a dashboard/network operating center feature will enable municipal officials to make data-driven decisions in a proactive and efficient manner.
- Adding mobile capabilities to software solutions will enable municipal employees to complete their tasks in the field, and will enable citizens to access services on the move.
- Enabling software as a service will lead to increased customization, adoption and affordability.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND

“

Through your public grievance redressal system, I filed a complaint about non-functional street lights. The junior engineer from the ward called to ask for the exact location, after which the problem was immediately addressed. This people-centric application is something that we can all be proud of.

- A citizen of Chennai

”

QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Co-founded by Nandan Nilekani and Srikanth Nadhamuni

- Nilekani has served as chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and as CEO of Infosys, a technology company.
- Nadhamuni is co-founder and CEO of Khosla Labs and has had significant experience working with several technology startups in Silicon Valley.

Partnerships

- Past funders include Google Inc. and Nandan Nilekani.
- Partnered with the Centre for Good Governance for the implementation of e-governance solutions across municipalities in Andhra Pradesh.

Endorsements

- Quality certified by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology, for the provision of e-governance services to municipalities.
- Security certification provided by the India Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN).

“Technology can be leveraged to streamline large-scale systems, which can serve to ameliorate local governance at the city or village level. This led Nandan Nilekani and me to create eGovernments Foundation - to focus on improving city governance by creating scalable and replicable municipal e-governance solutions across all departments and activities of urban local bodies.”

- Srikanth Nadhamuni, co-founder

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Gram Vaani
www.gramvaani.org



Founded: 2009 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 32
Budget (2013-14): Organization - INR 2 crore; Governance - INR 2 crore

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Gram Vaani (meaning 'voice of the village') uses technology to develop media platforms for the hardest to reach populations. It partners with over 90 organizations to deploy its voice-based technologies, reaching over 2 million users in seven countries and over 15 Indian states. It runs its own mobile-based community radio platform, Mobile Vaani, primarily in Jharkhand and Bihar, and also supports over 40 community radio stations nationwide.

<p>THE PROBLEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Significant rural populations remain ignorant due to either irrelevant content and language in mass media or lack of access to any media ● A dearth of common platforms for citizen voices sustains the low level of awareness and accountability of the local government 	<p>GRAM VAANI'S RESPONSE</p> <p>A media platform that is easily accessible through a phone call, which empowers people, particularly those that are illiterate or offline, to share experiences and gain local visibility. This provides a forum for citizens to increase transparency and accountability of government services in rural areas.</p>
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HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Mobile Vaani allows rural populations to share and receive information through a free-of-cost call on their mobiles, using an IVR system. Individuals can record their comments and listen to local content, primarily generated by other users. This voice-based social media platform has various uses, including knowledge sharing, discussion forums, social campaigns to collect data and increase awareness on specific issues, as well as entertainment. Content generated on Mobile Vaani is used to increase accountability in several ways:

- Dissemination through mass media: *Prabhat Khabar*, a local paper with a daily circulation of 8 lakh, dedicates one page per week to Mobile Vaani content.
- Advocacy through volunteers: Over 150 volunteers engaged through partner non-profits and local clubs follow up on issues with local officials, who are more responsive following the transparency created by media and fear of escalation.
- Direct tie-ups with government officials to respond to grievances.

Gram Vaani's partnerships enable revenue generation as well as increase its citizen reach and impact:

- It trains non-profits with local presence to develop citizen journalists who use the Mobile Vaani platform to mobilize communities.
- It provides partners with data generated through targeted social campaigns, which can be used for advocacy at a national level.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

- 1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens**
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
- 5. Technology platforms and solutions**
- 6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism**
7. Capacity building of government officials
- 8. Capacity building of local partners**
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Independent media: Its success is reflected in the level of listenership and participation; Mobile Vaani gets over 5,000 calls per day, 3% involve individuals recording content; it has over 400,000 unique users.
- ✔ Grievance redressal: Volunteer action or direct government tie-ups have led to a response in over 50 cases, including cases of corruption around MNREGA job-card issuance, illegal mining and water availability.
- ✔ Social audits: A two-month health campaign led to responses by 400+ people on the status of public health facilities; findings were shared with newspapers and television, leading to testimonials on five improved health facilities that impacted over 100,000 people; similar surveys done on education facilities, MNREGA works.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Gram Vaani plans to continue scaling its Mobile Vaani platform through:

- Expansion to new geographies - it recently began operations in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.
- New partnerships with non-profits that can use its platform to mobilize their communities, and in turn increase Gram Vaani's reach as well as user engagement.
- New social campaigns on issues such as illegal mining in Jharkhand, to expand the uses of Mobile Vaani.

In order to scale, Gram Vaani would need to expand its team: its content team, which is responsible for moderating and curating content; its field team and volunteer base, which mobilize communities to use the platform; and its management team to take on more projects effectively.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



A lot of recordings were published on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani that shared the details of an illicit land dealing and the involvement of senior officials and the Block Development Officer. After taking the matter forward, the district administration has suspended the Block Development officer and other officers involved in the scam. This quick response of the government is thanks to the recordings that were run on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani.

- Sanjay Soren,
from Domchach, Jharkhand (April 2014)



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Aaditeshwar Seth is the co-founder and CEO.

- Faculty at IIT Delhi, alumnus of IIT Kanpur and has a PhD from University of Waterloo (Canada).

Partnerships

- IIT Delhi, where Gram Vaani was incubated.
- Investors: Digital News Ventures, India Angel Network.
- Non-profits: Oxfam, CREA, Breakthrough, CEDPA.
- Government: Health and Labour Departments in Jharkhand, Municipal Corporation of Delhi.
- Other Supporters: Knight Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation.

Endorsements

- *Economic Times* rated Gram Vaani among the 14 startups to watch in 2014.
- mBillionth Award in 2012 and 2013.
- *Economic Times* Power of Ideas 2010.
- Manthan Award 2009.

"Initially, our growth was constrained because we were only a technology provider and it was difficult to scale through scattered NGOs. With Mobile Vaani, we evolved into a media company that runs its own network, which is enriched by partnerships but doesn't depend on them. Now, as a media company, our biggest challenge is funding: you need to first invest in scaling and building a user base; financial sustainability through sponsorships only comes after."

- Aaditeshwar Seth, co-founder and CEO

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Gujarat Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT)

www.mahilahousingtrust.org

Founded: 1994 | **Head Office:** Ahmedabad | **Coverage:** Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand | **Full-Time Staff:** 70 | **Budget (2013-14):** Organization - 4.8 crore; Governance - 2.3 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

MHT was established in 1994 as an autonomous organization promoted by the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA). MHT organizes and empowers poor women by facilitating the formation of community-based organizations (CBOs) and assisting them in gaining formal recognition from the government and service providers, so as to address the need for basic infrastructural services such as water, sanitation and electricity provision in slums.

THE PROBLEM

The process of town planning is typically opaque and top-down. This impacts the poor most adversely, as urban growth plans tend to overlook the needs of slum-dwellers, and their rights to services such as water and sanitation.

MHT’s RESPONSE

MHT develops grassroots women’s leadership to give poor and marginalized women a voice, thus empowering them to participate in the framing of policies, laws and schemes that determine their development. Through this, MHT works towards fostering more inclusive town-planning.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

MHT brings basic services and entitlements to the grassroots through community empowerment, and by facilitating engagement with the government and the private sector, adopting the following steps:

Generating Demand and Creating a Slum Transformation Plan:

- MHT enters slum communities, and mobilizes women through sensitization meetings and activities, discussing the potential impact collective action can have. It helps the residents to assess needs and design their own development plans.

Forming and Strengthening Community-Based Organizations:

- MHT then collectivizes and trains community members, forming CBOs, and imparts training on how to obtain clearances for, and how to undertake construction of infrastructure; on accessing government schemes; and on running CBOs effectively.

Service Delivery of Water, Sanitation, Energy and Housing:

- MHT liaises with the government to recognize slum settlement plots, and assists CBOs in working with urban local bodies and the private sector to ensure delivery of basic services.

Participatory Urban Governance and City Planning:

- It helps in forming and mentoring CBOs at the slum level, and consolidates these into city-wide federations called Vikasinis.
- Vikasinis are further mentored, to take forward pro-poor governance and provide inputs in development plans.
- MHT uses its learnings to directly advocate for pro-poor policies, working with national programs such as JNNURM and RAY.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ MHT has worked with 84,000 families in urban and rural areas, across six states; these households have been able to access infrastructural services, assisted by MHT’s approach to collectivizing citizens to work with the government towards their development.
- ✔ To date, MHT has mobilized nearly INR 50 crore from local governments and communities towards slum development.
- ✔ The Vikasini in Ahmedabad has provided inputs for Ahmedabad’s City Development Plan for 2020, working alongside the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

WHAT’S NEXT?

- MHT is in the process of developing and refining an ICT-enabled system, which informs citizens on the state of basic service provision and urban infrastructure, facilitating citizen-led planning. The system also shares information on municipal processes, and allows citizens to track applications. This project is currently being piloted in one zone of Ahmedabad.
- In addition to strengthening three existing Vikasinis, it is looking to establish Vikasinis in 10 other cities. To enable all Vikasinis to have a more informed say in urban infrastructure plans, MHT is also working towards further demystifying urban land tenure and town planning systems.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



We view our partnership with MHT as analogous to performing the role of a ‘water purifier’. We go into underdeveloped, ‘impure’ areas and assist women in these areas in ‘purifying’ them into clean, healthy environments.

*- Minaben,
(Vikasini member)*



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- The organization is led by Bijal Brahmbhatt, a civil engineer with over 15 years of experience in water, sanitation and housing development.
- The senior management is part of the Dasra Social Impact Leadership Program, 2014.

Partnerships

- Funders include the Gates Foundation, Dell Foundation
- On the Steering Committee of the Delhi Municipal Act for the Poor.
- Nominated on the Slum Notification Board of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 2014.
- Works with international organizations including WEIGO, based out of Harvard University; Asian Coalition of Housing Rights.

Endorsements

- The ICT-enabled governance project has won the 2014 Urban Resilience Competition organized by USAID, Pulse Lab Jakarta, UN Habitat and UNDP.

MHT believes that all citizens have a right to equal access to basic civic services. Enabling the poor to have their own city-level organizations helps them claim this right by effectively engaging with local governments, sharing their issues and concerns and working collectively to devise locally relevant solutions. A collective voice and common platform ensure that they are treated justly by all service providers.

- Bijal Brahmbhatt, director

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IndiaSpend
www.indiaspend.com

Founded: 2011 | Head Office: Mumbai | Coverage: Pan-India | Full-Time Staff: 6
Budget (2013-14): Organization - 1.4 INR crore; Governance - 1.4 INR crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

IndiaSpend is India's first online data journalism initiative, analyzing open data sources to bring out stories providing objective, data-driven information to the public. Its transparent and rigorous approach to reporting fosters better accountability and aims to create a more informed electorate. A project of The Spending and Policy Research Foundation, with pan-India coverage of issues, IndiaSpend hopes to improve the quality of public debate in India.

THE PROBLEM

The mainstream media often does not provide substantive reporting that is backed by thoroughly researched data on important development issues. The result is an under-informed electorate, which is therefore unable to challenge government on policy making and service delivery.



INDIASPEND'S RESPONSE

IndiaSpend uses primary data sources to analyze a range of issues of public interest at the state and central level. Its findings are disseminated into the public domain through its website and relationships with leading media organizations. By providing credible information freely, it enables the public to hold government accountable.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

IndiaSpend analyzes and uses hard data obtained from government archives to report to the public through the following:

- **Fact Checker website:** This online platform scrutinizes public statements made by individuals such as ministers and electoral candidates for veracity and context. It also examines issues in the public domain for which there is a strong need to verify data. These Fact Checks are disseminated online through a dedicated website. The objective is to encourage individuals in public office, or those informing the public, to make responsible statements and bring in a degree of personal accountability.
- **Research reports:** In-depth monthly reports on state - and central - level issues across women, health, education and infrastructure to foster data-led discussions among influential public figures.
- **Data room:** A first of its kind resource for students, journalists and researchers that allows comparison of dynamic and static data at the state level, on a range of development issues.

IndiaSpend's work and analysis is disseminated through its website and weekly feeds to prominent publications, journalists, politicians, and news platforms, such as Dow Jones and Yahoo News, and is quoted in leading publications like Mint and Indian Express.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. **Creating knowledge and evidence**
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. **Technology platforms and solutions**
6. **Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism**
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ First organization to highlight which Rajya Sabha Members of Parliament (MP) were not attending sessions - this story was covered widely by other social media and television channels.
- ✔ Platform collaboration with Dow Jones and Yahoo News, which feature all of IndiaSpend's stories.
- ✔ Its stories are published by numerous media outlets such as *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express*, *Mumbai Mirror*, First Post, *Youth Ki Awaaz*, Sify and *Free Press Journal*.
- ✔ 24,000 page views every month, 43,000 followers on Google Plus, 3,800 followers on Facebook.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Sending data analyses to government officials targeted by state/district as well as issues of interest; hosting roundtables/briefings to promote policy dialogue among them.
- Creating an open-source district database, the first of its kind, to collate key economic and social indicators for all of India's 675 districts. This will allow powerful search and comparison exercises between districts.
- Collaborations with the World Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Action Aid and Symbiosis Institute to convert their existing research expertise in various fields into in-depth stories for publication on IndiaSpend.

IndiaSpend's goal is to reach 5,000 influential individuals across India ranging from opinion leaders in the media to MPs and other public officials.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



The high relevance of Indiaspend becomes especially apparent during election times. In the last few months, Ethiraj's non-profit initiative has provided many of the nearly 815 million Indians who are entitled to vote with an opportunity to obtain concrete information about the many candidates running for parliament with interviews and articles.

-Stefan Quandt,
Board Member, BMW Foundation



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Govindraj Ethiraj, Founder

- Indian financial journalist, formerly Founder and Editor-In-Chief at Bloomberg UTV, previously at *Economic Times*, *Business World*, CNBC TV.
- Winner, BMW Responsible Leadership Awards 2014.
- Fellow, Aspen Institute.

Samar Halarnkar, Editor

- Former Managing Editor at *Hindustan Times* and columnist with *Hindustan Times* and *Mint*, former Fellow at Harvard University and UC Berkeley.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Rohini Nilekani, Vikram Lal, Nemish Shah, Pirojsha Godrej Foundation.
- Key program partners: Dow Jones, Yahoo News, Google.
- IndiaSpend is a member of the Global Investigative Journalism Network, the only media organization currently participating from India.

"We use data to tell stories that empower citizens so they can ask the hard questions on governance and thus demand accountability. We believe that data, if effectively used, can transform lives. Our target is to reach 5,000 influencers across the country, including in media. We believe we are already half-way there."

- Govindraj Ethiraj, founder

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Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy

www.janaagraha.org

Founded: 2001 | Head Office: Bangalore | Coverage: Pan-India | Full-Time Staff: 130

Budget (2013-14): Organization - INR 20 crore; Governance - INR 20 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Janaagraha works with citizens and the government to catalyze systemic change in urban India. Focused on developing the quality of urban infrastructure and services, as well as the quality of citizenship, its work ranges from civic education in schools, to providing support to state governments in the design of urban transformation agendas. While a large part of its work is based in Bangalore, it has scaled several programs to cover all of India.

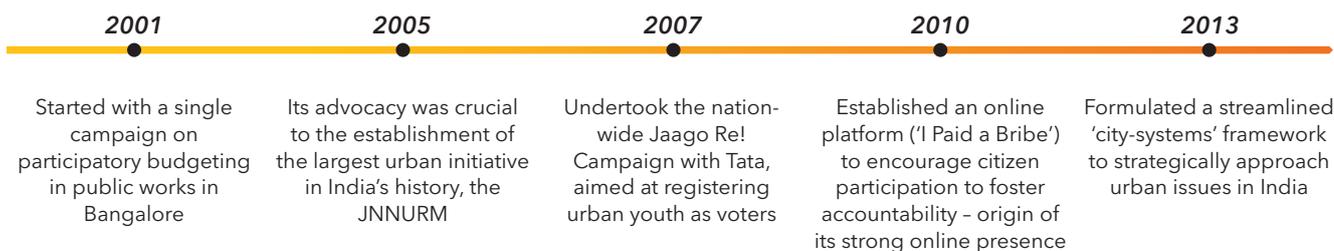
THE PROBLEM

Urban India faces several unheralded issues, ranging from a lack of platforms for citizen participation to patchy or broken infrastructure and service delivery systems. Further, the approach taken to improving our cities tends to be reactive and focused on the short-term.

JANAAGRAHA'S RESPONSE

Janaagraha builds the capacity of citizens to actively take part in public affairs, creates platforms for citizen engagement, and works with the government from the local to the national level, on systemic and institutional reforms.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Some of Janaagraha's engagements across the themes of its city-systems framework include:

1. Urban Planning and Design:

Towards ensuring planned and sustainable development, Janaagraha, through its sister organization Jana USP, advocates for, and pilots best-in-class urban planning policies and design standards, in collaboration with state and local government.

2. Urban Capacities and Resources:

The organization works with administrators at various levels of government to institute reforms that enhance human and financial capacities of city governments.

3. Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation:

It addresses the accuracy of voter lists by mobilizing communities and undertaking research and advocacy in partnership with the Election Commission of India.

4. Transparency, Accountability and Participation:

'I Change My City' serves as a city-specific e-database of information on civic issues, and as a portal for citizens to lodge complaints and seek redressal on issues under the purview of local authorities. Its PROOF program compiles hyper-local data at the ward level, linking service provision to budgetary outlays. Other initiatives include 'I Paid a Bribe', an online portal that tracks graft; community policing; 'Bala Janaagraha', a civic education program for children; and research initiatives across various themes.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
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6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✓ In 2013, the Karnataka government allocated INR 500 crore for redevelopment of 45 roads in Bangalore according to Janaagraha's Tender S.U.R.E design standards.
- ✓ Robust, scalable online platforms created - 'I Paid a Bribe' has been replicated in 10 countries in less than five years of its creation; close to 50% of the nearly 12,000 grievances posted on 'I Change my City' stand resolved, with Janaagraha assisting in mobilizing key stakeholders.
- ✓ Comprehensive 'city-systems framework' developed to identify root causes of systemic shortfalls in urban India; two annual surveys published; 2014 survey covers 21 cities, up from 11 cities in 2013.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- To scale up 'I Change my City' to Bhubaneswar, Jaipur and Delhi, the groundwork for which has begun.
- To build on its work in planning and redesigning roads in Bangalore, working to develop and implement planning and design standards for rejuvenating public spaces in the city.
- Scaling its work in urban planning and design to two other states over the next three years.

As Janaagraha scales the implementation of these various components of its city-systems framework across India (as outlined above), a key organizational priority will be to ensure greater strategic coordination across its programs, to maximize impact.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



I believe that urban India, at least as far as the roads in cities are concerned, should be a completely different picture if Tender S.U.R.E. specifications and Tender S.U.R.E. model [developed by Janaagraha] becomes the basis for road making... it's a big leap forward

*- I.S.N. Prasad,
Principal Secretary, Chief Minister's Office,
Govt. of Karnataka, 2008-2012*



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Founded by Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan

- Ramesh served as national technical advisor for JNNURM.
- Swati has received the Rajyotsava Puraskar - Rajasthan's highest civilian award - for the Jaipur 2025 plan developed by her.

Partnerships

- Individual Donors: N.R. Narayana Murthy; Sridar Iyengar.
- Corporate Donors: Tata Group; Google provides in-kind tech support; HSBC; Infosys .
- Institutional Donors: Omidyar Network, Edelgive.
- Brown University, on the Janaagraha-Brown Citizenship Index.

Endorsements

- I Change my City won the Global Impact Award at the Google Impact Challenge (2013-2014).

"India's cities are in a mess. The challenges are too deep and systemic to take tactical stabs at fixing them. Lack of clear leadership, and a mishmash of institutions with fragmented mandates add to the already mammoth problem. Janaagraha wants to engage with leaders to help them diagnose urban challenges through the lens of a "City-Systems framework" and develop a customized transformational strategy and execution plan for their city, to improve the quality of life."

- Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan, co-founders

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ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Khabar Lahariya (KL) was conceptualized and supported by Nirantar, a non-profit focused on girls and women’s education. It registered as an independent entity in 2013. It is the only local language newspaper that covers local news that is off the radar of mainstream media in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar. Produced by a collective of rural women journalists, it targets rural audiences in media-dark zones with little connection to the outside world.

THE PROBLEM

Rural populations have limited news coverage of local issues and are often forgotten or ignored by government bodies. Rural areas also have poor access to news, which means people in these areas lack the information to access their rights and entitlements.



KHABAR LAHARIYA's RESPONSE

KL produces a newspaper to give exposure to unseen places and unheard voices, by connecting audiences with unique local language content on local issues. Government bodies are held accountable for inaction over local issues and citizens are empowered with information to advocate for their rights.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Training local women in journalism

- Local literate and semi-literate women are selected as potential journalists.
- These women then get six months with senior journalists who rigorously train them to report and write about local news, including politics, development and women’s issues.
- In 2013-2014, 35 women journalists were trained.

Production of the newspaper

- Women collect information directly from villagers and actively follow up with local government officials to create accountability for local issues.
- The news collected is edited and produced at the regional level for six print editions and one online edition covering seven different dialects.
- Each newspaper contains eight pages, which cover local news from the village, town and state level as well as some international and entertainment news. One page is dedicated to women’s issues and one for local editorials and letters from readers.

Distribution of the newspaper

- 12,000 copies of *Khabar Lahariya* are printed weekly.
- The newspapers, sold at INR 2, are distributed door to door by the reporters in their respective geographic beats across eight districts; KL readership is approximately 1.2 lakh people.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. **Building awareness and mobilizing citizens**
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. **Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism**
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✓ *Khabar Lahariya* began as and remains the only multi-edition local language newspaper in India.
- ✓ In Chitrakoot, *KL*'s weekly circulation is the same as *Dainak Jagran*'s (India's most read Hindi newspaper); locals prefer *KL* for its relevant content and their greater involvement in the news it contains.
- ✓ *KL* reportage has generated public opinion around critical local issues and there has been increased accountability among local government officials; e.g. in 2012, a special issue exposing poor health services led to the suspension of the chief medical officer in Banda (UP).
- ✓ *KL* empowers marginalized women with an unconventional source of livelihood and greater independence.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next five years, *KL* aims to expand its operations and develop a sustainable business model:

- Create new editions in 10 more districts in UP and Bihar and increase the number of copies distributed in existing districts to reach 16,000 more households.
- Increase the price of the newspaper from INR 2 to INR 4.
- Explore avenues of advertising within the newspaper to increase revenue.
- Explore alternative distribution methods by collaborating with FMCGs and mainstream newspapers.
- Collaborate with mainstream newspapers to make *KL* available in peri-urban areas.
- Partner with Gram Vaani to broadcast stories over its mobile-based community radio, for greater outreach.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



*We know about schools at the panchayat level, but sometimes, when panchayats are big, we don't know how many children a school is meant to cater to, or how far children from hamlets walk to reach school. It was from a story in *KL*, from Pahra village in Karwi block, that we found out that the children from Gulab village had to cross the main road and walk 3 km to reach the nearest primary school. Subsequently a primary school has been built in that village, catering to 300 families.*

- **Satyendra**,
Clerk in the office of the Basic Education Officer, Chitrakoot, UP



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Shalini Joshi; founding member; director of Nirantar

- Has nearly two decades of experience in grassroots educational programs working with rural women.

Meera Jatav; founding member; Managing Editor of *KL*

- Worked extensively as a grassroots activist under the Mahila Samakhya government program aimed at educating and empowering rural women.

Partnerships

- Key funders: UNDEF, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Save the Children India.

Endorsements

KL has won numerous prestigious awards:

- Global Media Forum Award (2014).
- Marico Innovation Foundation Award for Social Innovation (2014).
- Times Now Amazing Indians Award (2013).
- UNESCO King Sejong Award for Literacy (2009).

"*KL* has been able to fill a huge gap by providing information on entitlements and empowering the most impoverished communities in remote villages. Its hyper-local content in the local language is distinct and unparalleled. It is a successful model now ready to scale its impact, its reach and operations. Support to this organization would enable us to make the shift to a sustainable rural media enterprise. This will strengthen institutions of local governance and make them robust and accountable."

- **Shalini Joshi**, director, Nirantar

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National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)

www.ncdhr.org.in

Founded: 1998 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 45

Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 5.2 crore; Governance – INR 5.2 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

NCDHR works to eliminate discrimination based on caste, and protect the basic human rights of Dalits (also known as Scheduled Castes), who constitute over 16% of India’s total population. NCDHR drives systemic change by strengthening the response of the government and justice system, as well as mobilizing civil society through a coalition of over 350 organizations, to protect and demand these rights.

THE PROBLEM

Despite numerous government schemes to benefit Dalits, the intended funds are under-utilized, and have not impacted the economic status of Dalits. Despite legal safeguards and policies to address injustices, the lack of enforcement has allowed for unchecked violence against Dalits.



NCDHR’S RESPONSE

NCDHR conducts research on public policy implementation and law enforcement, which is disseminated widely and used for advocacy with the government. It also trains civil society and mobilizes citizens to access their rights, to impact the state of Dalit rights at a national level.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

NCDHR’s interventions are implemented under various national movements, with the help of partner non-profits and volunteers across 14 states. Its model involves evidence building through research and public interest litigation, sustained engagement with government, training of stakeholders, informing legislation, grassroots community mobilization and media outreach. Its activities span:

- **Economic Rights:** Monitors the Union budget and 14 state budgets to track allocations and implementation of government schemes; trains organizations across sectors to use budget analysis to address exclusion of Dalits; has set up 12 budget centers which mobilize local volunteers to empower Dalits to access their entitlements under various schemes - over 10,000 reached in the past year.
- **Women’s Rights:** Promotes leadership and political participation by Dalit women, builds the capacity of Dalit women elected representatives.
- **Civil and Political Rights:** Mobilizes volunteers across 10 states to ensure access to justice to survivors of violence; monitors the criminal justice system; sensitizes the police and judiciary on Dalit rights; advocates for changes in policy.
- **Exclusion in Disasters:** Monitors prevention and relief processes for disasters, to ensure that the systemic response does not exclude Dalit communities.
- **International Advocacy:** Engages with bodies such as the UN and Human Rights Council to catalyze international campaigns.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ NCDHR led a national campaign to highlight the diversion of US\$140 million of funds allocated for Dalits to help pay for the Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi in 2010. This led to a public acknowledgment and stated intention to restore the diverted funds by the Home Minister before the Parliament.
- ✔ NCDHR's efforts led to the implementation of Code 789, which allows for the monitoring of government funds allocated for Dalits; the government made using this code mandatory for all departments in the 2011-2012 budget.
- ✔ NCDHR worked with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to help draft the Prevention of Atrocities Amendment Bill, 2014, which was signed by the President in March 2014 as an ordinance.

WHAT'S NEXT?

NCDHR aims to build its institutional capacity to strengthen its impact at the grassroots across 20 states. Additionally, it aims to focus on the following program areas:

- Expand budget resource centers to more states, to help Dalit communities realize their rights and leverage this on-ground experience for advocacy at the state and national level.
- Invest in technology and train grassroots volunteers to use its Atrocity Tracking and Monitoring system, a Web-based platform, which allows for tracking of case details to increase accountability in the justice system.
- Work with partner organizations to identify and develop Dalit women leaders across more states.
- Promote the policy agenda at a global level to enhance government response.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



NCDHR has pioneered work on policy at the national and state levels, and is committed to the cause of the marginalized. NCDHR has been striving to bridge the gap between policy and community. They have been doing commendable work in the area of fiscal transparency, accountability and access to justice issues, with a special focus on Dalits.

- Amitabh Behar,
Executive Director, National Foundation of India



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- N. Paul Divakar, V.A. Ramesh Nathan and Asha Kotwal are the three General Secretaries at NCDHR.
- Guest speakers and active participants at numerous global events organized by the European Union, UN, and Human Rights Council in 2013.

Partnerships

- Key funders include Christian Aid, CCFD (France), Oxfam India, Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative, UN Women, UNDP.
- Government ministries such as MSJE, MHRD, MWCD, and the National Advisory Council.
- Non-profits such as Human Rights Law Network, Housing and Land Rights Network, Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies.

Endorsements

- NCDHR won the prestigious Rafto Human Rights Award in 2007 in Norway.

"The Dalit issue is the elephant in the room in any discussion on development and citizens' rights. We need a mechanism to sensitize communities to accept Dalit rights, while ensuring that these rights are strengthened through better policies and implementation. Bridging policy gaps forms the fulcrum of NCDHR, and our primary objective is to ensure a free exercise of citizenship by the Dalit community."

- N. Paul Divakar, general secretary

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National Foundation for India (NFI)

www.nfi.org.in

Founded: 1992 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 17

Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 9.2 crore; Governance – INR 3.7 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

National Foundation for India (NFI) is an independent grant-making organization, aimed at enabling development and empowering societies in urban poor areas. It supports on-ground development by funding and building the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs). It works in seven key development areas – local governance, citizens and society, education, health, livelihoods, peace and justice, and development journalism.

THE PROBLEM

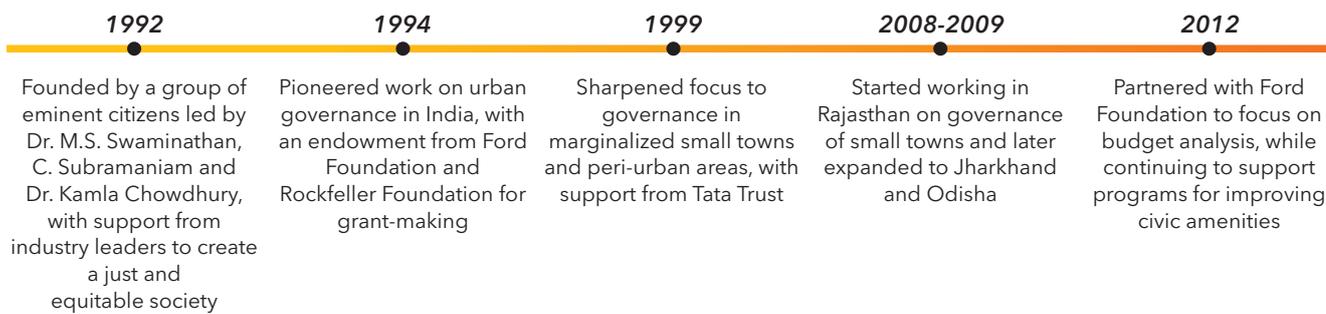
Small towns and peri-urban areas of India have a very poor level of civic services due to obscure decision-making and weak budget accountability. Their development is sidelined by governments and the gravity of the situation is compounded by a dearth of grassroots leadership and low citizen engagement.



NFI's RESPONSE

NFI partners with CSOs to empower grassroots society to have a voice in civic issues through participative development models in areas such as waste, water and sanitation. It also works to strengthen and support budget groups, to make governments accountable, transparent and efficient.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Strengthening Local Governance: Supports local CSOs' strategic interventions through funding and hands-on guidance, to drive community initiatives for improving civic services (such as water, waste and sanitation) and citizens' participation in local governance.

- Enabling participatory and empowering models, which engage citizens, especially women and youth, to solve local civic issues.
- Advocating for better governance and services in small towns and peri-urban areas through action research, community mobilization, and by creating linkages and networks.

Budget Work: Supports civil society budget groups to strengthen and deepen budget analysis and understand the impact of budgets.

- Working with nine state-level budget groups and two national groups to whom NFI provides institution building support through workshops and consultations, along with funding.
- NFI has established an Advisory Committee of domain experts to provide strategic inputs to its budget portfolio; also working with UN Women to promote gender equity through budgets.

Citizens and Society: Drives strategic collaborations for establishing and developing civil society organizations at the grassroots level.

- Leadership Development: Identifying grassroots leaders through awards and supporting them with capacity building and funding.
- Social Justice Philanthropy: Promoting indigenous philanthropy for social justice and channelizing it to under-served areas.
- Voluntarism: Encouraging civic engagement of youth groups.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ NFI has built a network of 40 grantee CSOs till date, and has supported the work of many from their ideation phase to a point where they are recognized as leading organizations in their area of work.
- ✔ NFI has succeeded in improving civic services in over 15 distinct urban communities across five states. For example, in a seven-year long partnership with Seva Mandir, NFI supported the local community of Delwara, a small township in Rajasthan, to successfully restore their peri-urban town and its civic amenities and come together as a cohesive social unit with participation of youth and women, to influence local governance.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next few years, NFI wants to focus on expanding its outreach within its existing focus sectors:

- Increasing outreach to additional small towns and peri-urban areas in the states of Jharkhand and Odisha, through participative projects, which strengthen local governance and enable participation of youth and women.
- Expanding budget analysis work by supporting 15 organizations, up from the initial six Ford Foundation grantees it started with in 2012, and reaching out to over 70% of India's states within three years. NFI seeks to create a collaborative network of around 10 funding partners for the expansion of its budget work.
- Focusing on its Social Justice Philanthropy platform to increase strategic indigenous philanthropy.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



Budgets are about citizens' money, so citizens have a right to have a say over it and to hold the government accountable. NFI is supporting budget groups to help improve the impact of budgets.

- **Basant Nayak**,
Odisha Budget and Accountability Centre



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- Amitabh Behar heads NFI and is recognized as a leading expert on people-centered advocacy.
- Led the National Centre of Advocacy Studies, convener of the *Wada Na Todo Abhiyaan* (Don't Break Your Promises Campaign).
- Serves as President of Yuva and Board member of Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, UNFPA and Omidyar Network.
- Trustees include Deep Joshi (PRADAN), Ramchandra Guha, Ravi Narain (CEO of NSE India), Renu Sud Karnad (MD of HDFC).
- Early supporters include Dr. Manmohan Singh, V. Kurien, Kiran Karnik, Ratan Tata and Mallika Sarabhai.

“Fraternity, the sense of being connected with others, is the life-breath of democracy, an institution we so cherish. And sharing one’s abundance with those on the margins is one tangible expression of such connectedness. By promoting social justice philanthropy, NFI facilitates such connectedness.”

- **Deep Joshi**, chairperson

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Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)

www.pria.org

Founded: 1982 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India and South Asia

Full-Time Staff: 50 | **Budget (2013-14):** Organization - INR 5.7 crore; Governance - INR 3.2 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

PRIA is an international center for learning and promotion of citizen participation and democratic governance. Since 1982, It has focused on the empowerment of the poor and excluded by consistently working on issues of citizens' access to rights and entitlements through knowledge, capacity building and advocacy. While it has field offices in five states, it works with around 3,000 partner non-profits in 23 states to deliver its programs on the ground.

THE PROBLEM

Despite the 1993 constitutional provisions to create a third tier of local government at the rural and urban levels, the process of decentralization and community participation in local governance has been very slow and varied across states. As a result, quality and delivery of public services remains weak.



PRIA's RESPONSE

Leveraging its strong networks with both non-profits and government bodies, PRIA works on the demand side by promoting active citizenship and empowering and collectivizing civil society; and on the supply side by influencing and strengthening governance institutions to become accountable to their mandates and to citizens.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Local governance: PRIA strengthens local governance in both rural and urban areas by building both, supply and demand side capacity, utilizing a train-the-trainer model by working with partner organizations. Its approach includes:

- Improving citizen participation in local governance by mobilizing citizens through formal (*gram sabhas*, district planning committees, *ward sabhas*) and informal structures (slum improvement committees), and pre-election voter awareness campaigns, e.g. around 500 CBOs, citizens and youth groups formed and trained on community monitoring and planning to improve service delivery in urban slums (through citizen report cards, GPS maps, participatory urban plans) in 17 states.
- Building the government's capacity by providing technical support to government institutions and training elected local representatives on their roles and responsibilities, including facilitating participatory planning for effective management of health, primary education, water, etc. For instance, it built capacities of around 100 municipalities in India and Asia, and trained more than 1.25 lakh elected representatives, and over 50,000 citizen leaders.

Knowledge and advocacy: Policy oriented participatory research and knowledge building and sharing are central to PRIA's work to sensitize and inform policy advocacy at all levels, and enable distance learning for practitioners. PRIA's online education programs have reached nearly 2,000 students from 65 countries.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Served on more than 50 governance expert groups of the Indian government and international bodies.
- ✔ Technical advisor to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on strengthening PRIs. For this, PRIA developed the first national fact sheets on panchayats, which resulted in 150 joint resolutions between the ministry and state governments; it also facilitated activity mapping of three tiers of PRIs for devolution of powers and funds in 14 states.
- ✔ Its unique 3-year program with the Government of Rajasthan and UNFPA on strengthening gender response of panchayats in 21 Rajasthan districts led to the preparation of 70 gram panchayat health plans focused on maternal health, two-thirds of which have already been implemented.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next few years, PRIA plans to:

- Increase its work on urban poverty and effective municipal functioning with a special focus on engaging the youth; working with 30 municipalities in 15 states.
- Develop replicable models of decentralized health and water governance and delivery by working with panchayats and Urban Local Bodies in 10 districts across five states.
- Expand its resource base by engaging new types of funders from the private philanthropy and business sectors.
- Scale up its knowledge and capacity building services through PRIA International Academy, a knowledge resource center archiving PRIA's field practices of 32 years.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND

“

In my first 5-year term, before I received support and knowledge from PRIA, I was not acquainted with how a panchayat works. I was hesitant to speak in meetings and seminars. Unaware of the schemes, I had to constantly look for help while carrying out the work.

- Tara Devi, a Dalit woman who was elected Sarpanch in Rajasthan's Bikaner district in 2000 and 2010.

”

QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Rajesh Tandon is founder and president of PRIA.

- Award in Social Justice by the Government of India (2007).
- Member, working group for 11th 5-Year Plan on PRIs.
- Appointed co-chair of the prestigious UNESCO Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

Partnerships

- Key funders include Ford Foundation, DVV International, UNFPA, Rockefeller Foundation, Arghyam Foundation, World Bank.
- Co-founder of global alliances like CIVICUS, LOGOLINK
- Governing Board Chair, Sheela Patel is a Padma Shri award recipient.

Endorsements

- Felicitation for PRIA's work on community participation fund and citizen centric reforms by the National Technical Advisory Group, Ministry of Urban Development, in 2009

“Active citizenship is about both, rights and obligations. Great policies and big schemes cannot automatically result in improvements in people's lives without the collective awareness and actions of citizens for whose public good they are created. Also, merely pin-pointing the weakness of government institutions is not enough; we have to find ways to support them to improve their capacities and functioning.”

- Dr. Rajesh Tandon, founder and president

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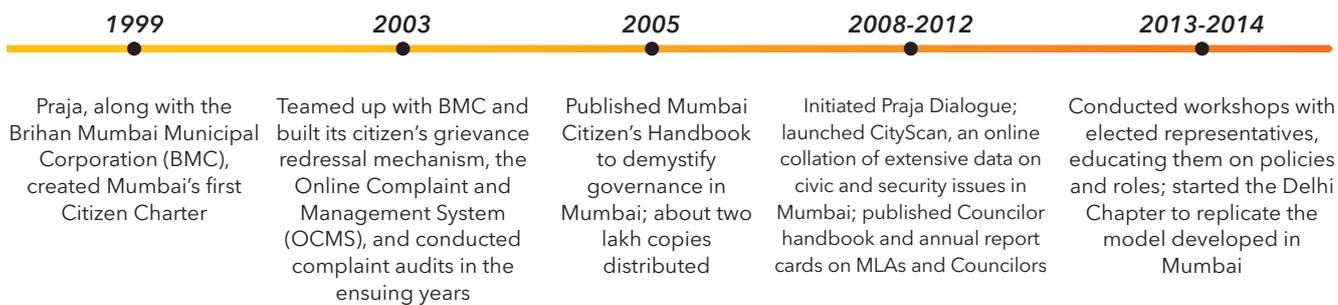


ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Praja is a non-partisan voluntary organization enabling accountable governance. It empowers citizens to participate in governance by providing knowledge and perspective so that they can become politically active and involved beyond the ballot box. It undertakes extensive research and highlights civic issues to build the awareness of and mobilize action by the government and elected representatives.

<p>THE PROBLEM</p> <p>Praja believes that uninformed and disengaged elected representatives and administration, rather than existing systems or policies, are responsible for the lack of good governance. Additionally, there is a paucity of tools to facilitate effective interaction between citizens and the local government.</p>		<p>PRAJA's RESPONSE</p> <p>Praja conducts data-driven research and provides information on civic issues to citizens, media, and government administration and works with elected representatives to identify and address inefficiencies in their work processes, bridge information gaps and help them take corrective measures.</p>
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HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Praja engages the three constituents of governance in an informed dialogue that ultimately facilitates a better quality of life for citizens:

- Elected Representatives (Councilors, MLAs, MPs);
- Government (including the administration); and
- Citizens (including all citizens, citizen groups and media)

It conducts in-depth research on civic issues, health, crime, education, working of elected representatives and housing in Mumbai. After analyzing data collected from surveys and the government through Right to Information applications, Praja reports its findings to the concerned constituents of governance with feedback and recommendations. The end products of its work are:

- Handbooks and report cards for MLAs and Councilors, rating their performance against parameters such as attendance, money spent, questions raised in committees, and pressing issues in their constituencies. It has published three MLA and two Councilor Report Cards on Mumbai's 227 Councilors and 32 MLAs.
- Capacity building initiatives such as one-on-one meetings and workshops to guide elected representatives on their roles. It has conducted over 790 Councilor meetings, 28 MLA meetings, and 18 workshops for elected representatives.
- White papers identifying civic-security issues. The monthly newsletter reaches out to over 13,000 readers including government officials, non-profits, and civil society.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✓ In 2011, Praja released data showing that 1,222 people died of malaria in different wards of the city in FY 2010-11. This was eight times the number being used by the municipal corporation. This led to a stronger response to malaria by the government, specially with its Fight the Bite campaign. By FY 2013-14, malaria deaths fell by 84% from FY 2010-11.
- ✓ Improvement in deliberation by Councilors in the Ward Committees – in 2012-13, questions asked by Councilors increased by 26%; number of Councilors asking no questions have come down from 45 to 28.
- ✓ Praja successfully advocated with the State Chief Information Commissioner's office to mandate BMC to share information on corporator funds in the public domain, thus bringing about greater transparency in operations.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Praja is looking at significant expansion of its operations in the following manner:

- Replicate its flagship model in Delhi with the following plan to be rolled out in the next three years:
 - **Phase 1:** Build local partnerships, conduct research in the areas of health, crime, education and working of elected representatives.
 - **Phase 2:** Establish a full-time team in Delhi, launch first series of white papers.
 - **Phase 3:** Scale local team, launch report cards on elected representatives.
- Expand work in Mumbai by adding two new verticals and engaging college students through a fellowship model.
- Expand work in Maharashtra and prepare report cards on MLAs from the Vidhan Sabha of the state.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



I will say that it is very sweet timing! Praja's workshops gave me an understanding of the working of the BMC. I learnt a lot from the experiences of senior leaders. Hard work, patience and perseverance have paid off.

*- Snehal Ambekar,
Mumbai's elected Mayor in September 2014, on the coincidence of being ranked no. 1 in Praja's Report Card for her earlier year's (FY 2013-14) performance and being newly elected as the Mayor*



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Nitai Mehta, founder trustee, Praja.

- Entrepreneur and head of Madhu Mehta Foundation.

Partnerships

- Funders: Ford Foundation, Friedrich Naumann-Stiftung, Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation.
- Collaborative Research and Advocacy: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) for research on crime, Centre for Civil Society (CCS) for research on education, Hansa Research for conducting social surveys, Initiative for Change - Centre for Governance headed by Prabhat Kumar (former Cabinet Secretary and former Governor of Jharkhand) for replicating its model in Delhi.
- Academic: Pravin Gandhi College of Law, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Nirmala Niketan College.

Endorsements

- Pravinchandra Gandhi Award 2013-14 for excellence in Public life by Rotary Club of Bombay.
- Praja's work has received about 400 media mentions in 2014-15.

"While the work that direct service NGOs do in plugging gaps unaddressed by the government is commendable, I believe that such initiatives are limited in scale as they only create islands of excellence in limited geographies. In the long run, the government has to take ownership and civil society has to hold it accountable. Praja strongly believes in a collaborative approach in which our objective research is taken back to the government to aid it in corrective decision-making."

- Nitai Mehta, founder trustee

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PRS Legislative Research

www.prsindia.org

Founded: 2005 | Head Office: New Delhi | Coverage: Pan-India | Full-Time Staff: 22

Budget (2013-14): Organization - INR 4 crore; Governance - INR 4 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

PRS Legislative Research (PRS) seeks to strengthen the legislative process by making it better informed, more transparent and participatory. It achieves its mission by providing independent and non-partisan research support to law makers across party lines, tracking the function of legislatures and engaging citizens in the policy making process.

THE PROBLEM

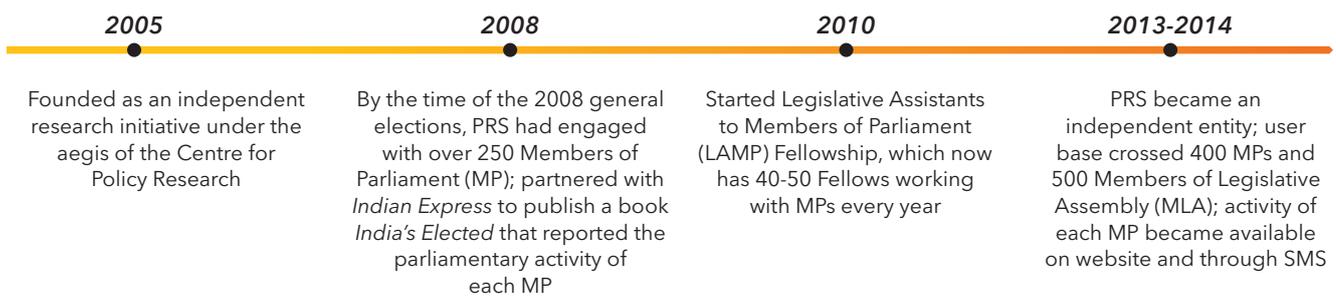
Given that Parliament passes 60 bills a year on average on a range of complex and technical subjects, it is evident that legislators need institutional support in order to appreciate the nuances of various legislative bills and their implications before passing them.



PRS's RESPONSE

PRS aims to deepen the legislative process by providing legislators with necessary, detailed, evidence-based research and analysis that can help them effectively discharge their duties. PRS also makes the process more transparent and participatory by informing citizens about the work of legislators and legislatures.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Support for Legislators:

- PRS assists MPs by providing research support - written and oral - on all bills discussed in Parliament. It also prepares policy briefing notes on issues being discussed in Parliament and other issues requested by MPs.
- PRS engages MPs when Parliament is in session by arranging meetings with experts on key policy and legislative issues.
- At the state level, PRS supports MLAs with research on bills and policies and builds their capacity by organizing workshops in which they can exchange policy ideas and best practices with each other.

Citizen Engagement:

- Conducts the LAMP fellowship, a platform for young Indians to engage with the policy-making process at the national level by working with MPs.
- Organizes workshops for civil society groups on legislation relevant to their areas and on engaging with policy makers.
- Holds workshops for journalists on tracking the work of MPs and provides inputs and data to the media on various Parliament-related activities.
- PRS tracks Parliament-related activity of every MP on a daily basis and provides this information to citizens through the internet and mobile channels.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✓ PRS is seen as a trusted source for credible and balanced analysis on bills in Parliament. Over 450 MPs across party lines had used PRS research by the time of the 2014 general elections.
- ✓ PRS has interacted with over 550 MLAs in the last three years for research inputs and capacity building.
- ✓ The media regularly uses PRS's data on legislative performance; in 2013-14, PRS received 1,200 media citations.
- ✓ The LAMP fellowship has been scaled up since inception to include a total intake of 46 fellows in 2014-15.
- ✓ PRS's website receives over 1 lakh unique visitors each month, in addition to 89,800 followers on Twitter and 11,000 followers on Facebook.

WHAT'S NEXT?

PRS aims to focus on both, institution-building as well as expanding the scope of its work

- The focus so far has been on supporting MPs with research on bills. PRS now plans to provide detailed research and support on policy formulation and budgets to help MPs with their accountability and financial oversight roles. It plans to achieve this by building a deeper sector and thematic focus.
- PRS is looking to deepen its engagement with state MLAs through a wider range of products and services.
- Technology, including social media tools and mobile platforms, will be leveraged to increase citizen engagement.

In order to ensure financial stability, PRS aims to secure long-term funding and build a corpus fund to cover about 40% of its annual costs.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



I am quite amazed at the quality, speed and efficiency of their service. Whenever I am stuck for a particular nitty-gritty piece of information, the organisation has responded to my emails within hours, sometimes in less than that.

- Abhishek Manu Singhvi,
Prominent lawyer and Rajya Sabha MP



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

M.R. Madhavan, co-founder and CEO.

- Has a background in the financial sector, having held leadership positions at Bank of America and ICICI.
- Received a PhD and an MBA from IIM-Calcutta and a B.Tech degree from IIT-Madras.
- Selected as a distinguished alumnus of IIM-Calcutta.

Partnerships

- Incubated at the Centre for Policy Research.
- Past funders include Ford Foundation and Google.
- Current supporters include Ajay Piramal, Nemish Shah, Rohini Nilekani, Rakesh Jhunjhunwala and Tata Sons.
- Partnered with the Indian School of Business, IIM-Bangalore, Indian Institute of Public Administration, the UN and Constitution Club of India to hold policy briefing sessions for MPs and MLAs.

Endorsements

- NDTV Indian of the Year for Public Service, 2013.
- Marico Foundation's Social Innovation Award, 2010.

"The work of legislators is becoming more challenging as the issues become technical and complex. It is clear that they need research and analysis to perform their roles, and structured channels to increase the engagement of citizens in decision making. PRS plugs this gap by providing detailed evidence-based research support, and building channels of information and engagement between citizens and their representatives."

- M.R. Madhavan, co-founder and CEO

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Public Affairs Centre (PAC)

www.pacindia.org

Founded: 1994 | **Head Office:** Bangalore | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 30

Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 3.6 crore; Governance – INR 3.6 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

PAC is a leading think tank that promotes good governance through the participation of citizens and civil society, by designing and implementing social accountability tools such as Citizen Report Cards (CRC). PAC also analyzes public policy frames and engages with civil society organisations. PAC’s approaches have been applied across the world and used for focused analysis by several Indian states and administrative bodies.

THE PROBLEM

Conventional policy design has always been structured upon policy expression and administrative processes, with little space for the inclusion of citizen experience with public services. There are few citizen-centric monitoring and benchmarking tools to assess the reliability of and satisfaction with services.



PAC’s RESPONSE

PAC undertakes and supports research, disseminates research findings, facilitates collective citizen action through awareness and capacity building activities, and provides advisory services to both state and non-state agencies. PAC’s work focuses on governance as experienced from an average citizen’s perspective.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

- **Public Policy Research:** PAC conducts professional research on important sectoral issues to inform and influence policymakers, civil society and other stakeholders. Major on-going policy research projects focus on Integrated Child Protection Scheme, Swachh Bharat Mission, and Right to Public Services Act.
- **Citizen Action:** PAC works through coalitions and campaigns for civic engagement. It develops toolkits and trains non-profits and communities in five Indian states to work with the Rural Roads Agencies to monitor road quality. PAC also empowers communities to reduce graft and leakage in the Public Distribution System (PDS) and MNREGA in their local areas.
- **Social Accountability Research:** PAC presents citizens’ experience with public services to those in governance structures through social accountability instruments like the Citizen Report Card. It has trained over 500 non-profits and government officials to diagnose gaps and strengthen reform measures in public services such as health, water, sanitation, power and police services.
- **Environmental Governance:** PAC’s Climate Change Score Card assesses the impact of climate extremes on the livelihoods of those in eco-fragile and disaster-prone areas in Gulf of Mannar, Wayanad, Cauvery Basin. PAC also promotes citizen-led Environmental Impact Assessment.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Has gained significant credibility for its assessment of programs through its citizen-centric and social accountability approach. PAC today receives direct requests from departments in the state governments (e.g. Karnataka Police) to assess existing programs and make recommendations.
- ✔ Has undertaken multi-state projects highlighting best practices and challenges in the implementation of government schemes such as Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (sanitation), PDS and MNREGA.
- ✔ Has increasingly played the role of influencer in the public policy space in India, through published books and papers on the state of urban infrastructure services, among other issues.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Increase focus on linking its research work with government policy - PAC plans to reach out to government functionaries to influence policy-making.
- Leverage its extensive experience in policy research and participatory governance to train other organizations and government functionaries in citizen-centric governance practices.
- Increase its team size and capability to meet the growing demand for PAC's research and advisory services, from both state and non-state institutions.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



PAC's work for Bangalore's government maternity homes has led to the formation of citizen committees, which serve as messengers within the user community and also help in building a good relationship between users and staff. These committees have been able to highlight and work towards solving significant infrastructure gaps in the maternity homes.

- Medical Officer at a Bangalore Maternity Home



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Presently led by R. Suresh.

- Worked for over 32 years on social and environmental change, livelihoods and resource management.
- Carried out international consultancy assignments on monitoring and evaluation and training tools.

Partnerships

- Key funders include IDRC Think Tank Initiative, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank, Government of India, state governments.
- Partnerships with 100+ civil society organizations.

Endorsements

- Governing Board is chaired by a former Chief Justice of India, and includes two former Chief Secretaries.
- PAC has achieved the highest level accreditation by Credibility Alliance.
- Dr. Samuel Paul, founder, was awarded the Jit Gill Memorial Award by the World Bank in 2006.

"Public Affairs Centre is a leap of faith, guided by a vision to enhance the quality of our nation's governance through an active interaction of civil society with the State. The positive response to the centre's initiatives from many quarters and the adoption of its concepts, tools and messages in varied contexts augur well for the future."

- Dr. Samuel Paul, founder

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Swaniti Initiative
www.swaniti.in



Founded: 2009 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full-Time Staff:** 10
Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 60 lakh; Governance – INR 60 lakh

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Swaniti Initiative adopts a ‘consulting style’ approach to support elected officials, such as Members of Parliament (MP) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLA), on delivering solutions for issues of health, education, gender and livelihood in their constituencies. By providing them insights and on-ground project implementation support, Swaniti aims to translate the resources and commitment of MPs and MLAs into developmental outcomes.

THE PROBLEM

While Indian bureaucrats are the primary medium for executing development programs worth billions of dollars in India, capacity constraints and severe understaffing (1 administrator per 125,000 people) are leading to major bottlenecks in stepping up development across the country.



SWANITI'S RESPONSE

MPs and MLAs have both, access and keen insight into resources available for development, as well as a deep understanding of grassroots issues in their constituencies. By supporting them on execution, Swaniti enables them to do more – bring greater development and improve implementation of existing programs in the constituency.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Engagement: Swaniti deploys a 2-3 member team in the target constituency to tackle a specific problem identified by the MP/MLA such as access to drinking water or occupational hazards to jute mill workers. The engagement is 3-12 months long and split into three phases:

- **Design:** Conduct fieldwork to understand challenges and solutions and recommend the best alternative.
- **Execution:** Secure appropriate partners and support to conduct a pilot and eventually a full-scale solution and hand over control to the MP/MLA's local team.
- **Monitoring:** Collect learning and survey effectiveness with follow-ups after 6, 9 and 18 months. So far, Swaniti has worked with over 40 MPs and MLAs, such as Dinesh Trivedi, Kamal Nath, Smriti Irani and Yashwant Sinha.

Knowledge Insights: Swaniti conducts training, one-on-one consultations and seminars with elected officials. An example is the roundtable on malnutrition in Orissa attended by 42 MLAs. Swaniti also develops knowledge products to inform and empower elected officials: *Jigyasa* is an online portal that helps identify key issues by analyzing developmental metrics (by sector, state and political party) across India since 1990; *Tamra Patra* is a centralized database documenting central government schemes.

Swaniti Talks: Formal/informal meetings to foster dialogue between thought leaders from across politics, civil society and academia, and youth in India. Over 1,000 youth have attended these talks so far.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
- 3. Creating knowledge and evidence**
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
- 7. Capacity building of government officials**
8. Capacity building of local partners
- 9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement**

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Has active relationships with over 100 MPs for knowledge and/or implementation support.
- ✔ Has impacted over 15,000 people in 30 constituencies by supporting development projects on the ground
 - E.g. Supported the successful de-silting of ponds in 30 villages with 1,200 people each to increase access to drinking water in East Singhbhum district in Jamsshedpur, Jharkhand.
- ✔ Supported open-data initiatives through the Chief Minister's office in Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh by developing open-data portals that aim to create transparency in key development programs.
- ✔ Helped eight MPs scale up their development initiatives to state-level programs.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next three years, Swaniti plans to implement the following activities:

- **Engagements:** Work with 200 MPs, seven Chief Minister's offices, and MLAs from weaker/backward states to deliver social and human development programs.
- **Knowledge support:** Further build on Swaniti's existing knowledge base to develop a 'Civic Tool Box' for MPs, bureaucrats and citizens consisting of insights that can help catalyze development. For example, providing constituency-wise performance indicators on healthcare and education delivery.
- **Create platforms** to bring together MPs and bureaucrats for training and knowledge sharing on specific issues of development and service delivery.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



Swaniti is a unique initiative, filling a much needed gap by providing development and governance support to elected Parliamentarians. In our interactions with the core team and Swaniti fellows, we have seen and heard the level of this impact and are truly excited to partner with them.

- Rati Forbes



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Rwitwika Bhattacharya founded and leads Swaniti.

- Has worked at the World Bank, UNFPA and FICCI.
- Graduate of Harvard Kennedy School's Masters in Public Policy program.
- Her publications include "Frontier in development policy" (World Bank), "A primer on labor policies" (World Bank).

Partnerships

- Key funders: Rohini Nilekani, Forbes Marshall Foundation, Avantha Foundation, Letzdream Foundation and British High Commission.
- Program partners include Harvard South Asia Initiative, Center for Civil Society, Confederation of Indian Industry, *Indian Express*, Live Mint, and Jameel Abdul Lateef Poverty Action Lab - MIT.

Endorsements

- One of Yourstory.com's top 50 start-ups, 2013.
- One of Forbes India's 30 under 30 organizations, 2014.

"For every 125,000 people in India, there is only one administrator who is aiding in the delivery of development programs. Swaniti sees Members of Parliament as the solution to such a severe bottleneck in the Indian governance system. With a vested interest in bringing development to their constituencies and/or states, empowered Parliamentarians can act as catalysts in their communities."

- **Rwitwika Bhattacharya, founder**

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The Hunger Project, India

www.thp.org/india

Founded: 1984 | **Head Office:** New Delhi | **Coverage:** Bihar, Karnataka, M.P., Odisha, Rajasthan, T.N., Uttarakhand | **Full-Time Staff:** 40 | **Budget (2013-14):** Organization - INR 8.9 crore; Governance - INR 8.9 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Hunger Project, India (THP) is a subsidiary of a global organization working in 14 countries to end hunger and poverty. In India, THP is focused on strengthening local governance in rural areas. It mobilizes and empowers women as elected political leaders in village councils (panchayats), to promote more effective local governance, social change and gender justice. THP works through 40 partner organizations across seven states.

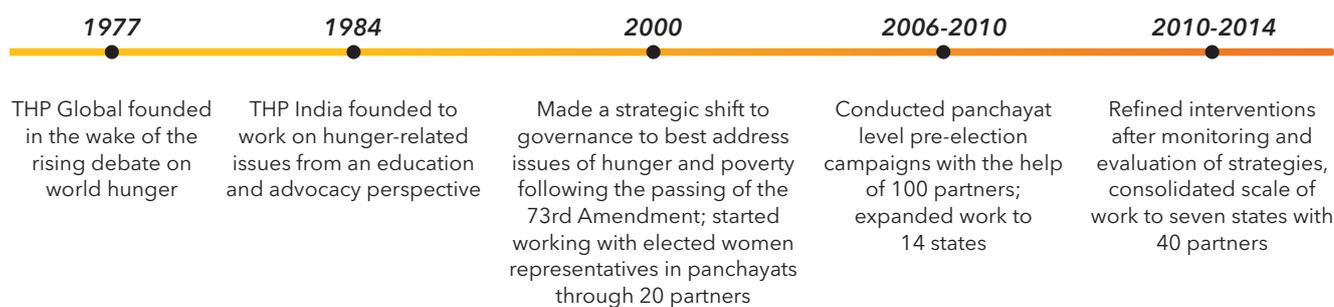
THE PROBLEM

A majority of the 1.3 million women leaders in panchayats in India lack the skills or know-how to drive local development and social change, even though they are typically more inclined to invest in community issues such as health and education than their male counterparts.

THP's RESPONSE

THP strengthens the leadership of elected women representatives in panchayats, to help them be more empowered and effective. It does this by improving their capacities and understanding of their powers, roles and responsibilities, and building an enabling environment for them to work in.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Since 2000, The Hunger Project has trained more than 100,000 elected women in panchayats, working with them over a five-year term.

Strengthening the capacities and leadership of elected women:

- **Electoral process campaigns** are carried out over six months in the run-up to an election. The aim is to tackle voter apathy and educate women about the roles they can play in panchayat elections. Information is distributed via posters, radio and village meetings. Workshops are held for potential candidates.
- Three-day **residential women leadership** workshops are carried out following elections, to help new representatives develop an understanding of their roles, responsibilities and powers, and to improve their confidence, self-respect and dignity.
- **Need-based workshops** are carried out to address specific issues and knowledge gaps, for example, MNREGA, RTI, PDS and other important social schemes and entitlements.
- THP facilitates the formation of **federations** of elected women at the block level, which allows women to come together to tackle common problems they face in their communities.

Building an enabling environment for elected women:

- Gram Sabha mobilization campaigns, media workshops, meetings with Parliamentarians are some of the additional activities THP conducts to enable elected women to achieve desired policy and service delivery outcomes in their villages.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

The achievements of elected women representatives working with THP are wide-ranging and include the following:

- ✔ Improving service delivery: Facilitating the building of new roads; re-opening of primary health centres, schools, and crèche centres; building of toilets and housing for poor communities.
- ✔ Building a more equitable and just society: Using redressal mechanisms to check corruption and pilferage in schemes; guaranteeing payment to daily wage laborers under the MNREGA scheme.
- ✔ Strengthening the democratic process: Ensuring women from all castes are represented and participate at Gram Sabha meetings; motivating women to vote and contest in elections.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next few years, THP wants to focus on deepening its work in existing geographies, as well as expanding into new ones, such as Jharkhand. It also aims to:

- Roll out an intensive program in at least 100 panchayats to ensure food security and address malnutrition. The focus will be on strengthening existing institutions to address the issue on the ground.
- Develop training-of-trainers modules on pre-election campaigns, federations, advocacy etc.
- Introduce a functional financial literacy training component to its workshops, to educate and train semi-literate or illiterate elected women representatives on basics of budgets.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



When I participated in the training programs and other activities of The Hunger Project, I felt confident in my own ability to lead. Only in these trainings did I understand the role of a panchayat member and therefore started conducting Ward Sabhas in my constituency.

- Elected village leader from Rajasthan



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Rita Sarin, country director.

- M.Phil in Development Policy from the University of Nottingham, UK; 15 years at the Swedish International Development Agency.
- Serves on the Boards of leading organizations such as PRIA, Action Aid and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Royal Norwegian Embassy, THP Global, UNDP.
- Key member of the Government of India's High Level Committee on the Status of Women in India and the National Steering Committee for Sustainable Nutrition Security.

Endorsements

- Awarded EdelGive Social Innovation Award in 2010, under the governance category.

"Trained elected women leaders are working towards ending hunger and poverty from their communities and villages. These are the change agents committing themselves to usher in a new India."

- Rita Sarin, country director & global vice president

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Transparent Chennai

www.transparentchennai.com

Founded: 2010 | **Head Office:** Chennai | **Coverage:** Chennai | **Full-Time Staff:** 11

Budget (2013-14): Organization - INR 1.5 crore; Governance - INR 1.5 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Transparent Chennai (TC) aggregates, creates and disseminates data, maps and research about important civic issues in Chennai. Its aim is to empower citizens and government officials to use this information to improve city planning and service provision for the benefit of the city's residents, especially the urban poor. TC's use of mapping technology to advocate for change is unique in Chennai and rare in India.

THE PROBLEM

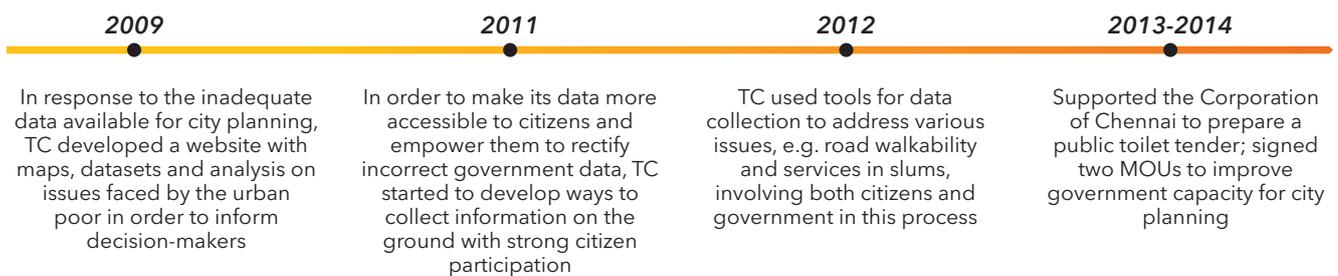
There is a lack of data concerning public service provision and existing data is often inaccurate or incomplete. Hence citizens have little evidence to claim their rights, and government bodies are not held accountable, and do not have the information to provide adequate public services to citizens.



TC's RESPONSE

TC creates maps and data including features such as location and quality of public services to highlight gaps in government service provision. It helps citizens use this data to advocate for their entitlements and engages government officials to use better data methodologies to improve city planning and service provision.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Creation of mapping tools, data, research highlighting civic issues:

- TC conducts research on electoral accountability, city governance, pedestrian infrastructure, road safety, sanitation and solid waste management, slums and informal settlements and open data.
- Existing data on these issues is aggregated from multiple sources, including government offices, RTI requests and newspaper reports.
- Study areas are chosen based on parameters such as relationships with councilors and demand from the community.
- Public meetings are organized to establish relations between different stakeholders and engage citizens in data collection.
- With the help of citizens, new data is collected using mobile phone surveys, interviews, GPS devices, and pen and paper maps; details such as location and salient features are recorded.
- This information is digitized and visualized using tools such as QGIS, OpenStreetMaps, Google Maps and Carto DB.
- Interactive maps are created to reveal insights into urban governance issues by juxtaposing layers of different kinds of data.

Usage of TC maps, data and research

- TC disseminates information in public meetings and encourages citizens to use these meetings to make claims for better service provision; to date, 45 meetings have occurred.
- TC trains government officials to use its data methodologies; in 2013-14, 55 attended mapping training and 30 were trained to identify performance indicators to assess city services.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ In 2013, TC worked with Corporation of Chennai (CoC) officials to prepare a tender for new public toilets; it was the first time that CoC used spatial data to plan for public toilets and mobile phones to collect that data.
- ✔ In 2014, TC signed two MOUs with the CoC: one to create a Web portal to improve data management practices for city planning and the other to create data to address urban poverty using maps and improved survey methodologies.
- ✔ To date, nearly 800 residents in Chennai have participated in TC data creation exercises.
- ✔ There has been strong interest in replicating TC's tools and methodologies by non-profits in other countries: TC trained 61 staff of the South African Aids Trust in Johannesburg and Tanzania to collect data and create maps.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Over the next year, TC plans to scale up its outreach and impact. This will include the following activities:

- Broaden its research focus and increase the number of wards in which it works in Chennai.
- Seek to establish partnerships with communities and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) that would like to use TC's methodologies and tools.
- Continue to develop opportunities to work with government to support the better use of data for planning and implementation of city initiatives.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND

“

I have 117 streets in my ward to monitor...It takes three months just to survey them all. We are short-staffed, so it is difficult to address the specific needs each community has. Transparent Chennai's surveys helped in setting the priority.

*- Aavin R. Arulvel,
Ward Councilor of Kalyanapuram*

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QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Nithya Raman, founder and director, TC.

- Has previously worked at IFMR, Amnesty International and the Hazards Centre.
- Has a BA from Harvard University and a Masters in Urban Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Asia Foundation; Ford Foundation; World Wide Web Foundation; Shakti Foundation; Rockefeller Foundation.
- Key program partners: Tata Institute of Social Sciences; Madras Institute of Development Studies; Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives; Corporation of Chennai.
- Networks: Open Data in Developing Countries; Open Knowledge Foundation.

“Narratives about urban India are often very bleak and Indians face seemingly insurmountable problems. Transparent Chennai's work supports substantive change by improving the availability and quality of information about the urban poor, and building the capacities of both government and citizen groups to use this information to ameliorate local conditions. Our work lays the groundwork for a new practice of urban planning that truly emerges from and responds to local conditions.”

- Nithya Raman, founder

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Urban Management Centre (UMC)

www.umcasia.org



Founded: 1997 | **Head Office:** : Ahmedabad | **Coverage:** Pan-India & South Asia | **Full-Time Staff:** 21

Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 1.8 crore; Governance – INR 1.8 crore

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Urban Management Centre is an independent organization focused on strengthening the governance of cities, primarily in India and also other South Asian countries. UMC’s mission is to professionalize urban governance by engaging with local government officials to build their capacities for managing cities and support the implementation of systems and process improvements. UMC works in the areas of urban planning, water, sanitation, health, transportation, and budget analysis.

<h4>THE PROBLEM</h4> <p>UMC believes that city managers (officials in urban local bodies) are committed to development, but they fail due to poor implementation of policies and weak systems. Cities are unable to leverage available funding for development work due to lack of local capacity, systems and technical expertise.</p>		<h4>UMC’s RESPONSE</h4> <p>UMC works to empower city managers with data, knowledge and skills, to enable them to take effective action to make their cities more livable and equitable. Its approach is to support city managers in improving processes for implementation and monitoring and to create networks for facilitating peer-to-peer learning.</p>
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HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

UMC links good governance to sustained civic services provided by urban local bodies and works in various sectors (water, health, etc.) to enable this. UMC provides technical assistance and support to city governments and facilitates change through peer-to-peer learning. UMC builds individual and systemic capacities of cities and emphasizes the use of networks for transferring best practices and innovative solutions to urban issues.

- **Municipal Performance Measurement:** This program has been the mainstay of UMC’s work since 2008. In partnership with CEPT University, UMC is attempting to mainstream performance measurement at the city and state levels. It collects and analyzes information from cities for use in decision making, for providing incentives, and for influencing demand. It also works closely with urban local bodies to improve their information systems as well as improve the delivery of services.
- **City Manager’s Associations (CMA):** UMC with ICMA pioneered CMAs in India, which are registered, membership-based organizations of cities from each state. CMAs act as platforms for knowledge sharing, and for conducting training needs assessments, workshops and study tours among cities.
- **City-to-City Partnerships:** UMC believes that local governments worldwide face similar governance issues, so it plays the role of a facilitator and catalyst for the exchange of best practices and successful innovations between international cities.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. **Creating knowledge and evidence**
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. **Technology platforms and solutions**
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. **Capacity building of government officials**
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✔ Created a performance measurement and assessment system, and a database of 167 cities across Gujarat (consistently for five years), to be used for guiding decisions at city and state levels.
- ✔ Built a network of 13 state-level CMAs and the Mega Cities Association, which together have a membership of more than 1,800 cities across the country.
- ✔ Demonstrated successful city-to-city partnerships between six Indian cities, with cities in the the US and South Asia. UMC facilitated partnerships for post-tsunami reconstruction work, receiving a best practices award in 2008.
- ✔ Formalized heritage management as a mainstream activity of urban local bodies.

WHAT'S NEXT?

UMC wants to increase its focus on framing policies for empowering cities, building the capabilities of city managers, and strengthening systems and processes for managing civic services, to make cities more livable and equitable.

- Create capacity of local government officials to monitor progress and establish systems, by using simplified information systems and integration of spatial data.
- Strengthen existing CMAs and revive them as platforms for networking, learning and capacity building.
- Use its previous work and data to create actionable frameworks for professionalizing municipalities.
- Initiate research on best practices in urban legislation and advocate for policy reforms, which can increase the autonomy of local governments to plan for and develop their cities.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



The Resource Cities Partnership program has been a great help. It provided us an opportunity to interact with other city managers - not as visitors, but as professionals - have a dialogue with them, see their work, study their methods of operating, understand their problems and learn how they face the challenges of managing a city. We have benefited immensely and are grateful for this opportunity.

- Srinivas Murthy,
IAS (retd), former municipal commissioner,
Bangalore Municipal Corporation



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

- Manvita Baradi founded and leads UMC. She has long-standing relations with ULBs in Gujarat, India.
- She has worked on institutional development as an urban management expert for donors such as USAID.
- She serves as Dean, Faculty of Management at Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) and is also state convener for the INTACH-Gujarat chapter.

Partnerships

- Key funders: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID, Climate Works Foundation.
- Key affiliations: International City/ County Management Association (ICMA).
- Key partners: CEPT University, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, state governments and municipalities.

Endorsements

- Awarded by INTACH for 'Exemplary work done for the Preservation and Promotion of Historic Towns' in 2011, for its work in Surat.

"Cities are often viewed as the engines of growth. However with weak institutional capacities and systems and lack of professional management, city governments are struggling to provide quality services to their citizens. UMC is a friend of cities and works closely with local governments to catalyze systemic change for more efficient, inclusive and sustainable cities. We are uniquely positioned to deliver successful results on the ground through our collaborative approach."

- Manvita Baradi, Director

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Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy
www.vidhilegalpolicy.in

Founded: 2013 | Head Office: New Delhi | Coverage: Pan-India | Full-Time Staff: 11
Budget (2013-14): Organization – INR 2.1 crore; Governance – INR 2.1 crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Vidhi is India’s first legal policy advisory group working specifically with government agencies. Its mission is to achieve good governance in India by improving the design and content of new and existing legislation. By providing expertise to government ministries at various stages of law making, and by proposing rigorously researched reforms, Vidhi’s aim is to ensure that laws passed are robust and relevant, which is a starting point for good governance.

THE PROBLEM

Ministries of the central and state governments lack capacity in the drafting of laws that are clear and in compliance with current national and international regulations. This leads to the passing of bills that either cannot be implemented or tend to invite litigation and become liable to be struck down.



VIDHI’S RESPONSE

By bringing together a strong team of lawyers from the world’s leading universities and law firms, to engage with ministries at the inception stage of law creation, Vidhi provides a unique and much-needed service in a complex field that requires a considerable degree of specialist knowledge.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Vidhi works across four areas of law: Judicial Reform, Financial Sector Regulation, International Law and Public Law. Its activities involve:

Legislative Advisory Services

- Offering assistance and legal advisory services to public agencies.
- Doing detailed and rigorous legal analysis of proposed bills and providing input at the stage of conceptualization.
- This requires getting buy-in from the ministry or committee and working with domain experts to make recommendations.

Independent Legal Research

- Vidhi publishes independent research reports on policies requiring urgent reform (minimum six annually).
- These reports are shared with relevant ministries and distributed free online, publicizing potential approaches to be adopted by the government on subjects requiring urgent reform.

Broadening Systematic Participation in Law-Making

- Media articles, Web publicity and sessions with media houses and journalists on legislation and law-making in India.
- Academic and scholarly articles on the content of Bills.
- Sessions with student groups in various Indian schools.
- All reports are publicly accessible with succinct summaries.
- A constantly updated website providing a go-to source for information on the Supreme Court.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Each recommendation accepted by a ministry impacts the interpretation and implementation of the law. For instance, two Vidhi recommendations were accepted by the Standing Committee on the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill.
- ✓ Successful partnerships with ministries: notably with the Ministry of Finance (Public Procurement Bill) and the Ministry of Law and Justice (three reports through the Law Commission of India).
- ✓ Multiple Advisory Roles: Expert witness for Oral Hearing of the Prevention of Torture Bill, Rajya Sabha; Advising Expert for the Committee to Formulate Policy for Approval of New Drugs, Clinical Trials, under the Ministry of Health.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Vidhi aims to focus on 25 areas for reform, which it believes should figure prominently on the agenda of the new government, highlighted in its Briefing Book launched in 2014 (eg. consolidate anti-corruption legislation, advance police reforms, bolster free speech, etc.). Its research emphasizes to the legal changes necessary to effect change in these areas; each reform has been matched with the nodal ministry responsible for that area of work. Five key themes crucial for India's development are covered - judicial and administrative reform, economy, human rights, and technology.
- Vidhi hopes to work with as many ministries and standing committees as are responsive to their support and develop a strong body of research to promote a culture of quality lawmaking in India.
- Expand its team by 2-5 lawyers as demand for its services grows within government circles.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



The issues for reform raised in this briefing book are vital and I do hope they spark a debate and engage the attention of the government so that India can finally embark upon its tryst with destiny.

*- Harish Salve,
Senior Advocate, Supreme Court (on Vidhi's first publication for the new government recommending 25 legal reforms for India)*



QUALITY INDICATORS

Leadership

Arghya Sengupta; research director.

- Awarded the Rhodes Scholarship.
- M.Phil in Law, Oxford University.
- Lecturer in Administrative Law, Oxford University.
- Member, 'Committee on Privacy Issues', Planning Commission of India, headed by Justice A.P. Shah.

Partnerships

- Funders: P. Godrej Foundation, Rohini Nilekani, Mahindra Group, V. Sarabhai Foundation, Mohandas Pai, Anu Aga.
- Vidhi's Board includes A.S. Ganguly (MP Rajya Sabha), Uday Shankar (CEO, Star India), Ireena Vittal (former partner, McKinsey and Co.).

Endorsements

- Work endorsed by high ranking officials and judges like former Supreme Court Justice Ruma Pal, former Finance Secretary Sumit Bose and prominent journalist Rajdeep Sardesai at the Vidhi launch event in 2014.

"As lawyers who've studied in some of the finest law schools in India and abroad, we realized that we are beneficiaries of a system that doesn't benefit everyone to the same extent... as both, citizens in India with a concern for the public interest and as lawyers who have certain skills to remedy these deficiencies, we were in a good position to try and make a difference."

- Arghya Sengupta, Founder

citizenvoice **policy law** servicedelivery **thinktank** transparency RTI
elections budgets urbangovernance panchayatiraj accesstojustice
technology humanrights independentmedia

REALIZING INDIA'S POTENTIAL

Recommendations and Conclusions

India is poised to achieve both, economic growth and human development, with better alignment between the three key stakeholders: civil society, the private sector and the government. Dasra's research shows that the development sector - primarily funders and social sector leaders - will play a critical role in bringing these key stakeholders together, and thus making them better placed to take the governance leap towards meeting our nation's aspirations. To that end, those stakeholders interested in moving from good governance to great governance will need to:

COLLABORATE

Create an innovative governance ecosystem that enhances engagement among diverse stakeholders - government, business, judiciary, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, civil society, media and academia - to yield solutions that have measurable outcomes towards improving governance.

FUND

Channel greater resources to strengthen the capabilities and scale of organizations executing on Good to Great Governance solutions using strategic philanthropy as well as talent and institution building.

LEAD

Cross-leverage influence among stakeholders to mainstream the importance of investing in governance solutions and shifting mindsets.

What are the new ways for you to support collaboration, funding and leadership? Dasra recommends convening sector leaders, creating collaborative funding platforms, partnering with the government and engaging civil society.

“

A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.

Mahatma Gandhi

”

Convene sector leaders

If the key players in governance have the opportunity to engage in active and open discussion, then problem solving and intervention prioritizing can happen more collaboratively. Dasra recommends cross-sector working groups across the four clusters of the governance framework: voice and accountability, government effectiveness, control of corruption and rule of law. These stakeholders coming together will enable new ways of partnering, foster knowledge sharing and enhance access to the various stakeholders.

Create collaborative funding platforms

Philanthropy in the governance sector is incorrectly perceived as anti-government, political and risky. This discourages funders from prioritizing governance in their giving portfolio. Creating a collaborative funding platform not only de-risks perceptions, but more importantly, it also becomes a collective force that supports scalable solutions and celebrates success stories.

Partner and dialogue with the government

Our ability to engage our government is critical for governance in India to evolve to its desired state. This will require rewarding non-profit organizations that create partnerships, foster dialogue and are able to walk hand-in-hand with the government. These activities should result in participatory policy-making and reform, which should complement traditional rights-based approaches to governance.

Engage civil society

Mainstream media can boost civil society's influence by driving wider public recognition and awareness on the benefits of improved governance. By 2034, young Indians will be a billion-strong⁷³ and far more empowered to demand change, especially given that their internet and mobile connectivity are both estimated to grow exponentially by then. Delivering on their aspirations will mandate investment to leverage technology and leap frog to great governance.

Play your part

No single stakeholder group - whether citizen, non-profit, philanthropist, government official, judge - can carry India from good to great governance unilaterally. Taking the governance leap calls for a collaborative glue that binds us all to the common purpose of building a nation of equality, progress and opportunity. This collaborative approach needs us to lay aside egos, politics, religion, tactical disagreements and distractions. If we are to leapfrog development in India through governance, we each have a role to play - vote, be better informed, fund a game-changing opportunity, collaborate with others, appreciate government efforts, perform civic duties - the list is extensive, as is the impact you can have on accelerating development by participating in the governance leap. By reading this report, you have already made a commitment of sorts - when a billion such commitments are delivered on and added up, India will have taken its collective leap of imagination and arrived at the distilled essence of its higher purpose.

APPENDIX I

Non-profit mapping methodology

Dasra's non-profit mapping included site visits to view programs on the ground and interact with beneficiaries of these efforts; detailed interviews with managers of non-profit organizations; phone interviews; and desk research. Operationally, the following due diligence procedures were followed:

Initial Mapping: Firstly, Dasra mapped the sector by collating a comprehensive list of non-profit organizations and social businesses working within the governance space. This was based on a combination of internet research, participation at relevant conferences and forums, referrals from sector experts and databases of past and present grantees of governance-related funding. Initial mapping yielded a list of **over 120 non-profit organizations and social businesses** throughout India.

On-Call Interviews: Secondly, Dasra identified non-profit organizations that allocate significant resources to programs addressing governance. A total of 69 were selected for on-call interviews, based on telephone conversations with the heads or program heads of these organizations. The interviews discussed:

- Activities, direct and indirect, that relate to governance
- Proportion of total non-profit budget allocated to governance work
- Outreach of governance programs since their inception and over the previous year (2013-14)
- Extent of diversification by program area
- Organizational and governance program team size

Additional information gathered included when the non-profit organizations and governance programs were established, their theories of change, geographical coverage, operational models, and interventions implemented. Based on the information provided, Dasra selected **28** non-profit organizations and social businesses to visit.

Site Visits: Thirdly, Dasra met with managers and field staff of the non-profit organizations short-listed, viewing their operational models at first hand, and securing a clear understanding of how effectively their theories of change translated into effective action on the ground. Dasra staff spent 2-3 days with each non-profit organization acquiring detailed information concerning the organization in general and its governance programs in particular, including the evolution of the program, its model, management structure, program financials, outreach and outcomes achieved. This stage was used to identify the non-profit organizations to be highlighted in this report and recommended for funding. The criteria used to compile the final shortlist were as follows:

- Program structure and documentation
- Management team
- Growth over the previous three years (2012-14)
- Future scaling plans
- Proven outcomes/impact
- Current partnerships (government, academia, international non-profit organizations, and other non-profit organizations)
- External endorsements (historical and current funders, and prestigious awards)

After evaluating these criteria, Dasra identified and profiled 26 established non-profit organizations and social businesses that implement high impact governance programs in India.

Non-profit registration/certification

- 12A: enables a non-profit organization in India to avail income tax exemption on its income
- 80G: Enables donors with a taxable income in India to get a tax deduction of 50% of the donated amount
- FCRA: Makes a non-profit organization in India eligible to receive contribution in kind or currency from foreign sources

APPENDIX II

Acknowledgements and organization database

A. Experts consulted

Abhinandan Sekhri	Newslandry
Amitabh Behar	National Foundation of India (NFI)
Binaifer Nowrojee	Open Society Foundation
Chakshu Roy	PRS Legislative Research
CV Madhukar	Omidyar Network
Dona John	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
Hari Menon	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Harish Narasappa	Daksh
Hartosh Singh Bal	Caravan
Kavita Ramdas	Ford Foundation
Mandakini Surie	Asia Foundation
Mandira Kala	PRS Legislative Research
Mihir Shah	Samaj Pragati Sahayog
Narasimhan Kishore Mandyam	Daksh
Padmanabhan Anant Iyer	Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative (APPI)
Peter Evans	Department for International Development (DFID)
Rajan Khosla	Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS)
Rajesh Tandon	Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)
Revathy Ashok	Bangalore Public Action Committee (BPAC)
Ruchi Yadav	The Hunger Project
Rwitwika Bhattacharya	Swaniti Initiative
Sandhya Lakshmi	Action Aid
Santhosh Mathew	Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
Sevanti Ninan	The Hoot
Simon O'Meally	World Bank
Srikanth Viswanathan	Janaagraha
Sumeeta Banerjee	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
Suresh Raghavan	Public Affairs Centre (PAC)
Trilochan Sastry	Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)
Vinay Vishwanatha	Open Society Foundation
Vishal Mehta	Lok Capital
Vivek Srinivasan	Program on Liberation Technology, Stanford University
Yamini Aiyar	Accountability Initiatives
Yamini Mishra	UN Women

B. Non-profit organizations and social businesses visited - 28

Accountability Initiative	www.accountabilityindia.in
Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)	www.adrindia.org
Caravan	www.caravanmagazine.in
Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)	www.cbgaindia.org
Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS)	www.cbps.in
Centre for Civil Society	www.ccs.in
Centre for Health and Social Justice	www.chsj.org
Centre for Policy Research (CPR)	www.cprindia.org
Charkha Development Communication Network	www.charkha.org
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)	www.humanrightsinitiative.org
eGovernments Foundation	www.egovernments.org
Gram Vaani	www.gramvaani.org
Gujarat Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT)	www.sewahousing.org
IndiaSpend	www.indiaspend.com
Janaagraha	www.janaagraha.org
Khabar Lahariya	www.khabarlahariya.org
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)	www.ncdhr.org.in
National Foundation For India (NFI)	www.nfi.org
Praja	www.praja.org
PRS Legislative Research	www.prsindia.org
Public Affairs Centre (PAC)	www.pacindia.org
Samarthan Centre for Development Support	www.samarthan.org
Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)	www.pria.org
Swaniti Initiative	www.swaniti.in
The Hunger Project (India)	www.thp.org
Transparent Chennai	www.transparentchennai.com
Urban Management Centre (UMC)	www.umcasia.org
Vidhi Center for Legal Policy	www.vidhilegalpolicy.in

C. Non-profit organizations and social businesses called in addition to the above list - 41

Action Research in Community Health & Development	www.archgujarat.org
Bangalore PAC (B.PAC)	www.bpac.in
Budget Analysis Rajasthan Center (BARC)	www.barcjaipur.org
Centre for Communication and Development Studies (CCDS)	www.ccds.in
Centre for Legislative Research and Advocacy (CLRA)	www.clraindia.org
Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR)	www.cppr.in
Centre for World Solidarity	www.cwsy.org
Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD)	www.cysd.org
CGNet swara	www.cgnetswara.org
Citizen Matters	www.bangalore.citizenmatters.in
CIVIC Bangalore	www.civicspace.in
CMS	www.cmsindia.org
Committee of Resource Organizations (CORO) for Literacy	www.coroindia.org
Daksh	www.dakshindia.org
Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)	www.defindia.net

Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)	www.epw.in
Governance Now	www.governancenow.com
Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)	www.hrln.org
IDinsight	www.idinsight.org
iForIndia	www.iforindia.org
Inclusive Media for Change	www.im4change.org
India Governs Research Institute	www.indiagoverns.org
IT for change	www.itforchange.net
Jan Jagaran Shakti Sangathan	www.jjabihar.org
Janwani	www.janwani.org
Liberty Institute	www.empoweringindia.org
Life Education and Development Support (LEADS)	www.leadsindiajh.org
Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)	www.mkssindia.org
National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI)	www.righttoinformation.info
National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS)	www.ncasindia.org
NewsLaundry	www.newsLaundry.com
Odisha Budget and Accountability Centre (OBAC)	www.obac.in
OneWorld Foundation India	www.oneworld.net.in
Patrika	www.patrika.com
Prajayatna	www.prajayatna.org
Pravah	www.pravah.org
Regional Center for Development Cooperation	www.rcdcindia.org
Samarthan Advocacy	www.samarthanadvocacy.org
Sanket Development Group	www.sanketindia.org
The Takshashila Institution	www.takshashila.org.in
Transparency International (India)	www.transparencyindia.org

APPENDIX III

Acronymns

AJWS	American Jewish World Service
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPT	Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology
CIC	Central Information Commission
COC	Corporation of Chennai
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FMCG	Fast Moving Consuming Goods
FRA	Forest Rights Act
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System

GOI	Government of India
HR	Human Resources
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ICMA	International City/ County Management Association
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFMR	Institute of Financial Management and Research
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
INTACH	Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage
IVR	Interactive Voice Response System
JNNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
JSY	Janani Suraksha Yojna
MC	Municipal Councilor
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MSJE	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
MWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NISA	National Independent Schools Alliance
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
OBC	Other Backward Classes
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAISA	Planning, Allocations and Expenditures, Institutions: Studies in Accountability
PDS	Public Distribution System
PESA	Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RAY	Rajiv Awas Yojana
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
RTE	Right to Education
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Scheduled Castes
SCSP	Scheduled Caste Special Powers Act
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Scheduled Tribes
TOT	Training of Trainer
TSP	Tribal Sub-plan
UIDAI	Unique Identification Authority of India
ULB	Urban Local Body
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNIDO	United National Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United States Aid
VIP	Very Important Person
WEIGO	Women in Informal Sector Organizing and Globalizing
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicator

APPENDIX IV

Glossary

Anganwadi centers were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. These centers provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services of which the later three services are provided in convergence with public health systems.

Gram Panchayat is the cornerstone of a local self-government organization in India of the Panchayati Raj system at the village or small town level, and has a Sarpanch as its elected head.

Gram Sabha includes all adult citizens of a village. Their roles include electing the Gram Panchayat, as well as contributing to a number of decisions taken by the Panchayat.

Panchayati Raj is a decentralized form of governance where each village is responsible for its own affairs, as the foundation of India's political system. It is the oldest system of Indian government in the Indian subcontinent. It consists of a three-tiered system of administration: Gram panchayat (village level), panchayat samiti (block level) and Zila parishad (district level).

APPENDIX V

End Notes

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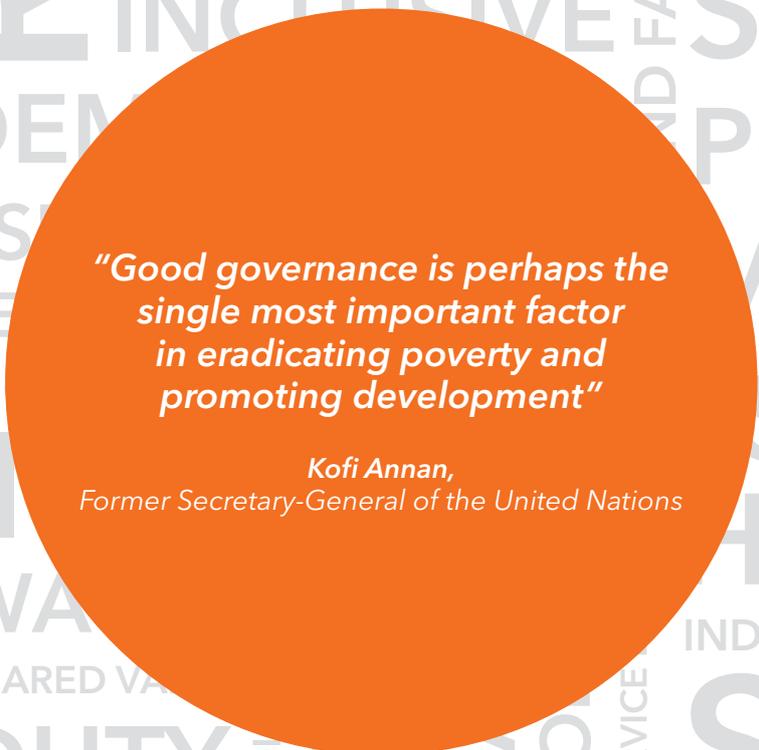
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"Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development"

*Kofi Annan,
Former Secretary-General of the United Nations*



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