

Public Concern



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

VOL. 8, ISSUE 3, January 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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Youth for Governance



PUBLIC CONCERN FOR
GOVERNANCE TRUST



Sri Shanmukhananda
Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha



ANNUAL EVENT : AN INITIATIVE FOR YOUTH

“हम सब एक हैं”
“UNITY IN DIVERSITY”



Chief Guest
Shri Rajmohan Gandhi
(Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi)

Tuesday , 6th Feb. 2018 Time : 4 p.m. To 7 p.m.

VENUE

Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium, Plot No 292,
Comrade Harbanlal Marg, Sion East, Mumbai - 400037 (Close to King Circle Railway Station)

For More Information : Call:+91 22 2352 6426/ +91 70455 62664

Email: publicconcern@gmail.com

The Public Concern For Governance Trust (PCGT) is once again organizing its annual event at Shanmukhananda Hall on Tuesday, February 6, 2018.

Shri Rajmohan Gandhi (grandson of the Mahatma) will be the Chief Guest. The invites will be sent to you later. Please do come and grace the occasion.

VOICES

EDITORIAL



"Jai Kisan" but How?

If you are a sensitive person, this should shock you. Eight thousand farmers have committed suicide in last three years in Maharashtra alone and though the numbers have been coming down since 2015, but still remain above 2,000 annually. The unacceptably high rate of suicides among farmers merits serious consideration. The providers of "food" deserve a better deal.

Dependence on monsoon for the crops particularly for some of the cash crops has made farmers extremely vulnerable to its vagaries. Having taken loans for pre-harvesting operations, some of the farmers feel forced to end their lives when crops fail. Introduction of high yielding variety (HYV) and genetically modified seeds have had only a marginal effect in isolating farmers from effects of low water availability when monsoons play truant. While meteorologists may quote statistics that monsoons have been as per long time averages, for an agriculturist it is not only the quantity but its distribution that matters also. A long dry period in midst of monsoons ruins the crop and efforts at re-sowing are laid waste by subsequent heavy rains. Resultant financial burden is crushing. Dwindling land holdings with time, have made mechanised and other modern farming methods uneconomical for small and marginal farmers, whose numbers are growing.

Governments past and present have been resorting to writing off loans of farmers in "line" with popular demands. This has addressed the symptoms but not the cause of the disease. It is essential to provide to the farmers assured access to water for irrigation even when

rainfalls are not plenty. Construction of minor irrigation efforts based on village models rather than major irrigation projects appear to be better suited. Weirs, small check dams, construction of ponds, watershed management and desilting of existing storage is required.

Despite efforts at augmenting water availability, crops may still fail. It is essential to take care of such situations by providing alternate means of livelihood so that feeling of "all is lost" does not grip the farmer. Goatery, poultry, dairy, are some of the other avocations that could be taken up as second string to the bow along with improving skills in traditional and non-traditional professions.

Societal intervention to counsel a distressed farmer through governmental and non-governmental organisations is essential. It is here that the traditional governmental machinery seems to fail. The "Talathi" and "Gramsevak" who are Governments' representatives in the villages, have stopped being pro active in bringing relief to citizens and are more busy in Sunday duties and in acting as middlemen for BDO and revenue officers. Well meaning NGOs are increasingly reaching out to the villages but need governmental support to alert them as to where and who needs intervention. They also need support to watch, handhold and ensure no recedivism in case of counselled farmers.

Farms are where the primary sector of economy resides and farmers are the providers. The secondary and tertiary sectors are ultimately dependent on the health of the primary sector. The Society owes the farmers responsibility to ensure that they are looked after by the Government and by the Society as a whole.

Jai Hind.

— Sanjeev Dayal

INTERNS SPEAK

"Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are."

— Benjamin Franklin

The last three weeks interning at PCGT have been an experience unparalleled to another. The three of us entered as excited albeit clueless interns, and take leave as informed citizens, with a more evolved and mature approach to the world as we see it. Our internship began with the Weekly Trustees' Meeting, where we had the opportunity to witness the stalwarts of the organisation take prudent measures to the many issues prevalent in our city. These meetings encouraged us to think outside the box, and introspect - are we truly doing our bit for the people around us?

We began with the RTI division of PCGT, where we were trained in the nuances of the well known and deeply controversial RTI Act, 2005. The issues that were brought to us appraised us of the deplorable situations that a lot of citizens were facing. We tried to develop an all-round solution using the RTI Act as a weapon. The PCGT talks were a guiding experience in shaping our perspectives regarding governance affairs. We were faced with disheartening stories of people who were deeply wronged, and strived to right those wrongs. Our thinking itself has been altered within the course of this internship.

To add to the immense productivity every day, PCGT also imbibed in us a renewed sense of belonging, the sense of togetherness through the daily lunches that all employees had TOGETHER, each day. This practice, though seemingly insignificant, had a great impact on us as it was instrumental in creating the conducive environment PCGT has to offer!

PCGT as an organisation is a haven of experience and vigour. Its interactive atmosphere is the suitable place to do more for the society and in turn for your inner self.

PCGT has been dauntless and graceful in its endeavour to change lives, and we are eternally indebted to PCGT for letting us be a part of this great mission!

— Veronica Marie Miranda
— Muhammad Mahatab
— Varon Victor Miranda

PCGT PUNE

Seminar on 'Traffic in Pune'



Dignitaries on dais

Travelling is an everyday affair in our lives, and it is paramount that we lay emphasis on the safety of everyone on the road. In its constant efforts to provide a platform for exchange of other ideas along with studies, **Public Concern for Governance Trust, Pune Chapter, in association with Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune organized a Seminar on 'Traffic in Pune'** on November 3, 2017 at 3 pm at Shared Arena, Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune, to address traffic issues and safety in Pune.

The main speakers for the seminar were Mr. Rajendra Bhamare, IPS, DCP, Traffic, Pune; Mr. C. S. Chavan, Asst. RTO, Pune and Mr. Prashant Kakde, Dy. Director, CIRT, Pune. The seminar was attended by several other distinguished invitees.

Mr. Satyabhir Dodd introduced PCGT and its work. He focused on various activities carried out by PCGT, Pune Chapter.

With over 1 crore vehicles in Pune, City's fast growth and high level of transport



Dr. Rajesh Jalnekar, Director VIT presenting memento to Mr. C. S. Chavan, Asst RTO

traffic is not being supported by proper infrastructure. It is the responsibility of every citizen to follow the rules and regulations and to co-operate with the traffic police and other authorities who work tirelessly for the citizens.

It is worth keeping in mind that human life is more precious than any fast bike or luxury car and that these hi-tech machines were for us not the other way around. There was thus urgent and dire need to preserve life.

Mr. Bhamare rightfully pointed out the basic, yet overlooked traffic issues such as pedestrians not following the zebra

crossing and manual use of traffic signals instead of correctly synchronizing them. He also talked about 'Pay and Park' which could potentially solve most traffic issues in dense areas.

Mr. C. S. Chavan focused on softwares 'VAHAN' and 'SARTHI' which are very effective tools in

today's day and age. He rightfully laid emphasis on the adoption of new technologies such as 'Smart Driver' whose use and importance will appeal to our students.

Mr. Kakde presented videos on the various causes of accidents making us realize how most accidents could be avoided through more vigilance by drivers. It is important that drivers do not overlook or underestimate the consequences of mistakes such as signal jumping.

Mr. Nagpal, the Chairman of PCGT, concluded the seminar by briefly putting the points discussed

by all speakers. Various doubts from attendees were cleared during Question/Answer session covered by Lt. Gen. Ashok Kapur.

Bansilal Ramnath Charitable Trust, Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Dean Student Activities and entire student council team expressed very hearty thanks to Mr. Nagpal, all chief speakers and PCGT members for giving the opportunity to be a part of this seminar.



Section of the audience



Mr. Rajendra Bhamare, IPS, DCP, Traffic addressing the audience

YOUTH FOR GOVERNANCE

Road Safety Campaign with Mumbai Police



Responsible Citizen Badge being awarded to DCP Dr. Saurabh Tripathi

The Road Safety Campaign was undertaken by PCGT in collaboration with the Mumbai Traffic Police and NSS Cell of V. Z. Vaze College, Mulund, from September 25, 2017 to October 9, 2017. The main objective behind the campaign was to inculcate respect for laws in the citizens. If they did not respect small laws they would end up by not respecting bigger laws and ultimately the citizens who did not have respect for laws could be called “Anti Socials”. The main rationale behind the campaign was to appreciate the citizens who followed the rules by giving them “Responsible Citizen Badges” and requesting people who failed to obey laws to start following laws and be Good Citizens of the country.

RTI Session at Rizvi B.Ed College, Bandra

RTI session was organized by PCGT to make students aware about the Right To Information Act, 2005. The history of RTI, when one can file RTI application, who and what kind of information can be obtained from RTI, where can one appeal if he/she is not satisfied by the information given, the fee structure in accordance to the Act. Forty Five students attended the session



Former Chief Information Commissioner Mr. Shailesh Gandhi delivering workshop on RTI

YFG Dialogues

PCGT in collaboration with Jai Hind College organized a dialogue with students on the topic “Youth’s Role in Fighting Corruption” on 13th Oct., 2017. Director General, Anti Corruption Bureau, Mr. Vivek Phansalkar addressed the gathering. He stated that corruption is one of the greatest evils that shakes the backbone of any society. More than a matter of need, corruption has become a sub-culture, a common practice, a terrible evil. Faced with this trouble people have grown used to it, it is a part of everyday life. If this evil is eradicated from the society, then the greatest threat to development is over. Youth of India can do a great deal in this matter but we must be careful so that they do not take up misguided ideals and ideas because that will have the opposite effect. The main problem of the youth in India is that they are not a part of the society in its full sense – they come under the influence of parents and are guided by parties and age old ideas that have no relevance in today’s IT age.

Again on 8th December, 2017, in collaboration with Sydenham College, PCGT arranged a dialogue with Actress Swara Bhaskar on the topic “Communal Harmony”. The session was attended by 400 students from different colleges across Mumbai. Ms. Swara Bhaskar spoke on communalism and why this issue is very important to address to bring peace in the nation. The youth, she felt, are getting brainwashed by different forces and she spoke why brainwashing should be stopped and youth should contribute in the development and better future of the nation.

On 18th December 2017, in collaboration with NMIMS, PCGT arranged for dialogue on the topic “Problems of North East : Issues, Causes & Concerns” by Mr. Chamanlal, Director General of Police, Nagaland.



KUCHH AUR



A playful ice-breaking session with CoW

For the academic year 2017-18 PCGT collaborated with different NGO's to instill the right conduct with community children and children in aided/unaided and BMC Schools.

A yearly curriculum has been finalized month-wise for the various schools. The entire program is known as 'Lessons in



Ice-breaking activity with Children of the World, Nerul

Responsible Citizenship'. The details are as below:

- June: Relationship
- July: Environment
- August: Unity in Diversity and patriotism
- September: Respect
- October: No Sessions due to exams and Diwali holidays
- November: Sensitivity
- December: Peace and Silence



Interactive session with CoW, Rabale, after the orange test

October – No sessions due to exams and Diwali holidays.

November – Sensitivity : The **objective** is to educate the children in understanding, insight, and self awareness about one's own behaviour and its impact on others, including the ways in which others interpret one's behaviour, to understand both verbal and non-verbal clues, which increases awareness and understanding of what the other person is thinking and feeling.

Outcome: The children learnt to understand each other's strength



Children of Worli Naka BMC School being taught the value of life

and weaknesses. They understood the differently abled. They learnt to co-operate with each other and learnt to deal with anger, insults and disagreements. They also learnt the value of time.

December – Peace & Silence

The **objective** was to make the children aware of their thoughts and emotions as they're experiencing them. It also encourages them to see these emotions as temporary and separate from their core sense of self – this disconnect in itself can bring a sense of calm. Because they're not invested in or defined by their hurt and anger



Children of the World (CoW), Rabale, taking the orange test - how to enjoy the peace and silence while eating an orange

they can choose to let it go. By being aware of thoughts and emotions as they arise, children are less overpowered by them and can make better decisions about how to respond. Decisions based on calm focus, not emotional turbulence.

Outcome : This helped children navigate their way in their daily tasks. It helped to increase their self-awareness and self-understanding. Their quiet time helped in relaxing their bodies



CoW, Nerul, at a group discussion on Sensitivity

and release physical tension. It could help them with greater control over one's thoughts, with less domination by unwelcome thoughts. The peace helped them to "keep calm".



Dr. Ambedkar BMC School children, Worli being taught the value of peace during the orange test

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

RTI Session on 12th Nov., 2017, at Khankah-E-Sabariya Sajidiya, Harinagar, Jogeshwari (East)

A community session on Right to Information (RTI) Act was organized by Mohalla Committee Movement Trust (MCMT) in association with Public Concern For Governance Trust at Khankah-E-Sabariya Sajidiya Madrasa, Harinagar, Jogeshwari (East), Mumbai, on 12th Nov., 2017. The session was conducted by the notable RTI activist, Mr. Anand Bhandare.



Mr. Bhandare began by educating the people about the brief history of the evolution of RTI and the objective of the Act.

The participants were also shown a short film titled 'Kar Sawal', by Bollywood director

and producer, Mahesh Bhatt. The film captured the lives of citizens of different ages, in their struggle against careless establishments that deny the common man their dues and the answers they sought to seek from their Government.

Mr. Bhandare elaborated about his analysis on the progress report of local corporators in Mumbai from years 2012 to 2016. The report book named 'My Ward-My Corporator' includes work done by corporators in his particular ward, but the analysis is done by citizens rather than any political parties. The core theme of RTI session was to give a systematic approach on how to evaluate and understand the work of the elected corporator. Mr. Bhandare also requested participants to do a systematic study of work done by corporators through annual social audit and to monitor and participate in governance.

* * * *

Parents-Teachers Meeting (PTM) at Tardeo BMC School in Mumbai Central



As part of the Right to Information initiative, a session was organized by PCGT on the need and relevance of Right to Information (RTI) Act, at the Parents-Teachers Meeting (PTM) at Tardeo BMC School, Mumbai Central. The audience primarily consisted of members from the economically weaker sections of the Society, who were eager to learn their rights under the provisions of law. Participants were parents of students in classes VI to X.

The session was conducted by Mr. Digvijay Tarte, Programme Executive at PCGT, who highlighted the key features of the RTI Act as well as its importance in their lives. Further, Mr. Tarte explained to the parents how PCGT is helping people to solve their issues related to BMC (dependent job cases, corruption cases), MHADA & SRA. Parents were advised to visit PCGT office if they needed any help related to their work in Government offices.

SUCCESS STORIES

Mrs. Vanita Nalin Patel

Awidow, Mrs. Vanita Nalin Patel, did not get her deceased husband's DCRG benefits and her family pension even after nearly two years of her husband's death in service. She approached PCGT who promptly pursued the matter through filing RTI. After the First Appeal hearing, in November 2017, she got a sum of more than ₹ One Lakh as ad hoc arrears of her husband's pension dues, with a promise that other pending payments would be paid shortly. PCGT is pursuing the matter further.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ribeiro wrote to the MC that penal interest should be paid to all those pensioners who were not paid their dues in time.



Mrs. Vanita Nalin Patel and her children

Ms. Priyanka Mali, a student of Govt. Law College

Ms. Priyanka Mali, a student of Govt. Law College (GLC), Mumbai did not get her missing answer sheets of two subjects, viz., Contract II and Land Laws, when she applied for revaluation to Mumbai University after her Semester IV exams in May 2017, in which she had been declared 'failed'. Her repeated written and verbal representations failed to evoke any favourable response from the varsity. Finally, she approached PCGT. The PCGT promptly filed an RTI application referring her letters addressed to the varsity and seeking to know status of action taken on the same and the response time of the varsity to such representations. Soon the PIO (an Officiating Deputy Registrar of the varsity) sent photo copies of all the missing answer sheets of the student/applicant sent by e-mail to her through her college and also by post.

The Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), non-responsive for 8 months, comes calling after an RTI application filed with the help of PCGT

Shri Ashok S. Pawar, an employee of ESIC, Thane committed suicide (21-1-2017) alleging harassment by his superiors. Even though a police case was registered in this regard, no visible action was evident from the department (ESI) with the office remaining silent till November 2017 when the widow of the deceased approached PCGT who guided her to file an RTI application seeking to know the status of action by the ESIC on the suicide note of the deceased, alleging harassment and corruption and irregularities by some seniors. ESIC HQ., replied in December 2017 that a departmental inquiry was going on and further progress would be updated soon after completion of the inquiry.

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 ₹ 5,000/- 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 under-taken by PCGT. They can contact us at our Office at the address given below or call on 022-2352 6426

✂ tear along this line

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