

# Public Concern

The Quarterly Newsletter of Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT)

October 2018

## Profile

Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT), a registered trust, founded by concerned citizens, mobilises public opinion, increases public participation and activism towards promoting honesty, transparency and accountability in governance.

## Vision

To strive for good governance, contain corruption, uphold and inculcate values and enhance Sadbhavna in the citizens.

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## 3rd Late Narayan Varma Memorial Lecture

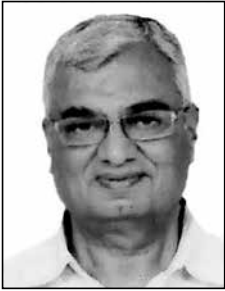


*Dignitaries on the dais*

**T**hird Late Narayan Varma Memorial Lecture was jointly organized by the Bombay Chartered Accountants' Society (BCAS), the Dharma Bharathi Mission (DBM) and PCGT, at K. C. College on Friday, August 24, 2018. The Guest Speaker Mr. Vallabh Bhansali, a fellow member of ICAI and the co-founder and Chairman of ENAM, gave an enlightening talk on "Rebuilding India". The talk was followed by felicitation. PCGT awarded Mr. Anil Galgali, an RTI activist, speaker and journalist who has started his own publication "Agnisheela". Using RTI, Mr. Galgali has brought to the fore issues related to social environment, especially those close to the common man's heart. Through RTI he has exposed several wrongs done by various authorities like BMC, MMRDA, Mumbai Metro and Mumbai University. The programme ended with a vote of thanks.

## EDITORIAL

### Unhomely Homes



To provide a roof over the heads of young girls in distress with no worldly support and to feed them is perhaps the noblest of the causes. Yet the same distress, the helpless state that the girls find themselves in, the fact that they have no one to look after them become factors for their abuse and exploitation at the hands of the wily and powerful. This became amply clear from the happenings in shelter homes at Muzaffarpur, Bihar and in Deoria, UP. However, these are not isolated cases, for, many shelter homes for girls in all States show similar degenerate tendencies when looked into in detail. It is hoped that when Police file the chargesheet they will also include the names of all those who exploited the girls in return for favours to the managers of the shelter home. It is only when each and every debauch who abetted in exploiting helpless girls is accounted for and made to pay for his deeds that the police should rest their case.

Much has already been written on what has been happening in these shelter homes and it is not our purpose to repeat the same. We concern ourselves here on what needs to be done to make life in these shelter homes more secure and better for the inmates, generally minor and helpless girls.

It is clear from the accounts from Muzaffarpur and Deoria that the girls in these shelter homes had no contact with the outside world, being confined to the "home" day in and

day out with no means to convey what trauma they were suffering. So it is this "isolation" that needs to be broken down by ensuring that they have (a) A formal education plan designed to help them achieve dignity, self confidence and above all economic self-sufficiency and are enrolled in educational institutions for that purpose. (b) They should also have access to internet at the "home" to stay in touch with the world. Once isolation is broken communication of exploitation would be easier.

An access to a health worker who is independent and regular must be ensured so that the girls are checked at regular intervals, their health monitored and a file maintained by social welfare authorities. During these checks it needs to be ascertained and ensured that the inmates are getting regular, adequate and proper nutrition, that they are free from any communicable diseases. The "home" must have a plan to deal with communicable diseases should the inmates be found to be suffering from the same. A trained counsellor should assist in cases detected to be suffering with depressions or other such mental conditions.

An audit of these "homes" periodically by an independent body is essential. A committee headed by the local judicial magistrate and compromising officials of social welfare, revenue and police should audit these "homes" as is done by District Sessions Judge for district prisons. They should look into all aspects of working of the "home" and in particular should randomly talk to the inmates *in camera* when no official of the "home" is present. They should look for signs if the inmate

appears to be afraid or traumatised and if so should try to ascertain the reasons and mention should be made in their report.

The inmates must be empowered to have a say in the running of the "home". They could be involved in having a say in the everyday menu, the rules of the "homes" and such other aspects which impinge on their lives and there is discretion vested in the management. Empowered inmates could be expected to be less susceptible to abuse than those who are not.

Governments could not be expected to run all the shelter homes for they are not known to be efficient and with limited resources at their command would be diverting scarce resources to salaries. Present system of outsourcing the running is correct, however, the homes are run by socially and financially powerful who feel no qualms at abusing the helpless girls entrusted to their care. Ushering in transparency in running of the homes, empowering the inmates and ending their isolation would help in reducing the instances of exploitations.

There are several ideal Standard Operating Procedures for such "homes" present and advocated by the Governments. These are, however, rarely ever followed. What is needed is that we as a State Vietnam must become sensitive to the issue and rise collectively to compel the authorities that be to ensure that these "homes" are homes and not centres for exploitation.

JAI HIND.

— Sanjeev Dayal

## PCGT PUNE

### 7th Late Shri B. G. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture



*Dignitaries Lighting the Lamp*

**S**ymbiosis Law School, Pune (SLS-P), and Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT), Pune Chapter, jointly organized the 7th Late Shri B. G. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture, 2018 on “Education – Oxygen for Development” on 11th August, 2018. Students from various sister institutes of SLS-P were in attendance.

Dr. Shashikala Gурpur, Fulbright Scholar, Director, SLS-P, Dean, Faculty of Law, SIU, initiated the lecture by giving the audience an insight into the conception of the annual lecture series. She credited Dr. S. B. Mujumdar’s vision and thirst for knowledge as the reason for SIU’s global success, as seen in BRICS and Asian rankings. She called True Education as an avenue of rights and justice which touched upon lives. She upheld SIU’s efforts in the field of education in India as an experiment in justice, inclusion, development. She concluded by saying “I appreciate PCGT’s unrestrained commitment to the cause of public intellectualism”, and expressed her faith in the organization to rejuvenate the cause which was unfortunately on a decline in the country.

Mr. Ajit Nimbalkar, Member, PCGT, Pune Chapter, gave an overview of PCGT’s inception, aims and objectives. He expressed his belief in empowerment of citizens, and a transparent & accountable government.

He elucidated the achievements of Shri B. G. Deshmukh and exhorted the students to be as committed to the nation as Mr. Deshmukh, whose apolitical stance, sincerity and dedication to his work made him a visionary.

Dr. S. B. Mujumdar, Hon’ble Chancellor, SIU, the Keynote Speaker, introduced the topic by stating that “Living beings require oxygen and ‘education’ is required for development. Therefore,



*Dr. S. B. Mujumdar delivering the Keynote address*

education is oxygen for development.” He shared PM Shri Narendra Modi’s slogan, “Sab ka saath, Sab ka vikas” and reminded the Indian youth of their responsibility of driving the country to the path of development. Dr. Mujumdar acknowledged the high percentage of youth in India and added, “The

need for the youth population to be utilized as efficient human resource of the country, will reap benefits of the demographic dividend and prevent a demographic disaster.” Dr. Mujumdar bemoaned the dismal state of higher education in India, and held factors such as old syllabus, ignorance of soft skills, poor quality and training of teachers, lack of emphasis on research, among many factors responsible. He urged the students to commit themselves to a revolution in the field of education in India, and not to submit to the notion that foreign universities are superior. Dr. Mujumdar concluded by dismissing the element of reservation in the Indian education system, and upheld merit as the only criterion that must be observed by educational institutes.

Mr. S. C. Nagpal, Chairman, PCGT, Pune Chapter delivered the concluding remarks by appreciating SIU’s commitment to being an institute of educational excellence. He commended Dr. S. B. Mujumdar’s efforts that had contributed to the nurturing of thousands of students across India.

Mr. Satish Khot, Vice Chairman, PCGT acted as the Moderator for an engaging Question and Answer session. Dr. Bindu Ronald, Deputy Director, SLS, Pune, delivered the vote of thanks.



*Dignitaries on the Dais*

## YOUTH FOR GOVERNANCE

### YFG DIALOGUES



#### Careers through Competitive Exams

**A**n Interactive session on “Careers through Competitive Exams” was organized for 450 students at the Sydenham College on 20th July, 2018. The speaker was Shri Avinash Dharmadhikari, Ex-IAS & Founder of Chanakya Mandal Pariwar. It was a very informative session for those students who wished to appear in the competitive exams and motivated those wishing to appear for the civil services.

#### Students In Compliance of Traffic Laws

**P**ublic Concern for Governance Trust in association with the KPB Hinduja College organized a dialogue on “Students Obeying Traffic Laws” with Shri Amitesh Kumar, Jt. CP (Traffic) as chief speaker. 300 students attended the session. The speaker appealed to the students to follow traffic laws to avoid accidents and injuries. He urged the youth to come forward as a catalyst and convince others to also follow the rules. The students also got an opportunity to raise issues on traffic management in the city and the Jt. CP assured them that action will be taken to ensure a smooth flow of traffic.



#### RTI Session at GLC

**A**n RTI Session was organized for the students of Government Law College to create awareness on use of RTI Act to combat corruption. The lecture included practical applications, helping students know the right way to question the public authorities. At the end of the session many students came forward to clear their doubts on the subject.



## KUCHH AUR

### REPORT

The Kuchh Aur program in schools is education beyond the school curriculum for the students from Std. VII to X. It focuses on values and lessons in Responsible Citizenship. A special content is formulated by us and values are implemented in various schools.

For the months of August and September, we focused on Peace, Unity In Diversity, Patriotism and Respect.

Internal peace is the prerequisite for external harmony. Through Silence and Quiet Time students are taught to be at peace with themselves and thereby be the creators of peace in their family, neighbourhood and country at large.

Patriotism is not about wearing of orange, green and white but about a way of life in your day-to-day attitude, behaviour and responses in the society. The students are taught to take National pride through the ideology of love and devotion to a homeland and a sense of alliance with other students who are citizens of the same country and share the same values.

Video clips and films were shown depicting the value and how individuals had worked and sacrificed individual needs for the betterment of the society and nation.

Students were told stories of events that changed the course of world history, for example the dropping of the atom bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the impact of which lasts even till today. Students

were made aware of 'choices' in their day-to-day life and were requested to choose peace over war and terrorism.

Students were given examples of individuals like Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa who worked for peace.

Solidarity in diversity is a trademark of India and has one of a kind culture which has kept up the tradition for great many years while adjusting to continuous changes in the mean time.

The students were taught how it was our obligation to advance and save our social heritage.

Discussion was held on how individuals around us speak distinctive dialects, have diverse religions and hone diverse customs. It was also discussed how we can observe the varieties in their dress. Yet, inside every one of these varieties there is a hidden solidarity which goes about as a solidifying power.

Mrs. Rekha Shahani, Trustee PCGT, took a session on the value of 'Life' at the Purshottam High School, Bandra. Over the past few years it has been observed that students have been losing faith in themselves due to various factors and succumbing to the pressures in their environment. Through this session she made the students of Std. X realize the value of life, how music could help in relaxing and rejuvenating our souls. Sharing our concerns was one form of relaxing, so was whistling – whistling releases our tensions and sometimes that

could help us between our studies during exam days.

While discussing Unity In Diversity, one student beautifully shared that she would ask her father to take her to the Mahalaxmi Temple as they frequently visited the Haji Ali Dargah. So if she could visit one place of worship, nothing should stop her from visiting the other.

Students were taught the value of respect through stories, examples and discussions. Respecting the self was the core for realizing the value of life.



- The students shared how diverse groups of people co-operated and worked together as a single force.
- How different areas or states were united as a single country.
- How different people set aside their differences and looked forward towards a common goal.

It has indeed been a good learning for us too as a team when we visit different schools in the city sharing our concerns and getting many of the solutions from the students. We may say and feel that they are the future of our country, but the reality is that they are our present and have a lot to contribute to the society.



## RIGHT TO INFORMATION

### Workshop on SRA Act Session on SRA Act at D-Ward Office



**P**CGT in collaboration with D-Ward, MCGM, completed its first session on SRA Act on the topic of **“Overall SRA Scheme Process and Finalization”** on Saturday, 23rd June 2018, from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm. The speaker for the session was Mr. Mahesh Talreja, a former engineer of SRA and BMC.

40 participants attended the session from different wards.

### RTI Session

An Interactive Session on The Right To Information Act (RTI), 2005 at Pravin Gandhi College of Law, Vile Parle by Shri Shailesh Gandhi was attended by 120 law students on August 31, 2018.

Shri Shailesh Gandhi, an RTI activist and former Chief Information Commissioner, started by explaining about ‘Right to Information Act’ and extensively explained its each section. He related it to the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression enshrined in Article 19 of the Constitution. After the talk there was a question-answer session. Thereafter, the students were distributed the RTI formats and asked to draft RTI applications on issues which they considered important and then these issues were discussed.



### 2nd RTI Session

An Interactive Session on The Right To Information Act (RTI), 2005 was conducted at Adv. Balasaheb Apte College of Law, Dadar, by Shri Shailesh Gandhi on September 1, 2018. It was attended by 80 law students.

The Session was a joint Venture of PCGT and Moneylife Foundation to make people aware of RTI and how it played a major role in promoting Transparency in Governance. The session began by Shri Gandhi asking if we were the ones who ruled the country? Were we happy with our rule? If not, why didn't we ask questions?

The interactive question and answer session whetted the appetite of participants.

## RTI SUCCESS STORY

**H**appy Home and School for the Blind, Worli, urgently needed a music teacher and had requested the Social Justice and Special Assistance Department to allow them to recruit one. However, since Social Justice (SJ) and Special Assistance Department were unable to find time for themselves to join the School in the recruitment process, they asked the School to appoint a teacher and they will then provide the NOC after the trust appoints a music teacher in January 2018. Though the Trust, which runs the School for the Blind, had recruited and appointed the Music Teacher, the Social Justice and Special Assistance Department (SAD) delayed the issue of the NOC, thus resulting in non-payment of salary to the newly appointed Music Teacher.

On a complaint of the Trust to the effect, the PCGT helped them file an RTI application in May, 2018, before the Social Justice and Special Assistance Dept. of Mumbai, seeking to know the timelines and procedures for issue of the NoC. Finally, after the First Appeal hearing, the file relating to the NOC had reached Competent Authority to issue the NOC at Pune in October 2018 and the same was collected by the School authorities and paid the pending salary of the Music Teacher, waiting for the reimbursement of the same from the SJ & SAD.

## RTI SUCCESS STORY



**J**ai Singh Kohli, a retired Mukadam of SWM, D-Ward office, MCGM approached PCGT in June 2018 complaining that though he retired in February 2017 and applied for his pension and pension benefits, he did not receive them till date, despite repeated reminders to the officials concerned.

At this juncture, he approached PCGT for help. PCGT readily took up his case and helped him file RTI processes after which he got his dues of his retirement benefits amounting to ₹ 15.25 L and his pension, hitherto not sanctioned was also granted and he started receiving from the month of September 2018 onwards.

August 23, 2018

Shri Devendra Fadnavis  
Chief Minister  
Government of Maharashtra  
Mantralaya  
Mumbai 400 032

Dear Shri Fadnavis,

After the Kamala Mills fire it was announced that a massive count of buildings which were occupied without issue of Occupancy Certificate by the BMC would be undertaken. I presume this was done. Yet we are told that in the Crystal Tower fire which occurred on 22nd August 2018 no Occupation Certificate had been issued and that the building had been occupied since 2016.

I think very severe action needs to be taken against the builder (who has already been arrested) and the officials who have provided water and electricity connections making it possible for the residents to contravene the laws.

Kind regards,

Sd/-

Julio Ribeiro

**RTI CLINIC IN MUMBAI**

**PCGT :**

Every Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

For appointments and details :

**Call** : 022-2352 6426 / 2352 6452

**Address** : B/2, Mahalaxmi Chambers  
22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,  
Mumbai-400 026

**E-mail** : publicconcern@gmail.com

**RTI CLINIC IN PUNE**

**Pune Municipal Corporation**

Every Friday between 11 a.m. & 2 p.m

For appointments and details :

**Call** : Mr. Marutirao Sail

**Tel** : 020-6400 5613

**Address** : Nagrik Suvidha Kendra  
Pune Municipal Corporation  
Shivaji Nagar, Pune-411 005

**E-mail** : pcgt@rediffmail.com

**Visit us at :** www.pcgt.org

**DONATIONS TO PCGT**

All activities of PCGT are undertaken from the funds received from the donors. People who want to donate any amount of ₹ 1,000/- and above may please issue cheques in favour of 'Public Concern For Governance Trust'.

Donations to PCGT qualify for deduction u/s. 80G(5)(VI) of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

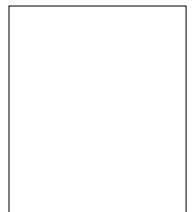
**VOLUNTEERS**

People who believe in the Vision & Mission of PCGT are welcome to work as volunteers and contribute to various programmes undertaken by PCGT. They can contact us at our Office at the address given below or call on 022-2352 6426

✂ tear along this line



**BOOK POST**



**PUBLIC CONCERN**

C/o. Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT)

B/2, Mahalaxmi Chambers,  
22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,  
Mumbai-400 026.



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