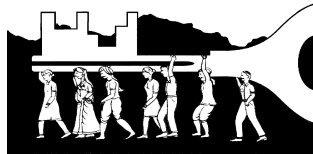


# **Divisional Level Workshop**

## **Tonk**

**“Combating Corruption in Rajasthan State, India, by Applying RTI Act as a Tool”**



**CUTS-CART**

**Organised**

**by**

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART)

D – 222, Vijayalaxmi Apartments, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park,

Jaipur – 302 016, INDIA

Telephone: 91-141-513 3259/228 2821

**Email:** [cart@cuts.org](mailto:cart@cuts.org)

**Web:** [www.cuts-international.org](http://www.cuts-international.org)

## Background

1.1 Under the project entitled 'Combating Corruption in the Rajasthan State, India, by applying RTI Act as a tool', CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) organised a two-day Divisional Level Workshop for the Consortium of the Groups for Combating Corruption (CGCC), on August 6-7, 2007, at the State Institute of Agriculture and Management, Tonk, Rajasthan.

1.2 The project is being implemented with the active support of the Partnership of Transparency Fund (PTF), US. It focuses on combating corruption through effective application of the RTI Act and through citizens' empowerment in Tonk and Jaipur districts. The project is being implemented in two administrative districts of the Rajasthan state, viz., Jaipur and Ajmer, with a rural community-based approach.

## 2. Objectives

The overall objectives of the project are:

- to generate awareness for provoking/encouraging the common citizens to make use of the RTI Act as a tool in addressing corrupt practices in governance;
- to empower the civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) and the vulnerable sections at the grassroots to enable them to be able to curb corrupt practices by supporting in improving functioning of the existing accountability mechanisms;
- to urge the policy makers to effectively implement the RTI Act for ensuring good governance and accountability in order to address the deep-rooted corruption in the State; to reveal the corrupt practices and officials pertaining to the selected five departments i.e. Panchayati Raj & Rural Development (PR & RD), Police, Revenue, and Food & Civil Supply, PHED; and
- to assign CGCC for achieving a minimum target of submission of 250 applications under the RTI Act by the public.

## 3. Participants

3.1 A careful selection of the CGCC was done in the operational area of the project, prior to the divisional workshop for filing the applications under the RTI Act. For this, the network of CUTS CART was used as a tool

3.2 The key criteria for selecting the members was their individual credibility in their respective area, general understanding to identify corrupt practices, so far interventions in governance related issues, basic knowledge about the functioning of various service-providing departments/agencies of the Government and willing to associate with CUTS CART, especially in its key programmatic area of "Good Governance".

3.3 The dignitaries who participated in the event included Dr Rakesh Ranjan Convener, *Soochna Adhikar Abhiyan* (SAA), Madhya Pradesh, and B L Kothari Chief Executive Officer (CEO), *Zila Parishad*, Tonk. Besides the project management team from CUTS CART, 20 CGCC members from different districts of Ajmer Division actively participated in the workshop.

3.4 The event witnessed an active participation of around 45 relevant stakeholders representing various CSOs, CBOs, NGOs and representatives from funding agencies and

**Comment:** This is future activity based on presumption.

Government Officials of the concerned departments, the media and other individuals working on and/or interested in the RTI issue.

#### **4. Proceedings of the Workshop**

##### **4.1 Day - 1 (August 06, 2007)**

##### **4.2 Inaugural Session**

4.2.1 A Documentary Film was shown to the participants about the potential of RTI Act in fighting against corruption.

4.2.2. The workshop commenced with welcome remarks by R K Sharma, who stated that the event was very important and said that, CUTS CART, Jaipur, in partnership with the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), has conceptualised this unique project, entitled for a period of one year, focusing on awareness generation at the grassroots, empowering the CSOs, advocacy with the policy makers and encouraging the common citizens towards application of RTI act, as a tool in addressing corruption at various level. Through this project, it is proposed to create an enabling and conducive environment at the grassroots for making governance more transparent and accountable and closer to the common people.

George Cheriyan, Associate Director, CUTS, opined that there is a great need to take the RTI to the grassroots level. Hence, there is a need for awareness generation and training for the information seekers and providers for effectively using the Act. Thus, this workshop is aiming to orient the members of the CGCC thoroughly on RTI Act. He outlined the potential of the project in combating corruption and assembling responses of common people and other relevant stakeholders in an adequate manner at the grassroots level.

**Comment:** Meaning?

4.2.3. Ajnish A Bishwas of CUTS CART made a brief PowerPoint presentation of various aspects of the project, covering the background, the objectives, major activities, expected outcomes, etc.

4.2.4 .B.L kothari, the CEO), *Zila Parishad* delivered the keynote Address on RTI Act and pointed out the need to build awareness among the people regarding the use of the Act. Pointing out the need for positive approach, he explained the procedure of filing the application under the RTI Act.

**Comment:** Example of carelessness/lack of revision.

4.2.5 Dr Rakesh Ranjan, Convener, SAA, Madhya Pradesh, briefed the concept behind RTI Act, 2005. Making PowerPoint presentation on the RTI Act, he explained the objectives, background, major activities and expected outcomes etc. He also responded to a number of questions raised by the participants during the workshop.

#### **5 Technical Session**

5.1 Dr Rakesh Ranjan introduced the Technical Session on RTI Act, 2005) to the participants, including its potential in becoming a tool to ensure transparency and accountability in the government system..

5.2. R K Sharma and Ajnish A Bishwas, facilitated an open discussion on the role of the CSOs ensuring governance accountability through the RTI Act and Dr Rakesh Ranjan addressed the queries from the floor.

5.3 Female participants in the session took part in group discussion.

5.4 Dr Rakesh Ranjan made a brief presentation on “A Framework of Accountability Relationships”. He also presented various success as well as failure stories, loopholes and hindrances in effective implementation of RTI Act and its implication..

## **6. Day - 2 (August 07, 2007)**

6.1 Day two started with a quick recap of the previous day activities. Ajnish A Bishwas made live presentation of case studies. Then, an invitation was extended to the citizens, who have filed the application under the RTI Act, and who shared success and failure in the workshop.

6.2 Next, Ajnish Bishwas shared the CGCC’s ideology and functioning methodology with the participants, who set success strategy of CGCC by group exercise. Female participants took part in group discussion. Dr Rakesh Ranjan made the expert comments on strategy.

6.3 During the two days workshop, the CGCC members took the following decisions:

6.3.1 The responsibility of collecting proactive disclosure of five departments, viz. Revenue, Police, *Panchayati Raj* and Rural Development, Food and Civil supply, P.H.E.D assigned to Praladh Rai Vyas, Ganga Dadhich, Sylvester Ariel, Jasvant Singh and Rajrani Yadav with a deadline up to August 20, 2007. CUTS CART will disseminate this information further to CGCC members up to August 26, 2007.

6.3.2 It was decided that CGCC member will collect the information from the respective departments at the Block/Districts level and send it to CART office by August 20, 2007 with details including: Name of Public Information Officer (PIO)/Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO)/Appealing officer with Name/Designation and contact number.

**Comment:** Provide full form followed by this in bracket.

6.3.3 Responsibility assigned to the CGCC members was to collect the list of below poverty line (BPL) families and different schemes of respective departments, including procedure for filing the applications under RTI Act. The target of 250 for each division i.e. Jaipur and Ajmer up to January 31, 2008, was assigned to CGCC.

6.4 It was followed by an interactive session. Dr Rakesh Ranjan and Ajnish A Bishwas responded to various questions raised by the participants. Simultaneously, the participants also provided very useful suggestions that will help in the implementation of various activities under the project.

6.5 At the end of the session, Ajnish A Bishwas proposed the vote of thanks and the workshop concluded with lunch.

### **7 Outcome of the Two-Day Workshop**

7.1 The presence of dignitaries in this two-day workshop helped in attracting the attention of the government, media and the general public in the design of the project and initiated a public debate regarding the potential of the RTI act in combating corruption.

7.2 The event provided an adequate forum for propagating the projects' aims and objectives among the relevant stakeholders and also discussing the related issues.

7.3 The CGCC is enough empowered with resources in terms of knowledge, information, active support from functional network of CSOs/CBOs and the access to the proactive and committed government officials and the corruption defeating agencies.

7.4 The meeting also provided an opportunity to the representatives of CSOs, CBOs, NGOs, the Government Officials of the concerned departments and other individuals to get acquainted with various technical aspects and clauses of the RTI Act.

7.5 The CGCC will be able to support the corruption-combating attempts by the common citizens, especially the poor rural citizen. It will perform the role of a watchdog as well as the local resource centres for application of RTI.

7.6 The CGCC is assigned with achieving a minimum target of submission 250 applications under the RTI Act asking for the specific information related to their grievances. The number of submitted applications in the Ajmer and Jaipur division in the five concern departments will substantially help in reducing corrupt practices.

7.7 In the long term, an enabling and conducive environment would be created at the grassroots, making governance more transparent and accountable. This entire process will, ultimately, help in facilitating the development of the state in reducing the poverty.

7.8 CGCC) is formulated with the members present in the two days workshop:

7.6 List of the CGCC members enclosed in Annexure 1.

### **Annexure 1**

#### **CGCC Members from Ajmer Division**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of the Person</b>	<b>Association and Address</b>
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1. 2. 3. 4.	Rajarani Yadav Kamal Kumar Yadav Pankaj Yadav Deepak Sain	<i>Mahila Jagriti Samiti</i> (MJS), Ward No. 14, Raigaron ka Mohalla, Near <i>Kekadi Walon Ki Mill</i> , Post, Newai, District-Tonk, Pin: 304001 Ph: 01432-244898; Fax: 01432 246092; Mob: +91-99298 13189, +91-98292 39299
5.	Seema Teli	Motivator, Nodal, <i>Stata Shiksha Kendra</i> , Po: Uparada, PS: Banneda, District, Bhilwada Mob: +91-92524 44983
6.	Pushkar Lal Meena	Village, Banduni, Block, Mandalgardh, District, Bhilwada Ph: +91-9828868878
7.	Munna Lal Rao	<i>Samuhik Vikas Sansthan</i> , Patel Bhavan, Patel Marg, Tehsil: Niwai. District, Tonk, Rajasthan, Ph: +91-1438 224393; Mob: +91-94136 01148
8.	Ganga Dadhich	CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD), Chittorgarh. (Rajasthan) Ph.: +91-1472-241 472, Fax: +91-1472-240 072, Mob: +91-94148 39315 Email: <a href="mailto:chd@cuts.org">chd@cuts.org</a> ;
9.	Jaswant Singh Rawat	<i>Ajmer Zila Gramin Upbhokta Sansthan</i> PS, Masuda, District, Ajmer Ph: 01462-266938, 266992. Fax: 01462-266991, 266861 Mob: +91-99285 51369 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:azgus_masuda@yahoo.co.in">azgus_masuda@yahoo.co.in</a>
10.	Prahladh Rai Vyas	<i>Rajasthan Upbhokta Kalayan Simiti</i> . Bhadada Mohalla, District, Bhilwara. Mob: +91-4143 02738
11.	Ashok Kumar Sharma	<i>Shivaji Sansthan</i> , Lal Bhawan , Shivaji Colony, Gali No.1, Newai. District, Tonk, Rajasthan. Ph. +91-1438-223967, 224367. Mob: +91-94143 48267 E-mail: <a href="mailto:shivajiorg_newai@yahoo.co.in">shivajiorg_newai@yahoo.co.in</a> .
12..	Sylvestor Ariel	<i>Gramin Avem Samajik Vikas Sansthan</i> . Nasirabad Road, Parbatpura, Ajmer. Ph.0145-2695871 Mob:- +91-92145 69944, 98298 34292
13.	Gyarsi Lal Meghvanshi	<i>SACHET Sansthan</i> , Village & Post, Ramsisar, Tehsil, Nasirabad, District, Ajmer Mob: +91-98294 67915, 99291 55137
14.	Ashok Kumar Vaishnava, Secretary	Lok Vikas Sansthan, VP- Sarwar, Distt.- Ajmer Mob.: +91-99287 65818
15.	Sitaram Prajapat	Sangharsh Sansthan, PO- Dhandholi, Teh.- Dudu, Distt.- Jaipur Ph.: +91-1428-513218; Mob: +91-94142 07872, 92149 78669
16.	Radhey Shyam Bagari	Prakratik Paryavaran Evam Shiksha Vikas Samiti (NEEDS), V- Mala, P.- Bhogadit, Distt.- Ajmer Mob: +91-94601 92433
17.	Mohd. Salim	S/o- Mohd. Rafiq, Parveen Aari Taari Centre, Babron Ka Chowk, Tonk Mob: +91-94148 41246
18.	Abdul Wahid	S/o- Shri Abdul Latif, <i>Swayam Bharat Sahayata Samiti</i> , Tonk Mob: +91-99283 09223
19.	Mohd. Aziz	S/o- Shahzarin Khan, Khidaki Darwaja, Tonk Mob: +91-94605 93240

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