

‘Dialogue on Governance’

On the occasion of

Project Launch

Hotel Ramada, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Monday, 31 May 2010

Event Report

‘Developing a culture of good governance and accountability in the state of Rajasthan, India through involving CSOs and building their capacity with a focus on improving the public expenditure outcomes’



Organised by

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Background:

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) has been working for enhancing transparency and accountability at all levels of governance through enhancing client power and engagement in the processes of government. CUTS' contribution towards improving governance is well recognized at the national and international level.

In this direction, CUTS Center for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) started its new endeavor of developing a culture of good governance and accountability through a project in all 33 district of Rajasthan which commenced with a 'Dialogue on Governance' in which chief speakers were Prof V.S Vyas who is a member of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and Dy. Chairman, Planning Board, GoR, Rao Rajendra Singh, who is a member of legislative assembly in Rajasthan, Gopa Kumar Thampi, Chief Operating Officer, ANSA-SAR and George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International.

This endeavor of CUTS CART is supported by Affiliated Network for Social Accountability – South Asia Region and Global Partnership Fund (ANSA–SAR & Global) based at Bangladesh in Institute of Governance Studies at BRAC University.

It is becoming evident now that culture plays a very important role in functioning of government and ensuring accountability and without having a culture of good governance, its an uphill task for any organization or government to improve transparency and accountability. Thus CUTS CART started an initiative to start developing a culture of good governance through engaging civil society organizations and training them in implementing social accountability tools seems extremely relevant.

Participation:

The dialogue was attended by around 75 participants including NGO representatives from India, other South Asian countries including Bangladesh, Indonesia, and few other countries from world like Egypt, Argentina and Yaman. Media representatives, policy analysts, social activists and other stake holders participated actively in the dialogue.



Dialogue Process

George Cheriyan, Director CUTS International

George Cheriyan, Director CUTS and Head CUTS CART started his address welcoming all the participants with special emphasis on the personalities on dias and participants from different part of the globe and said that he is very hopeful for the initiatives under the project being launched today, which will result in the formation of a network of NGOs working on the issue of good governance and social accountability in Rajasthan and will start developing a culture of good governance.

He further added that the culture of corruption is fast extending to all aspects of life and corruption has become a way of life in India. 37 percentage of total plan outlay during 2010-11 goes to social sector. But the resources are not reaching the intended beneficiaries. He said that according to an estimate, only around 15 percent of the expenditure reaches to the people it meant for and 85 percent of the expenditure is diverted. Quoting India corruption Report of Transparency International (India), he said people below poverty line had to pay 863 crore as bribe for getting the services they are entitled for.

He also mentioned about a recent study conducted by CUTS in partnership with Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) in Jaipur and Tonk districts of Rajasthan where it was found that an average bribe of Rs. 303, 1268 and 660 are paid in the schemes NREGS, IAY and SGSY respectively by the beneficiaries. He hoped that the current project of CUTS in partnership with ANSA will help in developing a culture of good governance negating the culture of corruption. He said the Social Accountability project of developing a culture of good governance will train local CBOs in a particular social accountability tool and tested in NREGS.

Rao Rajendra Singh, Member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, Rajasthan

“The Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) get not more than 30 days in a year to execute its functions of discussing and passing the legislations for the state Rajasthan. Out of the available 30 days to perform their duties, 20 days are lost in party politics and some times it takes only 5 minutes to pass 100 legislations. We are living in such an ironical situation where our legislations to guide and protect the interest of common mass get enacted in such a short time”, said Rao Rajendra Singh,



member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly in an event ‘Dialogue on Governance’ organized by CUTS on the occasion of launch of a project *‘Developing a culture of good governance and accountability in the state of Rajasthan, India through involving CSOs and building their capacity with a focus on improving the public expenditure outcomes’* in partnership with Affiliated Network for

Social Accountability- South Asia Region and Global Partnership Fund (ANSA-SAR & Global).

He further said that a public representative or minister is always blamed for the prevalent corruption, the poor development and other malice in the society. But how the public representatives are suffering because of this poor governance, lack of a functional system at place to perform is beyond imagination,. The public representatives are facing hell lot of problems in getting re-elected because they are unable to fulfill the demand of people in their constituencies and have to be involved in many activities in which they do not want to. He also pointed out that on every 10 month, people vote for one of their 6 representatives (Ward panch, Sarpanch, Pradhan, Zill Parshad, MLAs & MPs) to take care of them but even then accountability does not exists. He said that it is shameful that still in our country after 60 years of independence, 24 percent of people don't get two square meals a day and 93 percent people have to pay bribe for availing health services in this state of Rajasthan. He called upon the civil society organizations, media and participants from government to work to make the life of a common person better.

Prof V.S Vyas Member of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and Dy. Chairman, Planning Board, GoR,

Speaking on the occasion as a chief guest, Prof. Vyas said that it is important that the practice of good governance is cultured amongst all stakeholders of the society in order to ensure that corruption is totally uprooted from our systems. He also said that peer pressure amongst all groups is important to inculcate the practice of



not bearing corruption amongst the officials. “Corruption is corruption, there is no small or big corruption and to uproot it, governance must be cultured among all stakeholders of society” and this corruption can be only weeded out through developing a culture of governance. Emphasizing on the all stakeholders, he specifically mentioned the role of opinion makers in developing culture and peer pressure also works.

Gopa Kumar Thampi, Chief Operating Officer, ANSA-SAR

Speaking as a special guest on this occasion, he elaborated about the motive behind the initiatives of World Bank in setting up Affiliated Network for Social Accountability for South Asia region and informed that there are two more such networks in world which are working towards ensuring good governance in world. He also appreciated the measures that CUTS is undertaking on the issue. He pointed towards the magnitude of the problem of corruption and others because of which there is a need of a strong movement of good governance, which can ensure that common masses can get what, they are entitled for.

Floor Interactions:

Finally floor was opened for participants for queries from guests and sharing their governance related specific experiences with fellow participants and lot of interesting and important interaction take place during this session.

The major issues were

How the public representatives can be trained to be inclined towards the governance?

How establishment of a call centre can help in reducing corruption?

How seriously the government is taking the issue of corruption, accountability and governance?

Sum up and vote of thanks:

Summing up the half day dialogue O.P Arya, Project Coordinator, CUTS CART, extended vote of thanks to the chief guests as well as the participants who included delegates from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Egypt, and Argentina. He also put special vote of thanks to the representatives of the World Bank, Neeru Sharma. He summed up the proceedings of the day, insisting on the fact that if collaborative efforts are made it's not hard to ensure good governance in countries like India.
