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Asian region

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Organization, mandate, performance: Public Accounts Committees from the Asian Region

Introduction

In 2002 David McGee published a book entitled *The Overseers*. The book, that presented the results of a survey conducted among PACs from the Commonwealth, investigated the role, the function, the activities and the performance of two very important oversight tools: the Auditor General (AG) and the Public Accounts Committees (PAC).

The book by McGee (2002) has been for many years the standard work on PACs. In his book he advanced several claims. He claimed that size matters, that when PACs are too small they are less likely to function effectively, that bigger PACs may be dysfunctional when they are not adequately staffed, that opposition Chairpersons are essential for securing the successful performance of PACs and that an adequate representation of opposition forces and MPs is essential for making PAC work effectively.

In 2009 the World Bank Institute (WBI) has conducted, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), a survey on PACs. The survey, that has been administered globally, allows one to perform two tasks: first, to assess the capacity, the organization, the resources and the mandate of PACs from the Asian region and, second, to compare and contrast them with PAC from the rest of the world (Stapenhurst, Pelizzo and Jacobs, 2013).

The survey, administered by WBI in collaboration with CPA, collected information on PACs from Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and Oceania. We present here some of the data concerning the organization, the mandate, and the activity performed by PACs from the Asian region.

The paper is divided in four parts. Part One provides some information concerning the size, the partisan affiliation of the Chairpersons, the representation of opposition parties and the size of the support staff of the Asian PACs. Part two discusses the way in which PACs are set up, the dispositions under which they operate and the scope of their mandate. Part Three discusses the amount of activities carried out by PACs in the Asian region, while in the final part we draw some conclusions.

The evidence presented here can easily be summarized in the following terms: PACs from Asia are bigger, better staffed and more likely to be chaired by an opposition MP than PACs in the rest of the world. These three characteristics are offset by the fact that in Asian PACs opposition parties are not represented nearly as well as they are in the rest of the world. In terms of mandate, PACs in Asia have on average a much wider mandate than they do elsewhere. In terms of activity, the data collected by WBI in collaboration with CPA suggest that PACs in Asia hold more meetings and hearings, but conclude fewer inquiries and, as a result, produce fewer reports.

Part One. Organizational features

The evidence generated by the WBI-CPA survey is consistent with the findings presented by study by McGee (2002) and Pelizzo (2011). In fact, while McGee (2002) reported in his 70-country study that PACs have on average 11 members and Pelizzo (2011) reported that they have on average 11.6 members, the most recent data collected by WBI and CPA reveal that PACs have on average 10.6 members—a difference that can be explained by the fact that the size and the composition of the sample was not the same.¹

¹ After the publication of McGee's book, in 2002 the World Bank Institute surveyed 52 national and subnational legislatures in Commonwealth countries in Asia, Australasia, Canada and the United Kingdom. These data have been used to produce three different publications, Stapenhurst et al. (2005), Pelizzo et al. (2006) and Pelizzo (2011). The 2009 survey, administered by WBI in collaboration with CPA, covered 58 national and subnational legislatures from seven regions. There were four responses from Africa, nine from Asia, 14 from Canada, two from the Caribbean, eight

Table 1. Organizational features

Country	Size of the PAC (n. of MPs serving on the Committee)	% Opposition MPs serving on the Committee	Opposition chair	Size of the staff (n. of staff members supporting the PAC)
Bhutan	5	n.a.	n.a.	7
Bangladesh	12	40	No	2
Indonesia	9	33	Yes	10
Maldives	7	50	Yes	0
Nepal	24	0	Yes	5
Sri Lanka	31	n.a.	Yes	6
Thailand	8	46.6	Yes	9
Average	13.7	33.92	83.3% yes	5.57

The data at our disposal make it quite clear that the size of PACs in Asia is sensibly larger than the world average. The size of PACs in the Asian region varies from a minimum of 5 members in Bhutan to a maximum of 31 members in Sri Lanka, with an average of 13.7 members. In other words, the size of Asian PACs is nearly 34% larger than the size of the world average.

The second point that must be underlined is that opposition forces, parties and MPs are generally adequately represented in the Asian PACs. Except for Nepal, which reported that no opposition MP serves on the PAC, in the rest of the region the opposition controls from a minimum of 33 % of the seats in the Indonesian PAC to a maximum of 50% of the seats in the Maldivian PAC. This means that opposition forces control on average 33.9 % of the seats on the PACs in Asia, a value that is only slightly lower than the world average (36.8%)

With regard to the presence of opposition chair, the PACs from Asia greatly outperform the PACs in the rest of the world. In fact, while 70 per cent of the PACs worldwide are chaired by an opposition MP, 83.3 per cent of the PACs from ARAPAC are chaired by an opposition member.

With regard to the staff, there is considerable variation in terms of the level of support that PACs enjoy. In fact, the number of staffers at the disposal of a PAC varies from a minimum of 0 (zero) staff members in the Maldives to a maximum of 10 staff members in Indonesia. This great variation notwithstanding, Asian PACs are on average better staffed than PACs from the rest of the

from Europe, eight from the Pacific region, 9 from Asia and three non-Commonwealth PACs— Indonesia, Thailand and Kosovo. These data were used by Stapenhurst, Pelizzo and Jacobs (2013).

world. Asian PACs enjoy on average the support of 5.57 staffers, while the average number of staffers worldwide is just 3.33.

Therefore Asian PACs are bigger, better staffed and more commonly chaired by opposition MPs than PACs in the rest of the world. This means that from an organizational point of view, PACs from this region have all they need to perform more effectively than their counterparts in the rest of the world.

Part Two. Institutional factors and the mandate of PACs

Literature on Public Accounts Committees has generally focused its attention only on institutional organizational and behavioral factors as antecedents of successful performance of a PAC.

Scholars who believe in the importance of how a PAC is institutionalized, or created, have advocated two different positions. The first position is that the performance of a PAC is enhanced when a PAC is set up by a constitutional disposition (Rawlings, 2006). The second position is that the performance of a PAC is boosted when it is set up by an Act of Parliament - reasoning that such an enactment reflects the Parliament's commitment to the effective performance of the PAC itself (Jacobs, Jones and Smith, 2007).

Method of institution

PACs may be institutionalized in different ways: by a country's constitution, by the standing orders of the assembly, or by an act of parliament or by various sets of normative dispositions. PACs were established by parliamentary rules in Thailand, by constitutional reference and parliamentary rules in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. In a second group of countries PACs were institutionalized by

parliamentary rules and the standing orders of the Parliament in Nepal and Maldives. The PAC in Bhutan and Indonesia was established by Act of Parliament. As an example of constitutional support is the case of Bangladesh Article 76(1)(a) of the constitution which along with Rules 233 and 234 of the Rules of Procedure provide the full legislative base.

Scope of mandate

Scholars who believe in the importance of the scope and the range of activities that can be performed by a PAC have generally suggested that the effectiveness with which a PAC performs its oversight function is a function of the scope of its mandate (Degeling, Anderson and Guthrie, 1996). In other words, the wider the mandate, the more effective the PAC.²

The mandate refers to three distinct sets of powers dealing respectively with the right of access, the accounts and operations and the relations with the Auditor General (AG) or other Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI).

Specifically, the right of access refers to the number and type of government organizations or public entities to which PACs have either unconditional, conditional or no access. The survey administered by CPA and WBI asked respondents to indicate whether they had unconditional, conditional or no access to the following entities: Government agencies within the finance portfolio, Government agencies outside the finance portfolio, Statutory authorities, Government owned corporations, Local government authorities, Parliament (and its expenditures), Parliamentarians⁷

² Operating under this assumption, Pelizzo (2010) constructed an index of PAC capacity. The index, named Formal Power Index, was an additive scale that basically reflected how wide was the PAC's right of access, power over accounts, and involvement in AG's operation. The analysis, conducted with data collected in a small number of Pacific Island states, revealed that there was little to no relationship between the formal powers at the disposal of a PAC and the amount of activity performed. On the basis of this evidence, Pelizzo (2010) argued that while PAC performance in small countries is not indicative of what happens elsewhere, the presumed relationship between formal powers at the disposal of a PAC and its performance is not a given. The research conducted by Stapenhurst, Pelizzo and Jacobs (2013) corroborated this conclusion. In fact while it showed that structural or organizational characteristics may have both a direct and an indirect impact on the performance of a PAC, they made clear that the scope of PAC mandate has no influence whatsoever on the effectiveness of the PAC.

expenditures (eg. Staff), Government service providers, Government funded non-government organizations.

The second set of powers, what we define as the powers on accounts and operations, pertains to whether PACs can examine accounts; consider budget estimates; assess the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of a given policy; the efficiency and the economy of policy implementation, the effectiveness of policy implementation, and whether they have the power to undertake self-initiated inquiries. PACs can enjoy these powers unconditionally, conditionally or not at all.

The third set of powers concerns PACs' ability to examine various types of Auditor Generals' reports or to bring matters to the attention of the Auditor General. The three powers that belong to this category are the power to perform an examination of Auditor General compliance reports, an examination of Auditor General Performance reports and, finally, the power to refer matters to the Auditor General for investigation. PACs can enjoy each of these powers unconditionally, conditionally or may not enjoy it at all.

Some evidence

Let's proceed systematically and let's begin with the right of access. The first of the right of access powers pertains to whether a PAC has right to access to government agencies within the finance portfolio. In this respects, six out of the seven Asian PACs that participated in the survey, reported to have unconditional access while one reported to have only conditional access. All PACs reported to have access, either conditional or unconditional, to agencies within the finance portfolio. This result is perfectly in lie with what was reported by global analyses (Stapenhurst, Pelizzo and Jacobs, 2013)

With regard to the right to access government agencies outside the finance portfolio, Asian PACs outperform their counterparts in the rest of the world. In fact, while all PACs from Asia enjoy unconditionally this power, only 96.3 per cent of the PACs in the rest of the world enjoyed this power unconditionally, 1.5 of them enjoyed it conditionally and 1.9% of them did not enjoy it all. This means that the power of accessing government agencies outside the finance portfolio is more common and more powerful for PACs in Asia than for PACs operating elsewhere. Furthermore, while all PACs from Asia have unconditional right of access over statutory authorities and state owned corporations, more than 9 per cent of the PACs in the world does not enjoy these powers.

Even more impressive is the gap between Asian PACs and PACs in the rest of the world with regard to the right of access over local authorities. Nearly 36 per cent of the PACs in the world lacks this power, but only 1 of the six Asian PACs for which data were available reported to lack this power—this means that only 16.6 per cent of ARAPAC lacks this power. This value is nearly 20-percentage points lower than the world average (35.8%).

The data at our disposal also reveal that 6 out of 7 Asian PACs have unconditional right of access over parliament's expenditures, while in the remaining case the PAC enjoys this power on a conditional basis. In this regard PAC from Asia have a wider mandate than PACs in the rest of the world. Similarly, while large proportions of PACs worldwide lack the right of access over service providers (35.2 per cent), 6 of 7 ARAPACs enjoy this power.

In other words, except for the right of access over parliamentarians expenditures (where there is no detectable difference between Asian PACs and PACs elsewhere) and for right of access over NGOs (an area in which PACs worldwide are more likely to have right of access than PACs from Asia) the mandate (in terms of right of access) of PACs from the Asian region is much wider than the world average. See Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Right of access

	Bhutan	Bangladesh	Indonesia	Maldives	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Thailand
Government agencies within the finance portfolio	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1
Government agencies outside the finance portfolio	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Statutory authorities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Government owned corporations	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Local government authorities	1	0	1	*	1	1	1
Parliament (and its expenditures)	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1
Parliamentarians' expenditures (eg. Staff)	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
Government service providers	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Government funded non-government organizations	0	0	1	*	1	1	0
Tot	8	6.5	7.5	6*	9	8	7

Legend: 1 means that a power is enjoyed unconditionally, 0.5 means that it is enjoyed conditionally that is under some constraints while 0 means that the PAC lacks that specific power.

Table 3. Right of Access: ARAPAC v World averages

	world		Asia	
Power	% of PACs that lack this power	Number of valid answers	% of PACs that lack this power	Number of valid answers
Government agencies within the finance portfolio	0.0	54	0	7
Government agencies outside the finance portfolio	1.9	54	0	7
Statutory authorities	9.3	54	0	7
Government owned corporations	9.3	54	0	7
Local government authorities	35.8	53	16.6	6
Parliament (and its expenditures)	7.3	41	0	7
Parliamentarians' expenditures (eg. Staff)	24.4	41	28.6	7
Government service providers	35.2	54	14.3	7
Government funded non-government organizations	41.5	53	50	6

Legend: 1 means that a power is enjoyed unconditionally, 0.5 means that it is enjoyed conditionally that is under some constraints while 0 means that the PAC lacks that specific power.

Accounts and operations

The functions of PACs in South Asia extend beyond the exclusive review of expenditure as to its wisdom, faithfulness and due regard for economy. Instead, the focus is on audit observations involving financial irregularities, losses and nugatory expenditures. When any case of such nature is brought to its attention –i.e. negligence resulting in loss or extravagance the Ministry concerned is called upon to explain as to what action, disciplinary or otherwise, has been taken to prevent the recurrence. In such cases the Committee is expected to record its opinion, either disapproving the action of the government or passing strictures against the extravagance or lack of proper control by the Ministry or Department concerned. The Committee is increasingly expected to examine the control framework and discuss points of financial discipline and principle.

The Committee is normally not concerned with rationale and the design of a government policy but it is within its jurisdiction to point out if there has been waste or abuse of public funds in the implementation of a government policy. The Committee calls attention to weak points in internal control and administration, leaving it to the government to remedy the breakdown in the system of checks and balances.

The PACs' main functions/powers across the seven Asian countries surveyed are presented in table 4. The evidence presented in table 4 shows that all the PACs in the region have the power to examine the accounts and financial affairs, 6 out of the 7 PACs have an unconditional power to do so, while the Indonesian PAC enjoys this power on a conditional basis. Only 2 of the 7 PACs (Bhutan and Nepal) have an unconditional power to consider the budget estimates, while all the other PACs do not engage in the preparation, the drafting or the consideration of the budget. It is interesting to note that 4 of the PACs from this region are new PACs, as Bhutan, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand have established or adopted a PAC only in recent years. Two (Bhutan, Nepal) of the four new PACs have the power, unlike the more traditional PACs described by McGee (2002) and

Yamamoto (2007), to consider budget estimates, while both the Indonesian and the Thai PAC lack, as the majority of PACs worldwide, the power to examine budget estimates. All PACs for which information was available (Sri Lanka did not provide an answer to these questions) reported to have the power to consider economy, efficiency and effectiveness of policies and of their implementation. Only 5 of the six PACs for which information was collected (no data on Sri Lanka were made available) have the power to evaluate the delivery of outcomes, while the Indonesian PAC lacks the power to do so. Last but not least two-thirds of the PACs in the region have the power to undertake self-initiated inquiries as only Bhutan and Bangladesh reported to lack the power to do so.

Table 4. Accounts and Operations in Asia

	Bhutan	Bangladesh	Indonesia	Maldives	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Thailand
Examination of accounts and financial affairs	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1
Consideration of budget estimates (other than Audit Office)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Efficiency, economy and effectiveness of government policy	1	1	1	1	1	*	1
Efficiency and economy of policy implementation (value for money)	1	1	1	1	1	*	1
Effectiveness of government implementation (delivery of outcomes)	1	1	0	1	1	*	1
Undertake self-initiated inquiries	0	0	1	1	1	*	1
Tot	5	4	3.5	5	6	1	5

Legend: 1 means that a power is enjoyed unconditionally, 0.5 means that it is enjoyed conditionally that is under some constraints while 0 means that the PAC lacks that specific power. The * means that no information was made available for the analysis.

While the data presented so far provide a clear picture of the breadth of the mandate that PACs have in the region with regard to the examination of accounts of operation, we can now show that mandate of PACs in this region is actually wider than it is worldwide. First of all, the percentage of PACs from Asia that is mandated to consider budget estimates is greater than it is worldwide—28.6 Asian PACs have the power to do so while this power is enjoyed only by 22.2 per cent of the PACs globally. Second, while all Asian PACs evaluate the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of government policy, only 79.6 per cent of the PACs worldwide has the power to do so. Third, all PACs from the Asian region consider the value for money of policy implementation, whereas only 94.1 per cent of the PACs is empowered to do so globally.

The only two areas in which the terms of reference of Asian PACs are outperformed by the terms of reference of PACs worldwide concern the delivery of outcomes and the power to launch self-initiated inquiries.

Overall, however, the mandate of PACs from the Asian region is generally wider than the mandate of PACs worldwide. Hence, if the performance of PACs were an automatic consequence of the width of their mandate, the performance of Asian PACs should be somewhat superior to the performance of PACs worldwide. This is not necessarily the case because PACs' actual role in public budgeting may significantly differ from what their formal powers would predict.

The gap between formal power and performance is explained by the fact that effective oversight depends not only on the availability of oversight tools, but also on additional conditions (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012). Effective oversight may depend on the specific oversight powers given to the PACs, on whether the PAC has the ability to modify legislation, on whether PACS and PAC member are given proper information to adequately perform their oversight tasks , on the role of individual members of committee , on the role of committee chair, on swings in the political mood of the country, on tensions between the executive and the legislative branches, and on the saliency of issues and how aggressively the opposition performs its role.

Relationship with the Auditor General

With regard to the relationship with the Auditor General, the survey questionnaire administered by WBI and CPA, asked PACs to say whether they had the power to examine the AG’s compliance reports, whether they had the power to examine the AG’s performance reports and whether they had the power to refer matters to the AG for investigation.

All the PACs from Asia reported to enjoy each of these power on an unconditional basis. This result is not uncommon as PACs from several other regions also reported to enjoy the same set of powers. But this results places PACs from the Asian region above the world average as these powers are more common here than they are, from instance, in Africa, Australia, Canada and the Pacific region.

Table 5. Relationship with the AG

	bhutan	bangladesh	Indonesia	Maldives	Nepal	Sri lanka	Thailand
Examination of Auditor General compliance reports	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Examination of Auditor General Performance reports	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Refer matters to the Auditor General for investigation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Legend: 1 means that a power is enjoyed unconditionally.

Part Three. Activity

There are various types of activities that a PAC is expected to conduct. A PAC must in fact hold meetings and committee hearings, it must conduct and complete inquiries and, last but not least, it must produce and submit reports.

PAC Meetings

An important indicator of workload is the frequency or the number of meetings³. Meetings are normally called by the Chairperson in consultation with members representing all the parties. The Committee is expected to schedule sufficient meetings to discharge its responsibilities.

This again varies between countries depending on the Parliament involved, the way the PAC is structured and its continuity over time. In some Asian countries there have at times been interruptions to the parliamentary processes as in the case of Bangladesh recently. These gaps in continuity have in turn had an impact on the workings of the PAC.

There is considerable variation in the frequency of meetings between PACs in Asia. Most frequent meetings were held in Thailand while the fewest were held in Bhutan which, along with Indonesia and Thailand, is a relatively new PAC. Bangladesh holds on average 15 meetings per year; Nepal around 40 meetings per year; Sri Lanka around 40 per year and Bhutan has only recently started and had held 4 meetings during the last year, while Thailand holds 50 meetings a year. Indonesia reported to hold 2 meetings a week.

This means that Asian PACs hold on average more meetings than PACs operating in the rest of the world. Nepal has the most active subcommittees which meet several times more than their Bangladeshi counterparts.

³ In Canada for instance the committee normally meets when the legislature is in session, but may also decide to meet when the legislature stands adjourned. The committee may also meet also meet outside the legislature.

Hearings

The data collected by WBI in collaboration with CPA show that there is great variation in the number of hearings held by PACs from the Asian region. Except for Indonesia, which reported the number of hearings held on a weekly basis, the other PACs reported the number of hearings held on a yearly basis. The most active of the PACs that provided a response in this regard was the one from Nepal, while the least active was the one in Thailand, while the majority of PACs from the Asian region (Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand) did not provide any indication as to whether and how many hearings they hold on a yearly basis. The average number of PAC hearings held in the region is considerably higher than in the rest of the world.

Inquiries

As we noted above a fairly large number of PAC from the Asian region has the power to conduct self-initiated inquiries. Whether they do or not is an altogether different question. The survey administered by WBI in collaboration with CPA asked PACs from Asia to indicate what proportion have committee activities been initiated in the three previous years by the Auditor General, Parliament, Minister, the committee itself or by some other source. The responses provided by the PACs in this respect show that there is considerable variation.

First of all, there is considerable variation in the percentage of activities initiated by the Auditor General. This percentage varies from a minimum of 0 (zero) percent in Thailand and the Maldives islands, to 20 per cent in Bangladesh, to 30 per cent in Indonesia and to 50 per cent in Bhutan.

Second, there is considerable variation in the percentage of activities initiated by parliament. This percentage varies from a minimum of 0 (zero) percent in Bangladesh, Maldives and Thailand to a maximum of 70 per cent in Indonesia, whereas exactly half of the initiatives carried out by the PAC in Bhutan are initiated by the AG.

Third, there is no variation at all in the percentage of activities initiated by a Minister. All respondents indicated that this percentage in each of their respective countries is 0 (zero). A similar set of responses was given for the percentage of activities initiated by other sources.

Finally, there is some variation in the percentage of activities initiated by the PAC itself. This percentage varies from a minimum of 0 percent in Bhutan to a maximum of 100 per cent in Thailand and Maldives islands. Bangladesh reported that the PAC had initiated about 80 per cent of the activities it conducted.

This evidence sustains the claim that the single most important source of PAC activity in the Asian region is the PAC itself.

Nearly all PACs in the region conduct more than one inquiry at the same time. Indonesia, Thailand, Bhutan and Sri Lanka reported to conduct up to 3 inquiries simultaneously whereas the PAC from Nepal reported to conduct up to 9 inquiries at once.

The data reveal that there is some variation in how long it takes to complete self-initiated inquiries. The duration of this type of inquiries is up to 3 months in Bhutan 3 to 6 months in Indonesia and Thailand and up to 12 months in Nepal.

There is a clear inverse relationship between the duration of inquiries and the number of inquiries conducted simultaneously. This findings has one of the following two meanings: either holding too many inquiries at once prevents the PACs from completing them in a more expedite manner or it is because completing an inquiry is such a time consuming effort that the PAC ends up holding so many inquiries simultaneously. The second scenario is not particularly problematic, but

the first may be. Timeliness in conducting and completing inquiries is one of the most important conditions for keeping the government accountable.

In terms of number of completed inquiries, there is some variation. In the three before the survey was administered Maldives reported to have completed 1 inquiry, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal reported the completion of 2 inquiries, Sri Lanka completed 3 inquiries, while Indonesia completed 4 a year in its one year of activity while Thailand completed 2.5 a year in the two years it was active.

This evidence suggests two considerations. First, the PACs in South East Asian PACs significantly outperformed their South Asian counterparts in terms of completing inquiries. Second, that the performance of both South Asian and South East Asian PACs is below the world standard. In fact, outside of Asia, PACs completed more than 19 inquiries in the three year span about which information was collected.

This suggest an important conclusion. PACs from the Asian region meet more frequently than in the rest of the world they hold more hearings, but they complete fewer inquiries.

Conclusions

The literature on PACs has usually indicated that the success of PACs depends on some organizational characteristics (size, staff support, opposition chair, proper representation of opposition) as well as on some institutional characteristics (scope of mandate). Regardless of whether one believes that the successful performance of a PAC depends on its organizational characteristics or the scope of its mandate, the evidence presented here suggests that the performance of PACs from the Asian region should be much better than that of PACs operating in other parts of the world.

Asian PACs are bigger, usually chaired by an opposition member, have a broader mandate, and more staff support than PACs operating in other jurisdictions. The only area in which Asian PACs need to improve, eventually, concern the presence or representation of opposition members in the committee. The percentage of opposition MPs serving on PACs in Asia is lower than it is in the rest of the world.

In terms of output, PACs from the Asian region are significantly more active than PACs from the other regions. Asian PACs hold more meetings and hearings. But while this higher level of activity is commendable in itself, it does not always translate into effective oversight. Perhaps a qualitative study with higher level of subjectivity on the quality of the recommendations, level of knowledge of MPs who are part of these committees and quality of discussions in the Committees etc. will shed some lights on this.

However, it can safely be concluded that, the high number of meetings and hearings is not matched by a similar level of success in terms of completing inquiries and producing reports—without which parliament cannot properly keep the government accountable for its actions and expenditures. This is an area in which Asian PACs need to take giant leaps forward to catch up with the success rate that PACs enjoy in the rest of the world.

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