Report of CSOs Consultation

MyCity (Year-3)

'A project for Improving Service Delivery by Urban Local Government in the City of Jaipur through Enhanced Civic Engagement'

Hotel Maurya Palace, Jaipur, November 27, 2014

Background

CUTS International in partnership with The Asia Foundation implemented 'MyCity' project to improve governance and service delivery through enhanced civic engagement in city of Jaipur by using social accountability tools. Public Service Index (PSI) was used to generate ward-level report cards of urban services provided by the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) in selected wards of Jaipur city.

The essential municipal services provided by JMC include: roads, water supply, public health and sanitation, solid waste management, provision of urban amenities and facilities, such as parks, gardens, playgrounds, street lighting, parking etc. were considered for developing PSI. A tool of Citizen Report Card (CRC) was also utilised for gathering feedback of citizens on the status of services and engaging them in demanding better delivery of services. Various community meetings and interfaces with service providers were organised for resolving specific issues in various service delivery. To advocate improving services emphasising the need for strengthening mechanisms of citizen participation and provisions of 74th amendment is essential.

Objectives

The main objective of the consultation was to discuss how to deal with issues related to the city; challenges faced during the implementation of the project; and future strategies with civil society organisations (CSOs).

Participation

More than 35 participants attended the consultation. A K Ojha, Centre for Development Communication; Anshu Singh, Project Manager, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA); and P N Mendola, *Lok Sampatti*

Sanrakshan Samiti were present as resource persons and shared their views. Apart from nine partners of 16 wards, few other non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives were also present who exchanged their opinion in making the project successful.

Proceedings

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Amrat Singh, Assistant Director, CUTS welcomed the participants and briefly mentioned about the background and activities of MyCity project and objective of the meeting.

Amar Deep Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS provided a brief overview of the project. He mentioned that its objective is to improve the service delivery by urban local bodies (ULBs) in the city of Jaipur through enhanced civic engagement. Third phase of the project commenced successfully completing the first and second one. He shared that growing urbanisation and implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment (CAA) are two important aspects behind initiating MyCity intervention in the city.

Further, he explained that country is growing and urbanisation is rapidly increasing. Rural to urban migration is major factor due to attraction of better employment opportunities, infrastructure, communication, and medical facilities, etc. It is resulting in challenges, such as pollution, increasing slums, rising crimes, shortage of infrastructure and unequal distributions. Jaipur is also a victim of growing urbanisation. It is 24th fastest growing city of the world. By 2030 Jaipur's population will be 5 million.

He added that 74th CAA (1992) was a land mark amendment aimed at decentralisation in urban governance and providing political, functional and financial powers to ULBs. But, at present, the Act is poorly implemented at the ground due to absence of many provisions. One of the major factors is absence of ward committees. There is no space for citizens to engage themselves in the urban governance.

While highlighting specific issues of ULBs, he mentioned that these are struggling to get powers for its proper execution of services. There are severe resource crunches. Parallel departments have been bestowed with development work. Management of revenue earning assets is given to ULBs. State government and elected members of the state assembly are involved in the local development work.

He emphasised on the role of CSOs in present context of ULBs. MyCity has created space for CSOs to come forward to raise the issue of ULBs and to get involved in urban governance issues. Under the project local issues can be highlighted at different levels from wards to city.

Overview of MyCity

Vipin Chawla, Project Officer, CUTS presented an overview of the project during the Phase I and II. He briefly mentioned about the intervention, project activities, area and findings that emerged out of the project. He also discussed in brief about the community and interface meetings, CRC and PSI findings that were conducted during Phase I and of the project.

Technical Session: Session: Current context of the Local Governance in the City and Role of Civil Society Organisations to Improve the quality of Services

While speaking on the theme, **P M Mandola** said that transparency and accountability must be involved in local self-governance. He said that Jaipur builders do not have proper master plan, violate rules and do not give proper space for facilities. They are using 90 percent of space for residence and only 10 percent for facilities, such as parks, community halls, street roads, playgrounds etc. Community members should be aware of duties and responsibilities towards the society and lay out plan of builders. Community contribution in local self-governance is less as the government officials do not have any interest in working with local community members.

JMC has more than 4000 workers on contract-basis, but 90 percent of them are meretricious. JMC officials maintain fake attendance in the attendance sheet. Local self-governance is involved in corruption, therefore CSOs should monitor local government officials. CSOs and community members should be made aware of their duties and responsibilities. Civil society should work with local self-governance and make a good action plan for the development of the society. CSOs should be aware of the JMC office staff and their working areas; and update local community members about the same so that they can resolve their problems by themselves. JMC should provide ward-wise budget and councilors/CSOs should plan how to spend it in the ward.

A K Ojha said that 55 percent of the total population stays in slum areas. Urban government should consider slum areas and develop it. MyCity project should be implemented in slum areas. The government while making and implementing policies for the development of urban areas, should share it with local CSOs. It should be implemented only after taking the views/suggestions of local CSOs into account.

CSOs should identify local people who are interested in working with the local self-government official and obey its rules and regulations. Local self-governance should motivate the councillors. CSOs should create a platform in their areas and discuss basic problems on the local self-governance and resolve it on priority basis with government officials.

Anshu Singh, PRIA provided a brief introduction of PRIA and its ongoing activities and working areas in Rajasthan. She told that 25 percent of state population lives in urban areas. Jaipur urban slums' population is estimated to be 4.87 lakhs, which is 15 percent of the city's population. She stated that urban development budget growth is not increasing in proportion to rapid population expansion. She shared that sustainable urbanisation require cities to generate better income and employment opportunities, expand the necessary infrastructure for water and sanitation, energy transportation, information and communication etc. She also shed light on the role of PRIA in urban governance in Rajasthan. She updated that PRIA is facilitating Government of Rajasthan to formulate training modules for elected councillors of ULBs and orient women councillors in 10 municipalities on urban governance.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS said that since two years CUTS is working on MyCity project and has been successful in implementing project activities. Now, third phase of MyCity project in Jaipur city is going to be implemented. A first of its kind, Mayor's Conference, will be organised in Jaipur, Rajasthan where all the mayors will get a common platform to discuss problems of municipal corporations. He also shared that many major cities in the world outside India have a strong and powerful executive Mayor, but this is not the case in India. The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) has been provided with more power and sources of income in comparison to JMC. He mentioned that JMC should provide a ward-specific budget in consultation with local CSOs. CSOs, JMC officials and ward-councillors should work together and resolve problems. Phase III of the project will be implemented in new wards so that these can also avail benefits.

When all key speakers delivered their presentations, CSO representatives shared their viewpoints and discussed various issues related to urban governance and municipal service delivery. Project team members responded to the feedback and suggestions given by participants and assured them to consider these points while finalising the project strategy.

Vote of Thanks

Amrat Singh gave a formal vote of thanks towards the end of the consultation.