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A Wake-up Call

In the recent past, one of my comrades from the consumer movement, currently working as a Secretary in a village *panchayat*, approached me to recommend his name for a posting in some 'remunerative' *gram panchayat*. I had never done such a thing and would never do so. During the last 30 years of working on social change issues, I have kept myself away from such "requests". In fact, I have often lost friends due to this attitude. But due to this, I have gathered a lot of support and strength to advocate for changes in the governance system in addition to huge satisfaction. However, that friend felt that corruption has become part and parcel of the current governance system and people ridicule and shun honest persons. While bidding farewell, I advised him, whether he takes bribes or not, he must ensure two things: first the poor should get full benefits of schemes meant for poverty alleviation; and second that he should never compromise with quality.



This is just one story on the lower rungs of our administrative system. When considering the top level let me refer to our Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh who is regarded as one of the most educated government heads in the world. There is no doubt on his personal integrity, but the same conduct should be followed by all the members of his council of ministers. People say that the present government is arguably the most corrupt government of all times. Is Dr Singh more or less like *dhritrashtra*? His claim that he is honest does not allow him to escape from his sovereign governance, from every member of his team.



Business Standard

responsibility of providing good

It has become the flavour of every media organ to read about some scam or other. On the scale of corruption in the world, India ranks 87th out of 178 countries as per Transparency International's 2011 ranking. The money earned through corrupt practices is either spent in elections or in vulgar display of wealth, though a small amount of this is recycled in our economic system. But the most surprising fact is ₹28 lakh crores have been stashed in foreign banks as illicit outflows, as was recently stated in our Parliament. To gauge its magnitude, if distributed among the 121 crore Indians, this money would provide ₹2000 per month for the next 60 years which would contribute in eradication of poverty.

Today, people are highly agitated due to growing corruption and malpractices. In the last 65 years corruption has not come down anywhere; rather it has taken the shape of an *ashvamedh* horse. This malady is now deep-rooted at all levels and has become a part of our DNA. Whether it is purchase of arms or issue of ration cards, without greasing the palm, the work never gets done. The 'kamdhenu' (money spinning) postings in government departments are auctioned in the country and whosoever 'buys' these positions wants 4-5 times of return on his investment.

Taking into account all these matters Anna Hazare has sounded the bugle and aroused the entire country against corruption. Let us all join this second revolution of our liberation...this time from corruption!

Pradeep S. Mehta

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

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Ailing Public Healthcare in Jaipur

Healthcare is a fundamental right of every citizen of the country and should be ensured by the government. Public healthcare is ailing today. Not only it has become extremely expensive but also making the poor poorer. Even the rich are feeling the pinch.



The SMS Medical College, Jaipur established on August, 15, 1947, has taken a big leap in recent times in medical education and research under a new model of growth using modalities of resource mobilisation, public private model and international academic partnerships besides help from some philanthropists. Yet, the patients face a hard time in getting medical aid due to poor maintenance of equipment and non-availability of test-kits etc. Some machines are not functioning for more than one year. The patients are forced to go to the private clinics for diagnostic tests at a much higher cost.

In a recent survey conducted by CUTS in Jaipur under the project entitled, "Collusive Behaviour in Health Delivery in India: Need for Effective Regulation" (COHED), it has been observed that low-income class is spending a larger share of their monthly income on the healthcare compared to middle or high income group. Interestingly, a large majority preferred to go to private clinics or private hospitals for treatment as they believed that the consultation fee they were paying was 'fair'.

Another factor that influences the choice of a private clinic is the proximity and familiarity with the doctor. There is a high tendency of prescribing diagnostic tests for all classes of patients depending upon the paying capacity. For those visiting the public hospitals, only a quarter of patients could obtain the drugs from the hospitals.

Evidence collected during this survey confirms that there is need for greater consumer awareness on healthcare to ensure that consumers get affordable and quality medical treatment across all income groups.

A few factors for avoiding public hospitals are inaccessibility, long queues, and the time spent in going to and from the health centre being very long. Those visiting government

hospitals are concerned with the rude behaviour on the part of the medical and para-medical personnel. Almost all of the urban population that is not within the poorest quartile has access to a flush or pit toilet for disposing of excreta; but this is not the case for more than half the population in the poorest quartile.

In recent incidents, cases of infected glucose bottles were reported in Zanana and SMS hospitals of the city. In some wards of the SMS hospital and many other government hospitals, there is no cooler or fan during summer. Blood donor cards are being sold by the unscrupulous at high rates. All these lead to shaken confidence of the patients in the public hospitals. Making medicines available in the public health institutions is imperative so that the poor can get proper treatment. Better qualified staff should be posted at the health institutions and vacant posts of doctors and para-medical staff should be filled.

During the last 64 years, Jaipur itself has become a hub for medical tourism. Many private hospitals with state-of-the-art infrastructure have been established in Jaipur for providing medical care to those who can afford. Jaipur is the first city that the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) has accredited as a centre for medical tourism.

At the same time, the need of the hour is to educate the common patients so that they demand better healthcare facilities for themselves and their families through public healthcare channels. No private institution can match the scale, reach and resources of the government in managing health and other development programmes.

Jaipur city has to adopt participatory methods involving all stakeholders in order to meet the challenge of urban health effectively.



Fare Hike Pinches Commuters

After the Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC), the Jaipur City Transport Service Limited (JCTSL), too, has decided to increase fares of low-floor buses. Earlier, the minimum fare for low-floor buses for 0 to 4 kilometres was ₹5, which has now been increased to ₹6. Monthly passes for JCTSL low-floor buses have also been increased from ₹500 to ₹600. The daily pass, which was for ₹30, has been increased to ₹40. The increased fare has hit the common commuter.

The JCTSL also launched 20 AC buses the fares of which are obviously even higher. However, sources in the department said that the AC low-floor buses are unable to attract commuters in the city, even though such buses are popular in cities like Delhi. Despite running in losses, the JCTSL will add 40 AC buses in the city.

It has been reported that the low floor buses in the city will now be equipped with high definition cameras and global positioning systems to increase security of commuters and to ensure movement of these buses in time. Further, the JCTSL plans to introduce mini buses within the walled city to address traffic congestion problems.

(Tol, 10.04.11, 04.04.11, 28.06.11; RP 02.06.11)



Ghat ki Guni Tunnel Soon!

The work to drill the approximately 858-metre-long Ghat ki Guni tunnel is in progress and will be completed by June 2012. Work on 335-metre has already been completed. The project would cost around ₹150 crore and is expected to considerably reduce travel time between the main Agra highway and Jaipur city.

Earlier, a four-lane underground tunnel was proposed from Jawahar Nagar bypass to Agra Road (NH-11). According to the revised plan, the tunnel

would terminate at old Agra Road instead of the previous proposal at the main Agra road.

The revised plan has been prepared in technical consultation with the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) after sorting out the horizontal and vertical alignment of the tunnel. A 65m long flyover will be constructed on Goner Road, which will connect the tunnel traffic with the roads outside. (DB, 02.06.11)

Threat to Life

About 23 petrol pumps in the city have been identified as risk-prone posing danger to life and public property in a first-of-its-kind survey carried out by the



district administration. There are about 10 such pumps on the main MI Road itself, which is densely populated and any mishap could be catastrophic. The survey was undertaken in the wake of major fires that broke out at petrol pumps in Shastri Nagar and 22 godam areas. Another petrol pump where a mishap took place (Sanganeri Gate) has since been closed by the administration.

Licences for setting up petrol pumps are issued by five different authorities – JDA, JMC, PWD, the Police and district administration. The fact that many of such petrol pumps came up after the construction of high-rise buildings and other commercial establishments is a sign of laxity on the part of licensing authorities, said the district supply officer, head of the committee that conducted the survey. (Tol, 11.04.11)

Long Lasting Roads

In an effort to make roads long-lasting, the Indian Concrete Institute has suggested developing concrete roads using the 'white-topping' technique. The JDA has instructed a few companies to develop a half-a-kilometre road between Gandhi Circle and Tonk Road. The

companies will do the patchwork on this road using this technique, which is expected to last for more than 25 years.

Around 15 cm of the bituminous layer of the road will be removed and a new concrete layer will be laid. The technique is around three times costlier as compared to the bituminous paving technique. The roads will not require maintenance and will be more durable than the existing roads. (DB, 22.04.11)

Plant Inaugurated

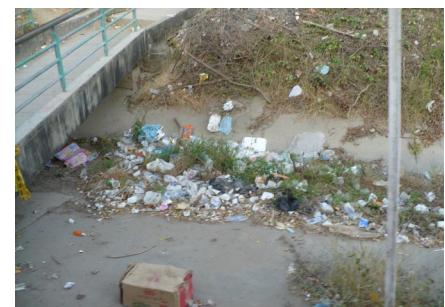
A sewerage treatment plant was inaugurated at Ramniwas Bagh with a capacity to provide 10 million litres of reusable water to the city. The project cost ₹1.33 crores and was implemented by the JDA.

The plant would cater to Ramniwas Bagh water needs and would not only save the underground water of the park to the tune of 7-8 lac litres of water per day but also the electricity that was consumed to operate the motor pumps.

(Tol, 11.05.11)

Penalty for Littering

The Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) has decided to deal strictly with the people caught red-handed throwing garbage and making the city dirty. The officials will keep a close eye on people



who frequently throw garbage on roads, parks and other public areas and click their photos in order to impose penalty on them. The JMC has ordered 80 digital cameras for clicking photos. This facility has been in effect since May 01, 2011, in the city.

It was decided during a recent meeting of the JMC commissioners and the CEO, Rajesh Yadav, to chalk out a complete plan to keep the city clean. The penalty would include collecting carriage charges from the person or organisation accused of spreading garbage in the city.

(RP, 23.04.11)

Jaipur Supports Jan Lokpal



Anna Hazare, veteran social activist, started a 'fast unto death' on August 16, 2011 to exert pressure on the Government of India to enact a strong anti-corruption act as envisaged in the *Jan Lokpal Bill*, a law that will establish a *Lokpal* (ombudsman) that will have the power to deal with corruption in public offices.

Hundreds of people in Jaipur united to support the movement. Jaipur observed a half-day *bandh* on August 18, 2011 in support of anti-corruption crusader Anna with majority of markets and business establishments remaining closed in the forenoon. Many in SUVs holding the Tricolour and shouting slogans were seen on the roads in a 'Gandhian' way.

From the walled city's crowded markets like Ramganj Bazaar to Chandpole to other areas including Jhotwara to Sodala, the traders not only closed their shops in support of Anna but also joined the rallies to bring more people.

An earlier fast by Anna in April 2011 had also gained popular support and forced the government to include civil society activists in a joint committee to draft the *Lokpal Bill*, along with some Union ministers. But committee members did not agree on the terms of the Bill, and the government introduced its own version in Parliament in August 2011.

(DNA, 07.04.11; Tol, 07.04.11 & 19.08.11)

Metro Updates

Company Blacklisted

In the casting yard accident case on the metro site, the technical committee has identified the site contractor and the company which was responsible for the wall-collapse and the company has now been blacklisted for one year from all government projects and has been penalised. Alarmed by the fatal accidents at Jaipur Metro Project sites, the DMRC is planning to appoint a foreign safety expert.

(DB, 15.05.11 & Tol, 16.05.11)

Private Interest for Phase II

Eleven national and international companies have shown interest in the 2nd phase of Jaipur Metro on the Sitapura-Ambabadi stretch. The companies include: Reliance Infrastructure, Essar Projects, Gammon, Coastal Projects Infrastructure and foreign companies like ICF of Spain, Korea's Samsung, etc. This stretch will be constructed on the public-private partnership model.

The first phase of Jaipur Metro is likely to cost ₹1250 crore and the second phase will cost about ₹8000 crore. However, fears are being expressed with regard to problems in acquisition of extremely valuable and costly land falling on the proposed track. Meanwhile for the Chandpole-Mansarovar phase, the cost of construction and running of the Metro would be borne by the government. (RP, 26.04.11 & 01.06.11)



Metro to Use Tunnel Tech

The DMRC will use "tunnelling method" technology for the construction of Jaipur Metro's Chandpole-Badi Chaupar rail track in the walled city area. Under phase-II of the project, an underground tunnel would be dug from Chandpole to Badi Chaupar through the congested areas of the old city.

People living on the route fear that the project will damage the ancient buildings and spoil the heritage structure of the old city. DMRC officials said the technology was successfully used in Delhi and Chennai to protect the historical monuments.

(Tol, 19.06.11)

Jaipur Metro on Track

Metro Man, E Sreedharan, asked the state government to start recruiting staff for running the Jaipur Metro trains that will start rolling by June 2013. The DMRC will start training the train drivers, station managers, ticket sellers and other support staff once the government recruits them. It will impart safety training to the contractors and workers engaged in the ongoing Jaipur.

(Tol & DNA, 15.06.11)

Sources: DB: Dainik Bhaskar; DNA: Daily News and Analysis; RP: Rajasthan Patrika; Tol: Times of India