

aside time to meet us and documented information for us. They patiently explained to us the systems at work in the Municipal Corporation and our queries were welcomed.

The information collected was supplemented by extracts from the BMC Act and other BMC publications. The heads of departments authenticated each chapter, which was also whetted by retired BMC officials. The Tata Press Yellow Pages is carrying a condensed version of the Charter in their latest edition. A major daily newspaper is also working with us to print the Citizens' Charter in Marathi and English for distribution to its subscribers.

### The Citizen - Municipality Inter-active Workshops

Thus far we had succeeded in getting the municipal officials aligned with our objectives. The next step was to garner the support of the staff actually delivering the services. We did this through interactive workshops. So far, workshops have been held at 16 of the 23 municipal wards. At these workshops, staff



L to R : Shri Narayan Rane, Chief Minister, Maharashtra, Shri Hareshwar Patil, Mayor of Mumbai.

are informed about the Citizens' Charter and the standard of performance expected of them. Their feedback is taken on the content of the Charter, making them feel a part of the process. These workshops also facilitate a valuable bond between municipal staff and PRAJA members.

### What the future holds...

We realize that there are plenty of organizations that share our vision. We look forward to associating with them

to foster a dovetailing rather than a duplication of activity. We have already started working with groups like Bombay First, Dignity Foundation and Agni . A number of Resident Groups are also absorbed in struggles with the municipal authorities. These groups would benefit from the information contained in the Charter. Simultaneously, we would encourage them to support each other to combat any lethargy and corruption experienced.

We also plan to encourage the formation of such groups in areas where no such citizen bodies exist. Such associations would shake the service providers out of their apathy and encourage people's participation in the current system of governance where this is grievously lacking.

### Pressure Group

Though the Charter has developed a clear line of complaint redress, there

are still situations when certain problems would not be effectively dealt with. We therefore propose that a group of distinguished citizens such as retired Municipal Commissioners, viz., Mr. B.G.Deshmukh, Mr. Jamsheed Kanga and Mr. D. M. Sukthankar, as well as professionals like Mr. Gerson da Cunha, could meet with the Additional Municipal Commissioners, the Municipal Commissioner and the Mayor frequently to work through macro urban issues.

### Project Performance

To follow up the Citizens' Charter, the essence of which is people's

participation; we would then initiate our next project - the basis of which is accountability.

Project Performance adopts the Report Card system of evaluating the performance of public service providers and elected representatives, viz. Corporators, M.L.A.s and M.P.s. Developed and used extensively by the Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore, this evaluation by citizens is carried out scientifically through the Survey method. Feedback is provided to the municipal officials and elected representatives and commitments are extracted from them to improve services that were rated low.

### Epilogue

The Charter has been distributed through the Tata Yellow Pages and the Indian Express.

We hope that citizens will now feel empowered to hold government agencies and their elected representatives accountable and assert their right to competent public services. Simultaneously, we trust that service providers will begin to respond to the feedback of the service users effectively, thus building a spirit of mutuality between citizens, service providers and elected representatives.

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