



Information Seeking Behavior of Pakistani Parliamentarians'

Submitted by

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Submitted to

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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the 3 year whole story of **Parliamentarians' Resource Center** from October 2005 to June 2008. For activity under United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project (PLSP). The project contributes to USAID's strategic objective "More Participatory, Representative, and Accountable Democracy in Pakistan" and intermediate result "Improved Legislative Capacity of National and Provincial Legislatures" This article represents the efforts of the PRC team which will contribute to the project.

Staff in Islamabad (Parliamentarians' Resource Center) is responsible to assist Parliamentarians in their legislative work and to provide them with reference research materials for the day-to-day management of activities with the National Assembly and Senate, and technical direction and planning for assisting these Parliamentarians.

Mission Statement:

The main purpose of this Resource Center is to promote, advocate, and consistently work to achieve the highest level of information provision to the Parliamentarians, both Senators and Members of the National Assembly (MNAs).

Goals of the Resource Center:

1. To provide a reference service using the materials and electronic sources.
2. To liaise with the NA and Senate library staff to determine whether they have access to information not available in the Resource Center and to advise the client of this.
3. To provide subject bibliographies of information – print and electronic - pertinent to the Parliamentary agendas
4. To provide internet searching facility to Parliamentarians' in Legislation.
5. To establish databases in subject areas appropriate to the work in the Parliament – including, but not limited to the subjects of the Committees.
6. To establish databases of Pakistani NGO's and International organizations, this may provide objective and timely information to the Parliamentarians'.

PRC Services

Quick Reference: Resource Center staff may assist the honorable Senators and MNAs with quick reference questions drawing upon the resources of the Resource Center collection and the internet.

Electronic Resources: These resources provide an opportunity to quickly search for information on topics of frequent interest, such as: Communication, Economics, Environment, Human Rights, International Relations, Information Technology, Law, Legislation, Local Government, Religion, World Politics, and World History.

Document Delivery: Requested information or documents may be delivered to honorable members either in printed form or electronically (By e-mail, fax, on diskette, etc.)

The PRC Collection: The PRC has a small general collection of books. The staff also collects publications of NGO's, iNGO's and other institutions which the honorable members might find of interest.

Newspapers and Periodicals: Several national daily newspapers and a number of current event magazines, such as Time, Newsweek, The Economist, News line, India today and Herald.

Conference/Discussion Room: The Resource Center has a well-equipped Conference/Discussion Room that includes: Multimedia Projector, Projector Screen, Flat Screen TV, VCR, TV channels on Cable network

Special Courses: MNAs and Senators wishing to participate in special courses (such as "English Communication for Legislation" or "Computing Skills")

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Presentations / Discussions: The Resource Center may host presentations on innovations regarding parliamentary services (such as the introduction of e-governance to the National Assembly and Senate) or on topical issues.

Printing, Photo Copying, Fax machine and Scanning Facilities are also available for MP's

Information seeking behavior and user needs

Manager PRC has conducted interview based survey for information seeking behavior of MPs. The result of survey shows that MPs are very keen to know about current information before presenting their questions on the floor of the house. After the survey PRC management received a number of suggestions for the capacity building of MP's.

- They need Language courses for discussion in the standing committee meetings and for the discussion on the floor of houses, as well as for their foreign visits.
- They need computer trainings for utilization of new technologies.
- Retrieval of information and current affairs from internet by themselves.
- Reference services for their research work.
- They need help in retrieving information for their talk shows, speeches, workshops and foreign visits.
- They need help in understating budget with the comparison of previous year's budget.
- They also need help in post budget discussions on the floor of the house.
- They need assistance in their legislative work.

Age Factor:

The average age of current Parliamentarians is 48.5 years while the revolution of Information Technology started in Pakistan in the late 90's, by the time, all current MP's have done their graduation, so 80-90% parliamentarians are weak in this field.

Knowing about the need and age factor and the tendency of accepting changes and the ability to learn new things by the Parliamentarians, PRC is very friendly and flexible in timing and conducting the computer and language courses.

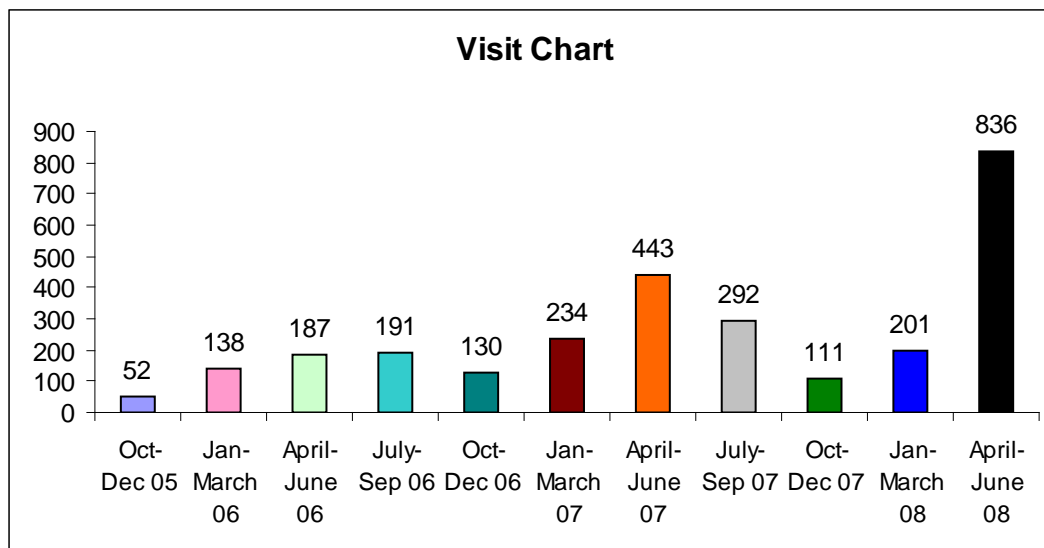
Overview:

There are total 442 Parliamentarians in both houses (National Assembly of Pakistan and Senate). In these 442 members, 100 MPs are Senators with 20 % female Senators and 80 % male Senators, National Assembly has 342 Members with 60 reserve seats for females, In current elections (Feb 2008) 15 female parliaments are elected from different constituencies.

In the early stage of this project, we can notice that in the first quarter (October to December 2005) of the project, the number of visits was very low, and then gradually it increased. In the last quarter of 2006 we can notice that visits were decreasing. Again from first quarter of 2007 PRC got a number of users increased in next quarter that is April to June 2007 (Due to budget session in both houses).

National Assembly tenure was completed in the last quarter. Numbers of users were very low. In February 2008, new National Assembly took oath and PRC started its planning for marketing of PRC services.

With the usage of various Marketing tools PRC got a huge number of visitors



Library Marketing tools and strategies

PRC team started brain storming and after discussion, made some suggestions

- At the oath taking ceremony of Members of National Assembly of Pakistan, PRC team presented a packet including some promotional documents. Each packet had a broacher, introductory letter, and a welcome card from PLSP.
- PRC practiced of making and placing a mailbox / notice pad on the door of each lodge.
- PRC sent congratulation letters to each MNA's lodge after they have been allotted a lodge in the month of March.
- All the Parliamentarians were divided into groups of 8-10 each. These groups were invited into PRC for tea and orientation (which included introduction to PRC, its services and staff, with the help of an informal power point presentation).
- A form has been designed to take feed back from the Parliamentarians. That form was circulated after every big task completed in the work plan.

Results:

Every time Parliamentarians enter their respective lodges, they will remind of PRC and its services. The mailboxes created an image of PRC as socially responsible office, which gave a base to every function PLSP commenced through PRC. In addition, the letters created a good image of PRC.

Librarian Working Group:

Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project (PLSP) has conducted 8 meetings of Librarian working group. The members of Librarian working group are the Librarians of PRC, National Assembly, Senate and all four Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan. The main function of this group is to make coordination with each other and resolving similar problems by discussions.

In these discussions, all librarians from all houses agreed on one point that they have not proper software for their respective Libraries. After the reviewing of some soft wares, all houses have decided that KOHA first open-source Integrated Library System (ILS) can help them in their Libraries and it can fulfill there needs. PLSP hired a consultant for implementation and customization of said software and installed it in PRC. PRC started work on it and found it very useful.

Parliamentarians' Resource Center Timings

PRC timings are 15/7 and can extend 24 hours on request by any MNA or Senator.

Staffing

PRC has five staff members. Manger of Parliamentarians' Resource Center, and four Parliamentarians' Resource Center Assistants.

- Manager has done her masters in Library and Information Sciences with vast experience in librarianship.
- All staff is qualified and expert in assisting MPs. Two Assistants has done their MBAs and one has done his LLM. He is assisting MPs in their legislative work. One has done his master degree in Journalism.
- PRC also hire trainers and facilitators for computer and language courses with the permission of PLSP office.

Success stories and Achievements:

In 3 years history PRC got many success stories.

- One Senator mentioned PRC name and its services in a Global Conference, **Higher Education Summit for Global Development** in Washington, D.C., on April 29-30, 2008.
- By the reference services of PRC, many MPs wrote articles in Newspapers.
- PRC got many queries, which MP's forwarded after knowing the reference services of PRC.
- Parliamentarians started computer learning and learnt from different computer courses offered by PRC.
- MPs use PRC reference services facility by using their cell phone during their meetings and request for information on urgent bases by internet on their black berries.
- PRC has introduced e-Google group for MP's for the PRC announcements and information.
- PRC got many acknowledgment letters from MP's.

PRC is continuously working hard to improve its services to meet the strategic objectives for Pakistan Legislative strengthening project (PLSP) and trying to enhance and maximize visits of MPs of Pakistan.