



PFI FOUNDATION

Reaching the Unreached, Covering the Last Mile

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

A non-governmental organization in
Special Consultative Status
With the Economic and Social Council of the
United Nations since 2012



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*Winner of the
Development
Marketplace Certificate
of Recognition from
The World Bank
in 2003 and 2007*

Preface



It was pleasure to continue as the President of the PFI Foundation last year after serving as the Vice President earlier. Coming from legal professional backgrounds, I am happy to interact with a team of board members that have come together to serve our local communities.

This past year we have strengthened our ties with United Nations and Bangladesh's premier civil service training institution, the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). Our delegate participated at the 7th International Conference on Public Administration and Governance (ICPAD) held on 5-8 February 2020 at the BPATC Campus, Savar, Dhaka. The key theme of this year's conference was "the evolving nature of governance and development and the need for realigning the civil service". Given your contribution of our organisation in regional development, I am pleased to inform you that PFI Foundation has become one of the founding member of the **South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA)** that was established as a follow up to the conference. This is a network of knowledge community to foster research, knowledge production, capacity building, knowledge dissemination, and strengthening regional and international partnerships in areas of Public Administration in South Asia and beyond.

In tandem with our consultative status with the UN-ECOSOC, our Foundation's delegates attended various sessions of the Commission for Social Development that were organised by the United Nation. We participated at the 3rd Session of the **Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee** held on 26-29 August 2019 in Bangkok (Thailand) on invitation from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

PFI Foundation also participated at the Sub-Regional Workshop on **ICT Co-deployment along Passive Infrastructure in South Asia** that was organised by UNESCAP at the Asian Institute of Transport Development, New Delhi on 27 June 2019. The workshop was an endeavour to raise awareness and facilitate constructive dialogue between government officials responsible for ICT and Transport respectively on opportunities and challenges for implementing policies on cross-border infrastructure co-deployment. In addition, to discuss the policy implications of cross-border ICT co-deployment on national and regional legislative and regulatory frameworks.

As we enter another financial year, allow me to express my sincere thanks for your understanding and support for the Foundation and its activities. Thank you for your warm guidance and enduring support.

A K Talukdar
President

From the Executive Director



This last year PFI Foundation continued its journey in education, skill development, international collaboration and community works towards interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding.

We sustained our CABA-MDTP Centre supported by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) for providing skill training in computer applications and accounting to local youths, we have enrolled fresh batches of trainees. NCPUL in which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. This will be our eighth year in successfully running the centre.

This year we participated at the **South Asian Regional Institute on Study and Practice of Strategic Nonviolent Action** (Asian Action Institute-2019) that took place in Dhulikhel, Nepal. It was organised jointly organized by Centre for Social Change (CSC), Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies at Tribhuvan University (DCPDS), the National Network of the families of Missing and Disappeared Nepal (NEFAD) and International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC).

Internationally, we carried forward our association with the **KAICIID Dialogue Centre, Vienna** and continued to work on the development of a foundation programme for university/college students for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. We are committed to follow our policy to promote inter-religious dialogue to prevent and resolve conflict in our region.

During 2019-20, the Foundation also sent a delegate to the Regional Summer Academy – South and East Asia with a scholarship. The Regional Summer Academy was organised by the **International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA)** from 30 August to 6 September 2019 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

We are truly grateful to all the members who have volunteered their time to guide us, dedicating significant time and energy to help chart our past, present and future and grow PFI Foundation as a sustainable and community-oriented organization.

We are grateful and excited to have the board members and bring their unique talents, expertise and perspectives to the work of the organization in order to further our vision of promoting a world for a better future.

Dr K M Jahirul Islam
Executive Director

Annual Report: 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

PFI FOUNDATION is an NGO with its HQ in Guwahati (India) which focuses on socio-economic welfare activities and works to promote community empowerment through awareness generation programmes and strengthening of local community organizations. Its programs include advocacy campaigns, preparation of information materials, youth leadership training, self-help groups and microfinance. Its major thrust areas are vocational and Life Skill Training, Information Technology for Development (ICT4D), technology transfer and integrated rural development.

VISION

Improving the pace of rural development and alleviating poverty in rural areas by using appropriate technologies and building technical skills through a Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) integrated collaborative network.

MISSION

The Foundation aims to provide the communities with a means to gain successful employment in all possible sectors reversing the urban migration and to train rural youths on the new 'appropriate' technologies and 'skills' suitable for rural areas and that are being used in other parts of the country by the rural industries.

LEGAL CERTIFICATION

PFI Foundation is registered under the Societies Registration Act of India. It is further endorsed by the Interior (Home) Ministry of the Government of India as a Foreign Contribution receiving charity and allotted FCRA Registration. The organization is also registered under Income Tax Act and granted tax exemption on donation to the organization under Sec 80GG of the Act.



Society Regn No 4292 of 1992-93 under
Society Regn Act of 1860
Unique ID under NGO Darpan of Niti Aayog:
AS/2009/0002462
FCRA Regn No. 020780111
Income Tax Regn No: 27/12(a)a/Tech/06-07
Under Sec 80G for Tax Exemption on donation

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

- Various kinds of socio-economic welfare activities.
- Promotion of community empowerment through awareness generation programmes and strengthening of local community organization through campaigns, preparation of information materials, youth leadership, self-help groups.
- Education, training and evaluation programmes in education
- Academic institutions with special emphasis on disadvantaged sections of the society and environment orientation to school education.
- Welfare of women and child, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, other backward communities, and marginalised groups like differently abled persons, orphans and destitute.
- Community health and family welfare through water supply and sanitation
- Employment generation programmes and training

- Environment and bio-diversity
- Preservation and development of cultural heritage
- Commemoration of life and activities of late Professor Md Fokhrul Islam (1939-1991), former Dy. Education Minister of Assam, a teacher, educationist and social worker of Barak Valley and to celebrate centenaries of other important national personalities.
- Promotion of national integration and communal harmony
- Disaster management, emergency response, relief and rehabilitation.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST YEARS

1. Legal Awareness Campaign for Women Rights under Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of India (1995) and National Commission for Women (2007-08).
2. Environment Education Awareness Programme funded by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.
3. Empowerment and Awareness Training Programme for Rural Women sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board (1995-96)
4. Capacity building training of the Village Health and Sanitation Committees in Cachar and Hailakandi Districts in Assam, funded by the UNICEF (2010)
5. Community on Community based Water Resources Management in Northeast India (2011). Funded by Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India and ADPC, Bangkok.
6. Legal Training for Women Lawyers in Northeast India, sponsored by The British High Commission, New Delhi (2010) and ActionAid India.
7. Minorities Initiative for Learning and Partnership (MILAP): Madrassa Teachers, Students and Imams Training Programme in Assam for communal harmony and peace; funded by The British High Commission, New Delhi (2010-11).
8. South Asian Regional Development Gateway – a regional Initiative for SAARC countries (2006-2012).
9. Inter-faith Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Northeastern Region, funded by the KAICIID Dialogue Centre, Vienna, Austria; development of a Foundation Programme for undergraduate students in colleges and universities in India (2015-18)
10. Environmental Impact Assessment – participatory training programme for capacity building of NGOs, funded by the World Bank (2014-16).
11. Asia-Pacific Academia Network, in collaboration with the UNESCAP, Bangkok, to set up a regional educational network that will interact with governments, private sector and civil society in conducting research, evaluation, monitoring, education and training programmes focusing on ICT for Development (ICT4D) at the grassroots level (2017-18).



Interfaith Dialogue programme with fellows of KAICID in Colombo, Sri Lanka

MAJOR ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2019-2020

1. IACA's Regional Summer Academy - South and East Asia, Seoul, South Korea

PFI Foundation participated at the fifth edition of the Regional Summer Academy, organised by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) based in Luxemburg/Vienna, Austria. This was IACA's flagship Summer Academy programme, that was held from 30 August to 6 September in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The programme gathered 48 anti-corruption and compliance professionals from 11 countries of the region for eight days of fruitful discussions and interaction with peers, leading experts, and seasoned practitioners.



The audience included representatives of the public and private sectors, international organizations, academia, and civil society, while the speakers came from a wide variety of leading institutions, including OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions, Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of Korea (ACRC), George Washington University Law School, Korea University, SOAS University of London, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Siemens, and Himalmedia. Programme also included a round-table on Compliance and

Collective Action, which was very well received and saw panelists from TRACE – Asia Pacific, School of Criminal Investigation – Singapore Police Force, Transparency International Korea, Lotte Shopping, Siemens, and Sanofi Korea.

As in previous years, the interdisciplinary programme blended theory and practice, addressing anti-corruption and compliance topics and issues from diverse perspectives: politics, compliance and collective action, integrity and corruption prevention, law, psychology, economics, good governance, and enforcement.

PFI Foundation now joined the IACA alumni association, a worldwide network of more than 2,250 anti-corruption and compliance professionals from 162 countries and jurisdictions.



Since it began in 2015, the IACA Regional Summer Academy editions have attracted and empowered 222 professionals from Latin America, Eastern Africa, the Middle East, East and Southeast Asia, and most recently, South and East Asia. IACA was initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the Republic of Austria, and other stakeholders. The idea of an international anti-corruption academy arose out of INTERPOL's International Group of Experts on Corruption, which at the time included Martin Kreutner, who became IACA's first Dean, Michael Hershman, Chairperson of IACA's International Senior Advisory Board, and the late Franz-Hermann Brüner, Director-General of OLAF at the time.

2. COMPUTER EDUCATION, ACCOUNTING AND MULTILINGUAL DTP

The Foundation continued to run the Computer Applications, Business Accounting and Multilingual DTP Centres (CABA-MDTP) in Karimganj district under the sponsorship of the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), Department of Higher Education, Government of India.



The one-year course "Diploma in Computer Applications, Business Accounting and Multilingual DTP" has been designed for transformation of Urdu speakers into productive human resource and making them part of the employable technical work force in the emerging Information Technology scenario and penetration of computer education to grass root level. Taking base as the DOEACC 'O' level course contents, the contents have been enriched with programming techniques, developing database applications, accounting package, web designing tools, Urdu, and English DTP.

Students who have passed Intermediate (10+ 2) level of examination from a recognized Board or an equivalent examination are eligible for admission to 'O' level course. Madrassa Qualification which have been granted equivalence to Matric or 10+2 level will also be eligible for the CCC and CABA-MDTP course. It is compulsory for all students who are admitted to Diploma course to write examination for Certificate Course on Computer Concept (CCC). The examination is conducted by NIELIT. All successful students are awarded "Diploma in Computer Applications, Business Accounting and Multilingual DTP" at the end of the academic session jointly by NCPUL and NIELIT, Chandigarh Centre and "Diploma in Urdu Language" by NCPUL.

3. TWO YEARS DIPLOMA COURSE IN FUNCTIONAL ARABIC



In line with the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), Government of India, the foundation recognises the importance of classical languages in preserving cultural heritage of the country and at the same time the need to bring students of faith-based schools to the mainstream job market. Since 2011, with the support from the NCPUL, the foundation is running *Two Years Diploma Course in Functional Arabic* 2002 with modern Arabic teaching in content and methodology being made accessible to Madrassa students who lack ability to speak and write and communication skill on colloquial level.

The basic aim of the course is to enrich the instruction in Arabic and give an experience to the students to modern and colloquial spoken level as well as on writing level. The 7 & 8 modules have been prepared on the basis of business and day to day user letters so as the students get expertise in drafting letters and communicating with business world. In exercises of these two modules, the rich translated version of English articles has been provided. This course will help students to achieve a level of excellence and bring them at par with the students of other foreign languages. Also, this will open the door of employment to the students of Arabic language.

4. ASIA-PACIFIC INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY (AP-IS)

PFI Foundation participated at the Third session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Steering Committee and WSIS Regional Review held in Bangkok, Thailand on 26-29 August 2019. Our organisation was invited to share our experience and works during event. The second session of the AP-IS Steering Committee in Bangkok was held in August 2018 and reviewed the progress of the implementation of the AP-IS Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework Document (2016-2018). As a result, an updated Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework Document (2019-2022) were agreed upon by the member countries and subsequently endorsed by the Committee on ICT and Science, Technology and Innovation, at its second session in August 2018. The updated Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework Documents are expected to guide sub-regional implementation of the AP-IS initiatives for the next four years. In this context, the meetings were organised to enhance awareness and knowledge of government officials and partners on latest research, emerging trends and technologies for evidence-based policy-making at national, sub-regional and regional levels; deepen regional cooperation and policy dialogue in the development and implementation of the AP-IS sub-regional implementation plans; facilitate information sharing and networking among government officials, academia, private sector and other stakeholders; and expand partnerships among government, academia, private sector and civil society organizations for the development of joint initiatives for AP-IS implementation.



The root causes of the region's digital divide are multi-dimensional. ESCAP studies have found various constraining factors, including a limited regulatory and policy environment, lack of institutional and individual capacity, digital literacy, inefficient Internet and network management; limited affordability of broadband services; and investment in natural-disaster resilient ICT infrastructure. As society and economy increasingly depend on reliable, affordable and resilient broadband infrastructure to deliver information and services, the lack of broadband access is expected to constrain the member countries' socioeconomic development and efforts towards the achievement of SDGs.



In response, ESCAP member States launched the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative to enhance the availability, affordability and resilience of regional broadband infrastructure as a foundation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, the 3rd session of the AP-IS Steering Committee was held to review the current implementation of the Master Plan 2019-2022 by member countries, ESCAP and partner organizations like PFI Foundation and discuss emerging trends and technologies which affect the implementation. The meeting will also serve as a platform to share the findings of latest research and analysis, initiate regional policy dialogues, develop regional cooperation initiatives and forge partnerships.

5. ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA

The Foundation felt the necessity of strengthening its capacity on ICT for Development programmes in collaboration with regional partners like UN-ESCAP. It was invited by UN-ESCAP to present its works and experiences at the Sub-Regional Workshop on ICT Co-deployment along Passive Infrastructure in South Asia on 27 June 2019 at AITD, Dwarka, New Delhi.



Expanding ICT connectivity has played a strategically significant role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region. ICT enables growth across sectors through accelerated innovation that increases productivity and efficiency. However, investment in ICT infrastructure development is costly and time-consuming and is further complicated by negotiations required when it comes to cross-border connectivity. One of the means to expand broadband connectivity is to leverage cross-sectoral infrastructure synergies; that is, through co-deployment of fibre optic cables (FOCs) along passive infrastructure such as roads, railways, power grids and oil and gas pipelines. Co-deployment could save costs of infrastructure deployment by minimizing duplicated civil works and environmental impacts via a one-time investment and construction.

Dr Baharul Islam, delegate from PFI Foundation made a presentation by highlighting the emerging opportunities and challenges of transboundary ICT infrastructure co-deployment between India and Bangladesh. He gave an overview of the India and Bangladesh's ambitious plans to expand fibre-optic connectivity in their respective countries, and promote increased use of broadband particularly for the last-mile connectivity. He informed participants that public-private partnerships (PPP) and infrastructure-sharing is a key component to successful broadband expansion. He noted that PPP interventions such as governments building ducts to share with service providers could also generate revenue for the local government and overcome the common Right of Way (ROW) challenges. He further noted another ICT codeployment opportunity in the subregion to partner with cable TV operators for rural connectivity which allows the private sector to deploy fibre-optic cables along the highways. He concluded by that Infrastructure sharing at backend would not damage the sector's competitive landscape and in fact, such partnerships are necessary to make robust infrastructure projects successful.

6. GENDER DIVERSITY

PFI Foundation continued its focus on Gender issues this year. In collaboration with IIM Kashipur (Uttarakhand) it embarked upon a research on gender bias in academia, employment and industry. It organised and participated at a workshop at the Centre of Excellence in Public Policy and Government, Indian Institute of Management Kashipur to discuss issues related to gender diversity in academia and industry which was attended by members from different educational institutions, universities, government agencies and the industry.



The workshop was specifically designed following the *future search methodology* as a very different approach unlike from traditional academic event. Key thematic presentations/lectures are given by experts that was used to stimulate further discussion and a question-and-answer period at the end. The sessions were introduced by teams of facilitators made up of representatives from IIM Kashipur and a Chair was chosen for each session from among the participants themselves. After that, two special sessions were organised constituted by five to six persons discussing a broad range of related issues. The presenters were given 10-15 minutes to discuss and highlight the fundamental questions, identify the main challenges, and present the arguments as to how we could reduce gender stereotyping in academia and industry; then the groups open up to continue as part of a plenary session.

One or two experts were identified for each session to present seminal ideas and invite other participants to put forward proposals resulting from this preliminary discussion. Session facilitators noted the recommendations and drafted an overview of the collective thinking, and also highlighting the points that remain unclear or contradictory. Discussion is then continued with short contributions from every participant.

In short, the main idea is to discuss the challenges of gender stereotyping in campus both from academia and industry perspectives and generate specific recommendations for mitigating these challenges. Given the limited time frame, much of the discussion was accomplished upstream so as to be able to address the core of the matter as quickly as possible. The work and the methodological framing of the workshop, as well as the facilitation by the invited experts and the development of conceptual maps all aimed at getting the most out of the discussions held during the day, which are the *raison d'être* of this event.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The annual accounts of the Foundation as audited by our auditors M/S Hussain & Co., Chartered Accountants, Guwahati 781 006 (Assam) and approved by the General Body is appended herewith.
