

# ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

## Praja Foundation



*Simplifying peoples' lives*

Committed to create an accountable and efficient society  
through peoples' participation

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## Praja Dialogue (Accountability project)

**Period:** April 2009 – March 2010

### **Introduction:**

Our new project “PRAJA Dialogue” is a unique platform that allows the elected representatives’ to understand and connect with their constituent members and the citizens on a forum to get their issues addressed. The project was launched in March, 2009 by the Mayor of Mumbai, Ms Shubha Raul. Representatives from Congress, BJP and Shiv Sena political parties also graced the occasion.

The project not only gives dialogue space but also provides constituency wise information on issues concerning the citizens. This information is collected from the government agencies and acquired under Right to Information Act. The Accountability project empowers people to dialogue with their Elected Representative and thereby provides an opportunity to increase the participation of citizens in the governance.

One of the major achievements has been development of the online discussion forums and starting of the two way communication process between citizens and Elected Representatives.

Praja released six white papers in this year to show the workings of elected representatives. All of them were widely covered by print and electronic media. At the end of year Praja presence can be overtly felt with more than 1500 members online, more than 100 topics discussed daily, a regular feedback mechanism to elected representatives and increasing number of support from organisations and individuals. We also launched ‘BIGGY’, a mascot to represent citizen of Mumbai and people’s power as community.

The most important achievement for Praja now is that we are looked upon as an organisation that does substantial research and create report on the workings of elected representatives. The credibility of the organisation is now recognised by Government, Administrative bodies, Elected Representatives and Political Party.

Activities (April 2009 – March 2010):

**Events**

**(a) Launch of MP White Paper concentrating on issues in MP constituency.**

Date: Month of April.

As the National Assembly was due, Praja released a White Paper giving details of issues concerning the citizens in the Member of Parliament Constituency. Thus a report on Health, Education, Civic and Crime issues in six constituencies of MP was released. The pick of report was on highest cases of Rape are in South Mumbai. The report was released to selected media houses and special effort was given to bring in citizens issues through interviews.

**(c) Forum Launch and release on White Paper on Human Development Index and Mumbai.**

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> of August

Praja dialogue promotes and facilitate a platform where a citizens can communicate his/her needs to the elected representatives in a structured format. The first feature was launched on online dialogue forum was launched by the Member of Parliament of North West Constituency, Shri Gurudas Kamat. He promised his support and participation for this unique dialogue platform. Mr Kamat and Mr BG Deshmukh released the white paper called as National Agenda for Mumbai. Giving comparative analysis of three main areas of Human Development Index, Literacy, Life Expectancy and GDP, also added was the real time issues of Mumbai.

**(d) Launch of MLA White paper: An analysis of the working of MLA's of Mumbai (Political Party Wise).**

Date: October'09

As the state elections were approaching, Praja came up with MLA White paper. Series of article appeared in Hindustan (English daily) and Locksatta (Marathi Daily) other than these many other Print press and audio visual press took this up widely.

**(e) Report on the working of elected representatives in Ward Committees. And DETAILS of civic problems registered with the Municipal Corporation across the Wards in Mumbai.**

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> March'10

The White paper gave an understating on Ward committee and how it is the most important system for Indian democracy. This Paper had the data on Councilor's question asked and the kind of question asked with relevance to the constituency's problem. This white paper was widely talked about and covered by many print and visual media. This paper was also translated in Marathi and posted to the respective councilor.

## **2. Website Development**

- New and user friendly software was developed for the project.
- The website pages have been redesigned.
- New features have been integrated.
- An independent reporting system is being developed where the citizens can view the functions of elected representative, compare details, view averages, etc.

## **3. Outreach / Campaign**

### **(a) Biggy:**

Conceptualizations of the mascot for Praja Foundation which will help address their needs and complaints of the citizens.

### **(b) Activity list for the offline communication:**

A detailed activity list has been prepared to take biggy to the people. For the same, a film has been made on Biggy which will help people understand the role of biggy. It will also motivate the citizens to participate in the governance with their needs and issues.

To communicate with the mass, multiplexes, hoarding companies etc. are being contacted to disseminate the message of Biggy.

### **(c) Launch of Biggy , 19<sup>th</sup> November**

This event took Biggy to the people/Citizen. A big (20ft) Biggy balloon stood on the steps of Asiatic Library. A press-meet was held to communicate the message; Biggy aims to spread, with the media. It was a quite successful Media Launch of the Biggy, as many print and visual media covered it, and appreciated the idea of the Mascot.

### **(d) Online communication through:**

Online communication with the citizens and the elected representatives is ongoing through the Forum, facebook, twitter and the periodic e-mailers sent.

This aims to increase the hits of the website and bring more people on-board the dialogue process.

## **4. Data Collection**

### **(a) Access to data cycle:**

The information on the functions and issues of the elected representatives is collected under the Right to information Act. The procedure takes approximately three months to collect the data. Praja has now formed a team to continuously

manage the information influx and as on today information till November 2009 from January 2008 is completely updated on the website.

## **5. Political Party Communication**

### **(a) Individual party communication:**

- Praja has successfully communicated with Shiv Sena (SS)/ Congress/ Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)/ & Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).
- Presentations made to all the 6 MPs on the utility and working of the communication system.
- A few members from the MP office were trained on how to use the Forums.
- Also, a weekly report is sent to the 6 MPs on the topics discussed on Forums.
- Member of Parliament of North West Mumbai – Gurudas Kamat looped in. He welcomed the communication process at the launch of the Forums. Mr Kamat has also commented on the Forums.
- Shri Sanjay Nirupam had sent his 100 days work report to Praja for uploading it on his profile.

## **6. Staff and resources**

### **(a) Core Group:**

Praja is steered a group of prominent individuals from different walks of life. They add value to the project at different levels as well as commit time and extend monetary support for upgrading the project.

### **(b) Office Staff:**

Praja started with a small team of two program officer and one data entry person. As the project has grown over the period our new staff strength is about 12 people. Mainly four data entry operators, two full time translators, one web manager and one part time technology officer.

### **(c) Partners:**

The Praja Dialogue website project is developed by a team of Hungama and Public Relationship is managed by Tatva. And Saatchi and Saatchi provide free creative support to all the programs of Praja Foundation.