

EVENT REPORT

‘My City’ Project Launch

I change my city



Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur, India
Jaipur, Rajasthan
October 31, 2012

Organized by CUTS International in partnership with The Asia Foundation

Project Launch Meeting

'India lives in villages' might be soon an obsolete phrase in coming years with the phenomenon of fast growing cities. By 2030, the urban areas will be home to 40 percent of the country. Rapid urbanization in India is placing huge demand on infrastructure – power, roads, railways, transportation system, water supply, sanitation, hospitals, schools, police stations, parks etc. Urbanization is an inevitable process for any developing country and also a sign of developing economy. The public amenities available per person and quality of various services in a city determine the quality of life there.

New UN habitat study ranked New Delhi, the national capital of India at 58 and commercial capital of India at 52 among the world's largest 95 cities and says that they are neither lovable nor liveable. Jaipur, the capital city of Rajasthan, is 7th fast growing city in India and along with the growth, it requires immediate growth in services and amenities.

CUTS, a renowned NGO working on issues of Trade, Competition and Governance, in partnership with The Asia Foundation has conceptualized an initiative 'My City' and launched in Jaipur emphasizing on the importance of local government and strengthen the roots of local Self-Governance according to the spirit of 74th constitutional Amendment through constructive civic engagement and advocacy for change.

Participation

More than 70 key stakeholders of urban governance including corporators, officials of Jaipur Municipal Corporation, civil society organizations, media etc. participated actively. Jagaroop Singh Yadav, Chief Executive Officer, Jaipur Municipal Corporation, K K Bhatnagar, Chairperson, State Commission on Urbanisation, P K Pandey, Member secretary, State Commission on Urbanisation were the senior representatives from the government to participate in the event.

Proceedings

Arti Pandey Tiwari, Project Officer, CUTS, greeted first of all to all the respective participants called the dignitaries to take seat on the dias. Amar Deep Singh, Senior Project Officer, CUTS, welcomed all the participants to the launch meeting and intimated the background of the project in brief to the participants.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS in his opening remarks emphasized on the importance of local government and said it is the most direct interface between citizens and government in a democracy and so it should be the most vibrant. The roots of local Self-Governance (LSG) lie in decentralization and it can be only strengthened by 'taking power to the people' according to the spirit of 74th constitutional Amendment. 74th constitutional Amendment Act was a milestone as it gave Constitutional Validity to Urban Local Bodies and it was an attempt to bring governance closer to the people. He expressed sadness about the lost structure of LSG during colonial period and said that even after 20 years of 74th amendment; the *ward sabha* didn't come in to existence.

He further added that there is three-fold increase in population of Jaipur city in last 10 years and it has huge implications on the services and amenities of the city. Poor quality of services further hampers the growth of any economy. Putting one example, he said that there are 551 vehicles in the Jaipur city for every 1000 people and it is more than the vehicle density of New Delhi, the capital of India. He emphasised on the need to create interface between people and government. People don't have idea about any institutional mechanism to reach to the government and convey their problem, he said.

Om Prakash Arya, Senior Project coordinator, presented the overview of the project and made a detailed presentation about methodology, activities and expected outcomes of the project. He also presented the proposed model for civic engagement under the project through citizen report card, interface meetings and formulating the Citizens' Action Group and sustaining the activities of the project.

K K Bhatnagar, Chairperson, State Commission on Urbanisation (SCU) in his special address appreciated the proposed activities of the project to engage citizens rigorously. He also reiterated the need of transact walk by service providers to the wards to know the problems of roads, sewerages, solid waste etc. He said that the JMC cannot provide required services unless there is proper allocation of funds for executing various activities and JMC is not doing much for fund collection.



Putting a question mark on the governance, he pointed out that the mechanism for collection of various taxes by JMC is disappearing and resources need to be collected for improving service delivery. He further mentioned about SCU and said that the commission has been given opportunity to reach to the people and he called upon CSOs and other stakeholders to come and provide suggestions for improving governance. He expressed his pleasure on CUTS initiating the project on urban governance.

Jagaroop Singh Yadav, Chief Executive Officer, Jaipur Municipal Corporation, expressed his willingness to support the activities of the project and be the beneficiary of the outcomes. He said that we are expected to cater to the various services of all 50 lakh people of Jaipur city and the list of services is huge. He emphasized on the need of more resources and coordinated effort of all the key stakeholders to improve the services. He also requested the CSOs to aware citizens using information,



communication and education strategies. He appreciated the ward level interface meetings proposed in the project.

The session was opened for taking the views of participants with regard to various services of JMC. Sushil Sharma, corporator of JMC emphasised over the need of frequent interfaces between JMC officials and elected representatives of LSG. One of the participants suggested inclusion of public hearing after finding the



problems in service delivery through CRC and other tools. A.K Ojha, Centre for Development solution commended the initiative and emphasised on the need of awareness among people about their social responsibilities. He also suggested establishing some groups of people responsible for sensitising people who collaborate and cooperate with service providers in order to achieve effective service delivery.

Rajeev Sharma, Executive Engineer, Jaipur Municipal Corporation, said that regular payment of taxes by citizens will help further in getting better services. He reiterated that the citizens should be sensitised to cooperate with the officials by giving them timely information about poor services and also taking permission for any new constructions to avoid any mis-management. Suman Bhatnagar, Madhukar sewa Sansthan suggested that CNG of the locality should also be incorporated as they are very well aware of their locality and proper monitoring system should be there.

Kaveri Dutt, Associate Director, CUTS summarized the major learning of the event and thanked all the participants and dignitaries including the chairperson, State Commission on Urbanisation (SCU), officials of JMC, elected representatives of urban local self-government, civil society organizations, media and other stakeholders.

