

---

# **UNIT 20      RESPONSIVENESS IN PUBLIC SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT**

---

## **Structure**

- 20.0    Learning Outcome
- 20.1    Introduction
- 20.2    Responsiveness: Concept
- 20.3    Responsiveness Mechanisms
  - 20.3.1    Citizen Monitoring
  - 20.3.2    Setting Standards
  - 20.3.3    Incentives and Performance Measurement
  - 20.3.4    Organisational Culture Ethos
  - 20.3.5    Transparency
  - 20.3.6    Information Access
  - 20.3.7    New Rights for Citizens
- 20.4    Accountability and Responsiveness
- 20.5    Public - Private Partnership
- 20.6    Conclusion
- 20.7    Key Concepts
- 20.8    References and Further Reading
- 20.9    Activities

---

## **20.0    LEARNING OUTCOME**

---

On completion of this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of responsiveness
- Describe the important mechanisms of bringing about responsiveness in public systems management
- Discuss the relationship between responsiveness and accountability; and
- Throw light on the significance of public-private partnerships towards improving responsiveness in public systems management.

---

## **20.1 INTRODUCTION**

---

The discipline and practice of public administration is undergoing a significant change. The attitude of the government earlier was that of a provider of services while the citizens were considered as passive recipients. This traditional administration approach towards citizens is giving way, in present times, to a more collaborative, participative and partnership approach. The decentralisation of service delivery activities on a large scale under the impact of new public management reforms, (discussed in Course 011 of this Programme), has given a new meaning to the concept of responsiveness. Under the market economy, responsiveness indicates better service for citizens as clients or customers. Responsiveness has two aspects. First, it gives importance to the government or the public agency, which is the supply side of the process while the other aspect gives primacy to the citizens, who demand services from the government. Both are directed toward the effective provision of public services to the citizens.

A review of literature from various sources suggests that different schools of thought follow different lines of argument regarding the approaches towards improving service delivery, especially with regard to decentralisation of service delivery. While some of the theorists support the technocratic and managerial approaches, which represent the service providers' 'supply' side of the process, others support the political and participatory schools of thought, which favour the 'demand' or 'citizens' voice side. Recently, there has been the emergence of a third school of thought, which argues that it is neither the increase in supply side, efficiency alone nor the greater involvement of the community, but rather a combination or convergence of the two approaches, which works best for the improvement of service delivery. For the purposes of this Unit, we will restrict ourselves to learning more about the supply or responsiveness end of public management and at the same time touch upon the other two approaches. We shall discuss the concept, mechanisms of responsiveness and the relationship between responsiveness and accountability.

---

## **20.2 RESPONSIVENESS: CONCEPT**

---

Responsiveness describes the extent to which a public service agency demonstrates receptivity to the views, complaints and suggestions of service users, by bringing about and implementing changes to its own structure, culture, and service delivery patterns in order to deliver a more appropriate product. Most state bureaucracies are in fact 'responsive' but to socially powerful interest groups, not the poor. Promoting responsiveness to a broader range of social groups and particularly to the poor and other socially excluded groups can involve promoting counter-cultural reforms in bureaucratic behaviour.

Definitions of responsiveness are still evolving and therefore it continues to be prone to different interpretations. Goetz and Gaventa (2001), define it as 'the extent to which a public service agency demonstrates receptivity to the views, complaints and suggestions of service users by implementing changes to its own structure, culture and service delivery patterns in order to deliver a more appropriate product.' However while this definition presupposes the service providers' willingness to initiate change by adopting mechanisms of internal reform, it does not take into account the fact that responses can be placed in different categories, addressing different voices. For instance, the responses could vary from a range where the early stages of local government responsiveness is

expressed by merely lending a ‘sympathetic ear’ to demands voiced by articulate service users, to that of the upper end of the range where the State is willing to ‘accommodate’ and ‘encourage’ voices from different sections of the service user community.

Responsiveness can be in conflict with an important principle of public service: *impartiality*. Responding in an unmediated way to citizens’ needs as expressed through the jostling of special interests groups is certainly no method for ensuring fair and responsive governance and this is one reason for the enthusiasm of public servants for creating distance and boundaries between themselves and the public they ostensibly serve. However the protestation that public servants must remain neutral is often an excuse for evading responsibility for responsiveness. The notion of impartial public service need not be in conflict with the notion of proactively directing services to public who are generally considered to be inarticulate groups who are not normally able to voice their concerns effectively.

The form and quality of responsiveness is also determined by the kind of service users being responded to. More vocal the user, greater is the response. Therefore responsiveness should also be seen in the context of the ‘voice’ or demands being generated by the user. ‘Citizen voice’ is a strategy, which has often been used by service users to elicit more responsive behaviour from service providers. The modes of expressing voice range from direct actions such as organised protests, lodging complaints, picketing and through means such as consultations, lobbying and such other mechanisms, which can exert pressure on service providers to influence their behaviour to generate better service outcomes. The recent instance of Delhi government’s decision to roll back the proposed hike in power tariff is the result of pressure generated by the citizens’ groups. The key to all these activities is the mode, quality and regularity of engagement or participation. However one should bear in mind that the types of voice mechanisms used for improving governance may largely depend on the kind of service and also the characteristics of the users, their education level and financial status etc.

Responsiveness also depends to a large extent on the influence citizens have on the design, delivery and assessment of public services, and the interaction of three major factors:

- The social, cultural and economic power of the client group in question within civil society- its power to mobilise resources and public concern to support its demands;
- The nature of the political system (the configuration of the executive, legislative and judicial powers) the organisation of political competition (the number and types of parties, their ideologies and memberships);
- The nature and power of the State and its bureaucracies (whether it is a developmental state, whether it has the will and capacity to enforce change in the culture and practices of bureaucracies, whether there is a professional civil service, whether the public service has internalised a commitment to poverty reduction etc., (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001).

---

### **20.3 RESPONSIVENESS MECHANISMS**

---

Service providers may adopt various measures to be more responsive towards the needs of the service users. Goetz and Gaventa (2001), discuss some of these initiatives in their recent study. They mention the process of arranging for consultations with the service users, the main aim being to identify space for new policies and potential for improvements in the existing system of service delivery; benchmarking standards against which the service users can measure the quality of services through mechanisms such as citizen monitoring, providing incentives, sanctions and performance measurement through performance-related pay and promotion, result-oriented performance targets; creation of new service delivery ethos among employees, which include strategies such as training and other interventions for changes in personnel relations with service users and encouraging a culture of organisational learning; new legal rights for service users which allows them to initiate legal proceedings against the State in the event of delivery of unsatisfactory services.

The following international and national case studies, most of which have been chosen by Goetz and Gaventa (2001), along with a group of researchers at the Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, U.K. provide evidence of the State's responsiveness initiatives we just discussed.

### **20.3.1 Citizen Monitoring**

Even though we live in a democracy, there usually is a very little direct citizen participation in the governance of the country. However over the last few decades, we can perceive a change, whereby citizens are gradually carving out a 'space' to voice their opinion and in some cases control and monitor the progress of policies and projects.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is vital if governments and aid organisations are to judge the successes and failures of development efforts. Conventionally, it has involved outside experts coming in to measure performance against pre-set indicators, using standardised procedures and tools.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is going significance because of recognition of the limitations of this conventional approach. It offers new ways of assessing and learning from change that are more inclusive and more in tune with the views and aspirations of those most directly affected.

PM&E has four broad principles:

- Participation – which means opening up the design of the process to include those most directly affected and agreeing to analyse data together;
- Negotiation – to reach agreement about what will be monitored or evaluated, how and when data will be discussed and analysed, what the data actually means, and how findings will be shared and action taken;
- Learning which becomes the basis for subsequent improvement and corrective action; and
- Flexibility since the number, role and skills of stakeholders, and other factors change over time.

PM&E is being used for many purposes. Some governments and aid organisations are using it as a way of becoming more accountable, by using intended beneficiaries the chance to speak about local impacts. At the community level, PM&E to sustain local initiatives and manage conflicts.

PM&E is an approach, which involves local people, development agencies and policy makers deciding about measurement of progress and acting upon the results. ([www.ids.ac.uk/ids](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids))

The cases cited below are examples of citizens setting up mechanisms to assert their views on minimum entitlements, or to review government spending patterns and assess whether these are in line with national commitments to the social development of particular groups.

**a) Consultation: Citizens' Juries- Women's Unit, UK**

Citizens' juries bring together a group of 12-20 members of the electorate, chosen randomly from the electoral register. Over the course of 3-5 days, the jury hears evidence from 'expert witnesses' on policy issues, engaging in deliberation on policy implications and arriving at recommendations on potential courses of action. First developed in Germany and the USA, this approach grew out of a perceived need to give ordinary citizens a stronger voice and role in democratic decision-making. The first citizens' juries to be carried out by Central Government in the UK were commissioned by the Women's Unit in 1998, to inform the development of national childcare strategy. The initiative sought to address policy issues related to the provision of childcare, the balancing of work and parenting and the nature of support given by employers to working mothers and their families. Many of the recommendations were subsequently taken up and are reflected in the emergent National Childcare Strategy. As deliberative mechanisms that offer access to the informed views of the public, citizens' juries can help feed these views into the policy process (Goetz and Gaventa, *op cit*)

**b) Consultation on Urban Design, Brighton, UK**

Consultation with the local residents over a plan for infrastructure development included an open access to participatory planning event and the involvement of a local citizens association in a working group to take forward residents' concerns about the proposed development. The consultation came out as a result of central government requirements. Initially supported by the council, the citizens' group worked together with consultants commissioned by the council to create a forum for public involvement in planning the future of the site. Yet many of the suggestions arising from the planning event, and, most importantly, considerable public opposition to the key features in the development of a supermarket- were not taken on board in the revised planning brief. This example serves as a cautionary tale in the tokenistic use of consultation and has left in its wake an even larger gap and greater distrust between citizens and local government (*Ibid*).

**c) Swabhimana: The Peoples' Platform**

A unique feature of the civil society of Bangalore is the people's platform called Swabhimana. Initiated in 1995, under the guidance of the then Municipal Commissioner, Dr. Ravindra along with active support shown by prominent NGOs of the city, Swabhimana was created to foster 'citizen-service provider' interaction based on partnership between local government, communities, corporate/business groups and

voluntary organisations in Bangalore. It mainly acts as the bridge between the NGOs and the community based organisations in the city. Since the group comprises a multitude of actors concerned with different activities, Swabhimana provides an umbrella under which all these diverse agencies interact, network and to some extent co-ordinate their activities.

This forum has not only been able to survive under successive commissioners over the past five years, it seems to have gathered momentum and gained public appeal as well.

### **20.3.2 Setting Standards**

Standard – setting for service provision addresses two major concerns. It focuses the efforts of the service providers on setting minimum, socially appropriate, and feasible performance standards. And it provides clients with a benchmark against which they can measure the quality of services they actually receive and for which they can hold service providers to account- through citizen monitoring. Standard- setting has been a widely exported public sector management tool in recent years with many public services in developing and transitional countries, which are encouraged to formulate citizens' charters.

#### **Citizens' Charters, UK and India**

A charter is a public organisation's statement of its aims, the standards of service that users can expect, feedback mechanisms to improve the quality of services and raise standards and grievances redress mechanisms. It may also give limited statutory rights to certain public customers. In the UK today, 10,000 local services produce local charters, and these are now an integral part of public service delivery (*ibid*).

In India also citizens' charters are formulated at various levels of government, agencies providing public services.

In Bangalore, the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) has made it mandatory for the seven main public agencies of the city to prepare and disseminate citizens' charters.

### **20.3.3. Incentives and Performance Measurement**

A work force which is already demoralised, poorly paid and under resourced is hardly likely to respond well to public pressures or voice mechanisms, whether couched in the language of consultation or complaint. In fact, the response is more likely to be defensive or negative. The use of pay and other benefits to reward individuals for conforming to the organisations' desired performance goals addresses a problem which citizens voice do not always deal with very effectively.

According to the dominant trends of the new public management theories, emphasis is laid on market-based solutions which assume that public servants are like other 'rational self-interested' individuals in a market economy. The goal is to make public servants more client-oriented and responsive to the public. The reward element is balanced both by the internal sanctions and by the threat of 'competition' from private providers invited to tender for the same service.

Linking incentives and sanctions to specific desired performance goals such as greater responsiveness to clients inevitably implies performance-related pay and promotion and hence, a systematic and objective set of mechanisms for measuring performance. The

typical new public management approach therefore involves the use of devices such as 'result-oriented' performance targets, whose achievement is monitored at both the individual and organisational levels by measurable performance indicators and performance contracts.

### **The Best Value Concept**

The Best Value concept is a policy initiated by the new Labour Government in UK in 1997, in order to improve and monitor local government service provision. It aims to: (a) ensure that the quality and cost of services reflect public perceptions of what is needed and affordable, and (b) build in continual improvement in service quality and efficiency. The mechanisms typically include a review and implementation process which begins with establishing whether there is a need for the service to be publicly delivered at all, followed (if the answer is affirmative) by comparison of the costs of best practice for delivery of that service both public and private, consulting with the public and finally ensuring that the service is provided on the most competitive (cost efficient) basis. It is very much a 'top-down', centrally imposed policy, which places local councils under a statutory duty to consult on best value performance reviews (*ibid*).

#### **20.3.4 Organisational Culture Ethos**

This mechanism includes several strategies, which can be clubbed as part of the human relations approach. These include training and orientation for attitudinal change among bureaucrats and service providers for developing and promoting greater job satisfaction.

A number of recent initiatives are being taken in India, Tanzania and Uganda to develop training approaches for public officials to build attitudes such as openness, respect, humility, flexibility and ability to listen. In Tanzania, success at the district level has led to workshops for principal secretaries at the national level. In India, the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration has been piloting training in behaviour and attitude changes as part of a national curriculum, with the support of the Ministry of Rural Development (*ibid*).

It is evident from these examples that 'responsiveness' involves greater transparency, changed staff attitudes, and the introduction of reinforcement of a service culture within the administration. The following examples further elaborate this factor.

#### **20.3.5 Transparency**

Any mechanism for adopting reforms for responsive governance usually implies the need to access vital information. One key lesson relevant everywhere is that with more information being made available and more publicity, the outcome of decentralisation efforts is likely to be better, whatever their rationale and whatever the circumstances in which they occur (Litvack *et al*, 1998).

#### **20.3.6 Information Access**

To make any service provider more accessible it is necessary to make their dealings with the public more transparent. This is usually attempted through creation of new physical points of access where citizens can obtain information and process a range of claims (such as one-window or one-stop desks in local government offices) These also include

the creation of virtual points of access where new information and communication technologies are used to consult with and provide information to service users.

### **One Stop Shops**

These initiatives are designed to ease access to a wide range of local services offered either by local councils, or by local service providers. It aggregates in one locale a number of functions, or at least, application procedures for a number of offices and officials they must visit. For instance, in Lewisham, UK, people can claim either housing benefit or income support from either the Benefits Agency Office, or the councils housing benefit department. In Sindhudurgh, in Maharashtra 'one-window' innovations in district and block offices have signboards detailing the cost of all services and the amount of time it should take to process an application, thus informing citizens of basic standards for delivery of these services ( *ibid*).

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), has adopted a one-window operation at its head office to issue all kinds of certificates (commercial and personal) at charges which are clearly displayed on a board, thereby reducing corruption with regard to issuance of certificates to a large extent. Also, easy-reading rules and regulations relating to services have been prepared and widely circulated among the citizens to make the procedures transparent to the public. This has helped reduce corruption in KMC to a great extent.

The Bangalore Agenda Task Force supports and facilitates e-governance by assisting service providing agencies to set up websites to make information available, allow online interaction with the users and to download appropriate forms for them which saves time and money.

### **20.3.7 New Rights for Citizens**

This refers to new legislation or even constitutional change recognising new rights. There are a few examples of this, where clients are endowed with a statutory and justifiable right to a particular service, of a particular quality, within a particular time-period. Failure to deliver can result in clients suing the state for compensation, or lodging a public interest litigation (PIL) which, if nothing else, does help to stop a project which is against the community with the help of the court's stay order.

### **Employment Guarantee Scheme, Maharashtra, India**

This is a long running employment creation scheme (since 1977), that commits the state government to provide manual labour opportunities on public works programmes to groups of unemployed workers. If the government fails to provide jobs in 15 days, it is obliged to pay unemployment benefit until work is provided. Political parties and NGOs have access to employment through the scheme as a mobilisation strategy and also as a way of holding the government to account. In cases where the government has failed to provide employment (or unemployment benefit) or other associated amenities such as childcare for working women, successful PIL has been pursued effectively (*ibid*).

Just as transparency is an important mechanism of responsiveness so is accountability. In fact in most studies they are both considered necessary prerequisites for the State to show any form of response to public criticism of its policies. Let us now examine the mechanism of accountability.



---

## 20.4 ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

---

Conventional public accountability systems in tandem with democratic institutions and polities are designed to ensure that the public service does indeed respond to citizens' needs in a fair and impartial way. Responsiveness and accountability are not the same thing, but a connection is being made because of citizen dissatisfaction with the record of their elected representatives in holding civil servants to account, or in channeling citizen concerns and preferences into decision making.

Accountability is generally interpreted as the means by which individuals and organisations report to a recognised authority or authorities and are held responsible for their actions (Edwards and Hulme, 1994). Accountability mechanisms generally operate along either a 'vertical' axis (external mechanism used by non-state actors to hold power holders to account) or a 'horizontal' axis (institutional oversight, checks and balances internal to the State) and at various levels. In liberal democracies, there are a few formal means for individual citizens to hold the State to account, let alone to enforce answerability from particular parts of the State. The vote is the classic formal mechanism of vertical accountability, allowing citizens periodically to hold governments to account for their rule. Between elections, this vertical accountability mechanism is supplemented by the operation of a free media and advocacy by civil society groups.

Horizontal and vertical accountability functions are ensured by a range of formal institutions. These include:

- **Political accountability-** ensured through the legislature, particularly where there is an effective opposition, sufficient staff resources, access to relevant information and parties organised on programmatic lines, oriented to serving the national interest rather than parochial concerns.
- **Fiscal accountability-** ensured through formal systems of auditing and financial accounting for the use of public sources.
- **Administrative accountability-** ensured by reporting systems that link the bureaucracy with ministers and the legislature. Similar hierarchical reporting relationships within bureaucracies assure internal accountability.
- **Legal and constitutional accountability-** supposed to be assured by the judiciary, which checks that politicians and officials do not exceed their legal authority. The judiciary is the ultimate seat of accountability in most countries and for this reason its autonomy from executive and legislature is crucial.

There are various levels of accountability, but for the purposes of this Unit, we restrict ourselves to studying the three basic but important levels of accountability in governance.

1. The first form revolves around the governments' (ministries, the bureaucracy and its constituent parts) accountability to the political leadership (elected or otherwise) of the country. Ministers, for example, should be accountable to

parliament in parliamentary democracies like India. Civil servants in turn should be accountable to their ministers. Accountability here is seen as a macro level concept, as it is difficult for a minister or legislator to supervise or control the individual acts of all civil servants and their departments. At this level, new political leaders act as surrogates for the public (Paul, 1991). The effectiveness of these macro level accountability devices has eroded a great deal in recent times with the states' expanding role in controlling the multiplicity of public services.

### **Accountability within the Kolkata Municipal Corporation**

A unique feature of a built-in form of accountability at this level can be found in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. Every department of the Corporation is headed by an elected political representative who is a member of a cabinet-like body called the Mayor-in-Council (MIC). The member of the MIC is assisted by an appointed bureaucrat. The presence of the councillors assures 'representation' of the citizens and the appointed staff provides professional guidance. Ideally this is the best form of accountability within local government, but in reality it is also ridden with problems of conflicting ideologies and work ethics.

2. The second sub-indicator of accountability involves the political representatives' accountability to the citizenry. Popular elections do address this to some extent. Also, since the local elected councillors find themselves closer to the electorate, they have to be more cautious of the decisions and actions they take. This is a crucial link in the accountability chain, as more often than not, citizens, especially those from the marginalised section, can approach the bureaucrats in authority only through their elected representatives.

The level of interaction among the elected representatives and local citizens for example, is high in Kolkata, due to the way the political regime operates. One can find various formal and informal party representatives in any given 'ward' or electoral constituency of the city. This is favourable for the local citizens as they can voice their grievances at the local level. However the disadvantage is that the person voicing the grievance has better chances of a positive outcome if s/he is known to be a supporter of the party of the elected representative!

The accountability of bureaucrats (individual civil servants) to the citizens is fundamental to good governance. Unaccountable and corrupt city management can undermine local government credibility, deepen urban poverty and increase social exclusion.

### **The Customer Complaint System, Bangalore, India**

As a result of a recent initiative to improve relationship between citizens and bureaucrats, the Bangalore City Corporation (BCC) launched a Customer Complaint System (CCS). Under this scheme, a number of complaint-receiving points have been established and each of the 28 Range officers of BCC headed by the Assistant Revenue Officer, are instructed to receive customer complaints. On receipt of a complaint, an acknowledgement receipt is issued to the complainant, indicating the time frame for redressal and the name of the officer responsible. The officers concerned are supposed to take action within the stipulated time frame and then report back to the revenue officer, following which, the information is entered into the database and a response sent to the complainant by post.

---

## **20.5 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

---

The need for co-operation between various service sectors has been an inherent component of development discourse over the last few decades. It gained increasing impetus by, firstly welfare reforms in the industrialised countries over the past two decades and secondly, the 'dual movement of declining state intervention and growing NGO influence in the development process' (Robinson and White, 1998).

It is assumed that democratic decentralisation holds considerable promise for collaboration and synergy between institutions and agents of government on the one hand and civil society level grass roots communities on the other. However, these specifically come together in the concept of 'partnership', a term that has increasingly become a part of the governance discourse. While conventional partnerships have been between the public and private sectors, increasingly it is being broadened to include other sectors as well.

Partnership refers to taking responsibility of an activity where more than one person or firm is involved. Partnership bridges the gap between public and private actors, between associations and business, between those who possess the means and those who have the competencies. Edralin (1997) points out that collaboration between local government and the community enhances the responsiveness of local governments to citizens' needs. She cites the example of Surabaya city in Indonesia where, as part of its urban policy, the local city government promotes partnership with the citizens. Though the urban management programme is a major tool for city beautification, it also has two other important tasks: to create conditions to generate income for the marginalised communities and to improve the environment. Partnering responsibilities have not only reduced the overall programme costs, it has also initiated a deeper commitment on the part of the people to the ultimate success of the programme in improving the quality of the environment.

The traditional forms of partnership in the area of urban infrastructure and services have usually been between the public and the private sectors, where the private firm provides the hardware and the public firm looks after the maintenance and distribution of the service. This is also known as leasing out or subcontracting, where service users often find it even more difficult to hold the providers accountable. At times this also implies an increase in the service charge, without necessarily improving the quality of service. The main reason behind its limited success may lie in the fact that in most cases the community or the users have not been involved in the partnership. At best these joint ventures have improved customer servicing norms, where the citizen is valued as a customer but not as a partner.

The multiplicity of stakeholders from diverse sectors engaged in 'responsible partnership' is a recent popular trend, which suggests some change in the traditional role shared between service providers and users. A few of these partnerships, compiled by the World Bank (1995) are as follows:

- Service users in partnership with private service supplier: This is the simplest case of service user-based agreement, which involves direct contracting of service suppliers by user communities. This is common in the area of waste management in Indian cities.
- Joint partnership between service users, government agency and corporate sector: responsibility increases if the users consider themselves co-owners and co-signatories of a project. This can often reduce project cost and ensure accountability.
- Joint partnership between service users- NGO-government and corporate sector. Often, service user communities are not a homogenous group. To represent unbiased interest and help articulate demands, it becomes necessary to have a neutral body, for instance an NGO, to act as enabler and mediator between the various stakeholders.

Public-private partnerships for service provision are not yet widespread in India. Also appropriate forms of user participation in the regulatory process have yet to be explored. Providers fail to appreciate the users potential in monitoring service quality. Partnerships also vary depending on the local political regime. If the ruling government is open to the idea of external investments in the form of shares, bonds or international grants and is not averse to the idea of collaboration, then partnerships can be worked out between various stakeholders.

There are more practical reasons for introducing joint management. Where resources (staff and money) are limited, where client communities are geographically distant, and where the State's role in managing and harvesting common property resources (forests, water) is fundamentally disputed, or where certain social groups have historically rejected the authority and legitimacy of the State, it is practically right to allow the communities to be involved as partners in state-led initiatives.

### **Forest Protection Committees, West Bengal**

In West Bengal, Forest Protection Committees (FPC) are local partnerships between forest dwellers and front-line forest officials implementing the Joint Forestry Management (JFM) Programme. This programme was intended to end the adversarial relationship between forestry workers and forest –fringe villagers. The latter are blamed for forest degradation. Conflicts in some instances resulted in violent assaults on forest department officials and workers. The FPC engages local residents in the regeneration, protection and maintenance of forests and plantations and in keeping encroachers out. In exchange, each FPC has a right to 25 per cent of the net income from timber sales and the right to collect certain categories of forest produce. JFM has not met with the success elsewhere in India, where service providers from the bottom to the top of the forest Department have been reluctant to cede management responsibilities and rights to forest produce to the local people. In this successful West Bengal case, front line workers were responsible for pushing the forest administration into full implementation of the national JFM proposals (Goetz and Gaventa, *op.cit*).

### **Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Madhya Pradesh**

This scheme was established in 1997 by the state government of Madhya Pradesh. It is a rights-based initiative to universalise primary education. Based on the notion that all children have the right to go to a local school, the state government created an informal charter in which it guarantees that it will establish a school within 90 days whenever this is demanded by a community lacking a local school. The community has to demonstrate that it has 40 learners (25 in the case of tribal communities). The District provides the teacher training and basic learning materials, while the community provides the land for the school. The Gram Panchayat appoints the teacher. The communities are encouraged to suggest a suitable local resident to be the teacher, thus minimising the problems of geographical and social distance between teachers and communities, which have led in the past to extensive teacher absenteeism. The community oversees the maintenance of physical facilities and school management. The communities' stakehold in the school is encouraged by the threat of withdrawal of funding if drop out rates are high. The programmes' reach has been very high, with over 15,500 EGS Schools established in the first year of the Scheme. This suggests effective dissemination of information about community rights and entitlements under the scheme (*ibid*).

### **Housing Scheme in Kolkata**

The collaboration between the State- run West Bengal Housing Board and a private cement company which now constructs houses under the company name of Bengal Ambuja Housing Development Limited has been a success story. The aim of this collaboration is to provide good quality housing along with allied facilities and infrastructure for people with varying different earning capacities. The profit they earn from building high income condominiums is put back into constructing blocks of flats for the middle and lower income groups, which are then sold at subsidised rates.

### **Waste Management in Kolkata**

Yet another example is that of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation's waste management service (collection, segregation and disposal) in partnership with private contractors. The Municipal Corporation has got into a partnership agreement with a private firm called Excel to convert waste into marketable products like fertilisers. This is based on the understanding that the company will pay 2.5 percent of its sales proceeds to the Corporation. The schemes have been initiated and are expected to reduce the demand on urban land for dumping of waste. As is well-known, in a metropolitan city, the procurement of urban land is becoming more and more difficult in terms of both acquisition and cost.

The impact of partnership, especially between the State and civil society, has not only improved the output of public services, it has also created a space for dialogue between the two most important stakeholders in the system of service delivery users and providers. Even though the gains from partnership programmes may not be large, they have nevertheless set in motion a culture of 'collaboration' and 'team spirit' which has created more space than ever before for ordinary people to participate in common issues concerning their city.

---

## **20.6 CONCLUSION**

---

When we talk of responsiveness, the first point to be clarified is from whom do the service users expect a response? It can be related to any level of government. At the local level, it is the local government that is expected to respond. The Municipal Corporation and other development authorities which have autonomous status are to respond to the citizens they serve. In most cities, to a lesser degree, there is an unofficial level of ‘service facilitators’ who operate on a commercial basis, mostly to facilitate the process of accessing services which are provided by State service providers. Nevertheless, major factors such as the status of civil society and the political context of the city ultimately determine the way, service providers increase responsiveness for better governance.

---

## **20.7 KEY CONCEPTS**

---

### **Bangalore Agenda Task Force**

It was set up in 2000 to bring about better management and development of Bangalore city. It is a partnership between the citizens, corporate groups and administrative agencies including Bangalore Development Authority, Bangalore Electric Supply Corporation, Police, Water Supply and Sewerage Board. This task force works on urban development projects relating to civic amenities, traffic, policing etc.

### **Joint Forest Management**

It is a concept of developing partnerships between forest users and the Forest Department on the basis of mutual trust and defined roles and responsibilities with regard to forest protection and development. Under this arrangement, the users who are the local communities and the owner, which is the government, manage the forest resources and share the costs equally. It is considered an effective way of involving local communities in addressing the problem of deforestation and land degradation.

### **Public Interest Litigation**

In simple words, it means litigation filed in a court of law for the protection of public interest such as pollution, terrorism, road safety etc. Public interest litigation (PIL) is not defined in any statute or act. It has been interpreted by judges to consider the intent of public at large. PIL is filed in various areas such as violation of basic human rights of the poor, content of government policy, ensuring action on part of municipal authorities to perform a public duty etc.

---

## **20.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

---

Cheema, G, and D. A. Rondinelli, (Eds), 1988, *Urban Services in Developing Countries: Public and Private Roles in Urban Development*, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingston.

Crook, R, and J. Manor, 1995. “Democratic Decentralization and Institutional Performance: Four Asian and West African Experiences Compared.” *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. Vol.33, No.3.

- Crook, R and J. Manor, 1998, *Democracy and Decentralization in South Asia and West Africa: Participation, Accountability and Performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Dillinger, W, 1994, *Decentralization and its Implication for Urban Service Delivery*. Urban Management Programme, Discussion Paper No. 16, The World Bank, Washington D.C.
- Edralin, J.S, 1997, 'The New Local Governance and Capacity-building: a Strategic Approach: Examples from Asia, Africa and Latin America' *Regional Development Studies* (3) Winter.
- Edwards,M and D. Hulme, 1996, *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post Cold World*, Save the Children Fund, Kumarian Press, West Hartford.
- Evans, P., 1996, 'Government Action, Social Capital and Development: Reviewing the Evidence on Synergy.' *World Development*, June 1996, Vol.24, No.6.
- Gaventa, J and C. Valderrama, 1999, 'Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance', *Background paper for Workshop on "Strengthening Participation in Local Governance."* Institute of Development Studies, June 21-24, Brighton.
- Goetz, A.M. and J. Gaventa., 2001, ' Bringing Citizen Voice and Client Focus into Service Delivery,' *IDS Working Paper No. 138*, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.
- Jenkins. R, and A.M Goetz. , 1999, 'Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right to Information Movement in India.' *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 20, No3.
- Heller, P.,2001, 'Moving the State: the Politics of Democratic Decentralisation in Kerala, South Africa and Porto Alegre,' *Politics and Society* 29 (1).
- Kundu, A, 1993, In *The Name of the Urban Poor: Access to Basic Amenities*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Kurien, G, 1999, Empowering Conditions in the Decentralization Process: an Analysis of Dynamics, Factors and Actors in Panchayati Raj Institutions from West Bengal and Karnataka, India, *Working Paper No 228*, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.
- Litvack.J, Ahmed J, and R. Bird, (Eds), 1998, *Rethinking Decentralisation in Developing Countries*, The World Bank Sector Studies Series, World Bank, Washington D.C.
- McCarney, P, (Ed.), 1996, *The Changing Nature of Local Government in Developing Countries*, Centre for Urban and Community Studies. University of Toronto and International Office Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Toronto.
- Migdal, J.S, 1988, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Minogue, M, 1997, The Principles and Practice of Good Governance, British Council Briefing, *Law and Governance*, Issue 4, London.

Paul, S, 1991, Accountability in Public Services: Exit, Voice and Capture. Policy Research and External Affairs, *Working Paper 614*, The World Bank, Washington D.C.

Paul, S, 1994. *Strengthening Public Accountability: New Approaches and Mechanisms*. Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore.

Public Affairs Centre, 1999, *Public Eye* 7(3), July-September, Bangalore.

Robinson, M, and G. White, 1998, *The Democratic Developmental State*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Schneider, H, 1999, "Participatory Governance for Poverty Reduction", *Journal of International Development*, Vol.11, No.4.

Turner, M. and D. Hulme, 1997, *Governance, Administration and Development: Making the State Work*, West Hartford, Kumarian Press Ltd, Bangalore.

UNDP, 1997, The Global Research Framework of the Decentralization Governance Programme. (UNDP website)

World Bank (1980, 1994, 1995, 1997), *World Development Reports*, Washington D.C.

World Bank, 1995, *Better Urban Services: Finding the Right Incentives*, Washington D.C.

### **Web Site**

IDS Policy Briefing 12, 1998-[www.ids.ac.uk/ids](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids)

---

## **20.9 ACTIVITIES**

---

1. Pick a particular issue of governance, for instance problems with road and public transport, or water and electricity shortage or any such area of public service and collect as much information about the debates that people are engaging in. For instance, maintain a diary with cuttings from the newspaper and magazines, add insights from talk shows held on similar topics on T.V. You could also browse relevant websites and gather information. After following up a topic for over a month, prepare a case study of what you feel are the causes for the particular problem related to that service.
2. As any ordinary urban citizen, you must be a resident of a particular neighborhood in your city. In this unit, we have seen that the responsiveness of the state is also urged or supported by various associations within civil society. One such association usually found in urban neighbourhoods is that of formal (registered) or informal residents welfare organisations. Your neighbourhood probably has one too. Collect as much information through informal interviews from the office bearers (president, general secretary, treasurer) as possible over a period of time to see what kinds of mechanisms they adopt to 'voice' their concerns to the civic agencies (e.g. Electricity board, or Municipal Corporation).



Map the chronological sequence of how a few sporadic incidences or comments may actually culminate into direct positive action.