



## **Benchmarking and Curbing Corruption in Local Service Delivery in Brahmapur City, India**

<b>CSO:</b>	Youth for Social Development (YSD)
<b>Years:</b>	2008 – 2009 (phase 1) 2009 – 2011 (phase 2)
<b>Country:</b>	Odisha State, India
<b>Amount:</b>	\$ 15,000 USD (phase 1) \$ 31,870 USD (phase 2)
<b>Sector:</b>	1) Controlling Corruption in Delivery of Social Services: Social Safety Nets 2) Controlling Corruption in Infrastructure Services: Water 3) Right to Information

<b>Corruption Problem:</b>	Corruption permeates local service delivery. Citizens do not know where & how to start demanding accountability and exercising their right to information
<b>Tools employed:</b>	Advocacy, Public Hearing, CRC, Awareness Raising, Community Mobilization, RTI, Survey, Citizen Monitoring, Social Audit, Information Campaign, Information Hotline

Petty corruption permeates basic service delivery in the city of Brahmapur in Odisha State, India. Youth for Social Development (YSD), a local CSO, decided to survey different corruption issues at the local level in order to map magnitude, prevalence and possible entry points for civil society to hold the government to account and demand corruption-free service delivery. During phase one, YSD implemented the ‘Urban Corruption Survey in Brahmapur City’ -project and successfully raised citizen awareness. Phase two of the project concentrated on mobilizing the community and building capacity.

The second phase was named ‘Enabling Citizen Monitoring of Public Services, Preventing Bribery to Foster Effective Service Delivery in Brahmapur City of Odisha’. Throughout both phases of this ‘Citizens against Corruption’ (CAC) project, YSD advocated on behalf of the poor and supported citizen monitors and communities to constructively engage with local officials. Based on the results of phases one and two, an extension of the project (phase three) was recommended and a new grant signed in 2011.

### **Corruption Problem Addressed**

Modern governments play a significant role in the provision of basic services, including supplying drinking water, primary education, health care, social safety nets, maintaining roads and many other services. These services are essential in providing infrastructure for economic growth and helping citizens lead better and healthier lives. Problems arise if services are not provided corruption-free and ordinary people, especially the poor, are hard pressed to pay speed money in order to gain access to services controlled by a few public officials. Refusal to pay often leads to delayed decision-making or outright denial of services, posing a clear violation of citizens’ rights to entitlements as stipulated by the law.

A study by Transparency International India<sup>1</sup> found that 62% of all Indians have had first hand experiences paying bribes or “using a contact” to successfully receive services that should be provided corruption-free. Citizens are increasingly

<sup>1</sup> Transparency International India (2005): India Corruption Study

vocal about the absence of transparency and accountability in public service delivery and are looking for ways and means to hold governments and officials accountable for their actions (or inactions).

YSD decided to map the magnitude and prevalence of corruption in six basic services provided by government agencies in the city of Brahmapur to establish a baseline and help communities target their ensuing anti-corruption efforts. Key findings of the survey were<sup>2</sup>:

- 82% of the citizens were required to pay bribes
- The Brahmapur Development Authority (BDA) and Land Record and Administration Services offices were rated among the most corrupt agencies
- Common citizens pay up to \$1,28 million USD in bribes per year (estimate)
- The two most important reasons for citizens to engage in bribery are a) fear of harassment and b) delay in service delivery
- The top two procedural reasons propelling citizens to succumb to bribery demands are a) unavailability of information and b) non-transparent application procedures

## Actions Taken by YSD

YSD conducted a comprehensive survey of 2008 households (4.5% of the total population) during the first phase of the project. The areas surveyed included (1) provision of drinking water, (2) municipal services, (3) public health care, (4) public distribution system (PDS), (5) BDA services and (6) Land Record and Administration Services. Completing the study, YSD arranged for focus group discussion with public officials, academics, the community and civil society organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Youth for Social Development (2008): Urban Corruption Survey

To present its findings, YSD – in partnership with the district administration – then organised a report release workshop, inviting senior officials of selected service agencies and the vigilance department. Three major daily newspapers, including the national media ‘The Hindu’, as well as various local media outlets reported.



YSD facilitated communities to start deliberating on how to best engage with authorities and other stakeholders to demand corruption-free services

Following the survey, YSD engaged in the following activities to raise awareness, mobilize the community and enable constructive engagement between authorities and citizens to improve service delivery in phase two. YSD -

- conducted 24 awareness and sensitisation camps
- mobilized 8 slum communities
- trained 32 citizen monitors, introducing anti-corruption tools, such as filing RTIs and social audits
- engaged with public officials through 2 trainings and 3 public hearings
- facilitated the formation of a CAC coalition
- produced IEC materials (10,000 leaflets, 1000 pamphlets, 2 toolkits, 1 hand books, 3 reports and 6 newsletters)

To make use of the outputs created and to facilitate constructive engagement between the various stakeholders toward achieving results in

the fight against corruption, YSD facilitated CAC and citizen monitors meetings with public officials from various departments, PDS fair price shop owners and a few elected representatives.

### **Obstacles and challenges encountered**

YSD experienced opposition from elite groups with vested interests. While this observation can be interpreted as an indicator for tackling the right issues, it nonetheless made YSD's work challenging to the degree that YSD staff was threatened by officials and a few corrupt ration shop owners. It also serves as an indicator why communities might come under duress, fearing to get involved in rights education and/or championing the fight against corruption.

In addition, there was some difficulty in identifying anti-corruption champions within the upper echelons of local government, inviting and involving senior officials to participate meaningfully in the proposed activities. Junior level staff however pushed the agenda to the upper level.

### **Impact and Results Achieved**

The survey results, citizen monitoring observations as well as social audit reports produced, are not just used in the activities conducted by YSD but served as important indicators and benchmarks for activities undertaken by other CSOs, media and government agencies alike. A short video on PDS, a toolkit on the use of RTI and a citizen handbook on RTI applications are continuously used to raise community awareness on governance issues not only in Brahmapur but also in other communities, for example in Gajapati and Ganjam.

Other measurable results include the filing of a total 161 RTI applications, 3 social audits, 3 public hearings and a community score card (CSC) survey conducted in communities to assess the provision of PDS and Water services. As a result of the

various interventions facilitated by YSD and follow-up discussions with stakeholders, YSD has observed the following impact:

- ✓ 28% decrease in bribery (baseline vs. end-of-project survey)
- ✓ Participation in citizen monitoring increased
- ✓ 12 vigilance committees active in the project area to monitor PDS shop operations
- ✓ Increased discourse among civil society and public officials on corruption at public agencies
- ✓ Citizens groups are empowered to effectively monitor service delivery
- ✓ Proactive information disclosure by six public agencies has improved
- ✓ Service delivery norms and procedures were disclosed and disseminated by three authorities
- ✓ Office orders were issued to mandatorily display and update information on citizen information boards by three government agencies



Four slums have been provided with access to public water in a corruption-free manner after waiting for a long period prior to the project intervention



## PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPARENCY FUND

- ✓ 4 slums have been provided with access to public water in a corruption-free manner
- ✓ 4 communities were provided with rationed items in a corruption-free manner
- ✓ 30 beneficiaries' cards were transferred to another shop due to a corrupt shop owner
- ✓ 2 PDS shop owners were required to provide full quota of kerosene in two slums in Brahmapur city
- ✓ 1 PDS shop owner was suspended due to complaints from the beneficiaries.

### Documentation

Project completion reports (PCRs) and Project completion assessments (PCAs) for both project phases can be accessed at [www.ptfund.org](http://www.ptfund.org) under the "Where-we-work" tab.

The Youth for Social Development (YSD) homepage can be accessed at <http://www.ysdindia.org>

Reports and Documentation on the two phases can also be found at <http://www.ysdindia.org> under the tab "Programmes"

A Toolkit detailing guidance on how citizens can fight corruption in the public service delivery can be found at <http://www.ysdindia.org> under the tab "Programmes" also

Citizen Monitoring Reports can be accessed at: <http://tinyurl.com/6w2ud83> and <http://tinyurl.com/7w9vfu2>

The Brahmapur Bribery Index 2009 can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/7octkmc>

The Transparency International India Corruption Study (2005) is available at <http://tinyurl.com/7z6v5yq>

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