

Consultation with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Under Project My City II

December 10, 2013, Hotel Maharani Plaza, Jaipur

In pursuit of the agenda of improving governance through engaging citizens in the implementation of services, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) formulated and executed an intervention 'Improving Service Delivery by Urban Local Government in the City of Jaipur through Enhanced Civic Engagement' using social accountability approaches for Jaipur city of Rajasthan with the support of The Asia Foundation (TAF). The project covered eight wards from eight zones of Jaipur city that remained quite successful in achieving its outcomes in its first phase.

Public Service Index (PSI) was used to generate ward-level report cards of urban services provided by the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) in eight selected wards of Jaipur city. The essential municipal services provided by JMC – 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 interface with service providers were organised for resolving specific issues in various service deliveries. In order to improve services, emphasis should be laid on enhancing citizens' participation. Provisions of 74th amendment is also essential.

Phase II of the project is going to be started in additional eight wards of Jaipur city. To get the initial insights from the experiences of CSOs, a CSO consultation meeting was organised on December 10, 2013 at Hotel Maharani Plaza. This was first in the series of consultations. It aimed at getting ideas from CSO representatives on the subject '*Improving municipal services: Way forward in current context*' based on their experience in this sector.

Participation

CSO representatives participated and shared their views in making the project successful. More than 30 participants including 12 partners from 16 selected wards participated. A K Ojha, Centre for Development Communication; Anshu Singh, Project Manager, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and P N Mendola, *Lok Sampatti Sanrakshan Samiti* participated as resource persons.



Objective

The main objective of the consultation was to understand issues related to the city from the perspective of CSOs and discuss the challenges faced while implementing any intervention or project to address those local issues.

Proceedings

Welcome & Introductory Remarks

Abhimanyu Singh, Project Officer, CUTS welcomed the participants and provided a brief overview of the project, its activities and objective of the meeting.

Om Prakash Arya, Senior Project Coordinator, CUTS also joined in welcoming the participants and spoke about CUTS' partnership with Asia Foundation. He mentioned that this is the second phase of the project after successfully concluding the first one. He also mentioned the important role which CSOs can play in the present context.

Overview of the Intervention

Amar Deep Singh, Senior Project Officer, CUTS briefly presented an overview of the project in the first phase. He spoke 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 the first phase of the project. He shared the objective, intervention and activities that need to be done in the second phase.



Key Address

A K Ojha shed light on the present trend of people becoming self-centric resulting into chaos in every area. He discouraged the tendency of feeling supreme among bureaucrats. Speaking about the changed mindset of the people, he said that here should be partnership between citizens and officials contributing towards delivery of services. On post liberalisation, he stated that the situation has changed and poor people are becoming poorer because of failure of inclusive growth.



Comparing Jaipur to world class city, he said that Jaipur is gradually becoming the worst place to live in. He said that CSOs should be strong enough to fight for the cause of common men. There is a dire need to bring changes in the attitude of the JMC officials. The system is very complicated in municipality. There should be proper regulatory system to maintain democracy. He also suggested forming an advisory body consisting of activists, CSOs, NGOs and intellectual persons for proper

functioning of the system and urged people to use Right to Information (RTI) Act for asking questions related to the functioning of government officials.

P N Mandola expressed his concern over building up more than 250 high rise buildings with no proper parking facilities. He also said that there are many such buildings with no proper master plan and thus violating the rules. He said that there is a need of exerting pressure on responsible authorities to work in accordance with the master plan developed for Jaipur city. He commented on the involvement of huge corruption in the functioning of the government machinery. He shared his endeavours in the direction of improving the situation and requested support from CSOs in this noble endeavour of MyCity intervention.

Anshu Singh, Project Manager, PRIA, presented their work related to urban slums of Jaipur city and showed how their efforts are creating stir for bringing change in the situation of slums.

When all the key speakers made their presentations, representatives of CSOs presented 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 to consider these points in finalising the project strategy.

Vote of Thanks

A formal vote of thanks was delivered to all CSO representatives towards the end of the consultation.