

**We are an advocacy group set up in 2002 with the express intent of impacting governance at all levels in the National capital region of Delhi. Our RWA wing U.R.J.A (United RWAs Joint action) is the apex body of RWA and connects almost 2500 Resident welfare associations in Delhi making us one of the largest civil society groups in Delhi.**

### **Here is a compilation of our work**

November 2002: Our view of the issue regarding cheating by auto drivers was based on the abject failure of the Delhi Government in bringing the drivers to book and/ or making any dent in the situation.

Keeping in line with our approach of finding real solutions and channelising public opinion to positive Action, we created a chart of Distances between the main commuter points of Delhi. On the chart we also printed a conversion table that one can use to arrive at an approximately fare for the distance travelled.

The result was stunning. The chart revealed that on average every Auto/ Taxi overcharged commuters to the tune of 100% over and above the actual fare! The Delhi Government, faced with the reality, promised to think about such a chart to empower citizens of Delhi .

People's Action has since released a Fare Chart for both Autos and Taxis based on the Distance Chart, which gives approximate figures of what the fare should be between the main commuter points in Delhi.

March 2003: The second issue that was undertaken was the issue of Pre paid system for autos and taxis at the airports and stations. Careful calibrations showed that pre-paid booths ended up charging up to 40% extra from unsuspecting commuters. This campaign was highlighted in the media and involved the Delhi Police, which mans these booths.

April 2003: People's Action, through its President, submitted results of a campaign initiated to audit the environment in a colony in Gurgaon. This campaign was under taken after research that showed almost 60 percent of park area had been reconstituted as plot area by the developers in the area using all possible loopholes in the law. The effort will help in developing greater sensitivity among people for protection and preservation of whatever is left of the green cover not only in Gurgaon but also in Delhi and other parts of the NCR.

May 2003: First all Gurgaon RWA Convention was held at 32 nd Milestone. Here over forty registered Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and NGOs discussed the breakdown of power, water, and poor transport services, choked roads unprecedented pollution and serious security problems in the city. The concern came up as in the last five years things had been going from bad to worse. The meeting also discussed what the residents themselves could do to improve the quality of life. This Convention led to the formation of the People's Action Gurgaon Council with one member represented from each participant RWA.

August 2003: The campaign for disclosure by candidates standing for election was initiated with a Press Conference to discuss the issue in view of the landmark Supreme Court judgement and the Election Commission of India's directive making it mandatory for candidates standing for elections to disclose on affidavits their antecedent, movable and immovable assets and educational qualifications. Later, in this regard People's Action organised a Convention of registered NGOs, RWAs, and Social Organisations at New Delhi to discuss a road map for taking the Supreme Court judgement, regarding a citizen's right to know a candidate's antecedents, to its logical conclusion.

November 2003: People's Action organised a "Meet Your Candidate" Programme under Delhi Election Watch a coalition of several NGOs and concerned citizens of Delhi whose main objectives has been that such a disclosure system should not remain only on paper but should be disseminated to the voters in an intelligible manner. The sole motive is to help the voters know the background and other relevant information about candidates contesting elections so that they can make a carefully considered choice in casting their vote. Being one of the coalition partners of the DEW, People's Action worked with the DEW in the entire exercise for the cause of transparency in the electoral system and active participation of the citizens in the process.

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February 2004: Under the Electoral Reforms and Good Governance programmes People's Action has also taken initiation where it was of dire necessity. People's Action in association with the India Habitat Centre organised a Panel Discussion on the subject of 'Electoral Reforms-an agenda for the forthcoming Lok Sabha Elections' arguing on the three premises viz., it is patently desirable to see civil society groups lobbying hard to promote the better candidate. Secondly, abolish the withdrawal provision to elevate the seriousness with which nominations and elections are approached. And thirdly, the abnormally short period of 13 days for campaigning has to be extended.

March 2004: As a part of the Electoral Reforms it has also approached the Chief Election Commissioner to discuss on the issue of voters registration to the electoral rolls and make it an ongoing process barring election time. Pursuing on the issue further People's Action was able to get authorisation from the Election Commission to help registering new voters with the assistance of the Gurgaon Resident Welfare Associations and the local Election office to enroll them in the electoral rolls. In one such campaign People's Action Gurgaon was able to submit as many as 8,500 new voters for registration in just two days and still has hundreds to follow up.

May 2004: People's Action organized a landmark Election Meeting between contesting candidates and society and Resident Welfare Association heads at Gurgaon leading to the general Election of

2004. The forum became an example of infusing debate and dialogue into the preparatory phase of electioneering and an attempt at making candidates aware of a collective vote-bank of educated, middle classes that sees beyond community lines. This meeting also became a source of inspiration to the new voters in Gurgaon to come out and vote for candidates that agree to their demands- in effect it brought attention to civil society concerns and expectations from political parties and candidates.

August 2004: People's Action extended the voter registration drive and mobilized the community to register as voters in large numbers. This campaign later ended in January of 2005 with a cumulative rise in numbers of voters of close to 1,00,000 in the duration of the campaign – roughly over one year. This is a record according to sources in the Election Office.

October 2004: People's Action responded to the growing acts of crime against senior citizens in Delhi and organized a Conference of RWAs with Police and administration to address the issue. The meeting evolved a realistic strategy to counter the malaise but laid the responsibility of the situation with the Delhi Government and its policy of continuing to admit new settlers with no identification procedures. A website dedicated to registry of particularly vulnerable senior citizens was also mooted and later developed by People's Action.

December 2004: People's Action began a movement for electoral best practices by mobilizing Gurgaon associations to join and put up a 'clean' candidate for elections in the state due in Feb. 2005. The act was a response to the common refrain of the middle class that they did not vote due to poor choice of candidates. This event became a watershed as a majority of the RWAs on the constituency forged an agreement to support such a move.

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January 2005: People's Action facilitated the creation of the Gurgaon Resident's Party [GRP] and organized a 'primaries' for selection of a candidate. The candidate was 'elected' by the representatives of various RWAs of the constituency and was later fielded as a candidate in the State elections from the legislative assembly seat for Gurgaon. This process became the first example of a transparent and scientific system of candidate selection in Indian political history that was designed to reject the corrupt practices such as 'purchasing tickets' or cronyism that have crept into the system.

February 2005: People's Action's attempts to consolidate residents around a clean candidate and generate interest in them to come out and vote resulted in an unprecedented participation of urban voters for the Assembly election on February 3 rd , 2005 in Gurgaon with close to 35% polling in some areas, up from dismal 10% in earlier elections. The GRP candidate came fourth, after the Congress, INLD and BJP candidates but swept the entire New Gurgaon, its core area of influence, beating the winning Congress party in 18 booths in the area.

May 2005: People's Action launched a community newspaper in Gurgaon called The Constituency. This newspaper now connects residents of New Gurgaon with the many RWAs in the area by interacting between each other through its pages. The newspaper is also becoming a vehicle for

carrying civil society messages into homes of ordinary residents on issues that concern the administration of the city.

July 2005: People's Action was invited by RWA groups and residents of Delhi to plan an intervention in the impending power tariff hike in the face of poor power sector reforms in the city after privatization. People's Action created a body titled Campaign Against Power Tariff Hike [CAPTH] and undertook a state-wide campaign to take the issue to the people. It organised the first ever All-Delhi RWA Convention on 16 th July and secured a mandate to mobilize people of Delhi to refuse to pay the 10% hike that was being imposed on residents of Delhi by the State Government.

August 2005: After over 100 public meetings across Delhi and involving close to 250 Resident Welfare Associations across Delhi over two months of grueling campaigning and mobilization, People's Action recorded a stunning victory for people power and the civil society movement when the Government bowing to the pressure created by the group finally withdrew the power tariff hike on 31st August 2005.

September 2005: Riding on the success of the Power Tariff campaign and with a view to set up a permanent structure that strengthens civil society to take up other such issues, People's Action floats United RWAs Joint Action [URJA] as a consortium of over 500 RWAs across Delhi at a packed second RWA Convention. A structure for the new entity envisages seven zonal chiefs and a cascading committee of representative members in a horizontal format that involves all RWAs of Delhi.

In Gurgaon, People's Action starts a campaign to demand better coordination between building and developmental agencies. The stir transforms into a demand for a Planning Board for Gurgaon as distinct from a Municipal Corporation, which Gurgaon is due to have.

October 2005: People's Action takes up the issue of fast running meters and demands an investigation to establish the truth. A new Satyagraha campaign is launched and a mobilization campaign launched to put pressure on government to examine the conditions under which a private DISCOM supplied these meters. Thanks to the din we created, opposition parties in Delhi took up the issue and built up steam on it.

November 2005: After two months of mobilization, People's Action calls another convention of Residents groups in Gurgaon to press for improved civic management and formalize the demand for the setting up of a Planning Board for Gurgaon. The Convention transforms into an orchestrated protest demonstration on NH-8 to press home the point. A follow-up campaign to spread the message and the demand is undertaken by the group to mobilize RWAs across the city culminating in a meeting with the Chief Minister of Haryana who absorbs the demands and promises action.

January 2006: People's Action scores when its President is selected among the people who have impacted Delhi in 2005 through their leadership and activism by mainline media house Times of India. Sanjay Kaul is credited with bringing the normally somnolent middle class on to the roads to protest and for federating the Resident Welfare Associations into a powerful lobby for the first time.

February 2006: In Delhi, People's Action intervened in the chaos created by the Supreme Court's sudden orders on the growing commercialization of residential colonies and illegal constructions. The spate of sealing and demolitions that followed was given a 'Traders versus RWAs' twist by media and some politically affiliated groups. People's Action argued for the principle of self-discipline as a means of solving the crisis asking all those who had transgressed the law to self-correct and offering a time bound plan to allow traders to re-establish themselves in pre-determined areas.

March 2006: People's Action organized a conference between URJA group heads and members of the organisation leading the traders protests, the Confederation of All India Traders [CAIT], where we collectively tried to emphasise that all traders in Delhi were members of RWAs themselves and sought to bring the two sides closer in an attempt to find solution that served everyone's purpose.

April 2006: People's Action organizes its student wing, United Students to hold a national press conference denouncing the new reservation policy of the government. United Students organized the country's first protest demonstration on this issue at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi and sent a rallying cry to students across India .

May 2006: Members of People's Action's student wing, United Students were invited by the President of India for a dialogue on the reservation issue. US members held a press conference on the RashtrapatiBhavan lawns to inform the country of the discussions. They also presented a 21-point charter arguing against the proposed policy to President Abdul Kalam.

July 2006: People's Action initiates the formation of an NGO collective that works on common issues of governance. New Delhi People's Association [NDPA] was formed with close to 30 members who are among the most prominent advocacy and civil society groups in Delhi . This group meets every month to debate current issues of concern to residents.

August 2006: People's Action sets up United Students for the student union elections of Delhi university, with Aaditya Dar as its Presidential candidate. Dar came third, after the NSUI and ABVP candidates securing a sizeable chunk of votes and spent only the stipulated amount on canvassing. The group strengthened itself through activism on Voter registrations drives and lobbying for a safer campus for girls.

September 2006: People's Action organizes the first independent BijliAdalat to record meter related complaints of residents in Delhi . The first, inaugural Adalat is organized at JantarMantar in the heart of New Delhi with a Retired Judge in attendance to receive all meter related complaints. Two other such Adalats follow in East and West Delhi . This action becomes the foundation for a series of legal actions against the State Government and private power companies.

October 2006: People's Action pilots a joint-appeal by RWA groups under URJA and members of the CAIT to the Chief Justice of India seeking relief for the residents of Delhi . The appeal is followed by an immediate reprieve from sealing and demolitions by the Court until further hearings.

November 2006: Leading from the crisis caused by the SC order and the state of the city, People's Action initiates efforts to bring together NGOs and civil society groups under one banner to work on issues of common interest like urban planning, civic improvements and development of the city.

December 2006: People's Action launches New Delhi People's Alliance [NDPA] with close to 30 active NGO and advocacy groups of Delhi as members of this body. It includes gender groups, resident associations, consumer rights groups, and various trade and community bodies. NDPA launched officially on 21 st December 2006.

January 2007: People's Action organises the first public meeting under the aegis of NDPA on 9 th January. Residents and political party leaders met face to face to discuss vexatious issues and the issue of municipal elections and the role of RWAs in the coming elections. On 23 rd January, People's Action organizes the first ever Political Convention of RWAs to determine the extent and role of RWAs in the coming municipal elections. A decision to involve residents in candidate selection is passed by consensus and a methodology is laid out at the Convention.

People's Action initiates the first protest against the construction of Commonwealth Games Village on the Yamuna river bed. URJA members from different parts of the city reach the Yamuna river-bed and organize a Havan [Fire ceremony] with a priest in attendance to signify the beginning of their campaign against land grabbing in the river bed.

February 2007: People's Action starts a campaign to enhance voter involvement in the Municipal Elections. To energise middle class interest in civic polls, People's Action draws up a template for RWAs to mobilize residents through an engaging procedure for identifying deserving, honest, clean and capable candidates from within their communities.

Consolidation of RWAs along wards is undertaken and People's Action oversees formation of Ward Committees in various wards where the candidate selection process starts. Eight independent candidates are thrown up in this process. People's Action urges political parties to own these candidates and give them tickets to fight elections.

March 2007: In colonies where RWAs are not organised, People's Action starts a new campaign called "JanatakaUmmeedwar" or "People's Candidate" and executes similar strategy to identify prospective candidates. Delhi 's largest Hindi newspaper, Punjab Kesri comes on board as a partner in the campaign. 13 candidates are identified and join the municipal elections fray.

April 2007: Over 350 RWAs across the city participated in the candidate election exercise and 21 candidates finally remained in the fray for election. People's Action calls an URJA Convention to discuss post-election strategies and lessons learnt. Many of ths candidates took third place behind the giant national parties Congress and the BJP. One candidate notched up over 10% of the vote. Results of elections are analysed at the convention and a new thinking emerges that justifies greater involvement of residents in municipal elections. Convention also throws up the first ever demand for the creation of Resident Ward Committees which will be recognized by the Municipal body. Also, for the fist time, a demand to split the Municipal Corporation of Delhi into 7 segments to correspond with LokSabha Constituencies is raised at the Convention of RWAs.

July 2007: A split between RWAs is averted over the issue of taking the Metro underground in South Delhi areas. People's Action rallies all RWAs to support the demand but cautions on making the issue a South Delhi centric issue. The campaign lost ground after an activist led group from Greater Kailash

files petition in the Court seeking relief only for GK residents. RWAs from across the city raise a similar demand and neutralize the campaign ensuring status quo to the detriment of environmental groups fighting to see the metro go underground all through its route in the city.

People's Action organizes the first protest against Blue line bus deaths in the city with a candle light vigil at the Jantar Mantar. Over 100 people die every year due to Blue line mishaps, but the Government refused to phase these buses out due to political reasons. The protest raised awareness on the issue and URJA RWA members participate in good strength.

October 2007: After a shocking Blueline bus accident which killed 8 people in one incident, People's Action organises victims under an Association of Blueline Victims. A half day protest outside the CM's residence culminated in this group action designed to protect the rights of poor people whose families lost earning members.

November 2007: The much touted High Capacity Bus System [HCBS] creates a mess for traffic and all hell breaks loose. People's Action takes lead in pointing out serious deficiencies in the plan which as it turns out was attempted without carrying out full due diligence.

People's Action takes assistance of its legal associates and the Association of Blueline Victims go to Court claiming compensation for victims' families.

January 2008: People's Action organises a people's Inauguration of the RTR Flyover which had been kept on hold for want of a VIP to inaugurate it, in spite of inconveniencing thousands of commuters every day. Members of People's Action along with URJA members cut the ribbon and 'officially' inaugurate the flyover and declare it open.

April 2008: HCBS, now renamed Bus Rapid Transport [BRT] opens for trials and is immediately a failure. Interminable jams, slow bus speeds question the very purpose of a scheme that had earlier failed in Pune. People's Action organizes a public protest against the hare-brained scheme and fuels debate on whether these projects are for the people, or for personal profit of politicians.

June 2008: People's Action initiates a campaign to establish Ward Committees with a view to aligning RWAs along Assembly Constituency lines. This campaign aligns RWAs within each ward to forge Committees made of their members who then conjoin with other wards within each Assembly segment to form an Assembly Committee.

August 2008: The three month campaign concludes with the creation of Committees in 35 Assembly constituencies, or half of Delhi's political constituencies and a hierarchy is created for effective coverage administration of the network. One of the first tasks for the Committees is to work to make the upcoming URJA Convention and AGM a success.

September 2008: People's Action launches a new insignia and design for the URJA logo and this is unveiled at the URJA Convention. The Convention is the biggest congregation of RWAs with over 500 delegates from across the city. The full day programme is attended by the MCD top brass and leaders

of both main line political parties. The second half of the day is covered by presentations by environment activists, power experts and RTI activists. The convention passes a resolution to make the Resident Ward Committees mandatory.

November 2008: The 10-member URJA Senate is formalized with temporary charge and a new command is put in place to operate through consensus. The Senate consists of one member from each of the seven zones of URJA and three representative members from People's Action.

2010: The team that carried out the NYKA agenda last year was reconstituted into a new youth volunteer group called United Volunteer Association [UVA] in the first quarter of the year. People's Action initiated a campaign against the wasteful expenditure on the Commonwealth Games arguing that a similar amount could transform Delhi's qualitative needs. 'PehleMakaan Fir Mehmaan' [First a Home, Then the Guests] was initiated and carried forward by members of UVA who met MLAs of Delhi and petitioned against the games. Mid year, People's Action was engaged by HelpAge India, an age-related NGO to collaborate in streamlining senior citizen associations across major cities of India. A campaign to petition for increasing number of Sainik Schools in the country was initiated by UVA in the second half of the year. Mayor of Delhi addressed URJA State Council on the formation of Resident Ward Committees. PACT initiates dialogue on RWA reforms. Credibility Alliance, a specialist audit for NGOs discusses possibilities of introducing standards for RWA functioning.

2011: People's Action is admitted as member of the United Nations Global Compact. In April a landmark is achieved. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi under the authority of the Mayor accepts the Resident Ward Committee scheme. People's Action signs MoU with the MCD to assist in implementing the scheme in all 272 wards of Delhi. RWC website launched. Gurgaon gets its first Municipal Corporation and People's Action is invited to present the RWC concept to Municipal members. MCD enlarges scope of RWC to include RWAs of unauthorized colonies. Power regulator DERC approves a power tariff hike under pressure from private power distribution companies.

People's Action opposes the move, mobilizes RWAs under URJA asking for a CAG audit and bringing these companies under RTI.

URJA organizes a Walkathon across Delhi to petition all 70 Delhi MLAs. Led by People's Action members of URJA walk over 400 kilometres over 23 days, to complete the Walkathon URJA takes the matter to Court.

Delhi Cabinet orders an in principle CAG audit of Private DISCOMS

March 2012: The Committee of experts set up to draft the new municipal act invites URJA to be a part of public consultation. URJA facilitates RWA from the North, South and East Municipal Corporation wards in three separate seminars to deliberate upon the issue of RWA participation and ward committees' role in transparent and effective civic governance in the spirit of the 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment

May 2012: People's Action and URJA respond to the decision of the youth affairs & sports ministry to take the matter of playgrounds for Children seriously and taker it beyond simple issuing of circulars

on opening school playgrounds to local area children. People's Action takes up the matter and brings the issue of providing playgrounds in all colonies of Delhi to the forefront

May 2012: URJA holds meet your candidate meetings across municipal wards in Delhi through their URJA coordinators. URJA releases a poster jointly with the Delhi State election Commission asking citizens to vote. The poster is spread across Delhi and Municipal voting percentages record an increase. The State election commission commends URJA in writing

August 2012- URJA takes up the matter of privatization of water in the Mehrauli and Saket area of Delhi and holds a series of meetings with the Jal board officials and residents and RWA of the area .

August 2013: URJA meets with the Former CEC and with the State election commissioner to begin work on holding elections for RWA under the aegis of the election commission. URJA writes to the three Municipal corporations to facilitate this process. Matter becomes a part of discussions with the Committee on the New Municipal act now headed by the SEC

2013: URJA opposes Mohalla Sabha concept decrying it as a ploy to politicize the civil society space and make cadres out of citizens. RWA collect in protest and oppose attempts to disenfranchise the RWA

April 2014- URJA partners with the Delhi Medical Association and New Delhi Municipal Corporation, and the Three Municipal corporations to run a campaign against mosquito breeding in Delhi.