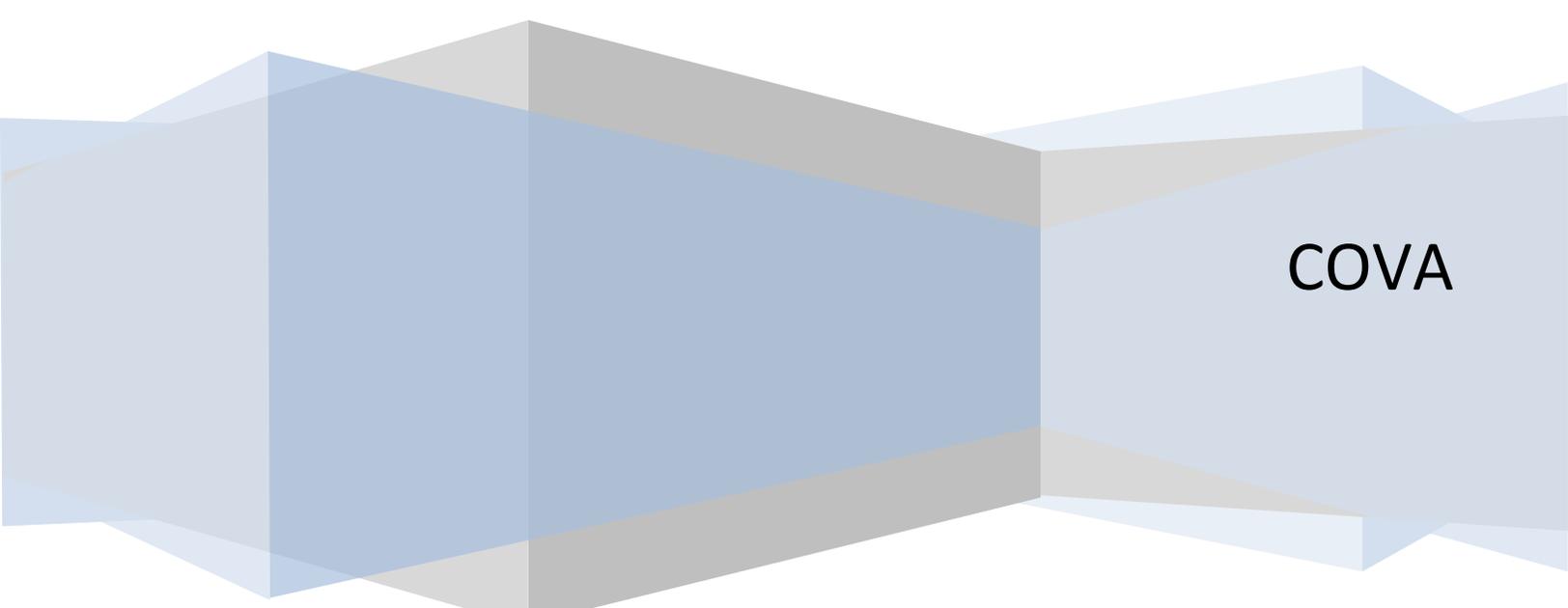


A Report on RTBS

**Basic Services and the Marginalised**  
**- A case study in Hyderabad.**

By

Dr. Irfan Basha



COVA

# Basic Services and the Marginalised

## - A case study in Hyderabad.

### **1. Introduction**

COVA started plans to facilitate the initiation of a National Campaign for Right to Basic Services in collaboration with other NGOs and peoples movements throughout the country since February 2007. This Right could enable the poor and the marginalised to obtain from the state an assured access to the essential services like civic amenities, education, health, sanitation, water, etc that are essential for a dignified human existence.

RTBS campaign will find its echo in the UN Millennium development goals on which India is a signatory. To make awareness regarding the plight of the poor and the downtrodden to the government and to involve the poor and the excluded of India to fight for the injustice and get them into adequate basic services net. RTBS is demanding that the promises made by the government to allocate 9% of the GDP toward public expenditure on eradication of illiteracy and improving the basic health conditions of the poor. RTBS also demand that the government has to raise public spending on education to 7% of GDP with at least 70% of the amount being spent on primary Education. It has to raise the public spending on Health to at least 3% of the GDP over the next 5 years with focus on primary health care.

We remind the government of its promise that every child and every family should have among others adequate food, education, health and infrastructure and work. We want every Indian to utilize education, health and infrastructure to the fullest as the basic right of everyone. The citizen's future should be India's first priority.

It is high time that we made government realize that mere promises not do any more. We have to discuss the budget with an eye on the future. Currently the public expenditure on education stands at 3% of the GDP and on health is less than 1%. We believe that in the absence of such a Constitutional obligation on the part of the Indian State, the poor remain entirely vulnerable to unaffordable market-driven systems. COVA expect that such a campaign would also help in reducing communal and caste conflicts by bringing together different communities on a common platform in a spirit of partnership and foster social integration and harmony.

Cova has conducted a small research study on the “Consumption patterns of poor urban house holds” in Hyderabad. Our aim is to gauge the Indirect taxes that poor families pay to the Government. We also sought to know the Socio-economic and Educational conditions of this group. We are focusing on their legitimate concerns so as to strengthen our demand of Right to basic services.

## **2. Methodology adopted:**

The Study is a distinct one with two components in it. One component draws the attention towards the socio-economic and educational conditions of the marginalised, and the other component shows the lack of basic services and inadequacies in infrastructure provided by the government to the poor. The proposed theme has been studied both in conceptual and in empirical framework.

First the relevant data has been collected from the secondary sources available in the books, and other sources. These include the research work done in Universities, Business Institutions, books written about the relevant themes and government reports. Secondly for the first hand authentic information, an empirical study has been conducted by administering the interview schedule to the target group. We also discussed with eminent scholars from different backgrounds and included their valuable inputs.

The questionnaire has been administered in different areas in Hyderabad, which include Fatima Nagar, Falaknuma, Asad Baba Nagar, Kishan Bagh, Phisal Banda, Santoshnagar, Bhagwandas Bada, Abids, Yakuthpura, Murtuza Nagar and Imlibun. The Respondents are in the age group of 30-60 years with low income group background and their occupations include Sugarcane Juice making, Cycle Mechanism, Fruit Selling, Auto Driving, Pan shop, Rickshaw pulling, working in incense sticks (Agarbatti) workshop, Tea selling on road and support staff in Hotel.

### **3. Findings of the study**

#### **3.1 Income and Family**

The average income of each family has found to be Rs 2196/- p.m. The total number of family members in each family averages to 5.54 persons. The Average age of marriage of the respondents is 21.8 years. There are on an average 3.42 children per family. Regarding the occupation of women nearly 9% women are working women.

#### **3.2 Education of the respondents**

Education is central to development<sup>1</sup>. It empowers people and strengthens nations. It is a powerful “equalizer”, opening doors to all to lift themselves out of poverty. It is critical to the world’s attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Two of the eight MDGs pertain to education—namely, universal primary completion and gender parity in primary and secondary schooling. Education also promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, and values of democracy and social cohesion.

Investment in education benefits the individual, society, and the world as a whole. Broad-based education of good quality is among the most powerful instruments known to reduce poverty and inequality. With proven benefits for personal health, it also strengthens nations’ economic health by laying the foundation for sustained economic

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<sup>1</sup> [www.developmentgoals.org](http://www.developmentgoals.org)

growth. For individuals and nations, it is key to creating, applying, and spreading knowledge—and thus to the development of dynamic, globally competitive economies. And it is fundamental for the construction of democratic societies.

### **Benefits to the individual<sup>2</sup>**

- *Improves health and nutrition:* Education greatly benefits personal health. Particularly powerful for girls, it profoundly affects reproductive health, and also improves child mortality and welfare through better nutrition and higher immunization rates. Education may be the single most effective preventive weapon against HIV/AIDS.
- *Increases productivity and earnings:* Research has established that every year of schooling increases individual wages for both men and women by a worldwide average of about 10 percent. In poor countries, the gains are even greater.
- *Reduces inequality:* Education is a great “leveler”, illiteracy being one of the strongest predictors of poverty. Primary education plays a catalytic role for those most likely to be poor, including girls, ethnic minorities, orphans, disabled people, and rural families. By enabling larger numbers to share in the growth process, education can be the powerful tide that lifts all boats.

### **Benefits to society**

- *Drives economic competitiveness:* An educated and skilled workforce is one of the pillars of the knowledge-based economy. Increasingly, comparative advantages among nations come less from natural resources or cheap labor and more from technical innovations and the competitive use of knowledge. Studies also link education to economic growth: education contributes to improved productivity which in theory should lead to higher income and improved economic performance.

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<sup>2</sup> web.worldbank.org

- *Has synergistic, poverty-reducing effects:* Education can vitally contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. While two of the goals pertain directly to education, education also helps to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, lower child mortality rates, protect against HIV/AIDS, reduce fertility rates, and enhance environmental awareness.
- *Contributes to democratization:* Countries with higher primary schooling and a smaller gap between rates of boys' and girls' schooling tend to enjoy greater democracy. Democratic political institutions (such as power-sharing and clean elections) are more likely to exist in countries with higher literacy rates and education levels.
- *Promotes peace and stability:* Peace education—spanning issues of human security, equity, justice, and intercultural understanding— is of paramount importance. Education also reduces crime: poor school environments lead to deficient academic performance, absenteeism, and drop out—precursors of delinquent and violent behavior.
- *Promotes concern for the environment:* Education can enhance natural resource management and national capacity for disaster prevention and adoption of new, environmentally friendly technologies.

Our study shows that more than 92% respondents did not have any formal education. In the rest some dropped out in primary school level itself and we found only one respondent who has studied up to secondary education.

The following table shows the comparative data on status of education in India.

**Table- 1: Educational Indicators**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Educational Indicators<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Year</b>
<b>1</b>	Adult literacy rate <sup>4</sup> , male	(1990) 62	(2000-2004) 73
<b>2</b>	Adult literacy rate, female	(1990) 36	(2000-2004), 48
<b>3</b>	Primary school enrolment <sup>5</sup> ratio gross, male	(1998-2002) 107	(2000-2005) 120
<b>4</b>	Primary school enrolment ratio gross, female	(1998-2002) 90	(2000-2005), 112
<b>5</b>	Primary school enrolment ratio <sup>6</sup> , net, male	(1998-2002) 91	(2000-2005), 92
<b>6</b>	Primary school enrolment ratio, net, female	(1998-2002) 76	(2000-2005) 87

<sup>3</sup> Source: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_statistics.html)

<sup>4</sup> Adult literacy rate - Percentage of persons aged 15 and over who can read and write.

<sup>5</sup> Gross primary or secondary school enrolment ratio - The number of children enrolled in a level (primary or secondary), regardless of age, divided by the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the same level.

<sup>6</sup> Net primary school enrolment ratio - The number of children enrolled in primary school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to primary schooling, divided by the total population of the same age group.

### 3.3 Consumption patterns

The following table shows the list of average regular expenditure of an individual family incurred during a month.

**Table-2: Average Consumption pattern of the households.**

S.No.	Name of the items consumed by an average person per month	Expenditure per month in Rs	From 4% to 70% indirect taxes (in Rs)
1	Rice	255.4	10.216
2	wheat	132	5.28
3	pulses	86	3.44
4	Tamarind	30	1.2
5	Chillies	45	1.8
6	Onions	30	1.2
7	vegetables	200	8
8	spices	75	3
9	pickles	40	1.6
10	fruits	37	1.48
11	Oil	180	7.2
12	other	120	4.8
13	meat	190	3.6
14	Other	100	4
15	Milk	150	6
16	Tea	36	1.44
17	sugar	96	3.84
18	Ghee and curd	36	1.44

19	Alcohol	310	217
20	Beedies	100	4
21	Zarda	60	7.5
22	eggs	24	0.96
23	firewood	150	6
24	Electricity	124	4.96
25	Soaps and cosmetics	68	2.72
26	Coconut oil	34	1.36
27	Kerosene	228	9.12
28	Barber & washer man	39	----
29	Clothes	185.6	7.424
30	Education	15.25	0.61
31	Festivals	66.6	2.664
<b>32</b>	<b>Foot wear</b>	25	1
33	Travels	41.5	1.66
	<b>Total</b>	3309	336.5

The expenditure incurred in each family per month on consumption is nearly the same as that of any middle class family. But when we calculate the ratio of taxes paid on consumption to the total amount of their incomes, we find that the poor pay more on taxes with respect to their earnings. And it conclusively shows that the poor has to have more burden of taxes than the middle class families.

### **3.4. Infrastructure facilities**

More than five decades of development planning in India has not been able to guarantee a moderate living for a large number of people residing in both rural as well as in urban areas. In spite of many large scale development schemes, the absolute number of people in poverty has not reduced significantly; dismal poverty still remains universal in all areas. Lack of basic infrastructure facilities, continues to remain a major constraint to progress in India. The role of the state remains crucial in promoting these sectors. The significance of infrastructure as a key factor in developing both rural and urban areas needs to be reconsidered as an important option.

India has the second largest urban population in the world with almost 300 million living in urban areas; the country has over 3,700<sup>7</sup> towns and cities. The urban population of the country has been growing at a rapid pace of over 31 per cent over the last decade. It includes about 30 per cent of the total population and contributes to over 60 per cent of the country's GDP. Essential infrastructure facilities need to be provided to this growing urban population. A large number of Indian cities and towns need adequate infrastructure facilities, specifically in the areas of water management, roads, transportation, housing, sanitation, sewage etc.

In our study we are informed by 95% respondents that they are not satisfied with the infrastructural facilities and socio-economic schemes provided by the Government. The following is the list of grievances of the respondents who shared their anguish with us.

#### **3.4.1 Drinking water**

Although India is endowed with sufficient water, there are significant variations in the spatial and temporal availability of this resource. Consequently, at any given time, there are areas of both water excess and water stress in the country. The per capita availability of renewable freshwater in the country, however, has fallen drastically over the last 50 years. With an average annual rainfall of 1,170 mm, India is one of the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://urbanindia.nic.in>

wettest countries in the world. At one extreme are areas like Cherrapunji, in the north-east, which is drenched each year with 11,000 mm of rainfall, and at the other extreme are places like Jaisalmer, in the west, which receives barely 200 mm of rain. Though the average rainfall is adequate, nearly three-quarters of the rain pours down in less than 120 days, from June to September.

According to Professor Malin Falkenmark of the Swedish International Water Institute, 100 litres a day (36.5 cubic metres a year) is the minimum per capita water requirement for our basic human needs. Agriculture, industry and energy usage is roughly 5-20 times that of human requirements.

The water table is rapidly falling with unregulated over-exploitation of groundwater. By 2025, water scarcity in India will be acute. And big dams, mega river-linking projects or privatised water distribution may not help. Rural water schemes have remained the scourge of planners since Independence. According to the latest statistics, about 15,000 habitations in the country were reported to be without any source of potable water; some 200,000 villages were partially covered by drinking water schemes; and 217,000 villages reported problems with the quality of water.

Water stress is becoming acute in both urban and rural situations. Not only the quantity but also the quality of water supplied or available is being questioned. At one extreme, water is being wasted in urban areas and by industries; at the other, the rural poor lack access to safe water. According to experts, the usable water resources in several river basins will eventually be exhausted, most surface water will be polluted, and environmental deprivation will be universal. Water scarcity has led to the emergence of the bottled water industry worth over Rs 1,000 crore.

It is difficult to estimate the proportion of population that has access to clean drinking water. Our study found that only 65.4. % respondents get drinking water from Tap, 7.7% from Tanker, 15.4% from well, 12% from other sources----neighbours, bore well etc. This means 35% of the poor do not get the drinking water regularly. We also found

that the 19% respondents said that they receive only 75% of the drinking water they required for drinking and cooking purpose. 42% respondents received only 50-70% of the water required, 23% respondents got only 25- 50% of the water required and the remaining 7.6% respondents said that they received less than 25% of the water.

For household purpose, 46.15% respondents get water form tap, 3.8% get it from the Tanker, 23% draw water from the Well and the remaining 15.4% respondents get water from their neighbours or from hand pump bore wells. We found that for drinking as well as for other domestic needs, only 19.2% of the respondents get total water to fulfill their needs. 11.5% of the respondents get 75% of water they require, 31% of the respondents get 50-75% of water, 23% of the respondents get 25-50% of water and the remaining 15.4% of the respondents get less than 25% of water. We can infer that only 20% of the poor are getting adequate water to fulfill their basic needs.

In the emerging situation of water scarcity, the central issue is that of redefining water governance. Unless alternative institutional and policy arrangements are examined, the situation is only going to get worse. In the context of groundwater, the real issue is the formulation of management principles that address the ecological, equity and sustainability concerns. Further, there is a need to identify and strengthen local institutions that ensure equitable and sustainable use of water within ecological confines. Institutional reforms, differential water pricing and water conservation are pivotal issues that need to be addressed in order to tide over the present and emerging situation of water scarcity.

India undoubtedly has the world's largest irrigation infrastructure. But it remains grossly under-utilised on account of project delays, cost overruns and inefficient utilisation. A report, jointly prepared by India's water resources ministry and the World Bank in 1999, revealed that this huge irrigation infrastructure is not maintained, with most of the available financial resources going towards funding new projects. Spillover

projects worth Rs 160,000 crore need to be completed in the Tenth and Eleventh Plan periods.

Even today, however, the water resources establishment is not ready to explore cost-effective, sustainable, quick options for satisfying the water needs of the people. And we have no credible, independent and comprehensive assessment of the thousands of dams built over the years

### **3.4.3 Drainage system**

As India's cities have expanded, their drainage systems have not kept pace with building growth nor with the provision of water supply. Encroachment on floodplains as well as inadequate sewerage systems flowing into storm drains mean that these drains cannot cope with monsoon runoff.

Our studies show Trench drain pipes in the localities cover only 65.4% of the people. The remaining types of drainage we found, like for example Open drains covering nearly 11.5% and Crude drains cover 7.7% of the population. 34.6% of the respondents said that the Drainage near locality is provided by the government. 54% respondents said that they themselves have constructed the drainage Nalas near their vicinity while they were constructing or repairing their houses.

For answering the daily Nature's call, 3.8% respondents alleged that they daily use Flushing Squat Toilet, 54% said they use Squat Toilet (Indian style), some 8% go for their nature calls near Open pits and the remaining 20% use Community free Toilet.

Regarding Electricity in the houses, 96.2% respondents said that they have electricity connections and 3.7% do not have electricity. But there are certain problems near their vicinity which bothers them most, like the voltage fluctuations, loading problems and the absence of power. 50% respondents opined that they get electric power for 24

Hours, 23% felt that they get power just between 12-24 hours, 11.5% get 6- 12 hours power in their locality and the remaining 7.6% get it for less than 6 hours.

What prevails here is a manifestation of the state of affairs all over India and in poor countries. India's sanitation coverage is just 30 per cent. In other words, one in every three Indians does not have access to a toilet<sup>8</sup>. In cities, the situation is marginally better with 58 per cent coverage. But given the disparity between cities, the metropolitan areas would be adding to this more favourable percentage while towns would be as bad if not worse off than some rural areas. And in India's villages, the coverage is a pathetic 18 per cent. With all our boasts about our growing economy, the real picture is shown up when you look at sanitation coverage. South Asia has sanitation coverage of just 37 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa has 36 per cent.

#### **3.4.4 Roads**

The position of Hyderabad roads is deplorable. Blame it on the inferior quality of job carried in laying roads or the eternal scuffle between Municipal Authorities and the contractors over cement prices, road conditions here are making the vehicle owners visit service centres regularly over maintenance of the vehicles. and some to seek an appointment with a doctor or a physiotherapist. Road conditions at many places including areas like Jubilee Hills are appalling.

We found that 9.2% respondents informed us that they have Kacha type road near their locality. 9.2% stated that they have Pucca type (Tar type) roads, 54% replied that they have Pucca type (C C type) and the remaining 7.6% answered that they have no road in their area. We found most of the roads in a frail state with pot holes on it. During the winter season people find it difficult to tread on it. All through, dug up or potholed roads welcome commuters. Most (42%) of the existing roads we were told, laid more

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.indiatogether.org>

than 7 years ago. Traffic jam on roads is only compounding the problem. 19.23% respondents said that some new roads that we saw have been laid recently (1-2 years) 27% respondents stated that the roads have been laid nearly 3 years ago. 42.3% respondents feel that the condition of the road near their locality as 'in a workable condition', 27% termed the condition of the roads as satisfactory and 27% felt it as bad and turning into worse.

Rains, traffic-jams, pot-holes, construction, road widening and water-logging have made driving on Hyderabad roads a challenge. As there has been record rainfall in Hyderabad this winter, than it has been for the last decade, they can't even repair the road as only one side is available for traffic. So for an instant result small stones are dumped to seal the potholes on the road and as it rains, they get away and that creates even more difficulties.

### **3.4.5 Health**

The most important basic service the government can provide to its marginalised and poor people is providing them basic health facilities in their area. India's public expenditure on health is among the lowest in the world – less than 1% of its GDP. Infant Mortality rate is 62 out of 1000. A Hospital/ health centre is the essential requirement which is to be built in every locality or basti, but what we found regarding hospitals and health centres is a sordid reality. 31% respondents do not find themselves near a hospital or even a health centre. They have to travel 3-5km away from their locality to get basic medical check up. 11.5% respondents informed us that they have to tread 1-2 km to reach a health center.

Only 3.8% people do access the health centre / Govt. Hospital for their medical illness regularly. 61.5% respondents conveyed us that they visit the hospital only sometimes. 11.5% respondents informed us that they visit the nearby hospital/health center for small illnesses only, 7.6% poor reported that they visit the hospital for major illnesses

only. We also found some 15.4% respondents who have never visited the government provided health care facilities. Those who visit the health center / hospital spoke of their experiences there. on the subject of punctuality of doctors, 57% respondents are of the view that the doctors are regular and 43% said that they are Irregular in their duties. With respect to the working Staff 46% respondents uttered that they are irregular and will not respond to their grievances. in relation to the availability of medicine, 39% respondents stated that they have to buy medicines from outside, as there is regular shortage of medicines. Concerning the Hospital Environment a massive 69% respondents found it dirty.

**Table: 3 Basic Indicators of Health and Nutrition**

Basic Indicators of Health and Nutrition in India <sup>9</sup>	Years	
	(2002)	(2004)
% of total population using improved drinking water sources	86	86
% of urban population using improved drinking water sources	96	95
% of rural population using improved drinking water sources	82	83
% of total population using adequate sanitation facilities	30	33
% of urban population using adequate sanitation facilities	58	59
% of rural population using adequate sanitation facilities	18	22

<sup>9</sup> Source: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_statistics.html)

### 3.4.6 Child Education

According to the Census2001report, even though 65.4 per cent of Indians are literate, and the gap between male and female literacy is also decreasing with the figures now, there is, however, a wide disparity in the literacy rates of different states - Kerala has achieved 90 per cent literacy while Bihar has only 38.5 per cent. If we take into consideration the case of children, almost all the children now have access to a school, with nearly 95 per cent of our rural population having a primary school within one kilometer of their surroundings. This is a noteworthy accomplishment. But there are some important questions to be asked: does the socio-economic situation of children let them to walk into those schools? Why is the drop out rate not decreasing as conceived? And how to improve the quality of education available at these schools?

The management of these schools is a vast and varied patchwork of agencies, both government and non-government. Basically, while the Centre is responsible for providing general direction in terms of educational policy and curriculum, education is predominantly a state subject, and the running of this vast school network is the responsibility of individual state governments. This is done in two ways: either by directly running schools, or by supporting privately-run schools through grants. A very small number of schools in each state are completely independent of government funding, and only these can really be called private schools.

Broadly, the vast majority of the population, both rural and urban, sends its children to government-run schools, as these are free, ie they do not charge fees. However, given that the quality of education in these schools is usually quite poor, the fast-increasing middle class prefers to send its children to the government-aided, privately-run schools. The third category, the private schools, caters to the elite upper-class population. Nearly 40 million children in India do not attend school (government estimates the number to be 13 million). The resources to support the poor will have to manage our finances with wisdom and with foresight. Our findings show that 53% respondents send their

children to Government schools, 27% are sending their children to small and affordable Private schools with English medium. But in the case of girl child, only 19% respondents are sending their girls to a private school. When we asked them which type of School they wish to send their children, we got a near unanimous reply that more than 92% preferred to send their children to English medium private schools. Thus even a layman knows the quality of teaching in government school education.

If one were to identify the single most important achievement in the field of education by the government in the post-Independence era, it would have to be putting a school within reach of almost every child.

The increase in drop out rates can also be due to the unattractiveness of the school and teaching processes. The PROBE report<sup>10</sup> recorded startling data about the lack of or dysfunctional state of basic amenities in many schools. As many as 52 per cent lacked playgrounds, 89 per cent did not have toilets and 59 per cent did not have drinking water. As for teaching aids, 26 per cent did not have blackboards, 59 per cent had no access to maps and charts, 67 per cent lacked any kind of teaching kits, and 75 per cent had no toys for the children. In 77 per cent of the schools, there were no libraries.

The report also noted that when the team dropped in at the schools, only 53 per cent of the teachers were actually involved in teaching. The rest were either in the head teachers' rooms, or standing outside the class, talking with other teachers, or involved in other non-teaching activities.

Most child-rights organisations are very clear about one thing: free, compulsory and quality elementary education is the first and most important step in the fight to eradicate child labour. In *The Child and State in India* (OUP, 1991), Myron Weiner makes clear the direct impact that compulsory education policies have had on reduction of child labour in other developing countries. While one may take issue with his thesis that the vast gap between official rhetoric and policy on child labour is a deliberate attempt by all sections of the middle class to maintain the *status quo*, there is no question

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.infochangeindia.org>

that unless the State takes it upon itself to ensure that each child is in school, child labour is going to continue unabated. (See [www.labourfile.org](http://www.labourfile.org), Campaign Against Child Labour, CACL)

A mass public demand for the passing of the 83rd amendment is an essential step to make this a reality. Critics of this move have rightly pointed out that given what actually happens in most schools, this is not something we want to force on our children through the Constitution! So, the issue of the quality of education needs to be tackled simultaneously.

Regarding the Ration Card they possess, we found that 77% hold White card, 4% enjoyed Pink card, but more than 11% poor do not have the ration card.

### **3.4.7 Housing conditions**

Although most (96.15%) of the respondents own a house, 92% of the houses have only 1 room and only 15.4% have a small hall. 70% of the houses they are living in, constructed with their own finances and 30% houses are built under govt. scheme. 26.9% respondents constructed their houses on Private Land, 38.5% constructed their houses on Assigned Land, 15.3% constructed their houses on Govt. Land and 13% respondents do not know on which type of land their house is built.

### **Suggestions**

Basic services are fundamental rights of all citizens, rather than a form of state largesse. The government of India must act quickly to fulfill its key responsibility of carrying out the basic services, namely bestowing basic health, primary education, sanitation and water. We urge the government to espouse the minimum basic rights of its people to universal and good quality basic services by taking it as a task to more activist role in meeting these developmental challenges face-to-face.

To improve the infrastructure the government has to plan major schemes like:

- Integrated development of small and medium towns
- Accelerate urban water supply programme

- Low cost sanitation
- Increase Investment opportunities in water supply, sewerage and waste management systems in many towns and cities.
- Housing is another major investment area with significant potential.
- To improve medical facilities at Primary Health Centres and bad condition of roads in the district.

At the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century 189 nations promised to end poverty in all forms in the world by 2015. The state of urban poverty is reflected in its magnitude, estimated at 80 million (upto 40% of the total urban population) and in data reflecting poor health and education indicators; poor sanitation and housing. The state of urban poverty is reflected in its magnitude, estimated at 80 million (upto 40% of the total urban population) and in data reflecting poor health and education indicators; poor sanitation and housing.

According to Government of India, success in eradicating poverty will be contingent upon three factors: (a) a GDP growth rate of at least 6 per cent per annum over the next 10 years (b) provisioning of at least seven basic minimum services -- universal access to safe drinking water, 100 per cent coverage of primary healthcare centres, universalisation of primary education, public housing assurance to all shelterless deserving families, extension of the mid-day meal scheme throughout all primary schools, road connectivity to all villages and habitations, and streamlining the public distribution system targeted to families below the income poverty line (c) ensuring that the income poor and the socially disadvantaged groups receive special attention and priority. Other planned initiatives include a universal employment assurance programme that will guarantee 100 days of employment for every unemployed person, and efforts to achieve universal literacy. Agricultural growth will be stepped up by improving productivity in regions with a high concentration of poverty -- which are also regions with the highest potential for growth. Efforts will be made to promote

actively both rural farm as well as non-farm employment and improve access to credit and other resources.

We have the most brilliant legislation in the world<sup>11</sup>, we have pro-poor policies spelt out in the most moving rhetoric. Yet, implementation of these plans and strategies was ignored, circumvented and in many cases deliberately prevented. There has to be the will to eradicate poverty.

The data below shows the reality of poorest countries<sup>12</sup>

- Half the world – nearly three billion people – live on less than two dollars a day.
- The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the poorest 48 nations (i.e. a quarter of the world's countries) is less than the wealth of the world's three richest people combined.
- Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names.
- Less than one per cent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the year 2000 and yet it didn't happen.
- 1 billion children live in poverty (1 in 2 children in the world). 640 million live without adequate shelter, 400 million have no access to safe water, 270 million have no access to health services. 10.6 million died in 2003 before they reached the age of 5 (or roughly 29,000 children per day).

#### **4.0 Conditions Today**

Since independence in 1947 India has been transformed from an impoverished agrarian nation into a potential global economic superpower. Nonetheless, whilst poverty rates are falling and about 200 million people have emerged to become the new urban middle

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<sup>11</sup> [www.infochangeindia.org](http://www.infochangeindia.org)

<sup>12</sup> Source: [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org)

class, high population growth is such that the number of Indians living in extreme poverty approaches 300 million<sup>13</sup>. The global challenge of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) therefore rests disproportionately on the fight against poverty in India.

**Table-5**

<b>Data</b>	
% of population living below \$1 a day (1992-2002)	35
% of central government expenditure allocated to health (1992-2004)	2
% of central government expenditure allocated to education (1992-2004)	2
% of central government expenditure allocated to defence (1992-2004)	15

Source: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india\\_statistics](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_statistics).

Data available for India shows that there is no adequate sanitation facility for 70% of the population (82% in Rural areas); 14% people lack access to proper drinking water source; and the gross enrollment for education is only 60% (UNICEF and UNDP). In a country with a population of over one billion of which about 300 million are living in extreme poverty (35% of the population living on less than \$1 per day) the total combined expenditure on education and health during 1992 to 2004 was less than 4% of the GDP (UNICEF).

In the absence of a Constitutional obligation on the part of the Indian State to provide the very basic services to all its citizens and in the context of economic globalisation and liberalisation, the poor remain entirely vulnerable to unaffordable market-driven systems and are being increasingly

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Millennium Development Goals.

deprived of even the most basic services and amenities. Denial of basic services should be seen in the context of violation of human rights.

In a scenario where the access of the poor, marginalized and even the middle class to many basic services like water, sanitation, education, health, housing and civic amenities is being increasingly denied or curtailed, there is an urgent need to launch a movement in the country to ensure that the basic services are available to every one- especially the poorest of the poor.

In this backdrop, a National Campaign for Right To Basic Services (RTBS) in India is being proposed with the involvement and collective ownership of civil society organisations like peoples movements, NGOs, students unions, trade unions, community based organizations and volunteer groups, etc.; throughout the country.

This Right could enable the poor, the marginalised and even the middle classes to obtain from the state an assured access to the very basic services like water, sanitation, education, health, housing etc that are essential for a dignified human existence.

The National Campaign will also be in consonance and a step towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. India is a signatory to the MDGs. Some of the Goals, which the National Campaign will address, include: Goal 2, which talks about achieving universal primary education; Goals 4,5 and 6, that address the issues of child mortality, maternal mortality and reversing the spread of diseases, and Goal 7, which addresses the issue of ensuring environmental sustainability.

### **Campaign Objectives**

1. Facilitate the emergence and consolidation of Citizens' Activism to enable the people to demand and secure basic services from the State within 10 years.
2. Facilitate civil society organisations working separately on rights to different basic services like education, health, sanitation etc. to come together within the next one-year and strive collectively for right to all basic services.

3. To obtain the right to basic services through an Act of Parliament.
4. To ensure that the government allocates adequate percentage of the GDP to provide all the basic services to each and every citizen.

### **Strategy**

It is proposed to adopt the following Eight Point Strategy for the Campaign.

1. Research
2. Meta- Campaign for Mass Reach
3. Demand for Percentage of the GDP
4. Citizens' Activism
5. Voter Assertion Campaigns
6. Use of Media
7. Celebrity endorsements
8. Lobbying with the political establishment, government and bureaucracy.

### **Research**

Research would enable the determination of the per capita availability of very basic facilities like water, sanitation, education, health care and housing; what is required for decent human existence; the gap between the facilities available and what is required; and what would be the cost to the exchequer to fill the gap and provide all the basic services that are required by all the citizens of the country.

Research could also be undertaken to determine the indirect and invisible taxes paid by the poor to strengthen the argument that as tax - payers, the poor also have a right to the basic services for a dignified human existence and it is the responsibility of the state to adequately provide all such facilities.

#### **Meta- Campaign for Mass Reach**

A number of civil society organisations are already striving to secure rights to water, sanitation, education, health and housing etc. However, most of these

campaigns are independent of each other and are being undertaken independently of one another.

The RTBS Campaign is not one more campaign but is being proposed as a Meta-Campaign to facilitate the conjunction and collaboration of different campaigns to demand from the State a non-negotiable right to all the basic services to be provided by the State. The RTBS Campaign could also function as a resource support to collate the research findings that are available about the basic services and generate campaign / education material for use by all the Partner Organisations for organizing sustained RTBS Campaigns in their areas of operation.

Different civil society organisations like mass movements, NGOs, student unions, trade unions etc could be enlisted as partners and collaborators to facilitate mass reach and involve large sections of people in demanding the Right To Basic Services and allocation of the required resources for the purpose..

#### □ **Demand for Percentage of the GDP**

It should be possible to calculate the percentage of the GDP that is necessary to ensure that all the basic services are available to all the people of the country and collectively demand the allocation of the required GDP for Basic Services within a specific time frame.

Given the phenomenal growth trends of the Indian economy with forecasts of 9 to 10 percent growth every year in the GDP for at least the next 10 years, the Government can no longer give the excuse that we are a poor country and hence cannot provide all the required services to all citizens.

#### □ **Lobbying**

In the era of coalition politics the aspirations of the people are getting better attention and response from the political parties. As a result, the state is becoming more amenable and responsive to the demands of the people.

As part of the RTBS Campaign, it is proposed to undertake systematic and sustained engagement with the government, bureaucracy and especially the political parties to lobby and influence them to accept the necessity of the Right To Basic Services and make it an act of Parliament and a reality for all the people of India – within a specific time frame.

□ **Citizens' Activism**

Activism has become a buzzword and one constantly hears of social activism, judicial activism and journalist activism - each in its own way striving to highlight the grievances and ameliorate the conditions of the people- especially the poor and the marginalised.

The time has come now to take the next step and facilitate the emergence of Citizen's Activism. With the gradual increase in the level of education and greater reach of mass media, the awareness and articulation levels of people at large (including the poor and the marginalised) is also increasing and the common people are evincing great courage and clarity in presenting and striving for their demands and rights.

The RTBS Campaign would seek to bring the common people in the forefront to strive for securing the Basic Services from the government and thereby facilitate the emergence of Citizens' Activism - paving the way for greater democratic assertion by the people to ensure more responsive functioning of the state.

**From Voter Awareness to Voter Assertion**

Elections are a time when the issues of the people come into focus at least for a month or two - all political parties start talking (mostly talking!) about them and the people also become conscious of their deprivations and aspirations. As part of the initiative to promote Citizens' Activism and secure the primacy of the common man it is proposed to use the period of the election campaigns to go beyond Voter Awareness to Voter Assertion Initiatives- where the voters will not only realize the importance of exercising their franchise and judiciously- but also proactively start demanding the actual redress of their needs and aspirations from the political system.

The RTBS Campaign could be an ideal vehicle for starting and sustaining the Voter Assertion Initiatives as the basic services relating to water, sanitation, education, health, housing and civic

amenities etc are the prime needs of large sections of people all over the country in both rural and urban areas cutting across religion, caste, gender, region and language. With the onset of economic liberalisation, even the middle classes are being increasingly denied access to these essentials and could become natural allies and partners in any struggle for basic services.

□ **Use of Media**

Strategies will be developed to enlist the support of the media to create sustained awareness amongst the people on a large scale and enable them to effectively assert their demands. Both the traditional and modern mass media could be used in the Campaign. Initiatives ranging from street plays to use of television channels and the Internet could form part of the communication strategy for the campaign. The effective support of media could generate an atmosphere that would eventually compel the state to concede to the people the Right To Basic Services.

□ **Celebrity Endorsements**

Endorsement of the RTBS Campaign by celebrities could ensure greater media coverage, attractive profile and wider influence for the Campaign. Film, sports and media personalities along with some leading social activists are agreeing to become “Cause Champions” to endorse the Campaign. Plans have to be evolved for the involvement of more celebrities and effective use of the mass media.

**Preparations For the Launch of the RTBS Campaign**

It is proposed to organize Preparatory Meetings in some states of the country and finally a One Day National Consultation in mid March 2007 to devise the required strategies and give a final shape to the RTBS Campaign. The National Campaign for Right To Basic Services (RTBS) could be launched in April or May 2007 on a date that is decided at the National Consultation.

**Campaign Partners**

All civil society organisations could be enrolled as Partners. The collaborating Partner networks / organisations / institutions / community groups etc. would be listed alphabetically and the Campaign could be carried out under the collective ownership of all the Partners with one of the members being entrusted with the responsibility of functioning as a Secretariat. As the Campaign is

likely to take many years before its objectives could be realized, it is possible to think of a revolving secretariat.

### **Listing of Campaign Partners**

All civil society groups that agree to collaborate in the RTBS Campaign could be listed alphabetically in the following categories: National, State and District wise- Peoples Movements, Networks, Organisations, Trade Unions, Students Unions, Community Groups etc.

### **Role of Campaign Partners**

Each organisation has its own agenda and program and cannot be expected to give more than a very limited time for any cause or activity however noble or needed. Hence it is proposed to devise the RTBS Campaign in such a way that each Partner Organisations gives at most four to eight days in a year and still the impact of the Campaign is sustained. Further, the Campaign has to be designed in such a way that it becomes a part of the ongoing programs and activities of the Partner Organisations and does not require much of exclusive time or additional resources.

### **Inclusion of Partner Organisations**

Civil society movements, organisations and groups will be encouraged to apply for partnership in the RTBS Campaign. The National Campaign Committee (to be formalized at the proposed National Consultation Meeting in Delhi in mid March 2007) will decide the inclusion of organisations as Campaign Partners to ensure that only credible and committed organisations are enlisted.

### **Expected Outcomes of the RTBS Campaign**

1. Emergence of Citizens' Activism.
2. Collaboration between different civil society actors that are independently striving to secure rights to different basic services.
3. Changing the political agenda from communal / sectarian to that of development which, apart from ensuring larger development benefits to the people, would also foster greater social and communal harmony- especially amongst the marginalised and down trodden sections of society.

4. Passage of an Act of Parliament making basic services an unalienable right of all citizens.
5. Allocation of the required percentage of the GDP to ensure the availability of Basic Services to all the people of India.

## ANNEXURE

### Constitutional Provisions to fight for RTBS

#### **Part IV Directive Principles of State Policy**

##### **Article 36 Definition**

In this Part, unless the context otherwise requires, "the State" has the same meaning as in Part III.

##### **Article 37 Application of the principles contained in this Part**

The provisions contained in this Part shall not be enforced by any court, but the principles therein laid down are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.

##### **Article 38: State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people.**

(1) The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life.

(2) The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

**Article 39: Certain principles of policy to be followed by the State**

The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing -

(a) that the citizen, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;

(b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;

(c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment;

(d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women;

(e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;

(f) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

**Article 39A Equal justice and free legal aid**

The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

**Article 40 Organization of village panchayats**

The State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.

**Article 41 Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases**

The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.

**Article 42 Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief**

The State shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

**Article 43 Living wage, etc., for workers**

The State shall endeavor to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organisation or in any other way, to all workers agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to promote cottage industries on an individual or co-operative basis in rural areas.

**Article 43A Participation of workers in management of industries**

The State shall take steps, by suitable legislation or in any other way, to secure the participation of workers in the management of undertakings, establishments or other organisation engaged in any industry.

**Article 44: Uniform civil code for the citizen**

The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

**Article 45: Provision for free and compulsory education for children**

The State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

**Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections**

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

**Article 47: Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.**

The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purpose of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.