

Social Accountability in India: Moving from Mechanisms to Outcomes and Institutionalisation in Large Scale Public Programmes

Jaipur, Rajasthan, December 16-17, 2009

1. Background

Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) with the support of the World Bank organised a two-day workshop entitled, 'Social Accountability in India: Moving from Mechanisms to Outcomes and Institutionalisation in Large Scale Public Programmes' in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on December 16-17, 2009. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen accountability relationships between policy makers, service providers and citizens which is at the core of the public accountability effort. In the South Asia region, demand-side approaches involving social accountability processes are strengthening the voice and capacity of citizens to directly demand greater accountability and responsiveness from public officials and service providers. Till date, a number of initiatives and pilots have been executed using and testing social accountability (SAC) tools but evidences of impact of these initiatives on service delivery and development outcomes are limited.

This workshop featured the impacts of SAC interventions piloted in large-scale public programmes like *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) etc. in different geographical and cultural context showing its potential and viability to be adopted constitutionally in large scale public programmes for sustained impact. The workshop witnessed the pilots from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan and discussion by eminent experts in the area particular on the issue of need, feasibility etc. of institutionalising these SAC tools. These interventions could emphatically put the fact that the investment in these SAC tools is small in proportion to the budgets of large scale public programmes, but have been able to catalysed certain impacts in terms of behavioural changes in service users and providers as well as development outcomes and thus needs to be institutionalised.

2. The Objective

The objective of this workshop was to disseminate the learning from different pilots among policy influencing people, discuss the need and feasibility of incorporating these SAC approaches and to derive possible strategies for scaling it up in various welfare schemes to generate better outcomes.

3. Participation

Primary participants were key decision makers who have their say in policy framing, government functionaries, who are directly, involved in the ground implementation of development programmes, the witness of the process and impact of the SAC interventions

from the side of government and *Panchayati Raj* Institutions and the World Bank Task Team Leaders working in relevant sectors. In addition, representatives from academia, representatives of the agencies who piloted these tools, civil society representatives working in the area of good governance and donor organisations also attended the workshop.

4. Proceedings

4.1 Inaugural Session

Welcome & Introductory Remarks:

While making his introductory remarks George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International, welcomed the participants and briefed about the objective of the workshop, concept of SAc, its importance, and emergence in India and also CUTS' interventions in the areas of SAc.

He stated that citizens have the right to demand accountability and public actors have an obligation to be accountable to its citizens, which are the fundamental principles of democracy and the keystone of the movement growing across the world to make public institutions more responsive to citizens. The new approach of governance engages citizen actively in order to hold public officials accountable for their actions, decisions and behaviour. SAc contributes to increased development effectiveness through improved public service delivery and better-informed policy design which leads to empowerment of citizens, particularly of the poor.

He further stated that the issues of good governance have been receiving considerable attention in the political discourses in India as seen in recently held general elections where the mandate was on governance issues. But much more needs to be done to enhance the administrative/bureaucratic accountability. The enactment of the Right to Information Act (2005) in India had opened up the entire governance process to the common people and created a genuine demand for SAc mechanisms. We need a law that bounds officials to deliver services in a time-bound manner, and directly accountable to the people.

Describing CUTS experience in the area, he said that CUTS has been involved in the area of good governance for enhancing the client power since the very beginning using various SAc methods and tools and it is imbibed in the philosophy of the organisation.

4.1.1 Opening Remarks:

Parmesh Shah, Lead Rural Development Specialist, World Bank in his opening remarks stated the background and objectives of the workshop.

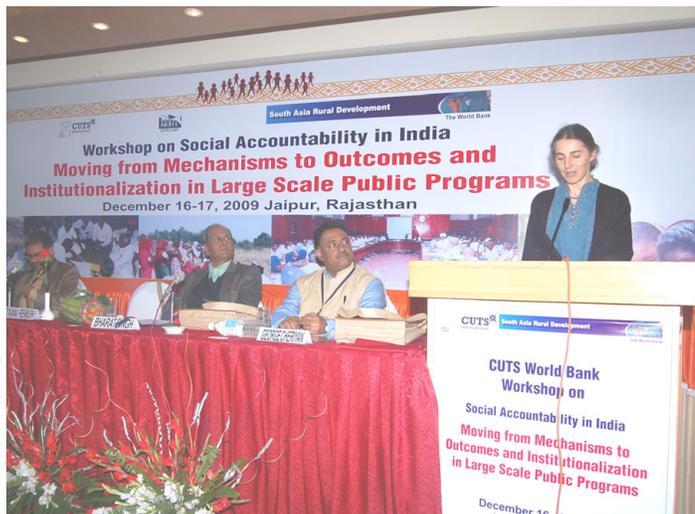
He briefed about the efforts made by the World Bank to mainstream SAc approaches and the establishment of South Asia Social Accountability Network (SASANET) comprising various

civil society organisations (CSOs), government officials and professionals in its network to make the scope of the approach wider. Earlier numbers of approaches were being tried like Citizen Report Cards (CRCs), Right to Information (RTI) Act and Participatory Budget Tracking, social audit etc. Three years ago, the World Bank decided to support pilots of institutionalising these social accountability tools in the large-scale programmes, findings of three such initiatives will be present during the workshop.

He stressed on the fact that unless expenditure is accompanied by achievements and outcomes, then it cannot be taken as a proxy for development. During this two-day workshop possible strategies of scaling up and institutionalisation of the pilot SA initiatives will be discussed.

4.1.2 Keynote Address: Giovanna Prennushi, Economic Adviser, the World Bank

In her keynote address, Giovanna Prennushi, Economic Adviser, The World Bank stated about the importance of community activism in its potential to extract accountability, which SAc approach ensures. Describing one anecdote related to poor accountability, the situation is sometime pathetic.



The government wants to improve the service delivery and improve outcomes for the poor. This is the common ground for both the government and the World Bank. The World Bank engages itself in a number of state sponsored schemes and tries to strengthen the mechanism of accountability. In case of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*, The World Bank supports social audit and third party evaluation system. We have initiated a talk with Ministry of Rural Development for adoption of similar exercise in case of *Swarn Jayanti Grammen Swa-Rojgar Yojana (SGSY)*.

She said that World Bank would support more SAc initiatives for fighting corruption, improving service delivery, ensuring outcomes for poor and capacity building at community level. She said that political will and role of media is very important and said that bringing the corrupt practices in the media may pose a problem for the service providers but is very effective for improving service delivery.. She said that the World Bank is looking forward to see and help more initiatives.

4.1.3 Inaugural Address:

Bharat Singh, Hon. Minister for Rural Development & *Panchayati Raj*, Government of Rajasthan started his inaugural remarks by saying the country has witnessed significant growth in the field of health, 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. This is where the question of accountability comes in.

Further he pointed out the need of introspection by every one. He questioned how you place accountability unless you ask the same question from yourself. It is individual responsibility and accountability which improves the country. He said that there is only hope from the citizen that they will come out together and question the government, ask for accountability and from the organisations like CUTS which is working consistently for the citizen empowerment. He said that he would look forward to the suggestions/recommendations emerging out of the workshop.

4.2 Release of Documentary Film and Screening

A documentary film 'Social Accountability in Action' based on the CUTS work in the area of social accountability in the case of Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was released by Bharat Singh and screened before the audience.

4.3 Vote of Thanks

Om Prakash Arya, Project Coordinator, CUTS conveyed vote of thanks to the guests and participants, who were invited only for the inaugural session on behalf of CUTS and World Bank.

Technical Sessions:

Session 1

Setting the Context: Parmesh Shah, Lead Rural Development Specialist, World Bank



After a round of self-introduction by all the participants, Parmesh Shah narrated the context of the workshop so that the participants can make their efforts and contribution towards achieving the objectives of the workshop.

In his presentation he pointed out the concept of 'Accountability Ecosystem' and made a strong case for the need to invest in building this 'Accountability Ecosystem' highlighting the outcomes of SA pilot interventions, so that accountability can flourish.

He pointed out certain measures to build Accountability Ecosystem:

- Putting accountability mechanism in place (availability of information, system of collecting feed back from users, forum of dialogue among community and service providers);
- Developing demand side institutional architecture (to send collective feedback);
- Building a cadre of community level monitors (when intensity and density of this cadre increases, will create irreversible process); and
- Supply-side architecture for collecting feedback (supply-side should have a system to collect feedback to take decisions to reallocate resources and redesign programmes).

Highlighting the outcomes of three pilot interventions he stated that various behavioural and institutional changes have happened due to these. India has invested nearly 100 billion dollars in development. If only one percent investment is made in social accountability, the outcomes can improve and lead to a change. But to sustain such results, such as SA mechanism should be institutionalised in all the big programmes/schemes for development.

Thus the question is if it can make such a huge change then why such investment is not being made. In spite of evidences available, why they are not addressing the need to invest this amount.

The presentation was followed by open discussion during which the following key points emerged out:

- Only investing one percent in SA mechanism to ensure outcome seems so simple but it is a complicated issue.
- Community action is important to ensure accountability but there is no single community but divided by groups having contradictions and different interests.
- Accountability of the policy-making institutions should also be fixed not only of front line service providers.
- Design and structure of any programme/scheme is very crucial to ensure its success.
- We should address the causes of lack of accountability instead of the symptoms.
- Attitude and behaviour change of service provider is must to ensure accountability.

Session 2

Presentation of 1st Case Study: *Achieving Service Delivery and Health Development Outcomes in Satara District, Maharashtra, India*

Presenters:

- Sumedh Gurjar, Director of Research & Documentation Centre, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA)
- Sambhaji Kadu-Patil, Joint Commissioner of Sales Tax, Government of Maharashtra and Former CEO of Satara District

Moderator: Dr. Santosh Kumar, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (Gujarat)

Discussants:

- Gopi Menon, Former Maharashtra State Representative, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Lakshmi Durga, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP)

Moderator Santosh Kumar introduced the session and said that equal development of mechanism of accountability is necessary and in public health arena more pilots of social accountability are needed.

Summary of the Presentation:

Sumedh in his presentation touched upon the context of the intervention, service delivery mechanism and role of PRIs, problems encountered, genesis of the accountability interventions, process and methodology used, major outcomes in terms of behaviour and institutional changes etc. Sambhaji Kadu-Patil further supplemented these findings. He said that in the micro planning process, SAc tools specifically the Community Score Card (CSC), helped a lot in improving the quality of the service delivery. When CSC was done, line departments issued orders to the concerned officials to participate in the CSC process so that they can know the ground realities, making an action agenda to strategise the things and can do accordingly.

As a result government department's allotted funds to sustain the community initiative of SAc and other departments, such as health and family welfare requested to make action plans in other districts as well and for that they allotted budget in crores of rupees. He informed that for institutionalisation of SAc tools annual bottom up district planning (which is culmination of village micro plans) has been made mandatory in Maharashtra. The villages covered under the initiative got '*Nirmal Village Awards*' (Clean Village Awards) by the state government.



In Satara District, Maharashtra, a structured, iterative process of micro planning and feedback between citizens, government and service providers has produced clear development outcomes in terms of child nutrition, maternal health and water and sanitation. Within one-year period of accountability initiative, Satara District has seen a 46 percent increase in normal nutritional grade children, a 16 percent increase in immunised children, and total sanitation with a significant decrease in waterborne diseases in 178 villages.

The presentation was followed by remarks by discussants and then the floor was opened for discussions.

1st Discussant:

Gopi Menon opined that to strengthen SAc it is important to see how the national goals can be converted into community norms. He said that unless this happens, effectiveness of service delivery would be limited. He stated that there is a need for creating more master trainers of SAc for creating community structures. He further said that partnership between government and community can be helpful in facilitating the initiatives as evident from this case study. He also shared UNICEF's work in Maharashtra on SAc, tools and process used and future plans etc.

2nd Discussant:

Laxmi Durga while narrating about her Andhra Pradesh experience stated that CSC was helpful in institutionalising certain processes in the system, such as fixed nutrition & health day. The community became proactive and started demanding services. The collectors of other districts also took interest and implemented these tools in their district where SERP provided technical input. So these tools are really helpful in making community proactive and created demand of service and drew attention of decision makers.

Following key points emerged out of open session:

- It seems like officer driven initiative and later community took the ownership of that is why it is sustainable.
- Ownership by *Zila Parishad* (Satara) and a very strong lead in raising funds out of existing programmes was the main factor for its success.
- CSC play a crucial role and is the only tool where we can evaluate and learn about the impacts and existing gaps in the machinery.
- Scaling up of SAc tools require large efforts and continuous evaluation over a period of time which will help in deriving acceptance from service providers and improving the public expenditure outcomes through SAc interventions.
- If there is lack of resources then they resources should be built and contributed within the communities to ensure sustainability. When community is mobilised then it supports the programme and many initiatives do not require additional budget but only change of attitude.
- There is impact cycle of using SAc tools with micro planning which leads for self-propelling change in behaviour and mechanisms, which together constitute accountability.
- For inclusive planning, entitlement mapping can be useful in identifying the requirements and entitlements of marginalised sectors.
- Enabling environment is must for success of such interventions.

- Community plans should reflect mandate of community and not of the organisation implementing the intervention.

Moderator, Dr. Santosh Kumar commented at last that various factors make the pilot successful or a failure in a limited area but unless a large area is not taken under implementation, the impact will not be seen. So it is very important to see how it can be scaled up even if it takes more than one percent of the cost of the scheme or programme. Stating about the lack of human resources, he said that a cadre of people needs to be trained and then the use of tools should continue to develop faith among community and service providers.

He put forward one question before Gopi and Durra to explain YASHADA's work to scale up in Maharashtra. In response Gopi informed that in Maharashtra, it is happening. Together in three districts, they have 16,0000 youths trained, 800 master trainers are created who can train facilitators and Master-Trainer Alliance is formed. We need to create network of resource institutions. Funding is not a problem. He said that if funding is required for CSC, the Planning Commission will approve the budget for it.

Session 3

Presentation of 2nd Case Study: Improving Student Enrollment and Teacher Absenteeism through Social Accountability Interventions in Nalgonda & Adilabad Districts, Andhra Pradesh

Presenter:

- Seshu Kumari, Regional Director, Education, SERP, Andhra Pradesh

Moderator:

Rajendra Prasad, Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF), Andhra Pradesh

Discussants:

- Mohammad Ali Rafath, State Project Director, SSA, Andhra Pradesh
- Venita Kaul, Independent Consultant, Education Specialist, the World Bank
- Yamini Aiyer, Director, Accountability Initiative
- Josyula Lakshmi, Knowledge Manager (Human Development) Centre for Good Governance (CGG) Hyderabad



Summary of the Presentation: Seshu Kumari, presented the findings, outcomes and shared experiences of the pilot project on SAc. In Andhra Pradesh, mobilisation of parents combined with monitoring through a CSC and feedback to service providers has galvanised public investment, public action and social

capital to improve the quality of education. This accountability intervention created an institutionalised platform for continuous dialogue between teachers, school committee, and parents to solve basic problems around quality of education, dropouts, and teacher's absenteeism. Both districts have seen a 10 percent drop in teachers' absenteeism, a significant decrease in school dropouts and a 100 percent enrollment of children in seven villages in both districts.

1st Discussant:

Md. Ali Rafath stated the challenges like illiteracy of parents, insensitivity of community towards school, breakdown of supervisory mechanism which are leading towards poor quality, high drop-out rate, high teacher absenteeism rate and poor governance of MDMS and SSA fund for solving this problem. He stressed on the need to create Academic Monitoring Committee (AMC) to improve the education system through demonstration of students' performance.

2nd Discussant:

Yamini commented that SSA and similar schemes are centralised at the core and decentralised at the implementation level. CSCs have provided a peg and should be taken as a tool for initiation of the process of community involvement with the schools and its development. Thinking also about expanding these further to help parents monitor and access the quality of education even if they are illiterate. Moreover what about parent's accountability? She further told that the provisions of SSA is not being properly utilised. SSA has space for better community mobilisation and involvement in the process of education. But every year, large amount of money of SSA budget remains unspent and every year there is increase in budget by 10-15 percent.

3rd Discussant:

Venita Kaul said that several parallel programmes are going on for children, so there is a need for a village plan for children rather than health, nutrition & education.

She said that the design of SSA is very beautiful, but it is not utilised as there is very limited awareness about SSA in the community. There are PRIs who do not know that SSA deals with education. The confidence level of community is very low. She also mentioned the need of maintaining the quality of school for consistent community participation.

She said that key learnings emerged out of combining her experiences and the intervention of SAC can be summarised as:

- The involvement of community is a very intensive process, so continuous facilitation by certain organisations and a regular handholding is required through multi-model system;
- Developing social capital for making this effort sustainable;

- CSC could be a very good development tool if properly implemented;
- Impact evaluation of such interventions should be done to see the cost benefit ration, which will give insight whether to put more money in to it or not; and
- For the question of scaling up the use of such mechanism and tools, convergence of this with SSA or any other scheme is the best answer.

Such interventions can be scaled up through convergence with SSA and other schemes.

4th Discussant:

Josyula Lakshmi commented that for strengthening SAc we need to built a cadre of supply-side champions and their support system, and for there is a need to invest in human capital. Champions alone could not do anything except motivating people. There is a need to multiply the number of champions and upscaling it. She also shared work of CGG on the issues of accountability.

Open Discussion:

- Priyanka of *Seva Mandir*, pointed out the lack of description on the problems encountered during the process of intervention. The problems like absenteeism, teacher's union, political patronage, problems of community breaking up, social conflict, youth migration etc. She also told that it is again too demanding in nature, when we say that the system can be responsive only when there will be demand from the community side. For poor, every day is a struggle, every resource is productive and we are expecting so many things from them, she said. She stated that we should not think of a theory which would work where responsiveness of a system is based on the demand of the community.
- There is mismatch between government's schemes and people's expectations.
- SAc mechanism should be integrated in the coming Right to Education bill.
- Design of SSA system is having no incentives for people to participate.
- There is huge investment of poor section of society on sending their children in private schools. What SSA is doing for curbing such kind of problems?

Session 4:

On the second day the proceedings of the workshop began with a summary of key observations of the first day by George Cheriyan, CUTS International. Parmesh Shah also added on his observation on the proceedings of the first day.

Session 5:

Presentation of 3rd case study 'Improving the Public Expenditure Outcomes of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme through Social Accountability Interventions in Sirohi District, Rajasthan

Presenter:

- Om Prakash Arya, CUTS International
- George Cheriyan, CUTS International

Moderator: D.K.Jain, Joint Secretary, Ministry of *Panchayati Raj*, Government of India

Discussants:

- T R Rahughunandan, Principal Secretary, Department of *Panchayati Raj*, Government of Karnataka (TBC)
- Siddharth Mahajan, District Collector, Sawai Mahopur
- Santhanu Sinha, National Consortium of Civil Society Organisations on NREGA

Summary of the Presentation:

In the beginning of the presentation Cheriyan described the context in which the intervention was made. He said that NREGS was piloted in 200 districts of the country. The government also needed the feedback form the beneficiaries about the programme as it was mentioned as people's employment programme. Thus, this intervention through citizen report cards (CRCs) and CSCs was initiated to assess the implementation of the scheme and identify the gaps in the scheme and the possible measures to rectify these problems. He mentioned that NREGS budget for Sirohi was Rs 757 million whereas the cost of this intervention was less than one percent of this budget which contributed greatly in enhancing the outcomes.



Om Prakash carried on the presentation touching upon the process and methodology used, major outcomes in term of behaviour and institutional changes etc. He told that in Rajasthan, a process of feedback through CSCs and CRCs has triggered a series of behavioural changes in NREGS beneficiaries including a dramatic rise in awareness on key entitlements under NREGS and a deepened beneficiary capacity to monitor NREGS implementation. These behaviour changes, in turn, have led to a series of institutional changes that have informed NREGS implementation in the district. Specifically, a Technical Committee to measure the

technical feasibility of NREGS proposals, and a Task Force for more comprehensive and effective possibilities of convergence with NREGA have formed since the introduction of this accountability intervention.

Describing the process, Om Prakash explained that government and district administration were taken on board right from the initial stage. The place where CSC was implemented, 15 days were needed for mobilising the community and convincing the service providers to sit along with community and get the performance assessed by them. He also told the use of CRC is helpful in getting feedback as well as informing the citizens about the entitlements or any other information.

1st Discussant:

Mahajan, who was the Collector of Sirohi at the time of its intervention and well aware of it, mentioned the background of Sirohi by saying that it is a predominantly agriculture based tribal area having large numbers of BPL and SC/St population. The intervention by CUTS was a fact-finding mission and not a fault-finding mission and provided feedback to improve the service delivery. This initiated many positive changes in the policies and implementation at the ground level. He said that any such



agency which can provide feedback to the district administration and help improve the service delivery is useful. The process and tools which were used by CUTS in the district were really helpful and this model should be replicated throughout the country by the Government of India.

Highlighting the constraints of supply-side he said that before NREGS, the field administration never did any large-scale work. There is also shortage of skilled manpower in the area but the cooperation of PRIs and their willingness to work for the welfare of the people resulted in the successful implementation of NREGS in Sirohi.

2nd Discussant:

Santhanu Sinha opined that CRC and CSS are very effective tools and mechanisms for improving the outcome of any development programme as evident from the presentation. These methodologies should be integrated with the modern technology, i.e. mobile phones, voice mail, SMS etc., to make it more people friendly and easily accessible by the uneducated masses as well. He said by such means SAc interventions can be scaled up.

He said that the main problem of accountability in NREGS is that the concept of *gram sabha* is not working as desired. *Panchayats* are *sarpanch* centric and most of people are not aware

about social audit related provisions. There is also lack of manpower to carry out CSCs and other kinds of social audits.

3rd Discussant:

T R Raghunandan said that he was involved in drafting of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). The Act was initially drafted having various provisions for SAc but final draft was completely different from the initial one.

He said that *panchayats* feel that they are being isolated in the battle of the indifferent government and the activism of NGOs. He said that *panchayats* have been made responsible for implementation of NREGS but actually it has been collectorised. Social audits are also becoming fault finding missions. Such audits should not expect any changes in the work of the administration. CSOs should not attack only front line service providers but the persons responsible for policy decision making.

Open Discussion

Following key issues emerged out of the open discussions, which followed the presentation and comments by discussant:

- CRC is an effective for addressing various issues by providing feedback and its institutionalisation can result in improving the expenditure outcome.
- From the findings of the social audits, administration is getting information, which does not lead them to take any action to improve upon the situation.
- When the tools have already been prescribed in the legislation of NREGA, why are new tools being devised and implemented? It should supplement the already prescribed tools.
- Social audit does not give action agenda to improve upon the system as CSC provides
- There is no touching upon the corruption prevalent in NREGS, whether the Sirohi was corruption free

Session 6

Presentation of 4th case study on 'Beneficiaries as Monitors and Government as Facilitators', Social Audit of the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Andhra Pradesh

Presenter: B Rajsekhar, Director, Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT), Government of Andhra Pradesh



Moderator: D.B.Gupta, Principal Secretary, Planning, Government of Rajasthan

Discussants:

- Professor Ashwani Kumar, Member Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC) and Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS)
- Anupama Jha Executive Director, Transparency International (India), New Delhi.

Rajshekhhar started his presentation with screening of a small documentary film on the process of social audit in Andhra. He spoke about the key factors for success of the intervention, the process and methodology used, challenges faced, the outcomes and the roadmap ahead.

Summary of the Presentation: The social audit programme in Andhra Pradesh is an institutionalised SAc process to assess NREGS implementation in the state. Through intensive capacity building efforts of a dedicated government agency, this social audit programme has trained a cadre of over 44,000 NREGS beneficiaries to be certified village social auditors and audit Rs 2,345 crore in NREGA expenditure. Even a single iteration of this social audit process has created a strong deterrent impact on rent-seeking officials. As a result, Rs 40 million stolen funds have been returned and 2,082 functionaries have been removed or disciplined. This social audit programme has paved the way for the institutionalisation of demand-side accountability approaches in other state government programmes to improve service delivery, governance and accountability. This session will highlight the sequence of interventions that have made the institutionalisation of social audits possible in order to inform similar initiatives in India.

1st Discussant:

Professor Ashwani Kumar commented that the structured design of social audit in Andhra is very impressive but the main pillars of SAc: the PRIs and CSOs are completely sidelined in this model. He further commented that social audit in Andhra is suffering from organic crisis and there is a need to think about multiple SAc initiatives at multi level. He said that social audit is helpful in stopping leakages of funds and capable of producing multiple outcomes.

2nd Discussant:

Anupama Jha commented that implementation of social audit provisions in NREGS is the key issue. However, it is good that government is institutionalising SAc in such programmes. She said that devolution of powers between different public representatives is not clear and also creating confusion in fixing their accountability. She also shared work and experience of T.I. in the area of SAc.

Following key issues emerged out of the open discussion, which followed the presentation and comments by discussant:

- Andhra social audit model is violating certain provisions of the NREGA by doing social audit at block level by team of trained auditors and not by *gram sabha* at the *panchayat* level.

- Political will and bureaucratic commitment is behind the success of the model. Social audits in Andhra Pradesh NREGS are new paradigm in SAc.
- The social audits in Andhra Pradesh (by Social Audi Council) have been registered as a society but it is a government run society and not a CSO. It needs to be more democratic by inducting representatives of PRIs and CSOs.
- There is need to utilise existing *Panchayati Raj* system by mobilising *gram sabhas* to ensure SAc in NREGS and other schemes.
- There is need to invest huge amount in creating institutions and strengthening them before starting large-scale programmes.
- Convergence among different schemes and departments is must for success of SAc initiatives and their scaling up in large programmes.
- There is need to demystify social audit and other such tools for public awareness and acceptability.

The Moderator, Parmesh Shah towards the end of the programme added that the learnings/findings which came out of the whole discussion is the need to invest in community mobilisation. These investments have to be made whether India implements NREGS or not so that accountability can work. When we are running an enterprise of Rs 100 crore, then at least 10 percent of it needs to be invested in community mobilisation and unless we do that, any amount of accountability mechanism will not work whether it is social audit or community score card, he said.

Valedictory Session

C D Arah, Chief Information Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh speaking as a **Special Guest** in valedictory session thanked CUTS and the World Bank for organising such event to deliberate the issue of SAc. He said that public authorities are under obligation to delivery the services if accountability is fixed. Referring to the case studies of SA pilot interventions presented during the workshop, he stated that the outcomes of these interventions show that it can lead to participatory governance. He also opined that RTI could be helpful in bringing transparency and accountability. He expressed that the deliberation of this workshop will certainly lead towards greater accountability. He also shared his views about the proposed amendments in the RTI Act to make it toothless.

Chief Guest ANP Sinha, Secretary to the Government, Ministry of *Panchayati Raj*, New Delhi said that inclusion, agenda, participation, enlightened citizens are the main pillars of SAc. He said that the subject of the workshop is of great interest for the Government of India and they are looking forward to the recommendations emerging out of the workshop to enhance SAc.



ANP Sinha said that the World Bank should not invest and see successes in isolated programmes. All the efforts and interventions should strengthen the existing system of local government and existing institutions. The Bank should not try to draw a parallel system but to strengthen and invest in the existing institutions of *Panchayati Raj*'s isolated projects which are scattered here and there. He also expressed that the present Andhra Model of social audit is neglecting PRIs.

Parmesh in his concluding remarks provided a brief overview of the World Bank work on SAc issues and background of the workshop. He also talked about the lessons learnt from the workshop. Parmesh also said that there is no substitute of community mobilisation to ensure accountability. He informed that to continue the dialogue process the World Bank would come up with a dedicated website on the issues. The following are some of the key issues emerged out of the deliberations of the workshop.

1. There is no substitute to mobilise local government and people for greater accountability;
2. There is dire need of investment on both institutions of *Panchayat* and users of services and technical assistance at all levels;
3. There is a need to build some facilitation structure from government and CSOs for nurturing institutions; and
4. Need of getting enough legal provisions and to strengthen knowledge management structure.

He also expressed his thanks to all the participants and distributed the memento to all the participants in the end.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS, proposed formal vote of thanks to all the delegates, presenters and discussants and other participants. A memento was distributed to all the participants at the end.

Social Accountability Mechanism: Moving towards institutionalization

This workshop was organized in order to showcase the impacts of the social accountability pilots among various policy influencing authorities and advocating for institutionalizing it in public programs to get better public expenditure outcomes. The workshop was successful in terms of triggering a debate on the need for investing in the tools or mechanisms, in community, in PRIs etc. which can help in extracting accountability of public actors. The policy makers, policy influencing authorities, academia, civil society organizations etc. reached on a consensus of using some tools and techniques to improve governance and accountability. The tools may be of social accountability or any other accountability tools or a mix. Few of the views on the need and feasibility of such institutionalization are summarized below:

1. More support for social accountability initiatives for fighting corruption, improving service delivery, ensuring outcomes for poor and for that it will invest in capacity building

at community level. .Anything which can play a role in greater accountability, the World Bank should do so

2. Citizens are the only hope that they will come out together and question the government; ask for accountability, which is inherent in the approaches of social accountability. Government to implement the suggestions emerging out of such workshop.
3. India invests nearly 100 billion dollars in development. If only one percent of it is invested in the social accountability mechanisms, it will lead to a substantive change in the degree of development outcome as proved in the 3 pilot interventions.. So to obtain and sustain such development outcomes, SA mechanism should be institutionalized in all the big programs /schemes for development.
4. Various factors make a pilot successful or a failure as it is implemented in a limited area. Unless a large area is not taken for such pilots, the impact can not be generalised. So it is very important to see how it can be scaled up for a large area. Even if it takes more than 1 percent of the cost of the scheme, it will be advisable to implement and see the results. Lack of human resources can be dealt with developing a cadre of people through rigorous training and then continuous use of tools which will also develop faith among community and service providers.
5. Convergence of the social accountability tools with the large scale public program is one way to incorporate it in the system. To implement such kind of mechanism, lot of hand-holding is required to increase confidence level of community. A suggestion to the need of impact evaluation of such interventions emerged out for cost benefit analysis, which will give insight about putting money in to it.
6. We should not think a theory would work where responsiveness of a system is based on the demand of community. It is too demanding on the part of the poor, for whom every day is struggle, every resource is productive and we should not demand time and resource from them to make the system work.
7. Social accountability tools and approaches provide information on gaps through feedback to work upon for improving the service delivery, which is not the case with any other approaches. Use of any such approach that can give feedback to the administration and can help it in improving the service delivery is very useful. So let this be a model to be replicated throughout the country.
8. Public authorities are under obligation to deliver the services if accountability is fixed. Referring to the case studies of SA pilot interventions presented during the workshop, it was said the outcomes of these interventions show potential to be replicated for generating participatory governance.
9. Enlightened citizen are the main pillars of social accountability and the subject of the workshop is of greatest interest for Govt. of India and it is looking forward to the recommendations out of the workshop to enhance accountability through civic and Panchayati Raj Insitutions (PRIs) involvement.