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“The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearing. Their right to know, which is derived from the concept of freedom of speech, though not absolute, is a factor which should make one wary when secrecy is claimed for transactions which can at any rate have no repercussion on public security. Since that remark, the country saw many demands for an RTI Act; 12 states had enacted their own transparency laws before it was passed as a central legislation and implemented in 2005.”

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About CMS Transparency

The CMS Transparency team focuses on issues of good governance, raising awareness about the Right to Information Act (RTI) and empowering citizens to benefit from the legislation. CMS Transparency has been providing significant database and momentum to create responsive governance systems in our country.

The team will continue to establish links with civil society groups and design campaigns for RTI to further social objectives like transparency in elections, exposing corruption and improving civic services.

"I am happy to note that Centre for Media Studies (CMS) has been carrying out the exceptional good work in various areas having substantial public interest. One of their initiatives is the study on corruption in the country in particular in certain geographical areas or on a theme."

...K.V.Chowdary, Central Vigilance Commissioner, Central Vigilance Commission (2015)



CMS Transparency
Towards Responsive Governance

RESEARCH HOUSE, Saket Community Centre, New Delhi 110 017 India
P: 91.11.2686 4020, 2685 1660; F: 91.11.2696 8282
E: transparency@cmsindia.org, info@cmsindia.org
W: www.cmsindia.org/?q=node/98

Explained: What Supreme Court said on RTI use, abuse

Shyamlal Yadav

CJI Bobde has called for a way to stop abuse of RTI. A look at the Supreme Court's observations over the years, at times stressing the right to know, and at other times critical of the way RTI is being used.

Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde called for a “filter” to check “abuse” of the Right to Information (RTI) Act. “There is paralysis and fear about this Act. People are not taking decisions... We want to find a way to stop the abuse of RTI Act,” he said.

Bobde’s remarks came a month after the Supreme Court declared the office of the CJI a public authority under the ambit of the RTI. Over the years, the Supreme Court has stressed the importance of transparency under RTI at times, and also remarked on its overuse at other times.

For a stronger RTI

Denial of Information:

On December 16, 2015, in *Jayantilal N Mistry vs Reserve Bank of India*, Justice M Y Eqbal and Justice C Nagappan observed: “It had long since come to our attention that the Public Information Officers under the guise of one of the exceptions given under Section 8 of RTI Act, have evaded the general public from getting their hands on the rightful information that they are entitled to... The ideal of ‘Government by the people’ makes it necessary that people have access to

information on matters of public concern. The free flow of information about affairs of Government paves way for debate in public policy and fosters accountability in Government. It creates a condition for ‘open governance’ which is a foundation of democracy.”

NGOs Under RTI:

In *DAV College Trust and Managing... vs Director of Public Instructions* on September 17, 2019, a Bench of Justice Deepak Gupta and Justice Aniruddha Bose declared that NGOs are not beyond the RTI Act. This was based on an examination of the question whether NGOs are substantially financed by the government. The Bench observed, “In our view, substantial means a large portion. It does not necessarily have to mean a major portion or more than 50%. No hard and fast rule can be laid down in this regard. Substantial financing can be both direct and indirect. To give an example, if a land in a city is given free of cost or on heavy discount to hospitals, educational institutions or such other body, this in itself could also be substantial financing. The very establishment of such an institution, if it is dependent on the

The very establishment of such an institution, if it is dependent on the largesse of the State in getting the land at a cheap price, would mean that it is substantially financed.

Their right to know, which is derived from the concept of freedom of speech, though not absolute, is a factor which should make one wary when secrecy is claimed for transactions which can at any rate have no repercussion on public security.

largesse of the State in getting the land at a cheap price, would mean that it is substantially financed. Merely because financial contribution of the State comes down during the actual funding, will not by itself mean that the indirect finance given is not to be taken into consideration. The value of the land will have to be evaluated not only on the date of allotment but even on the date when the question arises as to whether the said body or NGO is substantially financed. Whether an NGO or body is substantially financed by the government is a question of fact which has to be determined on the facts of each case.”

Because of this observation, the spotlight falls on several NGOs that have been getting public money and were not covered under the RTI. There are societies directly controlled by politicians, but fighting cases that they are not covered under the transparency law.

Critical of overuse

Time Consumed in Replying:

In *Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) & Anr vs Aditya Bandhopadhyay and Others* in 2011, the Supreme Court said: “The nation does not want a scenario where 75% of the staff of public authorities spends 75% of their time in collecting and furnishing information to applicants instead of discharging their regular duties.”

According to estimates, nearly 60-70 lakh RTI applications are filed in India every year, and activists have questioned whether addressing these would require 75% of the time of government staff.

Several public authorities have used this observation while denying information, ignoring the fact in the same case, the Supreme Court had ordered disclosure of the requisite information.

Personal and Public:

In *Girish Ramchandra Deshpande vs Central Information Commission & Ors* in October 2012, a Bench of Justices K.S Radhakrishnan and Dipak Misra observed, “The performance of an employee/officer in an organisation is primarily a matter between the employee and the employer and normally those aspects are governed by the service rules which fall under the expression ‘personal information’, the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or public interest. On the other hand, the disclosure of which would cause unwarranted invasion of privacy of that individual. Of course, in a given case, if the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer of the Appellate Authority is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information, appropriate orders could be passed but the petitioner cannot claim those details as a matter of right.”

Various public authorities have used this order to deny information on cases/inquiries going on against government officials.

Genesis of the law

It was the Supreme Court that had sown the seeds of the RTI Act when, in 1975, in *State of Uttar Pradesh vs Raj Narain*,

It observed, “Voters’ (little man-citizens’) right to know antecedents including criminal past of his candidate contesting election for MP or MLA is much more fundamental and basic for survival of democracy. The little man may think over before making his choice of electing law breakers as law makers.”

Justice K K Mathew observed, “The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearing. Their right to know, which is derived from the concept of freedom of speech, though not absolute, is a factor which should make one wary when secrecy is claimed for transactions which can at any rate have no repercussion on public security. Since that remark, the country saw many demands for an RTI Act; 12 states had enacted their own transparency laws before it was passed as a central legislation and implemented in 2005.

Before the RTI Act, the Supreme Court advocated for the people’s right to know in *Union of India Vs Association for Democratic Reforms* in 2002. It observed, “Voters’ (little man-citizens’) right to know antecedents including criminal past of his candidate contesting election for MP or MLA is much more fundamental and basic for survival of democracy. The little man may think over before making his choice of electing law breakers as law makers.”

This judgment was to make provision for declarations of assets, liabilities and criminal cases against electoral candidates, but for government officials the information is often denied by several public authorities, using the Supreme Court observation of October 2012 .

Section 6(2) of the RTI Act says: “An applicant making request for information shall not be required to give any reason for requesting the information or any other personal details except those that may be necessary for contacting him.” Section 8(1)(j) says, “The information which cannot be denied to the Parliament or a State Legislature shall not be denied to any person” under the RTI Act.

In *Bhagat Singh vs CIC* in 2007, then Delhi High Court Justice Ravindra Bhat (now a Supreme Court judge) observed: “Access to information, under Section 3 of the Act, is the rule and exemptions under Section 8, the exception. Section 8 being a restriction on this fundamental right, must therefore be strictly construed. It should not be interpreted in manner as to shadow the very right itself.”

Sources: *Indian Express*

Nineteen percent increase in admissions under Right to Education Act

Sonal Khetarpal

There is growing awareness and demand in the society on education. This is also seen in the yearly increase in the children admitted under the Section 12(1)(c) that mandates private schools to reserve 25 per cent of their seats for students from disadvantaged sections

In the tenth year of its existence, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009, has resulted in an increase of 19 per cent in admissions year-on-year since the academic year 2015-16.

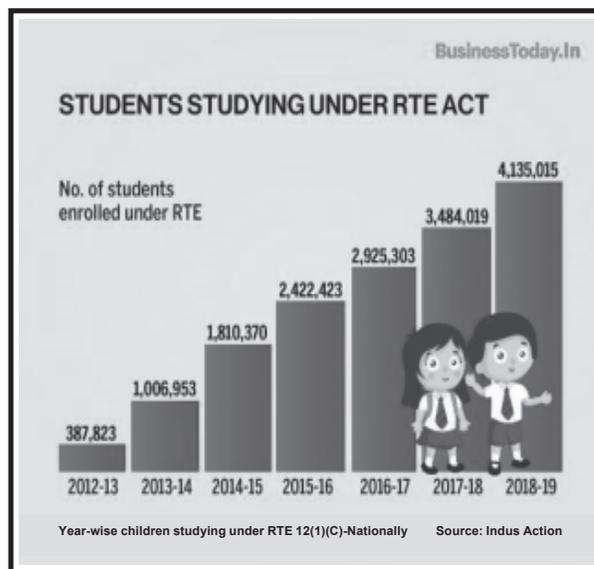
Indus Action, a New Delhi-based not-for-profit organisation that works on the landscape of education in the country, came out with the finding in its report 'The Bright Spots 2019'.

There is growing awareness and demand in the society on education. This is also seen in the yearly increase in the children admitted under the Section 12(1)(c) that mandates private schools to reserve 25 per cent of their seats for students from disadvantaged sections.

The rationale behind the inclusion of this Section in the RTE Act was that inequitable and disparate schooling reinforces existing economic and social hierarchies and promotes an indifference towards the plight of others in the society. Despite the slow start, the RTE act is seeing a significant impact of yearly increase in children admitted under Section 12(1)(c).

Tarun Cherukuri, Chief Executive Officer of Indus Action, said, "It is too early to announce triumph for RTE implementation but every single body

working on it deserves to keep some credit for 19 per cent ascend in new school admissions since 2015-16. For Indus Action, there has been no looking back since 2009, but now when positive outcomes are actually visible we are motivated and determined to enrol one million children in mainstream schools by 2020."



According to the report, over 40 lakh children are admitted under section 12 (1) (c) RTE Act, of which 68 per cent children are from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

(Source: Business Today)

TN tops in good governance

Centre releases Good Governance Index ranking States and UTs in 10 sectors

Tamil Nadu topped the Good Governance Index launched by the Centre on Wednesday. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh followed among the 'Big States'.

Among the 'Big States', the poor performers are Odisha, Bihar, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh with Jharkhand coming last.

The States and UTs are divided into three groups — Big States, North-East and Hill States, and Union Territories.

Among the North-East and Hill States, Himachal Pradesh was ranked first, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim. The worst performers in this group are Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, with Arunachal Pradesh coming last.

Puducherry is the best governed Union Territory followed by Chandigarh and Delhi. Lakshwadeep is the worst performing UT. The rankings were launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, and the Centre for Good Governance. Speaking at the launch of the Index, Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, said that

the Index was scientifically designed based on various parameters of governance.

An official statement said that the index is a uniform tool to assess the status of governance and impact of various interventions taken up by State governments and Union Territories.

The States are assessed on performance in 10 sectors — agriculture and allied sectors, commerce and industries, human resource development, public health, public infrastructure and utilities, economic governance, social welfare and development, judicial and public security, environment, and citizen-centric governance.

In the agriculture and allied ranking, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Daman and Diu are the best performing States in their groups. This rating took into account the growth rate of agriculture and allied sector, foodgrains production, horticulture produce, milk and meat production, and crop insurance.

While assessing the performance of commerce and industries across States, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Delhi top the lists of their groups.

State of governance					
Rank	Big states	Score	Rank	Big states	Score
1	Tamil Nadu	5.62	10	West Bengal	4.84
2	Maharashtra	5.40	11	Telangana	4.83
3	Karnataka	5.10	12	Rajasthan	4.8
4	Chhattisgarh	5.05	13	Punjab	4.57
5	Andhra Pradesh	5.05	14	Orissa	4.44
6	Gujarat	5.04	15	Bihar	4.40
7	Haryana	5.00	16	Goa	4.29
8	Kerala	4.98	17	Uttar Pradesh	4.25
9	Madhya Pradesh	4.85	18	Jharkhand	4.23

(Source: The Hindu Businessline)

Activism in 2020-2025, Influencing Factors

Dr N Bhaskara Rao

A recent (March 2018) concern of Delhi Government to introduce a curriculum in schools on “happiness” brings out a larger issue which is an undercurrent for increasing social unrest in the country. That children are not acquainted early enough with civics, societal concerns, responsible citizenship and such other related values to play a more active and positive role in their respective field and neighbourhoods is an important recent realisation. The direction and scope of citizen activism in coming years obviously depends on childhood upbringing and schooling. Harvard University’s Index of democracies – 2017 has insights for India to be concerned about of such a larger issue.

Citizen activism could easily be expected to be more visible and also vocal in the coming years (Silence too was used at times – *maun vrat* – to flag a point). It will be on several fronts and far more pan India in scope. The structure and modus operandi of activism however is likely to be distinct. This to a great extent depends on how the authorities are going to take or view citizen and civil society activism. The scope will be determined by different factors. Some prominent factors for protests and activism include the following.

First, going by recent protests, demonstrations, Dharnas, rallies and the kind of mobilisation of citizens, increasing gap between promises and performance of the elected parties and their policies will contribute even more in the coming years by way of intensifying activism.

Second, decline and unreliability of delivery mechanisms of public services and lapses in implementation mechanisms on ground too will add to public outcry or disgruntlement. Which in turn boosts activism.

Third, with more and more rights to individual provided for, the expectations of citizen will further rise adding to increase in the number of people who are ignored or left behind or put to provocations or authorities. This in turn is expected to add to the numbers engaged in public protests.

Fourth, with increase in access and connectivity between people and to newer media it is much easier for citizens to come together for a common cause and course. As a recent MIT study had reminded social media and flat-forms like WhatsApp will trigger word of mouth which often involves common citizen not merely the commercially motivated ones. Such potential of social media tempts authorities to take to false and planted contents more at the cost of citizen.

Fifth, the way the news media particularly the news channels report, exaggerate and hype adds to the anguish of otherwise disappointed citizens and prompts them to take to dissent and protests

Sixth, polarisation of political parties and proliferation of factional groups at gross roots have added to the disgust and anger of independent people as concern for basic issues has become secondary to political alliances and individuals on power pursuit. Political leaders are engaged more in alienating citizens dividing them as “with us” or “against us” and provoking those not with.

Seventh, certain issues long pending have now become emotional concerns like job reservations, subsidies, employment,



budget allocations, sharing river water, divide on skills, etc. each has acquired weightage for an agitation as Governments are taking a temporal view or fire fighting view of these issues.

Eighth, shrinking space for citizen meetings and activism locally as if by design further provokes activism and broadens its scope towards a networked activism.

Ninth, declining patience and tolerance levels among most sections of population and even more, among those in power positions. News channels are adding to this phenomena further. All this is bound to intensify protests, dissent and divides in the coming years.

Tenth, governments taking double standards view and stand on contentious issues adding to the gap between promise and promises while basic problems of poverty, equity and communal divides continue to be left out or become secondary concern.

These factors individually and together will give big boost to citizen activism in the coming years.

Shift in the Paradigm

How activism and role of citizen and civil society is viewed and taken into account determines the future course. In this process the following aspects matter.

First, the seriousness with which the authorities at various levels realise the significance of activism and also recognise citizen involvement as a better bet for many of the ills of governance today.

Second, how and to what extent citizen activism is deliberately facilitated and encouraged instead of trying to snub and suppress dissent and resentment in different ways.

Third, to what extent double edged character of ICT is availed with discretion by those in power. If governments start relying and believing on ICT tools more than citizen and civil society, it adds to the problem. Citizen groups have to be eventual moderators of ICT influence.

Fourth, a combination of hotspots of citizen activism, social media driven

networks and ICT led flat-forms, shape the future course. In that process the criticality of citizen activism will never get replaced and could be undermined for good governance scenario anywhere.

Fifth, devolution of powers to civic bodies has to receive serious attention. That would help citizen and civic society groups receive much deserved attention.

A seven day farmers rally (March 2018) of about 40,000 from Nasik to Mumbai has reminded power of (peaceful) protests and rallies. This rally is bound to give new fame to farmer protests across the country and rejuvenate the idea of alliances of different groups take on issues plaguing the nation across. And, remind the power of passive protests and active dissent.

This and such other events recently remind increasing role of civil society and activism. Both the Government and civil society should provide protected space for citizen activism. Government should “entrust” certain tasks and responsibilities to citizen groups with a positive outlook. The citizen groups on the other, should take to working group position (rather than merely taking groups), public hearings and the like of “social audit” of public services and policies. Only then we could expect good governance and harmonious habitats. The Government should have a public policy on citizen activism, instead of adhoc and knee – jerk reactions and most of time without sensitivity and concern for implications of public policies.

Criteria for Rejuvenating Activism

Citizen activism has far more significance in cities. The decline of cities on critical parameters is far more. Without active citizenry no initiative for urban renewal could be successful.

Which city scenario in 2018 is better as to citizen activism? Where people are more co-operative, community spirited and contribute together for better of their neighbourhood? This is a good criteria to determine the level of citizen activism.

nbrao@cmsindia.org

Heading towards safe roads

Annu Anand

Just five years back India has committed itself to reduce the road fatalities and crashes by half by 2020 under Brasilia declaration adapted by the countries across the globe. However, seeing by the data of 2018 released by the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways which shows meagre gains in reducing the accidents, creates a doubt about meeting its target. As per the report the road accidents in India claimed more than 150,000 lives in India in 2018, whereas to meet the target of reducing number of deaths on the road the government has started multiple infrastructural and legal measures in the year 2019. The transport ministry has firmed up a Rs 14,000 crore state support programme for strengthening road safety which will be funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The programme will be driven by a strict incentive-based structure for states delivering on road safety aspects, including reduction in fatalities. Apart from structural measure the legal reform has also been introduced last year to achieve the target of reducing road fatalities. Road traffic crashes now represent the eighth leading cause of death globally. According to Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018, 1.35 million lives were lost and up to 50 million persons were injured during the year 2016 due to road traffic crashes.

This translates to more than 3,700 lives daily. Road traffic injury is also the leading cause of death for people aged between 5 and 29 years now. Road crashes also contribute a large number to the disturbing burden of disability. There are more people dying on roads today than from other life threatening diseases.

Road Traffic Crashes in India

Roads are new battle ground, as more people are killed on roads than conventional war and 90% of these

casualties are happening in developing countries. India loses more than 100,000 lives due to road traffic crashes every year. It has a road traffic fatality rate of 11.8 deaths per 100,000 populations. Unfortunately, India now occupies the top slot, accounting for more than 22% (299,091) deaths as per WHO estimates. Approximately 30 per cent of all deaths on the country's roads are among vulnerable road users - motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists. Despite the existence of laws on speed, seatbelt wearing and helmet wearing, avoiding mobile calls while driving and drink driving, the enforcement of these laws by enforcement agencies are discriminative. In addition, the desire to follow these rules is not inculcated in the public. These two factors conjointly give rise to the loss of valuable lives on the roads in India.

Causes of Road Traffic Injuries

Some surveys and studies suggest that as much as one-third of collisions resulting in a fatality involve an element of excess speed. WHO data shows that almost one-fourth of the victims of road traffic collisions who require admission to a hospital facility have sustained a traumatic brain injury. In some low and middle-income countries (LMIC) head injuries are estimated to account for up to 88% of fatalities among two-wheeler users. So other major cause of traffic injuries is avoidance to wear helmets. Passengers who do not wear seat-belts at the time of a collision account for the majority of occupant road traffic fatalities. In addition, passengers who do not wear seat-belts and have a frontal crash are most likely to suffer a head injury. In low and middle income countries (LMICs) between 33% and 69% of fatally injured drivers had consumed alcohol before their crash. Drinking alcohol increases the risk of being involved in a fatal crash by 17 times.

Implementation of New law:

Keeping in view the seriousness of the problem, India has implemented new amendments in the road safety law Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019 since Sept 2019. The Act provides for grant of licenses and permits related to motor vehicles, standards for motor vehicles, and penalties for violation of these provisions. The new provisions of the act are expected to reduce the number of death provided the implementation of the rules are followed strictly. Overall, the new law has increased fine and penalty for many offences and many strict measures have been included in the act to reduce the road crashes and provide the relief to the victim. It includes compensation to the victims, compulsory insurance and exponential increase in penalties for violation of rules like driving without driving licence will be fined Rs. 5000 instead of Rs 500 earlier. Other preventive measures like vehicle fitness tests, recall of the vehicles are also expected to help in reducing the number of violations

Major Amendments in the Motor Vehicle Act:

The act has increased the minimum compensation for hit and run cases (i) in case of death, from Rs 25,000 to two lakh rupees, and (ii) in case of grievous injury, from Rs 12,500 to Rs 50,000. Another important feature of the act is compulsory insurance under which central government needs to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India.

When in the year 2017 a teenager in Karnataka, couldn't be saved, as his cycle hit by state – run bus and he kept lying profusely bleeding and begging for help on a road for almost half an hour. Though there were many people gathered around the spot, but not one of them bothered to call for help or provide some kind of assistance. By the time he was taken to the hospital, it was too late and he became

another statistic on India's killer roads. This incident not only created a huge uproar but also shook the conscious of the nation. Followed by many such incidents forced the government to understand the role of the bystanders to encourage and protect people who come forward to help victims of road accidents.

In fact, a 2013 study done by Save LIFE Foundation, a road safety NGO, found that only 26 per cent of bystanders in India are likely to help victims of road accidents. The majority would rather not get involved. This reluctance is one of the biggest reasons for deaths on our roads. Estimates made by India's Law Commission suggest that 50 per cent of the road fatalities could have been averted had timely medical assistance been given. Hence, this bill includes the provision about the role of Good Samaritan who can render emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident. Such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in providing assistance to the victim. In addition, the new Act also has a provision to order for recall of motor vehicles if a defect in the vehicle may cause damage to the environment, or the driver, or other road users .

How Effective Law Can be:

The Amendment Act also increases penalties for several offences like drink and drive, maximum penalty for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs has been increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000. Similar way, rash driving will cost fine of Rs. 5000 earlier it was Rs.1000 and driving without driving licence will be fined Rs 5000 instead of 500 earlier. Offence by juveniles is a new category introduced. Now Guardian of the juvenile / owner of the vehicle shall be fined Rs. 25,000 with 3 yrs imprisonment.

However, with the sudden increase of fine and penalty whether these traffic rules will help in reducing the cases of

Continued on page 20

The Year in RTI Activism and Transparency

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

While the Supreme Court verdict bringing the office of the CJI under the RTI was a bright spot, the Centre's plans to curb transparency were worrying.

The year 2019 was a mixed one for Right to Information and transparency in India as there were some gains for the movement through court rulings and the opening of the Chief Justice of India's office to RTI, while the Centre kept up the pressure to wield more power over institutions that ensure accountability of government offices towards ordinary citizens.

Right to Information activists insist that apart from the Supreme Court urging the Centre to expedite and streamline the process of appointment of information commissioners and opening the doors of its own chief to the RTI, the year did not offer much to be optimistic about.

Repeal of J&K RTI Act a big setback

"It's been a year of mixed experience where the tendencies towards curtailment of RTI were more, particularly in light of the Central Government's attempts to get complete control over the tenure and salaries of Information Commissioners across the country," said Venkatesh Nayak of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, adding that this was an unfortunate development.

Nayak, who has been closely involved with the transparency movement in Jammu and Kashmir, also lamented the repeal of the J&K RTI Act following the reading down of Article 370 and ending of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

With the move leading to the application of the central Right to Information Act, 2005 to the state, he said "this was another unfortunate development since "the J&K Right to Information Act which was at least three shades better than the Central law."

'CJI office under RTI is a big positive'

However, according to him, one positive development during the year was the ending of the controversy regarding coverage of the Chief Justice of India's office under the RTI. "It was a simple matter but it still dragged on for many years. Thankfully the clarification has been issued."

But, he added that "the judgment itself is both a blessing and also creates more problems in terms of interpretation of the law and application of the law."

Referring to how seriously the government takes transparency, Nayak also pointed out that the good governance index, which the government of India released on December 26, contained "no reference to either transparency or the

While the Supreme Court verdict bringing the office of the CJI under the RTI was a bright spot, the Centre's plans to curb transparency were worrying.

Admitting that there is no real-time data on RTI, Nayak said what was interesting is that compared to 2017-18 when around 9.5 lakh applications were filed with Central Government, in 2018-19 this number went up to around 12 lakh.

Right to Information Act. The only reference in the context of Citizens' Governance Indicators is the Right to Services Guarantees Act," he said.

Even when it came to Right to Services Guarantees Act, he said for this there is no Central Legislation at all and different states have passed different kinds of service guarantee laws.

"Therefore judging the states, particularly in the context of good governance, in the absence of any indicator on extent of transparency, is hugely problematic.

The concomitant value of good governance with transparency is accountability, but the good governance indicator is silent on the accountability issue."

Nayak also noted that "in the case of public security and judiciary related indicators, there is no mention of any indicator related to efforts of the states to curb corruption."

PCA amended to make it difficult to catch wrong-doers

Nayak said that the Prevention of Corruption Act too was "amended to make it more cumbersome to launch any kind of action against public servants unless they are caught red-handed creates further problems with regard to the accountability commitment of the government at different levels."

However, he said, the increasing number of RTI applications that have been filed, as an evolving phenomenon on the one hand, and as a response of civil society and the citizenry to the central government's efforts to curb its efficacy was a major and promising feature of 2019.

"Across the nation, during the first week of every month, citizens and civil society organisations are filing RTI applications in prolific numbers just to stand in solidarity with each other to protect and defend the RTI Act from rollback," Nayak said.

RTIs filed with central government have risen

Admitting that there is no real-time data on RTI, Nayak said what was interesting is that compared to 2017-18 when around 9.5 lakh applications were filed with Central Government, in 2018-19 this number went up to around 12 lakh.

"This is extremely redeeming because it is showing that while it was believed that the curve was plateauing, that trend has been bucked and there is an increase now," he said.

Key central laws awaited, no information on Lokpal's performance

Nayak also lamented that the Whistleblower Protection Law had gone nowhere in the last year; there has been no development around having a central Grievance Redressal law or in terms of giving grievance redressal powers to the information commissions, which most of the times dealt with appeals that were of the nature of grievances of the poor or non-delivery of public services.

As for the Lokpal, he said, though it has been activated in terms of appointment, "there is very little information about what exactly is the work they have done so far, particularly in terms of the disposal of a couple of thousand complaints that had been sent to them."

“The law, however, continues to be extensively used and valued by people across the country, who vehemently opposed the amendments to the law in 2019 and sought information to hold the government accountable.”

Centre failed to abide by SC ruling on appointments of information commissioners

Another noted RTI activist, Anjali Bhardwaj of the National Campaign for People’s Right to Information said “in February 2019, the Supreme Court gave an extremely progressive judgment on the RTI Act.

It reiterated that the RTI is a fundamental right and information must be provided under the law in a time-bound manner.

Highlighting the importance of information commissions, the court directed governments to appoint information commissioners in a transparent and timely manner.”

But, she pointed out, “unfortunately the Central government has failed to abide by the directions of the apex court to appoint information commissioners in the CIC.”

Amendment to RTI law compromised autonomy of information commissions

Referring to the Centre’s amendment of the RTI Act for the first time since 2005, Bhardwaj said, “the amendments, introduced surreptitiously by the BJP government, were extremely regressive and compromised the autonomy of information commissions in the country.”

The amendments passed by parliament, she said, empowered the central government to frame rules to decide the tenure, salaries and terms of service of all commissioners in the country.

“Through the rules promulgated in October 2019, the central government has given itself arbitrary powers which will result in commissions potentially becoming caged parrots, effectively functioning like central government departments,” alleged Bhardwaj, who has led several protests over the issue.

‘Despite amendments, RTI law used to expose flaws in electoral bond scheme’

Like Nayak, she too noted that activists are continuing to seek information under the law to keep the pressure up.

“The law, however, continues to be extensively used and valued by people across the country, who vehemently opposed the amendments to the law in 2019 and sought information to hold the government accountable.”

This, she noted, has also resulted in valuable and important information on government departments being revealed. “For instance, recently using the RTI Act, information was accessed about how the government pushed through the scheme for allowing anonymous electoral bonds despite objections being raised by Election Commission of India and Reserve Bank of India,” she pointed out.

So, at every step, the Centre’s attempts to curb the flow of information is being countered by aware and concerned citizens who do not want the government to succeed in its design of preventing them from asking questions and holding it accountable.

Source: The Wire

Section 144 cannot be used to curb non-violent dissent: SC

The Supreme Court on Friday ruled that Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, imposing restrictions on citizens' fundamental right to assemble peacefully, cannot be invoked as a 'tool' to 'prevent the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any democratic rights'.

The Supreme Court on Friday ruled that Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, imposing restrictions on citizens' fundamental right to assemble peacefully, cannot be invoked as a 'tool' to 'prevent the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any democratic rights'. The court's remarks assumed significance in the backdrop of the authorities invoking this provision all too frequently.

Section 144 bars assembly of five or more persons at a place. The provision has been invoked repeatedly to restrict people's movement in Jammu and Kashmir. Also, it was widely used in Uttar Pradesh and in parts of Karnataka, Delhi and other states during protests over the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. "Our Constitution protects the expression of divergent views, legitimate expressions and disapproval, and this cannot be the basis for invocation of Section 144, CrPC, unless there is sufficient .. material to show that there is likely to be an incitement to violence or threat to public safety or danger," a three judge-bench headed by Justice N V Ramana said.

The bench, which included Justices R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai, said imposing Section 144 had direct consequences upon the fundamental rights of the public. Hence this power "should be used responsibly, only as a

measure to preserve law and order", it said in its ruling on petitions challenging internet shutdown and curbs on people's movement in J&K. The power under Section 144, being remedial as well as preventive, is exercisable when there is an apprehension of danger but the danger contemplated should be in the nature of an "emergency" and for the purpose of preventing obstruction and annoyance or injury to any person lawfully employed, the court said. It is the magistrate's call to assess the situation and take a call on whether Section 144 should be imposed, it said. While exercising this power, the magistrate is duty bound to balance the rights and restrictions based on the principles of proportionality and thereafter apply the least intrusive measure. Re ..

The state is best placed to make an assessment of threat to public peace and tranquillity or law and order. However, the law requires them to state the material facts for invoking this power. This will enable judicial scrutiny and a verification of whether there are sufficient facts to justify the invocation of this power, it said. In a situation where fundamental rights of the citizens are being curtailed, the same cannot be done through an arbitrary exercise of power; rather it should be based on objective facts, the court said.

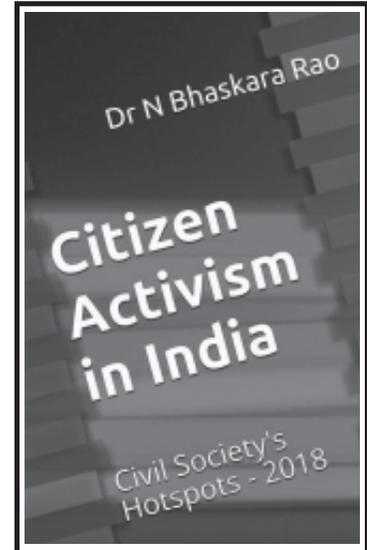
Source: economictimes.com

Civil Society's Hotspots-2018

TR Desk

How citizen activism plays significant role in the development of any democratic country; explains Dr N Bhaskar Rao in his recent book-Citizen Activism in India. Excerpts:-

Long march of 40,000 farmers from Nasik to Mumbai of 180 kilo meters distance during March 2018 was a landmark and a benchmark protest of farmers in India. June month witnessed follow up in 23 states by 190 farmer organisations. Rallies and road shows of farmers in all districts of Maharashtra were there. Taking cue of Tamil Nadu farmers' protests in Delhi Jantar Mantar twice earlier in 2017 and 2018, April had seen 300 farmers of Karnataka landing in New Delhi on Cauvery water dispute. May first was no longer limited to rallies of industrial workers as traditionally been, but May 2018 was marked by demonstrations of farmers against acquisition of farmer's land for the bullet train or a cement plant or some other in the name of development. Protests of farmers were scaled up across most states of the country and the agitations took a turn with farmers pouring milk and dumping vegetables on highways. Arrest of protesting farmers in June 2018 on acquiring their fertile lands for Chennai-Salem highway expansion and bulldozing the fields on crop had scaled up farmers agitation in Tamil Nadu. All this happening apparently for authorities not formally holding any discussions openly. Despite continued concern of farmers across the country and their agitations, no serious efforts of authorities and political leaders was evident to talk to farmers directly and locally. Instead, political leaders were politicalising and trying to appease farmer groups. The political leaders were trying to address or accuse each other more than to reach out farmers and share their anguish.



“The idea of citizenship has been the most distinct marker of the democratic journey of India since independence. It has been the foundation stone for the institutionalization of the processes of representation as well as the project of participatory democracy. It also functions as the bridge between the civil society and the political society. There is high co-relation between citizenship-building and good governance.”

Prof Anand Kumar
Senior Professor (Retd.), JNU, New Delhi
Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla
Well known Political Sociologist,

“The most important lesson as Dr. N. Bhaskara Rao point out is the crucial role of the Citizen Activism in the future of Indian Democracy within the Rule of Law under our Constitution. Until this "basic structure" is explicitly protected and enforced which it is not done today, the Indian democracy will remain a highly flawed democracy with gross abuse of power by those ruling the Indian State and its institutions. This is true violation of the spirit of our Constitution. Indeed to maintain the integrity of our democracy "Eternal Vigilance" by the Citizens as Dr. N. Bhaskara Rao stresses is the only way of sustaining and helping further growth of our yet troubled Democracy.”

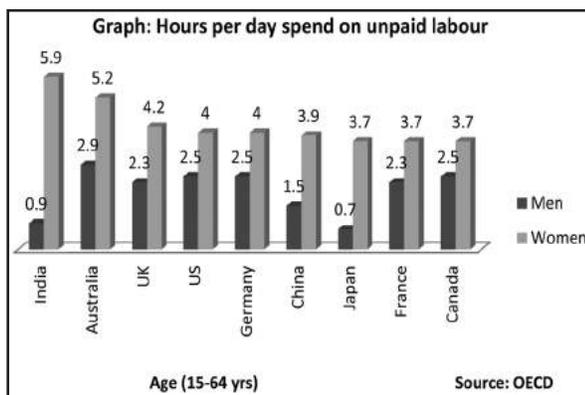
Dr. Vishvanath Pai Panandiker
Founder & former President,
Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

Invisible workforce needs to be recognised

Alok Srivastava

In India socio cultural norms and practices determines the role of women in both public and private spheres. To bring the attitudinal change and making the society realize the potential of women is important. Although vulnerability affects everyone but particularly women more, who face risks due to lesser employment opportunities, natural and man-made calamities, discrimination on grounds of gender and social groups. On the other hand, women spend her substantial time in unpaid domestic work. Unpaid domestic work refers to non-market unpaid work carried out in households primarily by women which includes both direct care of family members and indirect care such as cooking, cleaning fetching water and woods for fuel among others.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, in India women spend around six hours per day in unpaid household chores and related activities. Noticeably, even across developed countries, the hours put by women in the household work, though in varying proportion, is more than men (*see graph*).



Globally, women carry out 76 percent of the total amount of unpaid work. This work activity goes unaccounted for in the national accounts system. Women remains

invisible workforce. Moreover, women's unequal share of unpaid work is considered as a major constraint to both economic growth and women's empowerment. Her contribution has largely remained invisible due to the low or no economic value attached to her contribution in undertaking very important and critical household chores.

As per the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women typically invest 90 percent of the economic resources into health, nutrition, and family education. Thus, keeping her financial independence at stake.

In spite of, several measures have been taken by the government and non-government agencies across the country towards providing financial benefits to women and their financial inclusion, the situation continues to be far from satisfactory.

Women's economic choices too get jeopardized due to their minimal access to household finance including availing financial services and decision making in financial matters. Women's unpaid domestic work affects considerably GDP of the country.

No doubt, there is dire need for increasing women's access to use of quality financial products and services which is essential for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction apart from social and economic empowerment.

Access to financial services and decision making process is seen as a stepping stone towards women recognition as an 'economically relevant' workforce and empowerment. As per census 2011, only



58.7% of households were availing banking services in the country. This may improve in the upcoming Census (2021) due to some intensive efforts started during past years towards opening of bank accounts. However, opening of the savings accounts in banks could be a necessary condition but not a sufficient one in her economic empowerment, if non-inclusion of unpaid work in national accounts system or active participation in financial decision making at home continues to remain evaded from women.

In fact, lack of financial inclusion, particularly among women should be seen as a key reason for gender inequality. For women, financial dependence and low or no control over financial resources has affected, to a large extent, their bargaining power at home and influence over family decisions.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the economic opportunities for women are extremely limited in India (35.4 per cent). Further only one-quarter of women, compared with 82 per cent of men, engage actively in the labour market — one of the lowest rates globally (145th). Among the 153 countries studied for this WEF's report, India is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap.

On access to financial services, while women represent a larger share of the self-employed in developing countries and thus are in greater need of access to formal financial services, they are less likely to secure bank credit, according to a research by the World Bank. There are several reasons for the inaccessibility of women to basic financial facilities. One of the key reasons and barriers to access financial services is lack of knowledge about how and where to avail financial services, more importantly independently. Women irrespective of social group or age

do not have proper understanding of financial institutions and about managing finances. These are reflected by the poor institutional savings, particularly in banks and low awareness on financial matters.

On a positive note, in Indian context, the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO's) decision to estimate the value of unpaid work, especially household chores by women, is, perhaps, the first step in registering the country's unpaid labour. A report is expected by mid-2020. It is expected that this report will help the think tank of government, NITI Aayog to implement women targeted policies and also to analyze and take action on shifts in labour participation rates.

Along with the NSSO report based policy decisions to have women friendly policies and program, further strengthening of schemes such as MUDRA Yojana to encourage women entrepreneurs will make women workforce 'visible' and financially empowered. However, easier said than done, the emergence of women entrepreneurs in a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors prevailing in the society. This is well indicated by the facts that women constitute 48 per cent of the total population in India, but form 34 per cent total work force, 11 per cent of total entrepreneurs and around 6 per cent of total self-employed in the country. But in developed countries like United States women own nearly 30 per cent of businesses and form over 70 per cent of new businesses.

In short, women-sensitive transformative policy and programs along with change in society's outlook towards women workforce as equal partners in development is the only way to empower women and all-round growth of a country.

alok@cmsindia.org

Reviving Electoral Democracy

Dr N Bhaskara Rao

Based on my pursuit of over decades on electoral politics, I am convinced that nothing significant is possible without bold initiatives. The two CMS studies of 2005 and 2007 on Note-for-Vote across the country and studies on the eve of every election since confirm this view.

Money power in politics cannot be addressed without questioning the scope and structure of electoral campaigns. Why electoral contests have to be the way they are being fought now? The linkage of money power in politics is larger and not poll limited. Many of us thought that empirical evidence would make a difference in awakening the conscious of the country. Knowing more about who is contesting, how much is being spent to contest has not even become the national agenda. On the contrary, the phenomena of poll expenditure have been multiplying and the representative character of the ones getting elected is on decline. And, worse, the model of campaigns is vitiating the very atmosphere and threatening harmony of the country.

Unless we take a trajectory view, that is development, democracy and governance, we cannot address the roots and also reverse the trend. How all these three are linked and increasing election expenditure is adversely influences not merely the democracy but the very process of development and governance is what we need to be concerned about. The finance model in our politics is what need to be addressed as a priority. The present trend has to be reversed.

Summing up the studies over the years, I suggest seven measures – as essential initiatives for reversing the present trend towards good governance scenario in the country. We cannot claim good governance without these correctives.

Seven Measures

1. Crowd funding should be allowed in political campaigning instead of corporate

funding . Corporate funding is an invisible factor, pampering parties; inhibiting transparency and prompting quid pro-quo phenomena in politics, governance and development. The crowd funding will improve citizen participation.

2. Contesting candidates should campaign collectively as much as possible. ‘We the candidates’ should behave Indian way for electoral politics. Solo campaigning is the source of negativity and promotes self-interest. This is vitiating Post poll postures of leaders.

3. All news medium of the country should give free time/space to all candidates in Assembly and Lok Sabha polls. It will be in the interest of news media too. All India Radio and Doordarshan have been doing this for years. Supreme Court also had said decades ago that air waves are for public utilisation. And, this should apply to print media as well. We should come up with a formula amicably for a win-win opportunity.

4. Nomination as a candidate should be based on local endorsements by a minimum number of voters. So that, outsiders and those with questionable character do not end up contesting.

5. Nomination of a candidate by political parties should be allowed only if the parties are implementing their own party constitutional provisions. They cannot issue B-Form without evidence of that.

6. Let poll campaigns be limited to candidate’s or party’s manifesto proposals. An analysis of speeches of leaders and candidate indicate that they talk more about “the other” candidate and adversely more.

7. Without ensuring the two key Acts are implemented, we cannot expect to change the scope of poll politics. RTI and Delivery Guarantee Act are critical legislations. Non implementation of these is adding to money power in politics.

Is there any other way to reverse the trend in poll politics without adopting these seven measures? Let us debate the pros and cons for better poll procedure.

nbrao@cmsindia.org



Poll bonds worth 6,000 cr. sold in 2 years: RTI query

Activists had filed RTI query seeking data from SBI After the Finance Ministry released a fresh notification to issue electoral bonds (EBs), a Right to Information (RTI) query has revealed that more than 11,770 EBs worth almost 1 6,000 crore had been sold in the past two years.

RTI activists Anjali Bhardwaj and Amrita Johri, who sought to know from the State Bank of India (SBI) the number of EBs their 29 authorised branches had sold since January 2, 2018, claimed that 23 branches had furnished the information.

These 23 branches had revealed that 11,770 EBs worth 1 5,936.7 crore had been sold since January 2, 2018.

1 crore denomination

“Of the 11,770 bonds, 5,463 were of the denomination of 1 1 crore which means that 92% of the amount given through bonds was in the denomination of 1 1 crore. For 6 branches: Lucknow, Patna, Ranchi, Vishakhapatnam, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram, no information has been received till date,” the activists said in a statement.

“All the branches denied information on

the names of persons who purchased bonds in the denomination of 1 1 crore stating that “The information sought by the applicant cannot be disclosed as it is in fiduciary capacity, disclosure of which is exempted under 8(1)(e) and 8(1)(j) of RTI Act, 2005’... This is a violation of peoples’ right to know,” the activists said.

“The public authority has failed to weigh the issue of larger public interest, which is mandatorily required in each case in which information is denied under section 8 of the RTI Act,” they added.

In a related development, the Congress party attacked the government for bringing out a fresh notification for issuing EBs just ahead of the Delhi elections. “This government is bonded to electoral bonds,” senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal said at a press conference. “They have a great bonding with electoral bonds.”

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram retweeted a message put out by the official handle of the Congress party that said, “The next phase of Electoral Bonds have begun — right before the Delhi elections. Coincidence? Or is the BJP simply just funding their legalized loot and organized plunder”.

(Source: The Hindu)

Litigants on SIC radar for possible misuse of RTI Act

The state information commission (SIC) has started identifying litigants filing applications under the Right to Information (RTI) Act whose motive for doing so was not deemed bona fide and not in public interest. Recently,

state information commissioner Ajay Kumar Uprety (court no 6) had taken certain measures to check the misuse of the RTI Act.

He dismissed an application of a frequent RTI litigant, stating that the

information sought by him was not in public interest. “When the court asked the applicant that the information sought by him was in public interest in what manner, he could not give a satisfactory answer,” observed the court in its order. The applicant had sought information from the Krishi Nideshalaya (directorate of agriculture), Lucknow.

“Facts reveal that the applicant was not interested in seeking information because the information is related with a third person and is not in public interest,” observed the court. Notably, after the court’s observation, the RTI activist concerned has stopped filing such applications.

SUPREME COURT ORDER

The SIC’s measures for checking frivolous applications come in the wake of the Supreme Court having expressed concern about the misuse of the RTI Act on several occasions. As recently as December 16, the Supreme Court had observed in an order that the RTI Act had ‘come to be a weapon of intimidation, blackmail no less’. Chief Justice of India SA Bobde was a part of the three-judge bench that passed the order.

BULK APPLICATIONS

Meanwhile, the SIC has identified two other RTI litigants from Ambedkar Nagar

district who reportedly file applications in bulk. Recently, the court disposed of 26 out of 34 applications filed by one litigant and 24 out of 29 filed by the other. Remaining applications of both these litigants were dismissed.

The court also observed that at times, public information officers (PIOs) of government offices also harassed RTI applicants. In a recent incident, a PIO allegedly forged five signatures of an RTI applicant to inform the court that the litigant was satisfied with the replies provided to him. Taking a serious note of the issue, state information commissioner Ajay Uprety wrote to the senior superintendent of police, Lucknow, Kalanidhi Naithani, to get the signatures examined forensically.

“There are cases in which the RTI Act has been misused by information seekers and others where it has been misused by PIOs. Activists ask for tonnes of information from the PIOs, which puts unnecessary burden on them and also affects the working of the office concerned,” said Uprety. “On the other hand, there have been instances where PIOs have forged signatures of litigants to mislead the state information commission,” he added. SIC Ajay Uprety has disposed of 3,767 cases in around 200 working days.

(Source: Hindustan Times)

Daily Court Digest: Major environment orders

Down To Earth brings you the top environmental cases heard in the Supreme Court, the high courts and the National Green Tribunal through the week

Construction on Yamuna flood plain

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on December 17, 2019 dismissed the ap-

plication filed by National Capital Region Transport Corp Ltd (NCRTC), Delhi, seeking modification of the tribunal’s order of January 13, 2015 and permitting construction on the Yamuna Flood Plain’s “O” Zone. The construction was intended to execute an RRTS Project and decongest Delhi by providing public transportation infrastructure.

The NGT said it was for the concerned

authorities to deal with the “permissibility of any particular project on the flood plain after studying the environmental impact thereof.”

Groundwater pollution in Fazillka, Punjab

The NGT on December 17 directed a monitoring committee headed by Justice Jasbir Singh to look into large-scale discharge of untreated effluents in the drains

of Fazillka and adjoining districts, resulting in contamination of ground water and affecting public health.

Cotton mill in Mathura polluting air

The NGT on December 17 directed the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board and district magistrate of Mathura to furnish a factual and action-taken report in the matter of a polluting cotton mill in Mathura district.

(Source: Down to Earth)

Contd. from page no 8...

Heading towards safe roads

violation, Mr. Veenu Bansal, Additional Commissioner of Police, Traffic, Delhi Police feels that traffic rules play important role in reducing the road crashes.

“Helmet reduces possibility of severe injury by 72 % and seat belts decrease fatalities by over 50 %. Pedestrians have over 90% chance of survival if speed of vehicle is less than 30 km/ per hour and less than 50% chance of survival if speed is 50 km/ hour or more than that, he said”.

Dr. Patanjali Dev Nayar, Consultant, WHO-SEARO informed the *TR* that 43,600 two-wheeler riders without helmet were killed in 2018 which is 21% rise over 2017.” He also shared that 50% people on the front seat can save their lives by putting seat belt on; 75% people on the rear seat can save their lives by putting seat belt on - so actually rear seat belt has more importance than the front seat belt.”

One of the major reasons of road crashes in India, as informed by Dr. G. Gururaj, Senior Professor, Department of Epidemiology, National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences(NIMHANS) Bangalore, is the heterogeneous traffic environment, which

is one of the biggest challenges faced in road safety in India. He said, “Around 30 different types of vehicles move on Indian roads – they move in different speeds, they all occupy the same road space, are of different shapes and sizes, driven by different type of people. It is a huge challenge to design safety for all vehicles around us.”

Though many legal and infrastructural measures have been implemented by the government to provide safer roads, yet many solutions need to be taken more seriously in near future like improvement in trauma health care services especially in small towns and rural areas. Safe-system approach is another factor which plays important role to tackle the challenges of bringing down the number of road crash deaths and injuries. Strengthening the existing mechanisms and systems and helping to create & implement unique and innovative solutions like focusing on soft factors as improvement in driving skills. The focus on multi sectoral approach will lead towards reducing the graph of road rashes and road death in near future.

annuanand@cmsindia.org

CMS - Road Safety Media Fellows 2019



Anvit Srivastava
Principal Correspondent
Hindustan Times

Anvit Srivastava is a Principal Correspondent with the Hindustan Times in New Delhi. As a part of his fellowship, he planned to work on how many foot-over bridges were built in India over the past 5 years and how much public money was invested in it. In addition to this, he also planned to work on how many speed breakers in Delhi are legal and what challans, if any, have been imposed on people for constructing illegal speed breakers.



B. Raveendra Shetty
Chief Copy Editor
Vijay Karnataka

B. Raveendra Shetty is the Chief Copy Editor at Vijay Karnataka, and is based in Mangalore, Karnataka. During the fellowship, he wanted to look beyond the statistics and write on the understanding of how death impacts individuals and destroys families with exclusive focus on the families and dependents of road accident victims and how it affects them. This includes emotional and socio-economic ramifications on spouse, children, parents and extended families - which humanizes the impact of accidents and enable readers to understand it in real terms.



G. Rajasekaran
Freelance journalist

G. Rajasekaran is an independent journalist based at Salem District in Tamil Nadu. After 20 years of service with The New Indian Express as Staff and Special Correspondent, he currently contributes in-depth articles for online outlet, The News Minute and also edit news reports on part time basis for Afternoon evening English daily. As a fellow of the Road Safety Media Fellowship, he planned to report on how prepared are law enforcers and manufactures in implementing helmet rule for children, the efficacy of the computerised video surveillance systems in policing traffic violations in smart city Coimbatore and investigate connection between road accidents and the increase in sporty bikes.



Kishor Dwivedi
Senior Reporter
Press Trust of India

Kishor Dwivedi is a Senior Reporter with the Press Trust of India in New Delhi. During his fellowship he plans to work on an analytical story on how new age technology like Artificial Intelligence is used to save time at traffic lights can pave way for a pan-India replication of the model, an analytical and data-driven story on why people choose to violate laws – which would highlight if there are any shortcomings in infrastructure planning, and a story on major causes and preventive measures on accidents in Yamuna expressway by talking to experts and the expressway-managing authority.



Mamuni Das
Deputy Editor
The Hindu Business Line

Mamuni Das works as a Senior Deputy Editor with The Hindu BusinessLine and is based in Delhi. As a part of her fellowship, she wanted to assess how the new law of Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019 has changed the life of road accident victims and behavior of insurance companies. She would try to understand the medical, legal and social aspects of this through analysis of aggregates and a case-study approach.



Pradeep Dwivedi
Senior Reporter
Dainik jagran, Meerut

Pradeep Dwivedi is a Senior Reporter with Dainik Jagran in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. He covers and writes on issues related to NHAI, Delhi-Meerut Expressway, NCR Planning Board and developmental projects. As a part of his fellowship, he planned to work on road safety rules and symbols.



Prachi Salve
Research Manager
IndiaSpend

Prachi Salve is a Senior Policy Analyst and Research manager with IndiaSpend for the last 7 years. She currently works on Gender, Health and economy. As a part of her fellowship, she plans to work on reasons for state wise discrepancy in road accidents and deaths due to road accidents, whether other laws have an impact on road safety for example looking at alcohol ban's impact on the road accidents due to drunk driving accidents, and on policy learning through international comparisons and see what is working elsewhere in the world and what can be adopted for India.



Purnima Singh
Principal Correspondent
Times Now Hindi

Purnima Singh works as a Principal Correspondent with Times Now. During the fellowship, she planned to work on how potholes and bumps on roads may cause back pain and cervical problem, the hazardous impact of construction dust on people's health, and on underage driving accidents being on the rise in Delhi and NCR, which will include research, reporting, data and Interviews of doctors from government and private hospitals of Delhi and NCR.



Ravish Ranjan Shukla
Special Correspondent
NDTV India

Ravish Ranjan Shukla is a Special Correspondent with NDTV India, based in Delhi. During the fellowship period, he intended to write on various issues including Yamuna Expressway fatalities and causes of such events, Delhi being the most dangerous city for pedestrians and the accidents related to the use of mobile phones while driving.



Sangamesh Menasinakai
Senior Reporter
Dainik Bhaskar National Bureau

Sangamesh Menasinakai is a Special Correspondent with the Times of India, based in Hubli, Karnataka. During the fellowship period, he planned to work and focus on statistics of official road breakers and illegal road breakers, edging of the road, open drainages at the road, and awareness on IRC standards.



Sharad Pandey
Special Correspondent
Times of India, Hubli

Sharad Pandey has been working as a journalist for the past 20 years. He is currently working in National Bureau at Dainik Bhaskar, Delhi, where he has done many people centric stories that were appreciable based on Road, Transport and Highway. As a part of his fellowship, he planned to work on the design of roads, violation of transport rules and killer highways.



Umashankar Mishra
Sr. Copy Editor
India Science Wire

Umashankar Mishra is a science journalist working with India Science Wire - a New Delhi based science news service. As part of the fellowship, he would focus on the status of trauma health services in India. He would also attempt to explore how Indian roads make pedestrians, cyclist and two-wheeler riders the most vulnerable group of road users. Using data journalism techniques, the stories will bring out the challenges of making Indian roads safe.

CALL OF APPLICATION FOR MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

2020 CMS-Media Fellowship for Reporting
on Energy Efficient Building Program

Fellowship Amount

₹ 75000/-

Deadline

February 15, 2020

Timeline

March to June 2020

#WriteBetterBuildBetter



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