

Press Release

Strengthening ULBs for facing challenges of urbanization and creating space for more civic engagement a must: said unanimously in CUTS Advocacy Meeting

Jaipur, August 28, 2015

Addressing challenges of rapid urbanization is need of the hour; this can be done by strengthening ULBs through making them financially viable and creating more space for citizen engagement in the service delivery processes. All these were unanimously discussed in an advocacy meeting organised by Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) on August 27, 2015 in Jaipur. Meeting also prominently discussed the issues of unequal distributions of resources among city wards, less power to the elected representatives of urban bodies and lack of citizen platform for raising local issue.

Addressing the participants, Purushotam Biyana, Director cum Joint Secretary, Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Rajasthan said that efforts being done by the department to strengthen the ULBs and for improving the municipal services by provision financial assistance, though in Rajasthan which is very low and creating and activating more and more pressure groups, resident welfare associations and citizen groups and create pressure upon service providers to improve the services but on the other hand every common citizen need to obey their duties as well.

While talking in the meeting, Mohan Lal Gupta, MLA, Jaipur said that in urban areas effective complaint redressal must be ensured and that can 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.

Ramavtar Raghuvanshi, Director, Rajasthan Institute of Local Self Government talked about three specific things and that in ULBs structural changes are need of the hour which shall 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 happening around in the other states. He gave specific example of Surat where urban development tax regime has been reformed and Hyderabad where cleanliness has been ensured by taking innovative ways and means.

George Cherian, Director CUTS talked about MyCity project and its relevance in overall development of Jaipur City and said referred a survey recently done in which position of Jaipur is 317 out of 400 cities of India. He further said that Jaipur has aspires for being a world class city and has its master plan, 2009 to achieve the goal but still lots of things need to be done by Jaipur Municipal Corporation like devolution of powers, activation of ward committees, enhancing more civic engagement etc.

While making presentation, Amar Deep Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS shared the key findings come out of the study done in Jaipur to assess the conditions of public services delivered by the urban bodies and perception of citizens. He said that 64 percent of people are dumping garbage in open, 48 percent are not satisfied with cleanliness of the city 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 from playground and 62 percent are deprived from the facility of community centres.

Sanchita Bishnoi, Additional Director, Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Rajasthan, said that lots of powers have been devolved to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) but still lot need to be done regarding making ULBs financially viable. Later she emphasized by saying that every individual need to develop some ownership and try to be part of the solution rather being part of the problem so that lots of problems are automatically addressed therefore creating active citizenship is the key. She mentioned that overall position of Jaipur is good as per her own experience and feedback received by lots of visitors of the city.

Bhawani Singh Rajawat, Chairman, Committee of Slums, Jaipur Municipal Corporation, said that it is not easy for them to control so many things due to public pressure. He further said if public is aware about so many things like timing of the garbage collection and dumping garbage at that time only, and doing things correctly than it is easy for them to monitor the government service providers who are shying away from fulfilling their responsibilities. He further said the value based training to the government officials will certainly bring number of positive changes in the system.

Monika Solanki, Official from Jaipur Unite, an initiative by Jaipur Municipal Corporation for engaging citizens for making Jaipur Clean and Green, given overview of its objectives and initiatives taken by it and requested all the participants to join with it since it provides direct support to the citizens in making Jaipur clean and green by providing assistance on their request.

In the event more than 100 participants taken part including present and former Councilors, JMC and other departmental officials, representatives of CSOs, RWAs, other civic bodies and media. For more please contact:

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