

PRESS NOTE

“Poor Performance of Right to Information questions transparency and credibility of Brahmapur Municipal Corporation”

Facts of “Social Audit on Right to Information Execution in Brahmapur Municipal Corporation”

June 21, 2010, at Hotel Kamas Inn, Tata Benz Square, Berhampur

Youth for Social Development a research based NGO facilitated a social audit of RTI execution in Brahmapur Municipal Corporation during January, 2010. Trained community volunteers with set of modules monitored the implementation of RTI with the participation of beneficiaries, ordinary people, public officials, elected representatives, PIO and APIO. They also checked the infrastructure available for RTI and the ‘sou moto’ (17 point) disclosure done by BMC. A Public Hearing with the community involvement organized on 21st June 2010 at Hotel Kamas Inn. 30 citizens from various ward communities and 2 senior public officials from BMC, 3 officials from I& PR department Govt. of Orissa interacted with the problems incurred to access information from BMC.

Glimpses of the Social Audit on Right to Information in BMC

Social audit of RTI implementation conducted by 7 trained community volunteers with set of 0-7 inventory to collect information/perspectives of different stakeholder like beneficiaries, ordinary people, public officials, elected representatives, PIO and APIO.

- ❖ Only 6.7% of the citizens have knowledge on Right to Information and they have filled RTI applications in BMC
- ❖ Most of the information they have asked mostly service related information on street roads, drains, drinking water, holding tax collection, about different schemes like BPL benefits, SGSRY, old age, widow pension and also the budget of BMC
- ❖ All most all (96.7%) the citizens have ignorant about the ‘suo moto’ (17 information disclosure) provision of the RTI act.
- ❖ Among the good things in supply of information by BMC are
 - Receipt of acknowledgement after file RTI application
 - Received information within the stipulated time (30 days)
- ❖ Among the basic problems citizens faced while filling RTI applications are
 - negligence of acceptance of RTI application by the officials
 - delay in providing information by the officials
 - application fees unjustified, difficult process of filling and documentation are critical
 - critical and accountability related information are not clear and are incomplete
- ❖ The approach of the public officials to provide information to the public are negative, they are not cooperative, and their attitude towards non acceptance of the RTI application and rejection of the same seems to be very boldly.

- ❖ Lack of staff, lack of physical infrastructure, no contingency fund and lack of management of information are the major problematic areas found to implement RTI efficiently
- ❖ Capacity to implement Right to Information act looks depressing due to inadequate training provision by the government to the officials in charge of information delivery.
- ❖ Compliance to 'suo moto' information disclosure under section 4 (1) (b) done by BMC are incomplete, some information are not clear, not understandable are not available in local language (i.e. Oriya). Very general information are available in 17 point information disclosure and only available with a hard copy on demand no public disclosure done through informative board, media, and IEC material or by any other means.

Major Recommendations

- ❖ Public awareness campaign in ward communities should be done by BMC
- ❖ 'RTI Help Desk' should be set up in BMC and hand holding support to the RTI applicants should be provided by the officials
- ❖ Separate budget allocation should be made to create public awareness, information management through electronically and contingency fund to communicate RTI application
- ❖ Extensive Training provision made to capacitate the public officials in management and supply of information by the state government and State Information Commission.
- ❖ Information under 17 point should be clearly disclosed including minutes of the council meeting, procurement related information, important circulars, details of different development projects and schemes, list of beneficiaries of different schemes, process of access to different services etc. and these should be available in Oriya language, premises of BMC, and also at BMC website and also update regularly.

42 citizens from various ward communities, intellectuals, advocates, and 2 senior public officials from BMC, Bibekananda Biswal, Chief Monitoring officer, RTI implementation, I& PR dept Govt. of Orissa, NGO activists joined in the Public Hearing.

For more information please communicate to



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