

Vox Populi

voice of the people



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BOOK - POST

Dear Reader

How often have we seen raised eyebrows of the “Insiders” to the suggestion of introducing business management principles into public administration? Talk about ‘Total Quality Management’ (TQM) in Government and the eyebrows would rise further up. The point that the two are different is well taken. We suggest, however, that creative adaptation could be the way to go! This issue carries an article by Dr. J. B. Rajan on how introduction of TQM in a Panchayat helped it improve the quality of its public service delivery. The rationale for the including this article here is that certain key social accountability tools were employed in the course of the Panchayat being made TQM-driven. This has occasioned the inclusion – in this – issue – of a feature on KILA and its role in fostering social accountability in local governments in that State. Also included are features on Transparent Accountable Governance (TAG) project in Philippines, a workshop organised on innovations in accountability and transparency through citizen engagement - the role of donors in supporting and sustaining change and Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) report.



SAC Article: If there is a will, there is a way: A case of Cheruvannoor-Nallalom Panchayat

– Dr. J.B. Rajan

The Certificate Course in Local Governance is a unique initiative of the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) to build the capacity of Elected Representatives (ERs) of local government institutions (LSGIs). The course is intended to develop the understanding, skills and capabilities required by the ERs for effective involvement in local governance.

The course covers a variety of topics like local governance, sustainable development and local economic development, good governance, and capacity development. Total Quality Management (TQM) is one of the topics taught as part of the 'good governance' Module. Total Quality Management (TQM) so far has been a buzz word in the corporate world is now spiralling in the local governments of Kerala. Perhaps, Cheruvannoor-Nallalom Grama Panchayat must be the first Panchayat in Kerala or in India applying TQM for the effective functioning of Panchayats. This is a case study of Cheruvannoor-Nallalom Grama Panchayat (GP) in Calicut District of Kerala, which used TQM to evolve as one of the best panchayats in Kerala.

Certificate Course, Alternative Capacity Building Strategy

TQM is a continuous process of ensuring people-friendly office environment. TQM targets to improve the quality in service delivery by utilising the existing mechanism in an effective manner. By fixing a benchmark, TQM target to attain the same by filling the existing gaps in service delivery. The creation of environment for TQM is based on seven principles viz. (1) top management support, (2) strategic quality planning, (3) people centric, transparent and accountable governance (4) training and recognition, (5) team work, (6) performance measurement, and (7) quality assurance.

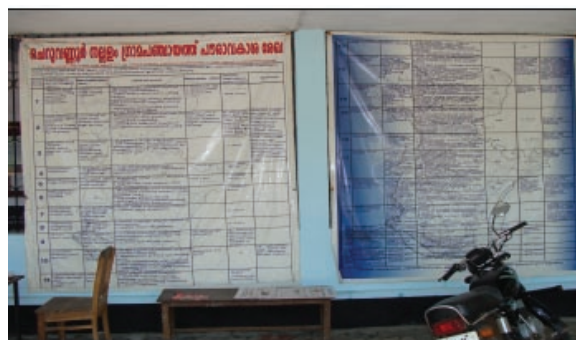
Milestones

The Panchayat deputed Mr. H.P.A. Hashim (Chairperson, Welfare Standing Committee) for the Certificate Course in Local Governance of KILA. He was inspired by the course and the session on TQM in particular. Mr. Hashim informed the Panchayat President Mr. P.C. Rajan who after discussions with the Panchayat Committee decided to implement the TQM model. This can be treated as top management support, one of the axioms of TQM.

Implementation of TQM

The implementation of TQM in the Panchayat has resulted in various reforms to improve transparency, accountability and quality of service delivery. Some important reforms introduced are:

- **Citizen's Charter:** One of the mandatory documents to be published by the local governments is Citizen's Charter (*Pauravakasa Rekha*), which is a declaration by the Panchayat to deliver services with its modus operandi. The Citizen's Charter which was prepared mechanically, with the introduction of TQM, was prepared in an organic manner by gathering inputs from the Staff and Elected Representatives. The document was discussed in the Village Assembly (*Grama Sabha*). The copies of the Charter are widely circulated and made available to all and is displayed in front of the panchayat office.
- **Display of Functional Map:** A functional map of personnel, showing their designations and responsibilities was prepared through participatory process and displayed in front of the panchayat office.
- **File Movement Register Opened:** Opening of file movement register as part of the TQM now helps to trace out the current status of files, reasons for any delay, the responsible person for such delay, etc. This reduces bureaucracy and red-tapism and ensures more accountability.
- **Office Attendance Made Public:** Another novel activity of TQM has been making the office bearer's attendance public through sign board. Visitors to the panchayat office would be able to



know the attendance of the staff viz. present, leave, on duty, etc. This avoids practices of 'absentee-attendance'.

- **Officials Identity Established:** Name Boards of administrative staff to the level of LD Clerks are displayed on the table of concerned person.
- **Service Counter Opened:** A service counter opened in front of the office to ensure smooth service delivery. The person at the counter receives the applications from the clientele and issue acknowledgement receipt with the appointed date of delivering the service.
- **Record Management:** A separate Record Room was opened and all the records were systematically arranged and indexed. A log-book is opened with a record keeper in charge.
- **Right to Information:** Compliance to the RTI act is another important step initiated as part of TQM. Updating and widely disseminating Citizen's Charter, display of functional maps, making public the office attendance, installing name boards, etc are some examples. Effective record management also helped in speedy disposal of RTI requests.



Output and Outcome

The introduction of TQM helped in maintaining order in the panchayat office. Budgets made were more realistic, accounts were up to date, records management is in place, diary system for staff is in practice, movement of files recorded, and office appearance improved and the whole service delivery system more transparent. Hearing these changes, the Panchayats from nearby areas have started enquiring about TQM. The Kadalundi Grama Panchayat in the Calicut district has earmarked Rs 3 lakhs in the current year 2008-09 for TQM and has requested the expertise from Cheruvannoor-Nallalam Panchayat. The Cheruvannoor-Nallalam functionaries feel that it is the attitudinal change and willingness of the members and other functionaries towards TQM that has brought about this change. Good Governance Planning has been made mandatory by the Kerala Government in its 11th five year plan for local governments and TQM is one such tool that can be used in achieving it. The initiative by Cheruvannoor-Nallalam Grama Panchayat proves the dictum 'if there is a will there is a way'.

The writer is an Associate Professor at Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Thrissur, Kerala.

SAC Project: TAG – Transparent Accountable Governance Project – Philippines

The Transparent Accountable Governance (TAG) Project is an attempt to summarize how, why and to what degree corruption exists in Philippine society. The Transparent Accountable Governance project has been running since 1999, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development to The Asia Foundation. This approach of the project is integrated which relies on public opinion survey research, investigative reports, case studies, and briefings to engage the public in a discussion on corruption. The work has now extended to promoting good governance in selected cities and municipalities of Mindanao through capacity-building efforts. TAG takes a pro-active role in encouraging public debate on the issue of corruption and on ways to counter it.

TAG Project was initiated to build awareness on the cost of corruption, increasing transparency and accountability in government transactions and promoting tri-sectoral collaboration in support of good governance. Initial advocacy under the project was a collective effort of partners like Makati Business Club, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Philippine Center for Policy Studies, and Social Weather Stations. Additional partnerships were also forged among the Philippine Governance Forum, Mindanao Business Council, Center for Continuing Legal Education, Procurement Watch, Bantay Katarungan, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, and Transparency International.

Building on the successes reaped by the initial national counter-corruption efforts and an improved



overall political environment for counter-corruption reform, the project now focuses at three levels:

1. National-level counter corruption advocacy;
2. Extending these efforts at the city-level in Mindanao by promoting transparency and accountability in city governance; and,
3. Broadening opportunities for peace and economic development in Mindanao through improved local governance especially in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and its neighboring conflict affected areas.

At the national level, efforts are focused on maintaining broad civil society and private sector engagement particularly for reforms at the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs, Department of Education, the Office of the Ombudsman; support for legislation promoting transparency in government transactions; continuous monitoring of public perception on the extent of corruption in government; continuing outreach and information dissemination and periodic advocacy initiatives of the Transparency and Accountability Network.

At the local government level, seven cities in Mindanao collaborate with private sector and civil society to improve transparency and accountability in government transactions through procedural reform in city government systems. It includes simplifying procedures, reducing monopoly of power and discretion of city employees, and increasing transparency and availability of information to citizens. Public perception on how city governments perform its mandate are measured through the use of scorecards, which are used to guide local chief executives in setting policy directions with respect to promoting transparency and accountability. Capacity-building for technical staff that lends support to process reforms is likewise implemented.

In Mindanao municipalities, different activities are being implemented which cover several sectors: municipal governments, civil society organizations, and local resource institutions. At the municipal level, technical assistance is provided to improve local government operations like planning and budgeting, resource mobilization, and organizational development among others. Capacity-building for both civil society organizations and local resource institutions are conducted to increase their level of awareness on local governance and be effective partners of municipal governments.

The TAG Project has continued to document perspectives among various sectors of the business community and general public concerning corruption as it relates to doing business in the Philippines; identify and analyze key areas of corruption to quantify their economic costs; and focus business and public attention on how particular areas of corruption affect the conduct of business and economic growth in the Philippines. The primary goal of the project is to build consensus on a concrete agenda for counter-corruption reform.

Source: http://www.tag.org.ph/citizen_action/default.htm

SAC Event: Workshop on Innovations in Accountability and Transparency through Citizen Engagement. The Role of Donors in Supporting and Sustaining Change

While work on accountability and transparency towards the mutual goals of deepening democratic governance, meeting development targets and delivering basic services appears to be growing, there also have been few opportunities for these various actors to come together to share approaches, to develop strategies for more synergistic work, and to think further about how to build the field. The risks of failing to do so are large – work could remain in silos, lessons and learning could remain unshared and



opportunities for collaboration that would make the work greater than the sum of its parts could be missed.

In order to build on the opportunities, as well as to minimize these risks, DFID and the Open Society Institute convened a workshop at the Bellagio Study and Conference Centre, Italy from June 16 – 20, 2008 around the theme of *“Innovations in Accountability and Transparency through Citizen Engagement – The role of Donors in Supporting and Sustaining Change”*. The workshop brought together 23 participants from civil society organisations, bilateral and multilateral aid organisations and private foundations for the purposes of:

- Sharing knowledge and practical learning of ‘What’s working? What’s innovative? And what’s missing?’ in work on accountability and transparency;
- Identifying key issues and factors for success; and
- Developing a broader vision/strategy for building the field collaboratively.

On the issue ‘Why Accountability/ Why Now’ there was a consensus among the participants that accountability was not simply a question of ‘accountancy’ or of counting. Rather, it represents a core principle of democratic relationships between states and citizens, which must be strengthened in order to realize broader goals of governance and development. Similarly, while citizen or civil society-led initiatives for accountability and transparency are increasingly seen as critical, so too is it important to focus on ‘both sides of the citizen-state equation’, through also supporting the capacity of governments to respond to citizen demand, and for civil society initiatives to link to official bodies, such as oversight commissions, parliaments and others.

The workshop went on to hear about a number of innovative strategies for accountability from practitioners and donors, including a special session on information, the role of media and new technologies. Key trend in the discussion was that accountability strategies used by practitioners are many, though often they may not be linked up in practice and information is a fundamental part of the enabling environment, and yet much more could be done to use new information tools, media and technologies to make information useable and accessible to broader populations. From the presentations of case studies, the workshop generated six broad areas on which more work would be needed to deepen or extend the collective impact of the work. These included:

1. Making the case and sharing our knowledge
2. New strategic emphases and directions (evidence on impacts to build new forms of learning)
3. Extending the reach: linking to and building broad-based demand at the grassroots
4. Joining up strategies for scale and sustainability
5. Building donors’ own accountability and legitimacy
6. Developing innovative funding mechanisms

The workshop reviewed progress on addressing the challenges and opportunities and came back to the task of outlining a broader strategy vision for building the accountability field. More information on the workshop is available in the report placed at the link below.

Source: <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/publications/Report%20from%20Bellagio%20workshop%20-%20final.pdf>



SAC Results and Reports: Transparency International 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

"In the poorest countries, corruption levels can mean the difference between life and death, when money for hospitals or clean water is in play."

— Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International.

A country or territory's CPI Score indicates the degree of public sector corruption as perceived by business people and country analysts, and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). Least corrupt country gets first rank. Prof. Johann Graf Lambsdorff of the University of Passau, who carries out the Index for Transparency International, says:

"Evidence suggests that an improvement in the CPI by one point [on a 10-point scale] increases capital inflows by 0.5 per cent of a country's gross domestic product and average incomes by as much as 4 per cent."

India slides to 85th rank in Transparency International 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), out of the 180 countries surveyed. This is in spite of the enforcement of the RTI Act. India was ranked 72 in 2007. India's CPI Score slightly declined to 3.4 from 3.5 in 2007. This time, Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand share the first rank. All these countries have strong Freedom of Information regimes. Sweden has a long tradition of openness, which enacted world's first transparency law, way back in 1766; Denmark enacted its Freedom of Information law in 1970 and New Zealand in 1982.

The Transparency International CPI measures the perceived levels of public-sector corruption in a given country and is a composite index, drawing on different expert and business surveys. The CPI 2008 is calculated using data from 13 sources originated from 11 independent institutions. For CPI sources that are surveys, and where multiple years of the same survey are available, data for the last two years are included to provide a smoothing effect. In the CPI 2008, this consists of the following sources: Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, Economist Intelligence Unit, Freedom House, Global Insight and Merchant International Group. Additional sources are resident business leaders evaluating their own country; in the CPI 2008, this consists of the following sources: IMD, Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, and the World Economic Forum. Confidence range provides a range of possible values of the CPI score. This reflects how a country's score may vary, depending on measurement precision. Nominally, with 5 percent probability the score is above this range and with another 5 percent it is below. However, particularly when only few sources are available, an unbiased estimate of the mean coverage probability is lower than the nominal value of 90%.

Source: www.transparency.org/surveys/#cpi

2008 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (CPI)				
Country Rank	Country	2008 CPI Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1-9.4
1	New Zealand	9.3	6	9.2-9.5
1	Sweden	9.3	6	9.2-9.4
2008 CPI OF COUNTRIES IN SOUTH ASIA				
85	India	3.4	10	3.2-3.6
92	Sri Lanka	3.2	7	2.9-3.5
115	Maldives	2.8	4	1.7-4.3
121	Nepal	2.7	6	2.4-3.0
134	Pakistan	2.5	7	2.0-2.8
147	Bangladesh	2.1	7	1.7-2.4
178	Myanmar	1.3	4	1.0-1.5

SAC Resources

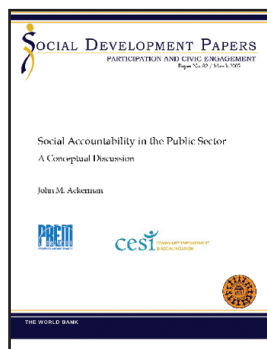
Social Accountability in the Public Sector: A Conceptual Discussion

John M. Ackerman – March 2005

Social Development Papers: Participation and Civic Engagement

Paper No. 82

The World Bank

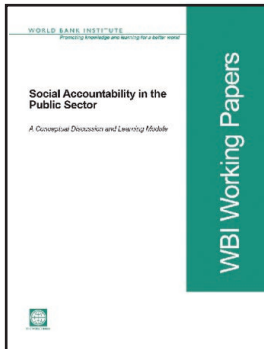


In recent years, civic engagement is being increasingly viewed as a promising approach to improve the performance in the public sector. This paper attempts to clarify one aspect of the growing literature on civic engagement: society's role in improving government accountability – a process increasingly being termed as "social accountability".

The paper develops a definition of accountability as a pro-active process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behavior and results and are sanctioned accordingly. The World Bank can apply social accountability approaches in many areas of its work. The paper highlights two such areas: (a) Public sector reform and (b) Decentralization. The paper discusses several examples as to how SAC approaches have made an impact in these two areas.

Source: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/214574-1116506074750/20542263/FINALAckerman.pdf>





Social Accountability in the Public Sector: A Conceptual Discussion and Learning Module

103 pages

Stock No. 37249

WBI Working Papers – 2005

World Bank Institute

A growing number of authors and practitioners have offered civic engagement as a way to improve the accountability of public institutions and office holders to their constituencies. This paper and learning module attempt to clarify one aspect of the growing literature on civic engagement: society's role in improving government accountability—a process increasingly being termed as “social accountability.” The paper presents accountability as “a proactive process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behavior and results and are sanctioned accordingly.” It then explores the various ways in which civil society can participate in strengthening accountability in the public sector.

Source: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/WBI/Resources/Social_Accountability_in_the_Public_Sector_with_cover.pdf

SAC Institution: CUTS Centre for Consumer Action Research & Training (CART)

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS International) was founded in the year 1984 with the mandate of pursuing the cause of common consumers. CUTS in India is working through six resource centers: three in Jaipur and one each in Chittorgarh, New Delhi and Calcutta and four resource centers overseas: at Lusaka (Zambia), Nairobi (Kenya), London (UK) and Hanoi (Vietnam). CUTS also works with several national, regional and international organisations.

With the growth of the organisation, later the responsibility of moving forward with the inherited agenda of CUTS, i.e. ‘Consumer Education and Protection’ was handed over to CART, which was established in 1996. The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating a more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to its issues of concern to the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment. At the ground level, it has trained and created over 1200 activists and helped to establish over 300 independent consumer groups in Rajasthan and elsewhere. Due to its pioneering work in the area of consumer protection, CUTS has not only risen to the forefront of the consumer movement in India, but also the world.

CUTS-CART strategy is to create and galvanize networks of people and social action groups who are concerned about the increasing gap between rights and their actual achievements, especially as those relating to women. It also interacts with government and the policy, the media and judiciary, so as to achieve for people their rights to basic needs and sustainable development. The following are the core functional areas of the Centre.

- Consumer Education & Protection
- Investor Education & Protection
- Good Governance, which includes accountability & access to information
- Utility Reforms
- Sustainable Mobility, which includes Road Safety
- Women & Child: Protection & Rights
- Sustainable Development, which includes MDGs, environment, livelihoods etc.

Source: <http://www.cuts-international.org/CART.htm>



SAC Trivia – Did you know?

1. In India, people complained that the maximum penalty under the RTI Act - Rs. 25000 is not a figure to deter. But the Central Information Commission (CIC) thought differently. CIC imposed penalty of Rs. 1,25,000 on Public Information Officer (PIO) of Daulat Ram College, Delhi for delay in supply of information in connection with five separate RTI applications by Prof. Pramila Sharma. Punjab information commission too imposed penalty of Rs. 50,000 on a PIO in connection with two applications filed by single individual.
2. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) implemented in India, mandates States Governments seeking funds from the Mission to enact a Public Disclosure Law and a Community Participation Law to strengthen people's Right to Know.
3. Supreme Court in a landmark judgment in *Samira Kohli v Dr. Prabha Manchanda & Anr.*, *Supreme Court, Appeal (civil) 1949 of 2004, 16 January 2008* case has formulated principles on Medical RTI and nature of information required to be given by doctors on the proposed treatment to the patients.

About SASANET

South Asia Social Accountability Network (SasaNet) is an initiative taken by the Centre for Good Governance (CGG) and the South Asia Sustainable Development (SASSD) Division of the World Bank to develop a broader understanding amongst various Government and Civil Society Organization towards the potential use of SAC tools in promoting good governance. The network offers a platform for mutual cooperation, exchange of experiences among organizations, associations and informal groups. The SasaNet website (www.sasanet.org) is the electronic voice of the South Asia Social Accountability Network. It offers a comprehensive knowledge base which includes conceptual information, set of tools, best practices and case studies for facilitating enhanced social accountability in governance.

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