

# Amartya Sen's Pratichi Trust praises TMC govt's initiatives

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Economist Amartya Sen. (Express Photo by Aditya Paul)

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The Pratichi Trust founded by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has praised the West Bengal government's "Duare Sarkar [Government at the doorstep]" and "Didi Ke Bolo [Tell Didi]" initiatives, calling them apt for democracy and for achieving the end goal of "responsive governance".

In a report published this month, the Trust said, "A vibrant democracy requires vigorous governance, and vigorous governance ideally draws its energy and direction from the aspirations and ambitions of and even accusations from its citizens. Good governance, therefore, is the 'art of listening' to people's voices and views and the allied capacity to act upon such concerns, criticisms and complaints through appropriate policy choices."

The government started “Duare Sarkar” last year to ensure the delivery of specific government schemes at the doorstep through outreach camps organised at gram panchayats and the municipal ward level. The “Didi Ke Bolo” initiative was intended to give citizens a platform to connect to Chief Minister [Mamata Banerjee](#) and talk about grievances. Both the initiatives were part of the administration’s efforts to showcase its welfare schemes before the state elections.

The report added, “Under the aegis of the Chief Minister’s Office, Government of West Bengal set up a public Grievance Redressal Cell (PGRC) in 2019. It has emerged as a novel governance project in the country as a technology-based (ICT-enabled) platform for public grievance redressal. Over a short span of one-and-a-half years, the cell appears to have dealt with more than ten lakhs of grievances online, and around 2.75 crore people through camp mode (Duare Sarkar) with an impressive record of 95 per cent grievance resolution rate. Since this is a community-based service, rather than an institution-based one, a huge number of people are reached through this system.”

The Trust praised the schemes for encouraging people to file complaints, make suggestions, and address problems and necessities. “This is perceived by the people as a citizen-friendly system. Moreover, as the suggestions and complaints are accessed by the highest office, i.e., the CMO, the accountability of concerned offices has gone up. Speedy redressals are better ensured,” it added.

The report said deteriorating roads were one of the top concerns of the citizens, and following the feedback the government launched the “Pathoshree” programme on October 1, 2020, and reconstructed and repaired more than 14,000 km of roads in comparatively inaccessible parts of the state.

“The cell has also played an active role in addressing the concerns of citizens during the Covid-induced lockdown, including facilitating the return of a large number of migrants from the various states of the country. Also, the state was witness to a severe and widespread devastation caused by a super-cyclone called [Amphan](#). Rising up to the unprecedented challenges that followed, the cell took up prompt measures to ameliorate people’s woes. About 0.3 million people in the state were

given assistance through this initiative. The initiative has already won some accolades like SKOCH Digital India Platinum Award and Express Technology Award in 2020,” the report added.

According to the report, 45 per cent of those who aired their grievances were women. It added, “The figure indicates that a large proportion of women respond and react to a plethora of schemes specially designed for women including programmes such as ‘Kanyashree’,

‘Rupashree’, and educational scholarships for specific social groups and widow pension schemes etc. Speedy redressal of such grievances will likely improve girl’s educational attainment and other core capabilities.”

The Pratichi report said most complaints were received from Paschim Medinipur (17 per cent), followed by Purba Medinipur (11 per cent) and South 24 Parganas. Most of those who registered grievances were 50 years or above (63 percent). About 16 per cent of the youth filed complaints through phone calls and e-mails.