

April 5, 2011

**PRESS NOTE**

**“New areas of citizen engagement and social accountability practice begun”**

**“Project Launching of Citizen Engagement in Monitoring PMGSY Rural Roads”**

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a flagship programme of the Government of India was launched in December 2000, with the objective of providing connectivity, through good all-weather roads, to all unconnected Habitations, with a population of more than 500 persons. About 1,60,000 Habitations are expected to be covered under this programme, with an anticipated investment of Rs. 60,000 crore for an estimated road length of 3.68 lakh kilometers. The National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA) has been established by the Ministry of Rural development as the nodal authority for overseeing the implementation of this mega scheme. Rural Development Ministry of Govt. of Orissa has been implementing these road projects in Orissa starting from the needs assessment to the contract implementation. Large scale bidding process has occurred for the construction of rural roads through private contractors. Huge leakages and kickbacks are expected to be happened due to involvement of large scale public expenditure and private parties (i.e. contractors)

In this regards **Youth for Social Development** a social research and development organisation based in Berhampur, is promoting governance & human rights and practising social accountability in public programmes has started working in a new dimensions of social accountability and citizens engagements. The proposed year and half long project has two major components, the first part is to check the contract selection process and award (e.g. how, on what basis, criterion, bid selection, transparency etc.) The second part will monitor the contract implementation and checking the quality of the rural roads (e.g. compliances with the agreement, quality maintained, contract reconciliation etc.). The main aim of the project is to enhance transparency and accountability in the bidding process of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) rural road projects in Ganjam and Gajapati district of Orissa, through increased community and civil society participation and monitoring to improve the quality of rural roads.

**The strategy will be used are innovative comprise of**

- One of the most important strategies is to engage communities and citizens in demand good governance.
- Right to Information will be used to get information and knowledge on procurement policies and the bidding process for formulating any social accountability agenda.
- Meaningful engagement with the service providers to make accountable both the supply and demand sides to bring transparency and accountability in the PMGSY bidding process.

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- Networking with Local NGO's and Civil Society will create a space for dialogue involving different stakeholders.
- Media plays a key role in highlighting the issues of corruption in bidding process of PMGSY.

Ultimately we aim to get a method of engaging citizens in monitoring rural roads and bring transparency and accountability in PMGSY specifically transparency and accountability in the bidding process of PMGSY projects and citizen participation in monitoring road construction works so that the quality of the rural roads improved.

We look forward for the cooperation of the civil social specifically local NGO's, media, intellectuals and most importantly the officials of implementing agency i.e. rural development department, govt. of Orissa and the citizens of the region.

### **About Youth for Social Development**

**Youth for Social Development (YSD)** is a not-for-profit independent social research and development organization established in 2005, devoted to improve the lives of the tribal, rural and urban poor in Orissa. YSD is promoting governance which is participatory, is based on the rule of law and protects human rights, is consensus oriented, transparent, accountable, effective and efficient, responsive, equitable and inclusive. This assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

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