

Semi Annual Report
People's Reporting Centre (PRC)
March 2006 to August 2006

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Executive Summary

Democracywatch has been implemented two years pilot phase project (October 2003 to December 2005) named People's Reporting Centre (PRC) in selected 6 unions in the country. The names of the unions were Fathepur and Ramnagar of Jessore, Bason of Gazipur, Khagakhoribari of Nilphamari, Singra and Bulakipur of Dinajpur. Key lessons of the pilot phase are the following;

- There are lack of democratic practices in decision making process in UP.
- Women members don't get equal respect and power to work.
- Local Govt. officials are simply corrupt.
- General people have no access to UP budgeting, planning and implementation process.
- UP office does not work properly in terms of accountability.
- Different standing committees of UP are ineffective.
- Performances of Village Court and Village Police are very poor and continuous rights violation is a common phenomenon.
- Birth and death registration activities are not working properly and
- Favouritism and nepotism in Union Parishad has make the UP isolated from the general people.

The main purpose of the present project is to develop and support the major stakeholders and build constituencies to link micro issues with the macro level. PRC will give particular focus on creating accountability and transparency of Union Parishads. Most strategic focus will be a clear motivation for the elected UP Chairmen, Members and Officials to make them transparent, catalyst Citizen Committee Members, CBOs, CSOs including media, awareness raising among the citizens at Union Level, mobilizing other stakeholders and initiating campaigns for ensuring people's participation in UP activities like budgeting, planning, implementation and monitoring. They will monitor role of UP and govt. officials in public service delivery management, handle law and order situation specially violence against women and children. The project will initiate policy formulation and research, review for finding out gaps in policies and practices and will initiate policy advocacy and lobbying to make the Union Parishads more accountable, responsive and effective.

The project will target Partner NGOs, women and men of different ages, belong to low-income families, particularly marginalized and prone to human rights violation from different ethnic groups, religious, able and disabled, LEB, Member of the Standing committee, LGI, local social & cultural activists, media personal, academia, clubs, charity organizations, libraries, businessmen group, trade union leaders, religious leaders, teacher's forums as civil society members. Among other stakeholder from GOB officials at UP, Thana, District level and Ministries at national level will be addressed.

The present phase of PRC will be implemented in total 28 Unions (Old 6 + New 22, (Jessore-10 union, Nilphamari-10, Gazipur-4 and Dinajpur-4) in Gazipur, Dinajpur, Jessore and Nilphamari district. The project started in March 2006 and will be completed in 31st December 2010. The total budget for the project is BDT 6 crore 8 lakh15 thousand 4 hundred 02.

Democracywatch implementing this project through its local partners such as Swapno Shahajya Shangstha (SSS) Jessore, Samajik Unnyon Shangstha (SUS), Gazipur, Nilachal, Nilphamari and PRADIP, Dinajpur.

General Project Status and Performance

Peoples' Reporting Centre (PRC) project of Democracywatch started March 2006 and will be completed at December 2010. Democracywatch received the grant on 28 May, 2006. According to plan the grant has been distributed among the partners at June 2006. With in this time for the implementation operation of the project Democracywatch initiated some events, which should be mentioned

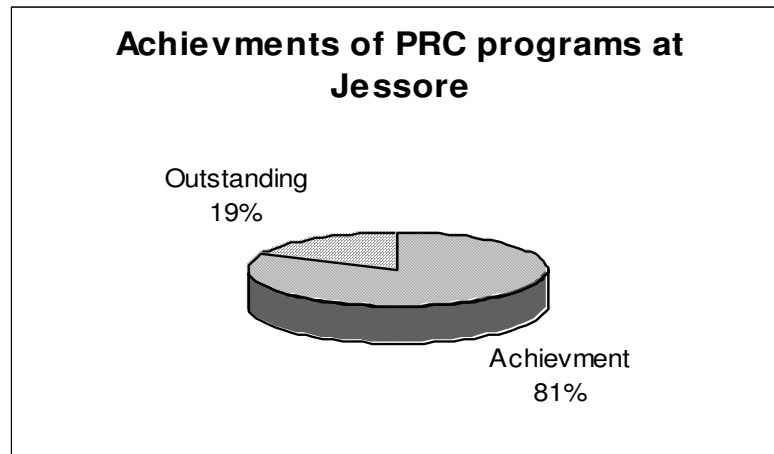
- Partners orientation regarding the project on 23 May, 2006
- Staff Recruitment
- Staff orientation on 11 July, 2006
- Financial orientation on 11 July, 2006



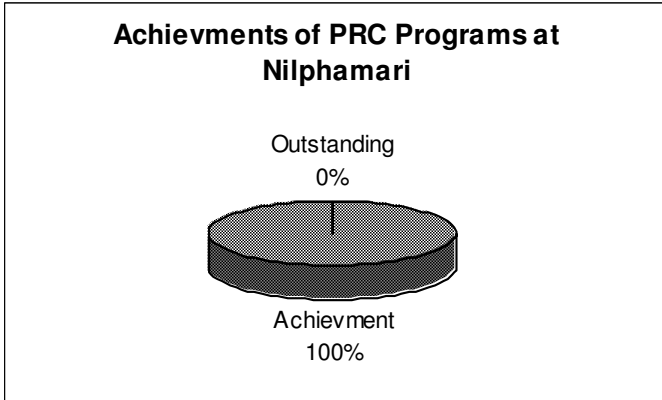
Staff Orientation

Though Democracywatch started the project with full swing in four districts but still we are suffering the lack of union, which supposed to get from DANIDA. The planning and implementation is being obstructed sometimes due to lack of union. Now PRC is working in 17 unions (Jessore-10, Gazipur-4, Nilphamari-1 and Dinajpur-2).

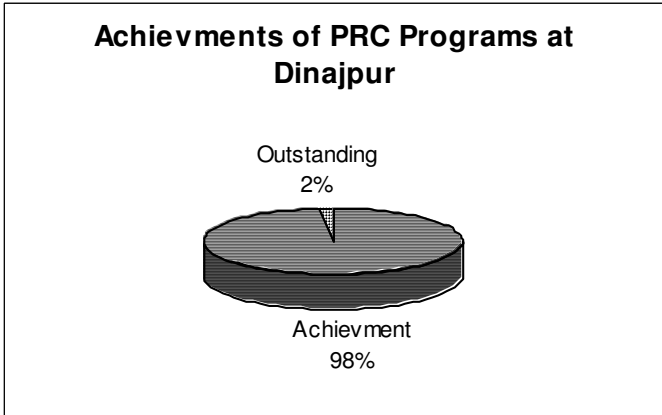
The overall performance of implementation at local field level in terms of quantities is quiet satisfactory. The monitoring department of PRC conducted a research recently, which revealed that 88% activities have been done during the last period as per target plan. The over all performance is shown in pie charts which is as follows;



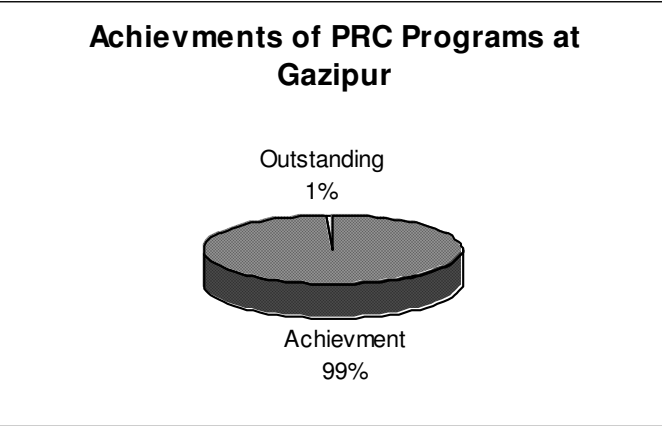
Total number of 278 events is designed for implementation under the time period March – August 2006 in 10 unions of Jessore. Among them 267 events has been conducted. All the targeted events have been achieved expect coordination meeting, sharing meeting and ADR facilitation. It should be mentioned that remain target will achieved in next period. The target plan for next period (September to December 06) has prepared with adding the reaming number of events of last period.



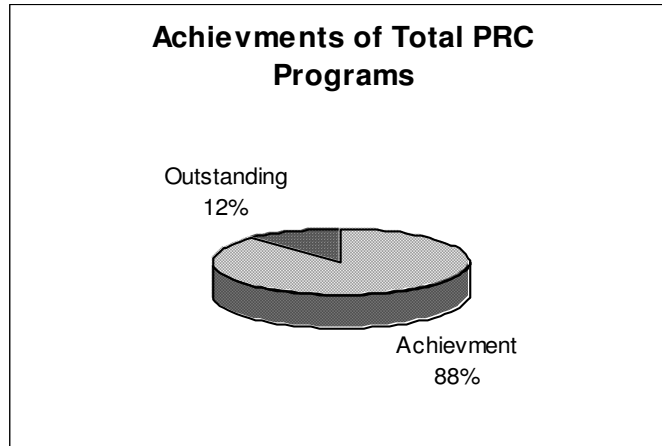
All targeted activities of old one union have been completed during the period of March-August 2006. Total 25 events have been targeted and all events have been successfully conducted. Still we are waiting for DANIDA approval for remain 9 unions in Nilphamari district. The plan for next period has prepared with adding the new target of 9 unions.



Total number of 4 unions has been designed for project implementation in Ghorahat upazilla under Dinajpur district. But still we are waiting for DANIDA approval in new two unions under the new phase. The target of program implementation was designed based on old two unions that were 50 events and we are conducted all the activities in due time.



Total target of program has been designed 110 events in 4 unions of Sader upazilla under Gazipur district. All the targeted events has been conducted successfully in due time in terms of quantities.



The entire target of PRC project was developed with total number of 781 events in 28 unions under 4 districts during the period of March-August 2006. But due to lack of DANIDA approval we have conducted program in 17 unions with 463 events among the total target. Apart from this actual target is 463 events which have gotten permission to work. Among that we have conducted total 442 events in number.

Achievements in terms of output

Out put -1:

1.1 UP standing committees and officials have taken effective measures for involving citizen committees and general people to identify and address problems through participatory analysis, planning and budgeting.



Formation of Standing Committee

Achievements

- A number of 4 standing Committee (Agriculture, Health, Education and law and order) were formed in Ramnagar Union of Jessore at June, 2006
- A number of 4 standing committee were formed in Khagakhoribari on 23 June, 2006
- A number of 8 standing committee were formed in Singra and Bulakipur union of Dinajpur at June, 2006
- A number of 2 standing committee (Education and health) were formed in Baria union of Gazipur at July 2006.

A Brief Analysis and impact

PRC local officers and Representatives made tremendous contribution to form these standing committees to make more transparent Union Parishad. In every meeting they invited local people and members of citizen committee to inform their roles and responsibilities regarding the function of standing committee. Some of the citizen committee members are included in the standing committee to run the UP more efficiently. The PRC local offices supplied all resolution register for

each committee. Furthermore, they will have been overseeing the decision of the meetings of UP. They are acting as a catalytic agent to run the UP in a participatory manner.

Achievements

- Out of 6 planned workshop on participatory planning and budgeting of Union Parishad, 5 workshop have been completed in last six months of which 1 in Jessore, 1 in Gazipur, 1 in Nilphamari and 2 in Dinajpur.

A Brief Analysis and impact

The objective of the workshop is to develop participatory method and tools for the budgeting of union Parishad. Side by side general people, civil society, citizen committee members and UP representatives will be habituated to make all the development plans of Union Parishad. The workshop has conducted with a comprehensive presentation at field level. Civil Society leaders, UP representatives, Members of the Citizen Committee, Local staff of PRC were present at the meeting. Virtually the participation of general people has been enhanced through promoting opportunity to provide input in budgeting process.

Achievements

- Out of 6 open and participatory budget declarations Democracywatch organized 5 open budget meeting respectively on 8 June, 2006 in Ramnagar in Jessore, 27 June Arabpur union of Jessore and Bason union of Gazipur, 28 June in Singra of Dinajpur and 30 June in Khagakhori of Nilphamari.

A Brief Analysis and impact

Participatory budget declaration is one of the important task of UP to make income and expenditure of UP more transparent and accountable to general people. Good proportion of budget allocation has been used in poverty eradication and investing in human development such as education, sanitation and health. All those allocation and expanses are being contributing in poverty reduction. Along with that the process of budget discussion and question session of post budget analysis are being contributing to promote participation of people. The participation and conceptual clearance on project of UP representative are very high and remarkable.



Participatory budget declaration

Output

- 1.2 Developed strong and effective networks among UP standing committees, Govt. service providers and other stakeholders at local level for creating access to health, education agriculture and legal services for the poor and disadvantaged women, men and children.

Achievement

- Out of 42 Alternative Dispute Regulation (ADR) of Union Parishad 10 ADR have been completed in last six months of which 6 in Gazipur, 2 in Nilphamari and 2 in Dinajpur.
- Out of 84 Coordination Meeting Conduction (CMC) of Union Parishad 21 Coordination Meeting Conduction have been completed in last six months of which 12 in Gazipur, 3 in Nilphamari and 6 in Dinajpur.

A Brief Analysis and impact

Democracywatch staffs conducted this meeting with all the stakeholders of UP so that everybody will be informed about the activities of PRC and UP as well. Government officials such as Education officer, Agriculture officer and member of the standing committee are use to present at the meeting. The lack of Union Parishad is the obstacle for unfinished activities.

Output-2:

- 2.1 Developed and well-functioned PRC as a platform where LEB and general citizens can work together to identify root causes of violation of basic, civil and political rights of people specially women and children.



Workshop with LEB

Achievements

- 54 citizen's committees have been working in old areas.
 - Out of 198 citizen committees 99 citizen committees have been formed in new areas.
 - Out of 90 trainings on Civil Rights and Responsibilities issues 90 training have been conducted in both for citizen committee's old and new project areas.
 - Out of 56 sharing meeting a number of 23 meetings have been organized with LEB, local journalists, CBO and CSO in the project areas.
 - Out of 56 quarterly meeting we have been completed 34 meetings of which 8 held in Gazipur, 2 in Nilphamari, 4 in Dinajpur and 20 in Jessore.
 - Out of 2 presses conference at local level we have been completed both press conference at Jessore and Gazipur.
- 2.2 Mobilized and sensitised mass people, Community based organizations, civil society organizations, local media for promoting people's demand on transparency and accountability of UP and monitoring public services delivery to the poor.

Achievements

- Out of 28 Spot campaigns we have been completed 17 spot campaigns at project areas.
- Out of 28 Video show of awareness rising on different UP activities PRC have been completed 17 video shows in 17 unions.



Yard meeting

- Out of 252 yard meetings on transparency and accountability, participatory planning and good governance we have been completed 153 meetings have been done.

Output-3:

3.1 Identified gaps and limitations in policy, system and practices of LGI with special focus on resource allocation, decentralization of power, people's active participation in UP and its relation with PRSP.

Achievements

- 1 Base line survey is running in 17 unions (focusing on health, education, poverty, law and order, gender based violence and discrimination, child rights violation,)
- 5 participatory budget analyses conducted in 5 Ups

Output 4

Institutional Capacity of DW as Human Rights organization has been developed and continued planned project activities.

Achievements

- 10 staff of Democracywatch and 18 staff of partner NGOs have participated 1 training on reporting and communication and ADR.

Discussion and analysis of progress and set back

Democracywatch started this project without 11 unions on March 2006 so that the planning and implementation level is sometimes obstructing. If DANIDA is not going to fix it up these unions the target of the project will not be achieved in time. Otherwise the project performance is quiet satisfactory.

Influence of external factors

Assumptions:

- Several organizations are working on local government to improve the situation
- Government policy emphasised on improvement of the local government
- UP representatives are more friendly and helpful at present.
- Community members are willing to contribute their time on a voluntary basis
- Venue is available to conduct training program at local level

Risks:

The following major risks have been identified

- Unlawful intervention from the local political leaders
- Political instability

Evaluation of achievements (Outputs) in relation to expenditure

<u>Head of Expenses</u>	<u>% of expenditure on current period budget</u>	<u>Reasons for deviation</u>
Programme Personnel	66%	delay in staff recruitment process for some positions.
Activity and Running cost	53%	Planning and implementation is being obstructed sometimes due to lack of unions. Now PRC is working in 17 unions out of 28 unions. Union list supposed to get from DANIDA.
Recurring costs	27%	Delaying in procurement process of a Vehicle.

Challenges and way forward

Democracywatch is working to ensure transparency and accountability of Union Parishad. During this period Democracywatch and its partners faced lot of difficulties and risks. This kind of project is not very easy when the question of transparency and accountability of Union Parishad comes in. It is sometimes hard to arrange a real platform for general people where they can raise their voices.

People have become aware of the PRC concept but their expectations are high. They thought that this project would give direct service delivery. It is up to us to make them understand that it will contribute indirectly in the development process and also ensure people's participation in democratic process.

People are not convinced about NGO activists. A Lot of NGOs worked here previously. But most of them are doing credit programs and maintaining businessman relationship with local people. That's why they were surprised and unable to trust when they became aware about our activities. Finally we make them understand that this type work will definitely help in their development process.

Government has selected Gram Sarker in all Union Parishad. But their neutrality and bias is questionable. Democracywatch selected citizen committee members with the consultation of local people. That's why the parallel existence may create conflict between citizen committees and Gram Sarker. Still we are trying to find out ways and means to resolve problems so that the two entities can co-exist.

Peoples Reporting Center project have already achieved enormous success at union level. Some UP already started participatory planning and budgeting and contributing a lot to improve their Union Parishad. General people, UP representatives and other stakeholders are quiet convinced to improve their union in a PRC model. So there will be a huge potentiality to implement this project in future.

Work plan and priorities for next half year

Coordination meeting, Sharing meeting, UP operation manual develop and publication, LEB workshop, meeting with journalist and civil society, Citizen Committee training on their roles and responsibilities, participatory planning, standing committee activation and study report publication will get the highest priority for the next half year.

Principle task

- Need Rapport building at UP level
- More comprehensive contact with UP chairman and other stakeholders (i.e. UNO, Upazilla Health, Education and Agriculture officer etc)
- Need more training for local staff
- Organize partnership meeting, strategy planning to resolve the problems at implementation level)
- Ensure regular visit from DANIDA to give input at implantation level

Challenges

- Forthcoming national election-2007 will influence at UP level. So that people from different political parties will be involved in different political programmes at UP. Due to this reason regular programme of PRC could be hampering or obstructing.
- Some government projects are running in different unions where they are getting hardware support directly. PRC with a full of software programmes are sufferings sometimes due to this.
- Most of the UP chairman are politically motivated either government party or opposition so that they could lost their concentration on their own duties and responsibilities to run all the development projects smoothly.

End