

Visit to Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh: An Exposure Visit to Twin City

Background

Consumer Unity and Trust Society, with support from Partnership for Transparency Fund, USA, is implementing a project called *Contributing towards Corruption Free and Transparent Service Delivery in 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)' through Civic Engagement in Jaipur and Tonk Districts of Rajasthan, India (CitizensUp)*. Under the project interventions, many activities were carried out for achieving the objectives. In continuation of the same, an exposure visit to Hyderabad was organised during December 16-21, 2012, for witnessing the existing service delivery pattern in MGNREGS and the functioning of Social Audit at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

Participation

A nine member delegation went for an exposure visit. The delegates included Sita Devi, *Sarpanch Dabich Gram Panchayat*, Phagi block, Jaipur; Bhagwan Sahay, Chief Executive Officer, Tonk; Deen Dayal Gupta, Block Development Officer, Niwai; Suresh Saini from SAJAG; Atma Ram, ATMA Sansthan, Syoji Ram SANGARSH Sansthan; and Mohan Meena, KalyanSewa Sansthan and project team. Madhu Sudan Sharma, Project Coordinator and Arti Pandey Tiwari, Project Officer from CUTS.



Proceedings



Delegation reached in Hyderabad on December 18, 2012, and, on the first day of the visit, the team had interactions with the officials of the Society for Social Audit and Transparency (SSAAT). Chaitanya Patel, Programme Officer, SSAAT, welcomed all the delegated and started the morning sessions on Social Audit and MGNREGS in SSAAT conference hall itself. With the formal introduction of all the delegates and CUTS, the day's proceedings started with the details of formation, roles and functions of the SSAAT through a presentation. As per the expectations of the delegate from the visits, Chaitanya very well explained about the implementation process of MGNREGS and Social audit and also addressed the queries of

participants related to the same. During the first half, the participants were given detailed knowledge about the social audit process

Meeting with the Officials



After the lunch, in the next session, SSAAT officials of the state team also joined the discussions. Among the officials, Murali, Social Development Specialist (SDS), along with three programme staff, Ujjwal, Nitin and Nazli, were present in the meeting. Initiating the discussions, Murali talked about his experiences at SSAAT and said that social audit is working well in the state despite the challenges. He added that political leaders and public representatives are the main takers of

the social audit in the state and bureaucracy follows that therefore there is strong political will among the state government about the social audit to see it successful. He also said that the demand for social audit is growing in the state in few of the programmes like Mid-Day Meal and *Indira AawasYojana*, etc. The participants raised their queries about almost all the processes like public hearing, recovery process, actions taken, etc., which were very patiently answered by the officials. The proceedings of the meeting were in English which were simultaneously translated in Hindi by his colleagues.



In the last session of the meeting, Sachyavani, Joint Director SSAAT, joined the group and shared her experiences of working in SSAAT and said she preferred to work in the society even under the civil society person who is not from the civil services solely because of the overall enabling environment within the state which helps her to work with her with full force and capacity. She also mentioned that it is for her satisfaction that she is working for the transparency and accountability work through SSAAT which requires a positive mindset of the official and inner force as well. Later, she added that SSAAT is working remarkably well and setting an example for other states as well and so far 25 crores of rupees which was misused or made through corrupt means has been recovered during the social audit process till date and there is growing demand of the process in other departments and programmes as well in the state and we are trying to meet that demand.



Field Visit on Day Two

On December 19, 2012, a delegation visited the field areas to see the social audit in practice and to learn the whole process of social audits including various steps of it at Mandalor block level. The area selected for the field visit was *Nyalkalmandal* of *Medak* district and *Medak* is headquartered at Sangareddi.

Public Hearing Proceedings



Delegates reached the mandal office where public hearing process was going on outside the office building. Nice arrangements were made there for the participants in the public hearing and delegates also joined the process by introducing themselves first. The Project Director who was presiding the public hearing process welcomed all the delegates and one of the SSAAT resource persons briefed the people about the purpose of the visit of the

delegates from Rajasthan. The officials present in the hearing were C. Siddhar, Project Director (PD), Y. Baswanapa, Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO), Nirmal Kumar, Cluster Assistant Project Director (APD), Y. Krishna Rao, Additional Vigilance Officer (AVO), Ch. Yakambram, State Team Monitor and M. Sailoo, State Resource Person (SRP). During the public hearing process, Village Social Auditors and SSAAT official first read out the steps completed related to a particular *Gram Panchayat* (GP) and narrated the whole story of the MGNREGS work in which some irregularity or misappropriation or some illegal work has been done in front of the community people and then chance was given to hear the views of erring officials of the GP as well to put their views about social audit done so far. After hearing both parties, the PD gave the final verdict on the issue. On the spot, within one-and-a-half hour of the public hearing process, three penalties had been imposed upon the wrongdoer officials in the MGNREGS which is a phenomenal rate in Rajasthan. Delegates thanked all the officials for their cooperation and facilitation.



Visit to MPDO Office

After learning the social audit process delegates visited the MPDO office as well to see the functioning of his office and interacted with him and his staff. government officials, who were part of the delegation, asked questions related to the



average days of work, total sanctioned budget, type of work taken under MGNREGS and other things which were answered by the MPDO and his colleagues. MPDO also told us in detail about the administrative set up, use of Electronic Musters and implementation of different programmes. Under the MGNREGS monitoring, the role of technology has been ensured in the state. Engineering consultant of the MGNREGS explained the functioning of the use of electronic musters and its connection with the online system which expedites the MGNREGS process of work measurement, payments of wages and digitisation of the records. Later, he added the process of filling up the e-musters on day to day basis by the field assistant and details of measurement is also sent to the main server daily by the GPRS activated mobiles, given to these people, the data sent through these mobiles goes directly to the main server, which is later on cross checked with the manual formats. Delegates thanked the MPDO staff for their cooperation. This was the last activity under the exposure visit.

Highlights

- Learning all the steps of the social audit process and overall enabling environment in support of it;
- The convergence of the line departments of the MGNREGS for effective implementation of the social audit findings, recommendations and work;
- The vigilance office set up under the MGNREGS which is responsible for the recovery of the misuse or penalties;
- The delegates from GPs, Government and NGOs enlightened a bit about the good practices which are being practiced within the system of MGNREGS and political level in the state;
- All the delegates are more recharged for their fight and action against corruption in MGNREGS which will motivate them to work more rigorously;
- The learning acquired by the delegates during the visit will be implemented in the field, the Government officials are of the opinion that process and technology used by the Andhra Pradesh Government for MGNREGS can also be followed here and for other things delegates will give their recommendation to higher authorities.