

## A Report of 'Dissemination cum Advocacy Meeting' Under Phase-II of 'My City Project'

Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur, August 28, 2014

CUTS International with support from The Asia Foundation is implementing a project entitled, "Improving Service Delivery of Jaipur Municipal Corporation through Enhanced Civic Engagement in Urban Local Government". The project is popularly called as 'MyCity'. It was initiated in 2012-13 and second phase (2013-14) is going to be concluded in September 2014. In the first phase, eight wards were taken, one each from eight zones. In the second phase, eight new wards were taken up, while some of the activities were commenced in the old wards as well.

As an integral part of project activities, an event was planned as 'Dissemination-cum-Advocacy Meeting'. The overall objective of the event was to share the findings of the intervention carried out by CUTS with various stakeholders in the urban development. These findings were gathered through use of certain social accountability tools, such as 'Citizen Report Cards (CRC)' and 'Public Service Index (PSI)'.

### Participants

The guests and speakers included Jyoti Khandelwal, Mayor, Jaipur Municipal Corporation; Ratna Jain, Mayor, Kota Municipal Corporation; Rao Rajendra Singh, Member, Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan; Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor, Jaipur Municipal Corporation; and Sagar Prasai, Country Representative of The Asia Foundation. Apart from these, the meeting was attended by more than 90 participants including representatives of Jaipur-based civil society organisation (CSOs), resident welfare societies, councillors of various wards, officials from JMC and other line departments as well as media.



### Proceedings

The event commenced with Varidhi Singh, Project Officer, CUTS welcoming the guests and presenting the flower bouquets to the guests on the dais. This was followed by opening remarks by George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS. Cheriyan, while welcoming the guests and participants stated that Jaipur is a fast growing city with a population of 33.5

lakh. He pointed out 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment of the Constitution is functioning well in rural areas, however there is no progress on implementation of 74<sup>th</sup> amendment, such as formation of ward *sabhas* in urban bodies. He explained the context of the project. He opined that MyCity project was launched with the aim to create a space for active engagement of citizens in the delivery of urban services in the absence of ward *sabhas* and to monitor the progress in the process of Jaipur becoming a global metropolis and a World Class city. He also said that comparative data shows that whenever citizens were engaged there is an improvement in the quality of delivery of services.

Amar Deep Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS in his presentation provided a brief overview of the background of the project, activities undertaken, role of NGO partners and tools used to measure satisfaction level of communities with the service delivery in selected wards under municipality area. He



shared the process adopted and findings collected through 'CRC' and 'PSI'. About 49 percent of population is throwing garbage in the open; 75 percent admitted that they face problems due to stray animals; 50 percent do not get any effective solution of complaints made by them – these were some of the key findings presented.

He mentioned that for developing PSI in each of the selected wards, certain key services such as roads, sewerage, solid garbage, water supply, amenities were considered. Several indicators under each service were developed and physical verifications made. Based on the status of each indicator, scores were given for adjudging the quality of services and ranking of wards was done based on the quality of services. First rank was assigned to Ward No. 28 with a score of 6.9, while eighth (last) rank was assigned to Ward No. 48 with a score of 3.3.



Sagar Prasai, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation stated that there could be a debate on the findings presented, however perception on lapses need to be addressed. It is important to get feedback of citizens for improving quality in the delivery of services. He also said that there are certain limitations in a democratic

system, however, through a joint action things can be worked out.

Jyoti Khandelwal, Mayor, Jaipur Municipal Corporation said that as development is a continuous process, problems also keep cropping up; hence efforts should be made rigorously. She said that ward committees should be formed – there is a provision in the Municipal Corporation Act for the same. She said that we should keep the city clean in a similar way as we keep our houses clean. She also said that there is a need to look into other aspects of service delivery as well. She appreciated CUTS' efforts for implementing the MyCity project.



Ratna Jain appreciated CUTS and MyCity project. Though a presentation, she outlined the state of affairs in Kota Municipality and efforts made by her to improve the situation. Through illustrations taken from her foreign tours, she made compared the development approach being adopted by the civic bodies in India and abroad. She briefed participants about the interventions made by her. Through use of technology, especially the mobile application, any citizen can not only go through the required information but also can file complaint. She said that among citizens there is a confusion prevailing due to multiple agencies and lack of awareness with regard to the scope of work. She also emphasised on the lack of financial resources to carry out the desired interventions.



Ratna said that there is a need for convergence among various schemes run by various departments. Citizen monitoring for implementation of schemes is also an area of concern. She also expressed that the responsibility as chief executives of municipalities should be assigned to the senior officers from Indian Administrative Service only, so that they can effectively coordinate with other

departments/functionaries and involvement of municipal functionaries in other works can be minimised. Ratna, by citing example of Rajkot Municipality, said that more financial resources are needed to carry out the development activities.

Rao Rajendra Singh, Member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (MLA) while delivering his address said that as citizens we should fulfill our fundamental duties and make efforts towards conservation of human capital. He emphasised on the need of developing civic sense for a better future. He raised the concern about the E-waste. He

also said that for better outputs there should be a dialogue among leaders across political parties.

Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor, JMC applauded the efforts of MyCity project and shared his experience of visiting various wards under the said project. He mentioned that there will be improvement in services due to enhanced civic engagement. He also spoke about other issues related to the local governance. He said that required devolution of powers to elected representatives in urban local bodies (ULBs) has not happened due to various reasons which are resulting in poor service delivery.

## Open Discussion

The address was followed up by an open house wherein councillors, JMC officials and 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 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment. He gave example of citizen action groups formed under the project in all selected wards which comprises group of active people. These groups are well engaged in local governance issues and effective in improving services.

P N Mandola, city-based activist also raised the issue of ward committees. He mentioned that there is requirement of making some structural changes in ULBs. Accountability of JMC officials is also an issue to be addressed. Rajendra Bhanawat, Retd. IAS stated the parallel departments, such as Jaipur Development Agency (JDA) and some others are unconstitutional departments. JDA is earning resource since by selling lands, but JMC who has to maintain the whole city is facing scarcity of funds.



Himani Sharma, Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) raised the concern about ward 48 where health related programmes are being implemented. She said that the quality of services in that ward is very poor, particularly public utilities. It is a concern of public health.

Following points were also raised by participants:

- In view of the coming elections for ULBs, CUTS may prepare a Citizens' charter for advocacy and parties be asked to include issues in their election manifesto.
- It was opined that keeping in mind the severity of the issue, the project should be continued and its ambit be increased.
- Need of coordination among various agencies were felt by all stakeholders present.
- Parking issues, rain water harvesting, plantation by municipalities etc. to consider in such intervention on local issues.

Amrat Singh, Senior Programme Coordinator, CUTS summarised the discussions held and delivered the vote of thanks to all participants.