

## About CART

Established in 1996, CUTS CART is pursuing the cause of common consumers, initially being undertaken by CUTS as the mandate. The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to its issues of concern to the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

## INSIDE

- Projects and Programmes
- Representation
- Meetings/Visits
- CART in Media



**CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CART)**

D-222, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302 016, India  
Ph: 91.141.513 3259, 228 2821  
Fx: 91.141.401 5395, 228 2485  
Email: cart@cuts.org  
Website:  
www.cuts-international.org

## Call to Governments to Invest More in Accountability Mechanisms and to Institutionalise it

“Investment in accountability mechanisms by the governments is a pre-requisite to enhance the outcomes of the welfare schemes. Less than one percent of the budget of any scheme, if invested in accountability mechanisms, can do wonder”, said Parmesh Shah, Lead Rural Development Specialist, The World Bank and George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS, principal organisers of the workshop. This message emerged out of discussions which took place in the two-day workshop on ‘Social Accountability in India: Moving from Mechanisms to Outcomes and Institutionalisation in Large Scale Public Programmes’ organised jointly by CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) and the World Bank, in Jaipur, on December 16-17, 2009.



The objective of the workshop was to deliberate on possible strategies for institutionalisation, scale-up and replication of social accountability (SAC) approaches based on the learnings from SAC pilot interventions and their impacts/outcomes. About 70 participants including senior policy makers and high level authorities from various government departments, academia and civil society organisations (CSOs) attended the workshop.

While inaugurating the workshop, Bharat Singh, Rajasthan Minister for Rural Development and *Panchayati Raj* said that country has witnessed significant growth in the field of health and education etc. but the phenomenon of accountability has weakened after independence. The outcomes are not always in proportion to the amount of expenditures made for the social development schemes and programmes.

Giovanna Prennushi, Economic Adviser, The World Bank, stated that the World Bank is trying to incorporate SAC mechanism into its flagship schemes for better public expenditure outcomes. While sharing her personal experience, she said that in the course of her work in the area of development, she has learnt that community activism is the best way to ensure accountability.

Parmesh Shah, Lead Rural Development Specialist, The World Bank stressed on the need of institutionalising a system by which public expenditure outcomes can be enhanced. The experiences which are accompanied by achievement and outcomes should be incorporated in the system.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS said that citizens have the right to demand accountability and public actors have an obligation to be accountable to its citizens. It is a challenge before us that how we can institutionalise the SAC mechanism in the system, however there is enabling environment for good governance in the country.

Two sessions were held on the first day afternoon: ‘Achieving Service Delivery and Health Development Outcomes in Satara District, Maharashtra, India’, and ‘Improving Student Enrollment and Teacher Absenteeism through Social Accountability Interventions in Nalgonda & Adilabad Districts, Andhra Pradesh’.

On the concluding day of the workshop, Om Prakash Arya and George Cheriyan of CUTS presented the learning’s of the implementation of SAC intervention in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in Sirohi district of Rajasthan. While endorsing the

## PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

impacts and outcomes of the intervention, Siddharth Mahajan, District Collector, Sawai Madhopur said that any mechanism which can provide the administration a systematic feedback and a way forward to act upon is helpful in initiating corrective measures. T R Raghunandan, Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development & *Panchayati Raj*, Government of Karnataka raised the issue of collusion among corrupt collectors, *Pradhan* and *Sarpanch* to pressurise the government to not to involve the CSOs in the process of social audit in Rajasthan. He called upon the CSOs to take part in debate to break this collusion. D K Jain, Joint Secretary, Ministry of *Panchayati Raj*, Government of India moderated the session and Santhanu Sinha (FES, Bhilwara) spoke as one of the discussants.

B Rajsekhar (IAS), Director, Social Audit, Government of Andhra Pradesh, presented success factors and various steps of the social audit process in Andhra Pradesh. D B Gupta, Principal Secretary, Planning, Government of Rajasthan moderated the session.

In the valedictory session, A N P Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of *Panchayati Raj*, Government of India suggested that all the efforts and interventions should strengthen the existing system of local self government and existing institutions and should not try to create parallel systems. C D Arha, Chief Information Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh pointed out that Right to Information (RTI) as a single act which empowers people of India and not the government. He suggested to use it as a SAc tool.

The following were some of the key outcomes emerged out of the workshop:

1. No substitute to mobilising local government and people for greater accountability
2. Dire need of investment on institutions of *Panchayat* and users of services and technical assistance at all levels
3. Need to build facilitation structure from government and CSOs for nurturing institutions
4. Need of legal provisions and strengthen knowledge management structure

## National Workshop on Social Accountability in India: Photo Gallery



## TCS Dissemination Meetings

CUTS and the Department of Technology and Society (DTS), Lund University, Sweden under the project 'Traffic Calming Strategies to Improve Pedestrian Safety in India' implemented in partnership with Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and in collaboration with Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Programme (TRIPP) of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi organised regional dissemination meetings in Jaipur, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata and national dissemination-cum-advocacy meeting in New Delhi, during October 01-28, 2009.

The main objective of the meetings was to share the findings of the study with wider audience and to receive their feedbacks on the project recommendations. Bureaucrats, technocrats and policy makers along with CSO representatives associated with the road safety issues participated in the meetings and provided their feedbacks with a word of appreciation for conducting project and sharing of findings from pedestrians' perspective.

## Four years of RTI: Rajasthan Scenario

CUTS CART in collaboration with Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi, organised a State Level Seminar on 'Four Years of RTI in India: Challenges in Implementation in Rajasthan' under the project 'Reforming the



Processes in the Rural Development Department through Policy and Civic Engagement, based on RTI Act 2005' (RePoRDD) in Jaipur, on October 23, 2009. This seminar was on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the RTI Act 2005 in India for taking a stock of the issues hindering the effective implementation of the RTI Act in Rajasthan; and assessing the current status of its enforcement in government departments of the State.

More than 75 participants attended the seminar including representatives of different CSOs and RTI activists of Jaipur and Tonk districts and Public Information Officers of various government departments like Police, Food and Civil Supplies, Department of Water Resources, Muslim *Wakf* Board, Government Press, State Information Commission and others.

## Ensuring Health Service Delivery System

CUTS CART in partnership with Results for Development (R4D) organised launch meeting of the project entitled, 'Ensuring Health Service Delivery through Community Monitoring in Primary Health Centres (PHCs) of Tonk, India' at *Jila Parishad* Conference Hall, Tonk, on December 22, 2009. The objective of the project is to evolve an innovative community-based model of monitoring absenteeism in public health centres that can induce demand accountability of service providers.

A documentary film 'Social Accountability in Action' was screened narrating the experiences from grassroot level of using social accountability tools in getting better service



delivery. More than 70 participants including officials from district health departments, medical officers, doctors, health workers from various PHCs, partnering non-governmental organisations (NGOs), selected community monitors, representatives of CSOs, media and other individuals working on health issues attended the meeting.

## Exposure Visit to Kerala



A 10-member delegation visited Kozhikode and Wyanadu districts of Kerala under the RePoRDD project during November 13-18, 2009. The visit aimed at studying the established system at the *Gram Panchayat* level specifically the application of RTI at various levels, peoples' planning process, e-governance, economic viability of *gram panchayats* and other best practices, with an intention to replicate it in Rajasthan.

The delegation interacted with the president and members of the *gram panchayats*, observed the infrastructure facilities, tax/revenue collection pattern and single window system for service delivery.

## Promoting Consumer Participation in Power Reforms

CUTS with the support of Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and in association with project partners under the project entitled, 'Capacity Building on Electricity Reforms in Bangladesh, India and Nepal' (RESA) organised national advocacy seminar in Jaipur (India), on November 20, 2009.

The objective of the seminar was to disseminate and discuss key advocacy issues of electricity consumers of Rajasthan and West Bengal. The advocacy issues emerged from the research and grassroots interface meetings held under the project in both the states.

The seminar was attended by more than 50 delegates comprising representatives of regulatory commissions, discoms, civil society, media, government officials, academicians and subject experts.



