

Report
Dissemination cum Advocacy Meeting
MyCity Project (Year-3)
Jaipur, August 28, 2015 at Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur

Background and Objective

CUTS in partnership with The Asia Foundation is implementing 'MyCity' project with the objective to improve the service delivery of urban local government in the Jaipur city through enhanced civic engagement. Sixteen wards of the city were selected under the intervention. With the support of ward councillors, officials of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) and local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), several activities were conducted in these selected wards to improve the civic engagement in local governance. Citizen Report Card (CRC) and Public Service Index (PSI), which were the tools of social accountability being considered to acquire the perception of citizens and status of the services delivered by JMC in Jaipur.

To disseminate the key findings of the project among all the relevant stakeholders and to share the recommendations with appropriate authorities, dissemination cum advocacy meeting was organised by CUTS on August 27, 2015 at Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur. It also aimed to provide a platform to its stakeholders to share their thoughts and suggestions to be incorporated in the final recommendations to the concerned department for advocacy.



Participation

The meeting was attended by around 100 participants comprising ward councillors, JMC officials, Director of Local Bodies (DLB) and other government departments, representatives of CSOs, residential welfare associations (RWAs), research and academic institutes, partner organisations and members of citizen action groups and other active citizens. To respond to the findings, a panel of eminent guests comprising Mohanlal Gupta, Member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (MLA); Purushottam Biyani, Director cum Joint Secretary and Sanchita Bishnoi, Additional Director from Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Rajasthan; Bhawani Singh Rajawat, Chairman of JMC's

Standing Committee and Ramavtar Raghuvanshi, Director, Rajasthan Institute of Local-self Government graced the occasion.

Proceedings

Varidhi Singh, Project Officer, CUTS welcomed the participants and thereafter opening remarks were presented by **George Cheriyan**, Director, CUTS International. He elucidated about 'MyCity' project and its relevance in overall development of Jaipur and revealed 'Swachh Bharat Ranking of Cities' conducted by Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of India. Jaipur stands at 370 position out of



400 cities of India. He further said that Jaipur has been aspiring for becoming a world-class city and has its master plan-2009 to achieve the defined objectives. But still lots of aspects are to be addressed by JMC like devolution of powers, activation of ward committees, enhancing more civic engagement etc. Cheriyan also stated that solid waste management should be the priority of municipal corporations. The experience and knowledge sharing at the level of municipal corporations should be encouraged. The CSOs have major say for facilitating and forwarding *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* from bottom to top-level.

While speaking in the meeting, **Mohan Lal Gupta**, Member of Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan said that in urban areas, effective complaint redressal must be ensured and this could be done using Public Service Guarantee Act and generating more awareness by such Acts. He suggested that 'MyCity' can also share this responsibility of making people aware about such Acts.

In the second phase of the meeting there were power point presentation on 'MyCity' project made by **Amar Deep Singh**, Project Coordinator, CUTS. He explained how the project was able to mobilise the citizens to raise their voices against poor service delivery and action from the community-side also worth mention. Local CSOs made tremendous efforts to make the project effective at the ground. Moreover, the platform created by 'MyCity' was very helpful in resolving day-to-day local issues of the citizen as well as for the service providers and elected representatives to interact with the community in a productive manner. Councillors were also benefited by the 'MyCity' project as they were newly elected in recent held elections and acquired orientation on 'MyCity' endeavour.. To raise the issues of local self-government at higher-level, a platform for City Mayors was planned and initiated and Mayors of Rajasthan were called for the discussion. 'Rajasthan Mayors Conference' was successfully conducted for the first time in the State and would be pursued in the coming days.



While talking on the second part of presentation, he shared key findings of the study conducted under the project to assess the conditions of public services delivered by the urban bodies and perception of citizens. He mentioned that about 64 percent of the people in city are dumping garbage in open, 48 percent are not satisfied with cleanliness and 24 percent are not having street light facility in their locality. Almost half of the population of the city is feeling that roads are not safer for pedestrians and

bicycle riders, 68 percent people are deprived of the facility of public gardens, 87 percent are deprived of playground and 62 percent are lacking the facility of community centres.



Purushotam Biyani, Director cum Joint Secretary, Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Rajasthan mentioned that the efforts are being done by the department to strengthen Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and enhancing municipal services by providing financial assistance. At one hand, in Rajasthan resource generation is very low so there is a need to create and activate more and more pressure groups, resident welfare associations and citizen groups for pressuring service providers to improve the services. But on the other hand, every common citizen needs to obey his duty as well.

Ramavtar Raghuvanshi, Director, Rajasthan Institute of Local Self Government explained three specific things and that too in ULBs structural changes are the need of the hour, which should be followed by convergence in all the other bodies working at any municipal-level and finally reforming the overall service delivery processes by adopting best practices around in the other states. He cited example of Surat where urban development tax regime has been reformed and at Hyderabad where cleanliness has been ensured by taking innovative ways and means.

Sanchita Bishnoi, Additional Director, Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Rajasthan indicated that great powers have been rendered to ULBs but still lot need to be done to turn ULBs financially viable. She emphasised on individual accountability by stating that every individual need to develop some ownership and should be part of the solution rather than adding problems, so that the prevailing problems are addressed automatically. Thus she mentioned that creating active citizenship was the key. She also said that overall position of Jaipur is good on the basis of as her own experience and from the feedback by the visitors of the city.

Bhawani Singh Rajawat, Chairman- Standing Committee, Jaipur Municipal Corporation said that it is not easy for elected representatives to control so many things due to public pressure. He further stated that if the public is aware about so many things like time of the garbage collection and dumping garbage at that particular time only, and doing things in the desired manner it is easy for them to monitor the government service-providers who are shedding away from their responsibilities. He added that the value-based training to the government officials will certainly bring desired positive changes in the existing system.



In the concluding session of the meeting **Monika Solanki**, Tax Assessment Officer, Jaipur Unites made a presentation based on Jaipur Unites campaign, which is an initiative of JMC for engaging the citizens to make Jaipur Clean and Green with the support of local citizens. She said that this initiative is unique in its, since there was no such campaign by the department where citizen participated in the joint initiative with the JMC. Activities of the campaign are being shared via social networking.

Open Discussion and Felicitations of Partners

The address by the speakers was followed up by an Open House wherein the councillors, JMC officials and partner civil society representatives expressed their views and concerns. B R Sharma of partner organisation expressed strong need of forming ward committees in each ward of JMC as per the 74th constitutional amendment. Rani Lubana, Councilor of Ward-70 stated that such interventions are actually very beneficial for councillor and officials to share their limitations with the people and to involve citizen participation in the development work.

To appreciate the efforts of partner CSO felicitations, the partners were awarded the certificate of appreciation in the event. Madhu Sudan Sharma, Senior Project Coordinator CUTS summarised and concluded the discussions and delivered the vote of thanks for the fruitful contribution of the participants and making the event a great success.

