



September 15-16, 2016, New Delhi



**Railway Minister  
Suresh Prabhu  
inaugurated  
the 3rd  
National Conference**

## Introduction

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The Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) organised its third National Conference in New Delhi on 15th & 16th September, 2016 that focused on **"Future of Advocacy & Shaping Public Policy"**. The objective was to bring thought leaders to deliberate on how stakeholders need to respond to the changing patterns in Advocacy tools and practices. PAFI has been working to bring greater recognition to Public Affairs function and to sensitize stakeholders on the changing nature of Public Affairs in India.

The Conference had an overwhelming response with over 40 panelists, more than 250 delegates from nearly 150 Companies, Academia, Government, Think Tanks & Civil Society. Support from 24 sponsors, 13 supporting organizations, chambers, associations & media partner contributed to the success of PAFI's 3rd National Conference.

The Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) ([www.pafi.in](http://www.pafi.in)) is the only organised platform for Public Affairs professionals in the country. PAFI has representation from large and medium-sized transnational Indian and foreign companies. PAFI's objective is to redefine perceptions of how business entities should engage with stakeholders, from Government and Media to Civil Society and Academics.

PAFI's goal is to redefine how corporates should engage with various stakeholders in an open, transparent manner. PAFI seeks to recognize the strategic role of Public Affairs in an ethical manner, provide a platform to share best practices & build a credible network of Public Affairs professionals in India.

The 3rd National Conference of PAFI was an initiative towards realising this goal.





Increasingly new forms of Advocacy are emerging and are changing the way the world works, like the ever-evolving digital medium. While the development is happening at a rapid pace, it is important to take time to deliberate on the traditional tools and methods.

The PAFI National Conference 2016 identified several issues and challenges for sustainable dialogues with stakeholders. Some of the discussions were on "Future of Advocacy: Does Government See Value in Advocacy?", "Role of Public Affairs in Reputation Management" amongst many others. A change is clearly visible with respect to how Public Affairs was perceived earlier vis-à-vis the reputation the profession enjoys today. Earlier the perception was more about the liaison role which today is more about information or data based Policy Advocacy. The session on "Professionalising Public Policy & Public Affairs" deliberated exactly on this evolution.



One of its kind session on "Advocacy & Public Policy: A Party Perspective" engaged top leaders from BJP and focused on understanding their views on expectations from Public Affairs professionals.





PAFI's 3rd National Conference was inaugurated by **Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Minister for Railways, Government of India** on 16th September, 2016. As a precursor to the Conference, an inaugural dinner was organised on September 15th, 2016 where Mr. Amitabh Kant - CEO, NITI Aayog, (National Institution for Transforming India), Government of India addressed the gathering.

Mr. Prabhu spoke on how Public Affairs has a potential to make a huge impact. He said, Government is a structured organisation, society is a complex institution. Government needs to have working relations with civil society such as people in media, Public Affairs etc. and only then, change can be brought in society.

Citing an example Mr. Prabhu said, in our country one of the critical issues is about public health which bears huge cost on overall GDP. For this scenario to be altered, the focus has to shift from curative to preventive and hence the need for change of mindset. We need to take advantage of the current situation in the country – the right leadership, the influence of leadership globally, the acceptability of

the leadership in the country. It is an opportune moment to bring new ideas that can really make a change.

The Minister spoke on the Government's 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. He said cleanliness is in our culture. The whole campaign of Swachh Bharat is all about going back to roots. He explained how his Ministry is trying to identify best possible ways to ensure cleanliness in Railways. The Government needs the support of industry and the people. Swachh Bharat is a scheme where all can work together and one single intervention will have a huge impact on various sectors, including public health, environment and on people themselves.

In his address he invited the industry to come forward and share ideas which can work and, more importantly, work in the current system.



**Mr. Amitabh Kant - CEO, NITI Aayog, (National Institution for Transforming India), Government of India** was the Special Guest Speaker at the inaugural dinner.

In his address, he spoke about the confidence in India and how the country is experiencing positive action, specially in different states. He emphasised on the need to go beyond productivity and ensure that we have consistent productivity. He applauded the work of start-ups and youngsters who are trying to bring radical changes through innovation.





**Mr. Sunil Kant Munjal, Chairman, Hero Corporate Services Pvt. Ltd.** said, "Public Affairs must ensure that the objective of Advocacy is contributing in national interest."

Mr. Munjal went on to say that the role of Public Affairs is an important one in helping the Government drive policy, rules, laws and regulations. Constructive criticism is far more helpful than just criticism. If one does the right thing, the right thing will happen. Our job is to do the right thing. No one has a monopoly on good ideas. One must encourage to experiment and partner across the board.

**Mr. Raj Chengappa, Group Editorial Director, India Today & President, Editors Guild of India** opened his speech with a quote, 'genius is the ability to make the complex into simple'. He said our world is getting complex every passing day especially due to the technology around us. The objective of technology is to simplify, whereas paradoxically, we are moving to complexity. Today, we are truly dependent and less empowered. From Radio to Television to Laptops – complexity has given rise to growth and is making way for evolution of Public Affairs in India.

Mr. Chengappa added that the Public Affairs professionals must aim to bring clarity, simplicity and transparency in Public Advocacy so that last man in the line understands what he gets. This is where Public Affairs professionals can add value.

**Mr. Rahul Sharma, President & Co-founder PAFI and President, Rediffusion Communications** in his welcome address said that Public Affairs professionals have to constantly try and find ways not to beat the system, but create better value in their arguments to convince policy makers to make changes that would benefit the country.

**Mr. Ajay Khanna, Conference Chairman & Co-founder PAFI and Chief - Strategic & Public Affairs, Jubilant Bhartia Group** while setting the tone for the Conference said, PAFI's objective is to make Public Affairs more professional and fact based. He said, "Public Affairs need to be more public rather than being a private affair."

**Mr. Harish Krishnan, Vice President & Co-founder PAFI and Executive Director, Public Affairs & Strategic Engagements, Cisco India & SAARC** proposed a vote of thanks.



## Session II

### Future of Advocacy:

### Does Government See Value in Advocacy?

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Mr. Rajeev Batra, Past President & Co-founder PAFI and Group Head - Corporate Affairs, Hindustan Unilever Limited welcomed the panelists.

Understanding the process of decision making within the Government is key to greater interaction between companies and bureaucracy. Advocacy, by nature, has to remain dynamic. The future of Advocacy, therefore, has to remain rooted in providing transparent and honest policy inputs.



Mr. S Sundareshan, Former Secretary, Government of India, moderated the session and set the stage for discussion. In his comments he said, the real task is to educate civil servants on the nature of the task to be performed. He said three key tasks here are, one - to question the way policies are structured, two - to administer the agenda and three - to suggest solutions.

Mr. Ashish Bahuguna, Chairperson, FSSAI explained how the process of Advocacy is taken up by the civil servants. He mentioned that when any idea is shared with a regulator, the first thought that crosses his mind is, 'where is the idea coming from?'

There is an inherent suspicion in the minds of Government bodies and regulators. And hence the need to bring clarity and simplicity in the dialogue. He observed that today there is a lack of active discussion within public members on public needs and highlighted the urgency to have effective discussion with Members of Parliament on regulations which are simple to understand.



Mr. D K Bhalla, Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat in his comments highlighted that Advocacy has to be ethical and data based. He mentioned how increasingly legislators are reaching out to reference desk for information on their topics of interest and this process is empowering MPs in their decision making.





Speaking during the session Mr. Shrinivas Vashisht, Chief Governance Coordinator of Gurgaon (CGCG), Government of Haryana said, today speed of change is very fast. Information reaching the right place in a timely manner is of great significance and, in that respect, Advocacy gains high importance.

Mr. Vinay Sheel Oberoi, Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development expressed his views on how technology has changed the nature of interactions. "Today we have a more articulate and assertive

Indian", he said. He mentioned that public grievance tool is increasingly getting monitored in Government. One can easily prioritise what is important and has wider impact on issues of education.

Mr. Vikas Khitha, Head of Business Development & GM - Office of Chairman, L&T Finance Holdings Ltd. thanked the panelists for sharing their views.



## Session III

### Professionalising Public Policy & Public Affairs

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Mr. T S Vishwanath, Past President & Co-founder PAFI and Principal Advisor, APJ-SLG Law Offices welcomed the panelists and mentioned that the session is carefully crafted for discussion on 'Professionalising Public Policy & Public Affairs', which is one area taken very seriously within PAFI.



Mr. Amir Ullah Khan, Professor-Public Policy, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad & Manipal Institute of Technology shared his insights from classroom experience.

As a regular visitor to PAFI's Conference, Mr. Khan said that since last year he has been curious to find an answer to the question, "What issues do Public Policy professionals want to know more about?"

In his statement, he shared that he carried out a small exercise to seek an answer to this, and the first question that people in the classroom want to know is 'How do you explain the caste system? Does it work in urban India?' Followed by question on 'Why is it that two third of the population is still living in villages?' Then there are questions on 'How does the federal structure in India work? How do budgets get made?' and so on. Mr. Khan said that this exercise made him realise that it is of utmost importance to make Public Policy multidisciplinary. During his talk he emphasized on the need for Public Policy organisations to simplify and teach, 'What does regulation mean?'



Mr. Rajeev Kapoor, Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie said, "Public Policies are still made in an adhoc manner. However, things are changing and perspective of an outsider is seen as an important aspect by the Government of India." In this regard Public Affairs professionals are required and one can see constraints in demand and supply of quality professionals who can advise on Public Policy. In India, we do not have enough institutions who can teach Public Policy. The need is to strengthen institutional set-up and capitalize on intellect available outside Government set-ups. Mr. Kapoor advised, "Public Policy is to be rooted in liberal arts institutions and not in management institutions."





**Mr. M R Madhavan, Co-Founder & President, PRS Legislative Research** said, "In India we do very little evidence - based policy making. The crux is not in just finding the data but also to find implications of this data." He added, "PAFI is trying to get ethical Public Affairs practices in India."



"Governance is changing character", said **Pradeep Singh, Deputy Dean and CEO Mohali Campus, Indian School of Business**. He said that Public Affairs professionals must have the skillsets to work with ambiguity. There is a need to understand that in Public Policy goals are complex and dynamic. He emphasized on the need for concerted efforts to find optimum solutions. In his address Mr. Singh said, "Training and capacity building has to grow tremendously. What we have learnt may not be relevant in five years from now. Institutions like ours need to step up and get public servants in the classroom. There is a need to have blend of stakeholders and Public Affairs professionals in the classroom."

**Mr. Rakesh Thukral, Managing Director, Edelman India** said, demand for Public Affairs professionals is evident. We see youngsters coming forward to learn Public Policy. Public Affairs as a profession gives them a larger canvas to work upon. He further added, awareness around Public Policy matters and Public Affairs is lacking in organisations. The urge to develop is intense in our country, be it at an individual level or state level or country level. Demand is not an issue, it is more about bringing a structure around it. PAFI is helping bring order in this space. Speaking on the role of PAFI he said, PAFI can further support by bringing some research into the space and make the profession research based, knowledge based. Policy making process has to be made inclusive through collaboration and co-creation of processes.

**Mr. Arijit Sen, Director - Government Affairs and Public Policy, Dell** thanked the panelists for their valuable inputs and contribution in helping PAFI evolve and grow.

## Session IV

### Advocacy & Public Policy: A Party Perspective

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Dilip Chenoy, Former MD & CEO, NSDC welcomed the eminent panelists to the session.



Mr. Rajiv Kumar, Senior Fellow, CPR & Founding Director, Pahle India Foundation moderated the session and in setting the tone for the session, said that, policy in a matured economy cannot be done behind doors. We need to move from closed door to transparent system.



Mr. Vinay Sahasrabudhe, MP, Rajya Sabha and National Vice President, BJP said, the Prime Minister has an emphasis on policy driven governance and hence four years ago, BJP decided to establish an institute for policy research.

Talking about challenges in policy making he said, "Once policy is done, we lack benchmarks on when to review the policy." Policy document can be googled but one will not find an implementation roadmap and there lies the difference. He questioned that despite so many policy schools and research centres why no project was undertaken to evaluate performance of a political party when in power.

Mr. Sahasrabudhe said, Public Advocacy organizations have no particular framework and hence one can see several anomalies. There is a need to establish a cause above any vested interest. He also suggested to keep separate roles between people at grassroots level and people involved in Advocacy. This will help Public Affairs professionals in maintaining an unbiased approach. He suggested that PAFI members should take up a task to create distinction between what is termed as Advocacy and what constitutes lobbying. During the discussion it was also suggested that PAFI should meet Chief Ministers of BJP led states.

Mr. Vijay Chauthaiwale, In-Charge, Foreign Affairs Department, BJP said, "Government of India is coming out of reservations. We have put 'India first' as a motto of our foreign policy." India is taking leadership positions on several global alliances. The role of diaspora has been brought into the development agenda. Today our country is using soft power to engage the diaspora and an effort is underway to reach the unreachable. He cited an example of the World Yoga Day.

Speaking on engaging with Politicians & Members of Parliament, Mr. Chauthaiwale said at times extreme positions are taken by people in industrial bodies/grassroots level which is detrimental to overall policy development and country interest.

Mr. Ajay Khanna, Conference Chairman & Co-founder PAFI and Chief - Strategic & Public Affairs, Jubilant Bhartia Group thanked the panelists for sharing their views with the participants.



## Session V

### Role of Public Affairs in Reputation Management

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Ms. Prema Sagar, Founding President PAFI and Vice Chair, Burson-Marsteller, Asia Pacific & Principal/Founder, Genesis Burson Marsteller welcomed the panelists and said, "the question of looking at reputation management from the eyes of digital is going to be something that is now and in the future." Ms. Ankhi Das, Public Policy Director, India, South & Central Asia, Facebook moderated the session and invited the panelists to throw light on 'How can companies build and sustain reputations in the digital world?'



Mr. Anil Padmanabhan, Executive Editor, Mint spoke on how digital is a big place for his publication. He said social media is something big, next after mobiles for information access. Mr. Padmanabhan said most of their readers are reading digitally. Biggest takeaway of social media is the democratization of space. Legacy media and new media, both should aspire to offer credible content. He emphasized on establishing credibility through content which will make people start believing in your facts.



Mr. Chetan Krishnaswamy, Country Head - Public Policy, Google said, interplay between traditional, mainstream and digital media is interesting. On one side they are symbiotic and draw energies from each other but, on the other hand, recording and reporting of news is different. He said user generated content is coming in sheer volume and hence there is a need to collaborate between traditional and digital media to secure publishers' interest. Sharing some insights from his experience, Mr. Krishnaswamy said most of the online sites are appointing readers' editor to ensure content is curated.

Mr. Kevin Bell, Global Practice Chair for Public Affairs, Burson-Marsteller spoke on what is the talent development agenda today which requires immediate attention. He was of the view that Internet is a force for good. Through Internet, people feel empowered like through the use of smartphones. Today, people are able to express their views very firmly and all through because of Internet. He mentioned, "the future of Internet is in the hands of young, to ensure they use it more sensibly and feel the responsibility of its use."



Ms. Manisha Sood, Country General Manager, Fitbit spoke about how her Company is engaging with customers and that active feedback from users is used in development of their products. She also added how their products are more meaningful to the end-user due to active engagement via Internet.

The session also took up an important question on 'right to forget' in an era when every single action can be pinned to your timeline. Expressing his views on this, Mr. Ishteyaque Amjad, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Coca-Cola India Pvt. Ltd. said, "In a world where nothing can be hidden, better you have nothing to hide." He also proposed a vote of thanks.





## Session VI

### The Last Word: The Legislatures' Perspective

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Mr. Raman Sidhu, Treasurer & Co-founder PAFI and Chairman, EBG Federation-India welcomed the panelists to the session and set the tone for a discussion on what role can Public Affairs teams in companies play in providing relevant information to legislators?



Mr. Sanjaya Baru, Former Editor & Media Advisor to Prime Minister moderated the session and said key to success in Public Affairs is to maintain lifelong relationships. In his address he complimented the leadership of PAFI for bringing phenomenal growth to the forum over the last four years.



Mr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, MP, Rajya Sabha, INC said Public Affairs professionals are very desirable part of the system. Problem is we have not created any legal structure for Public Affairs professionals and hence we start looking at them with suspicion. Speaking about PAFI, Mr. Singhvi said, everything that we see in PAFI as an organization is laudable. However, as next steps, the forum must work towards making lobbying legal so that the profession enjoys better reputation.

Mr. Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, MP, Lok Sabha, BJD said, the question is do we need external inputs and the answer is yes. He said, "Our MPs are required to manage their constituencies and are left with no time to research. Hence they need support with respect to data and inputs." He further said, "the moment you put a corporate face to data and inputs, it becomes a case of allegation - lobbying with agenda. Today dialogue is happening on problems of farmers but without any discussion on what is the solution." "I had proposed a private member's bill on lobbying which in future may change the way dialogues are taken", added Mr. Deo.



Mr. Harshvardhan Singh Dungarpur, MP, Rajya Sabha, BJP was of the view that it is time for constructive partnerships. Information has to be given in brief, concise form. "Something which is pre-cooked and easily digestible", he said. In his views, evidence based Advocacy helps MPs work faster. We hope to get nicely packed information capsule, which is less voluminous and reaches us in minimum time, from firms and people in Public Affairs profession.

Mr. Pavan Kumar Varma, Former MP, Rajya Sabha, Member-JDU, Writer & Diplomat elaborated his view on Public Advocacy. He said, according to him no Advocacy is neutral. Every Advocacy should have a point of view. "Having a group without any view is a search in illusion." He mentioned, "Important aspect is to have a point of view based on your credible facts." Talking about the future of Public Advocacy he said, the need and scope of Advocacy group will only increase further.



Mr. Sandip Beri, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. thanked the panelists and the participants for attending and actively participating in the discussions.





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