

PFI FOUNDATION

Reaching the Unreached, Covering the Last Mile



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

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 is acknowledged that NGOs and other civil society organisations play a vital role in plugging gaps in basic services, by building bridges between the government and marginalized communities. This is amply demonstrated by the role of PFI Foundation. Working in the areas of education, employment skills, disaster management, conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue, the Foundation wants to create an enabling environment in which development processes can be facilitated for the weaker sections of the communities.

I am honoured to be the President of the PFI Foundation last year after serving as the Vice President earlier. Coming from diverse professional backgrounds, I am happy to lead a team of board members have come together to serve our local communities and the nation alike.

This past year we have strengthened our ties with international organisations and initiatives. We have steadfastly moved towards more professional evaluation of our programmes. Our representative Dr Baharul Islam was awarded a fellowship to attend the **International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)** in Switzerland. The programme partners with strategic partners to build a global, inclusive, multi-disciplinary community committed to evaluative evidence improving development outcomes. We create space for people engaged in evaluation to come together to learn, exchange knowledge, and collaborate. The programme was implemented by the Center for Continuing Education (ZUW) at the University of Bern and the Center for Evaluation (CEval) in partnership with the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank.

In tandem with our consultative status with the UN-ECOSOC, our Foundation's delegates attended the 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development - CSocD57 that took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 11 Feb 2019 to 21 Feb 2019. The priority theme of the session was "Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies."

As we enter another financial year, allow me to express my sincere gratitude 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 members have shown overwhelming interest for taking up many new initiatives. The Foundation would also like to thank all our members and appreciate its partner organisations and sponsors for supporting our ongoing activities.

Providing skill training in computer applications and accounting to local youths, we have enrolled fresh batches of trainees in our CABA-MDTP Centre supported by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) 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.

Internationally, we continuing to support various developmental and socio-cultural initiatives. We participated in the international fellowship programme of 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 2018-19, the Foundation continued its research agenda to create new value for society through scholarly endeavours. We joined universities and institutes to study issues like environmental impact assessment, disaster management and regional exchanges and cooperation. We tried to bring women to the centre of our activities. It helped us to allocate and manage resources for gender mainstreaming and encourage women groups to participate actively in our programmes.

I take this opportunity to place on record my gratitude for commitment of our volunteers. The works of an NGO is by no means simple, and demands high levels of resilience and stamina. Thanks must also be extended to all institutional sponsors including KAICIID, Vienna, The World Bank Institute, NCPUL, New Delhi, individual donors, partner organisations, volunteers and supporters in India and abroad for their support and guidance.

Above all, I thank the members of the General Body and Executive Council of PFI Foundation for their strategic guidance and for egging us on in our endeavour to make a difference in the lives of the needy people.

Dr K M Jahirul Islam
Executive Director

Annual Report: 2018-19

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. Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative – Co-deployment of Optical Fibre along Roads and Railways in India and Bangladesh to increase the availability and affordability of broadband Internet
10. 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)
11. Environmental Impact Assessment – participatory training programme for capacity building of NGOs, funded by the World Bank (2014-16).
12. 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 members of Sikh community at Gurudwara Nankana Sahib in Kashipur, Uttarakhand, India

MAJOR ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2018 - 19

1. PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Since its inception in 1991, PFI Foundation has built a strong network of partnerships with governments, development banks, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based people's organizations (CBO), donor agencies, corporates, civil society organizations (CSOs), universities and research institutes, and other consortia and enterprises. Foundation works together with its partners to identify, assess, and evaluate various strategies and institutional approaches economic and social development.

PFI Foundation worked on various projects with following:

- UNICEF
- Action Aid, India
- Development Gateway (USA)
- The British High Commission, New Delhi
- KAICIID Centre, Vienna
- US India Policy Institute, Washington DC
- National Commission for Women, India
- US Public Affairs Office, New Delhi
- National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Bangkok.
- Development Gateway, Washington DC

The organization has been granted Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, UN since 2012.

2. COMPUTER APPLICATIONS, BUSINESS 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. Students should have attained age of 18 years and must be below the age of 35 years on the date of application. The course is organized in two batches of 40 students at each computer centre (Batch I from 9.00 A.M.to1.00 P.M. and Batch II from 2.00 to 6.00 P.M.). Out of these 4 hours, 2 hours for theory class and 2 hours for practical class. Twenty students will attend the theory class and twenty students will attend practical class simultaneously. 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. HISTORY OF THE REGION

This year the Foundation also focused on the study of the local history. In this connection foundation delegates joined the International Ibn Battuta Conference on 'travel, trade, traditions and trajectories' held in Kozhikode India on 4-6 Dec 2018 organized by Madin Academy, Malappuram in association with various foreign universities, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and Hamdard Foundation, Delhi. Scholars from USA, Canada, Italy, UK, China, UAE, Malaysia, Netherlands, Bangladesh discussed varied aspects of Ibn Battuta's travel and its history.



Foundation's delegate Prof Baharul Islam attended the conference and spoke was on Ibn Battuta's trip to modern-day Northeast India and Bangladesh before proceeding to China. He highlighted the meeting of

Ibn Battuta with Shāh Jalāl ad-Dīn al-Mujarrad al-Naqshbandi, popularly known as Hazrat Shah Jalal (1271 CE – 15 March 1346 CE) of Sylhet. Shah Jalal is one of the most influential saint in Bengal those days and he was credited with the spread of Islam into north-eastern Bengal through Sufism. Disciples of Shah Jalal received Ibn Battuta on his way two days before his reaching Sylhet as the saint told his disciples in advance that a certain traveller was coming from North Africa to meet him. Ibn Battuta's meeting with Shah Jalal tells us a lot about the time, places and people of present day Bangladesh and Assam (Kamaru) in Northeast India. Though it was only a brief journey compared to his total span of journey across continents, it nevertheless throws some interesting insights into the history of the region. This presentation looks into the journey of Ibn Battuta in his quest to meet the saint and through his traveller's lens revisits geography, landscapes, culture and social aspects of Bengal in those days.



Where the wander meets the saint: Ibn Battuta Conference in Calicut, India

Back home, the Foundation is working towards preservation of local culture and a revival of *Sylheti* language which attempted at reviving the local language. Findings of a preliminary research that was earlier presented at the International Conference on “Purifying the Dialect of the Tribe: Cross-Cultural Concerns in Colonial and Postcolonial India” in May, 2017 at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla was followed up and a specific chapter on *Sylheti Language* is being published in a volume from UK. *Sylheti* is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language, part of the Bengali-Assamese language group. It is spoken by an estimated 11 million people worldwide today, primarily in Sylhet Division of Bangladesh, the Barak Valley and the Hojai district of Assam as well as in northern parts of Tripura in India. Outside of these regions, there are substantial numbers of *Sylheti* speakers in Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland; as well as diaspora communities in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Middle East.

5. PROGRAMME EVALUATION TRAINING



The Foundation felt the necessity of strengthening its capacity on programme evaluation for long that will provide its decision makers, managers and practitioners with the tools that are required to commission, manage and evaluate policies, programs, and projects at the local, national, regional, and global levels as well as use those evaluations for decision-making. Foundation sets a great focus on practice and provides a diversified approach for audiences from different organizations and sectors who play different roles in the evaluation process. This year the the Foundation sent its delegate to the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET), 2018 to cooperate with strategic partners to build a global, inclusive, multi-disciplinary community committed to evaluative evidence improving development outcomes. The programme was held from July 16 to 27, 2018 at the University of Bern, Switzerland. It was implemented by the Center for Continuing Education (ZUW) and the Center for Evaluation (CEval) in partnership with the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank. Around 150 participants from 67 countries exchanged experiences and learned together during the one-week core course and the workshops in the following week covering topics like Evaluating SDG's, Private Sector Evaluation, Case studies in program evaluation, Quantitative Impact Evaluation, Quantitative Data Analysis, Evaluation Design Matrix, Results-Based Monitoring & Evaluation, Theory-based evaluation, Evaluation for Middle and Upper Management, and Utilization-focused evaluation. The program consisted of a one-week core course on fundamentals of evaluation, followed by two weeks of workshops on specialized topics and latest developments in the field, taught by an experienced group of renowned international faculty drawn from organizations around the world.

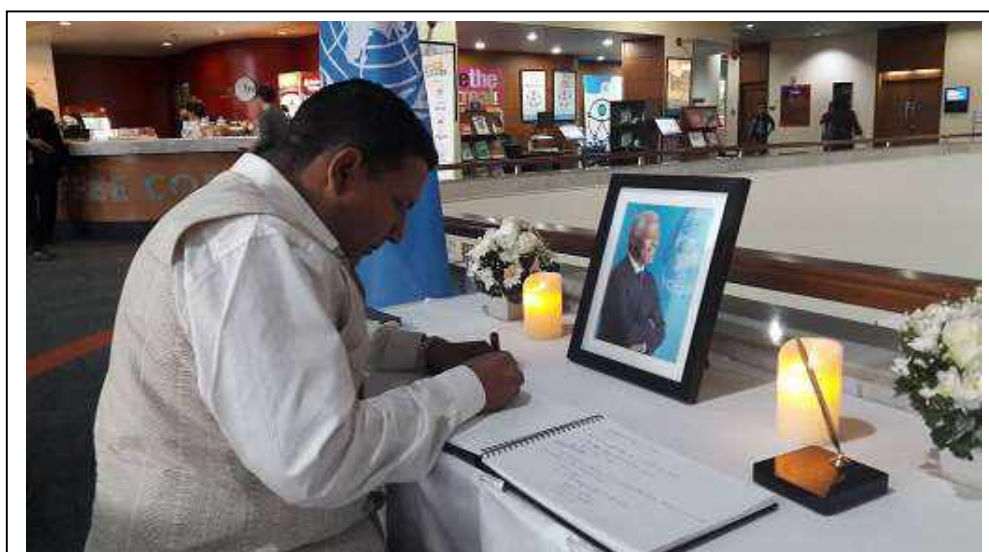
PF Foundation through the IPDET initiative cooperates with strategic partners to build a global, inclusive, multi-disciplinary community committed to evaluative evidence improving development outcomes. We create space for people engaged in evaluation to come together to learn, exchange knowledge, and collaborate.

6. ASIA-PACIFIC INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

PFI Foundation carried forward its close association with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Bangkok on Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (APIS) initiative. The Foundation participated at the Second Session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Steering Committee and WSIS regional review held on 27-28 Aug 2018 at UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The 73rd session of the ESCAP Commission in May 2017 adopted resolution 73/6 on the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) through regional cooperation. The resolution invited members and associate members to cooperate in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document as endorsed by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation at its first session. It also invited members and associate members to promote broad-based partnerships, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and highlighting the importance of such partnerships, for the implementation of the Master Plan and the Regional Cooperation Framework Document.



Following the adoption of resolution 73/6, the first session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 1-2 November 2017. The meeting established the modality of monitoring, coordination and advisory functions of the Steering Committee. The participants also identified challenges and opportunities on promoting national and cross-border broadband connectivity in line with the AP-IS strategic initiatives and discussed the elements of subregional implementation plans. The Steering Committee also agreed to review the status of AP-IS implementation at the end of the current implementation year (2018), and discuss the update to the Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework Document for the next 4 years.



PFI Foundation recorded its tribute to Kofi Atta Annan (1938-2018) at UN Regional Office in Bangkok. Kofi Annan served as the seventh Secretary-General of the United and the co-recipients of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

7. KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

PFI Foundation was focused on Public Policy analysis and good governance and participated at a number of programmes. One such programme was held at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand. It is an autonomous institute under the aegis of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India. Its head office is at New Delhi and registered office at Mussoorie. The NCGG has been set up to assist in bringing about governance reforms through studies, training, knowledge sharing and promotion of good ideas. It seeks to carry out policy relevant research and prepare case studies; curate training courses for civil servants from India and other developing countries; provide a platform for sharing of existing knowledge and pro-actively seek out and develop ideas for their implementation in the government, both at the States and the Central level.



PFI Foundation expert addressed a group of officers from Madhya Pradesh at the centre and discussed the latest trends in public policy for good governance during the programme that was held in 21-25 May 2018.



PFI Foundation continued to work with support from the NGO Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and in coordination with UN DESA. The Foundation support the work of the UN Committees under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the intergovernmental body responsible for granting consultative status with ECOSOC to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). During the year the

Foundation participated at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD57) will take place from 11 to 21 February 2019, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Commission is the advisory body responsible for the social development pillar of global development. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world are invited to attend the session. The priority theme for the session was - Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies.

The Foundation reviewed relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Development and the emerging issue. During the general debate, Foundation delegate and board member Sri A R Barbhuiya joined other NGO representatives and strongly underscored inequality as a defining issue of the present time. The Group of 77 expressed deep concern that more than 20 years after the World Summit for Social Development, progress remained slow and uneven and major gaps remained. Current trends demonstrated that income inequality not only persisted but had also increased within many countries, undermining poverty eradication efforts. Emphasis should be placed on the role of progressive taxation in favour of low-income households and public spending to support vulnerable populations. The fundamental role of international cooperation and renewed partnerships to support national efforts was highlighted. The European Union underscored that high inequality hampered growth and undermined social cohesion. The Caribbean Community noted that higher education spending had been the most important driver behind the declining trend in income inequality. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations highlighted the persistent disparities that remained in access to education, employment and health services.



Foundation's Executive Council Member Sri A R Barbhuiya discussed the UNESCO Model of Education at the 57th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD57)

During the high-level discussion on the priority theme, panellists and delegates underscored the challenges posed by rising inequality, as high inequality weakened the impact of growth on the reduction of poverty and diminished social cohesion, leading to social tensions. The need for policies to ensure equal opportunities and access to public services for all, and to support investment in human capabilities, especially for those at the bottom of income distribution, was emphasized. Progressive taxation to finance basic services, especially health, education and social protection, and increased investment in decent and sustainable work, as well as in the institutions of recent work, including in wage-determination mechanisms, were identified as crucial. The need to eliminate the gender pay gap in low-wage jobs was also highlighted as critical to reducing overall wage inequality.

FUTURE PLAN OF THE YEAR 2019-20

During the next Financial Year 2019-20 the Foundation has following plans;

1. To continue the Inter-faith dialogue programme specially focussing on Madrassas in India.
2. To work on the issues around preventing and responding to gender-based violence, particularly in humanitarian settings. In this regard the Foundation will focus on Witch-hunt related violence against women in some parts of India.
3. To continue the NCPUL Study Centre in Karimganj and run the CABA-MDP and FUNCTIONAL ARABIC DIPLOMA Course under the NCPUL, Ministry of HRD, Government of India.
4. To help setting up the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Academia Network in line with the broad objectives of the AP-IS Regional Cooperation Framework on UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, the primary goal of the proposed AP-IS Academia Network will be to provide a platform for a select interest group of leading regional universities and research institutions as well as individual researchers to enhance their role in emerging knowledge economies. Within this overall objective the AP-IS Academia Network may specifically focus on the following goals:
5. To join training and capacity building efforts on programme evaluation.
6. The Foundation is determined to take up specific projects to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

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.
