

CAC- Project Completion Report

Project Name: “Reforming the Processes in the Rural Development Department through Policy Dialogue and Civic Engagement, based on RTI Act (2005) in Rajasthan, India”

Name of the CSO: Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS International)

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1. Goal

Contribute towards reduced corruption in processes of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY) and Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY) implemented by the Panchayati Raj and Rural Development (PR & RD) Department in Rajasthan, India.

2. Target Area

The project was implemented in two districts namely, Tonk under Ajmer division and Jaipur under Jaipur division.

3. Duration

The duration of the project was of one year, i.e. from May 01, 2009 to April 30, 2010.

4. Objectives

- Reduced incidence of bribery/corruption experience by the project area citizens for service delivery under the targeted schemes of the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs) and Rural Development Department.
- Transparency and accountability in the target schemes increased through increased through RTI act.
- Citizens in the project area are able to obtain corruption free services through empowered network of Consortium of Groups for Combating Corruption (CGCCs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) & other interested citizens that conduct advocacy at multiple levels and play the role of ‘watchdog’.

5. Executive Summary:

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART), one of the programme centres of Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS), in partnership with the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), Washington DC, implemented a project, entitled ‘Reforming the Processes in the Rural Development Department through Policy and Civic Engagement, Based on RTI Act (2005) in Rajasthan, India’, from May 2009 to September 2010. The activities under the project had been confined to two districts of Rajasthan, Jaipur and Tonk, and had been conceived to make the attempts more rigorous and deeper in defeating corruption.

It was done through diagnosing systemic causes of various facets of corruption and adopting measures to address them through simplifying the service delivery process, re-institutionalising agency processes and enhancing transparency and people's participation. These efforts ultimately contributed to improving RTI response capacity of service providers by using RTI Act as a tool in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), *Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana* (SGSY) and *Indira Awas Yojana* (IAY) implemented by the *Panchayati Raj* and Rural Development Department, Rajasthan Government.

A network of trained & resourceful CGCCs, CSOs and other interested individuals working together for transparency and accountability in all 17 blocks of Jaipur and Tonk districts was formed and started to work in a focused manner, which resulted in the emergence of trained critical mass within the community, increased use of RTI for targeting corruption issues and denial of benefits meant for common man in case of not paying bribe in turn.

An RTI Advisory and Information Cell was started to advice and educate the masses, proactive citizenries and victims of corruption about the RTI Act and its usages in government departments and targeting the areas of corruption to get corruption-free service delivery meant for them. An orientation of the concerned staff was conducted for handling it effectively. A total 210 phone calls were received and most of the callers were facing a situation in which service providers were demanding bribes in lieu of rendering the entitled services. More than 43 callers/visitors filed RTI applications in various departments (26 of them received demanded information) and used it as a tool which helped these 41 people to avail those services without paying any bribe, denied earlier.

The 'RTI Ground Realities and Corruption Vulnerability Survey' was conducted with 600 scheme beneficiaries, engaging the consortium of CGCCs. This survey revealed that every beneficiary of NREGS (average Rs 303), IAY (Rs 1268) and SGSY (Rs 660) were paying bribes to avail the benefits. In Jaipur and Tonk districts, total bribes paid were: in NREGS (Rs 14.9 crores), IAY (Rs 48 lakh) and SGSY (Rs 37 lakh). These findings formed the basis for evidence-based advocacy and constructive and continued dialogue with high officials of the concerned Rural Development Department.

This constructive dialogue with the government resulted in passing office orders related to transparency and accountability. This data of RTI Ground Realities and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis (RGR& CVA) survey was disseminated widely to the common masses and service providers by organising 'RTI Block *Chaupals*' in all the 17 blocks of both the districts and their views and suggestions were invited. '*Chaupal*' means a meeting place of local villagers to discuss day-to-day issues with each other. In these BLRCs, strategies were also discussed to make the service delivery system free from corruption by using RTI as a tool.

A 10-member delegation visited Kozhikode and Wynadu districts of Kerala during November 13-18, 2009. The delegates included *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sachiv*, Mundia and Harsulia *Gram Panchayats* and Sub-divisional Officer, Niwai, Tonk. Two NGO partners from SAJAG and NEH Sansthan and three staff members from CUTS were part of the delegation. The visit was very educative, eye opener and full of learning for all the visitors which helped them in understanding the best practices related to people's planning process at ward and *Gram Panchayat* level out there and imbibing these to implement in their working areas in selected districts. It is significant to mention that, in India, it is the state of Kerala where 40 percent of the total plan outlay of the Rural Development and *Panchayati Raj* Department goes directly to the *Gram Panchayats*.

As an outcome, one visiting official passed an order down the line in all *Gram Panchayats* and Block Development Offices to have a complaint-cum-suggestion box, fixed at some prominent place of their office so that common citizens could drop their complaints and later actions can be taken by concerned officials. The order was followed in some of the *Gram Panchayats* and the visiting official also placed a complaint cum suggestion box in his office just after returning from this visit. This exposure visit was extremely helpful in ensuring the participation of these key stakeholders throughout the project period.

Efforts were made to develop a Model RTI *Gram Panchayat* (MRGP) in each district to ensure transparency, accountability and corruption-free service delivery system in selected schemes. In these MRGPs, community mobilisation programmes were organised in villages regarding RTI awareness, filing process, identified areas of corruption and using RTI as a tool so that they all avail services without paying bribes.

As a result of these mass mobilisation efforts, slogan writings and frequent visits, more than 90 people came forward to file RTI applications on corruption issues prevalent in the three selected schemes. In both the districts, 450 RTI applications were filed. These applications were based on issues of corruption that cropped up during the RGR and CVA survey: The information demanded in most of the RTI applications was related to acts of corruption. These RTI applications were need-based, represented burning issues among beneficiaries and were filed individually, but supported collectively. These also contributed to simplifying the processes, use of RTI by common people,

satisfactory resolution of problems, enhancing responsiveness of services providers and reducing corruption experienced by common people.

Two advocacy meetings were organised at the state level and participation of policy makers and media was ensured. These meetings were extremely useful and fruitful in terms of putting the ground realities and corruption vulnerability survey findings before the policy makers. As an outcome of these meetings, official orders were given to ensure transparency and accountability measures in governmental schemes.

A set of recommendations for simplified and transparent service delivery processes of the selected schemes was submitted to the government and policy makers to take appropriate actions.

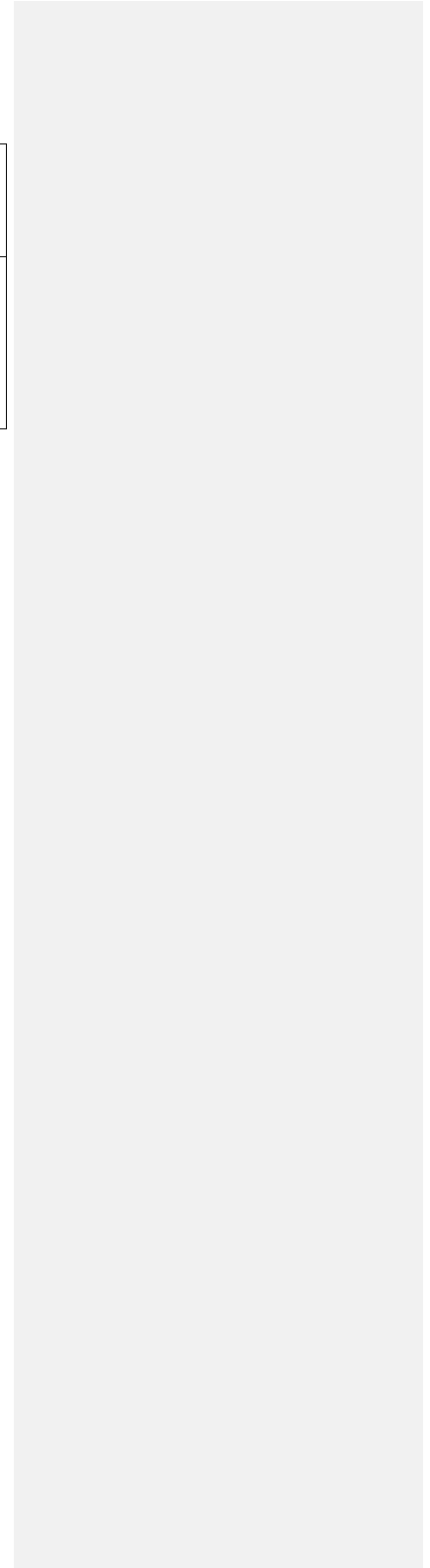
Finally, a model framework for replication or RTI Toolkit has been developed in which entire project-related experiences, tools, methodology, community participation model, success stories and best practices have been incorporated so that similar intervention can be replicated elsewhere as well. To develop the model framework for replication, a concept note was prepared and shared with key stakeholders mentioning the target audience, objectives/purpose, content/structure/usage/dissemination/replication.

6. Accomplishment of Activities *(Please compare the planned v/s actual activities)*

Activities planned	Status of achievement
1.1 Identification of CGCCs and CSOs network	As an outcome of this rigorous exercise, active CGCCs were selected in the project including CGCCs of phase-I. During phase-1 total 39 CGCCs were selected.

1.2 Orientation of CGCCs and CSOs representatives and strategy formulation, task assignment & target setting for them	<p>As a result of this activity a vibrant network of 40 CGCCs was in place. Out of total, 12 CGCCs were from six blocks of Tonk and rest 28 CGCCs were from 11 blocks of Jaipur district.</p> <p>Two orientations programme for more than 100 NGO representatives and proactive citizens .were conducted.</p>
1.3 Supportive monitoring and periodic evaluation of activities, targets and tasks Assigned to CGCCs or CSO representatives	<p>The Task and Target formation for the CGCCs is a very important activity and during the orientation workshop, the CGCCs were the same along with the monitoring mechanism of achieving these tasks and targets. Monitoring was done on a monthly basis at individual level, using monthly reporting and CGCC feedback formats. The results of assessment of these filled in formats are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in training, meetings, consultations = 100 percent • Sending photo copies of RTI applications = 90 percent • Making regular telephone calls for reporting = 75 percent • Fulfilment of objectives = 75 percent • Sending regular progress reports = 65 percent • Sending feedback forms regularly = 50 percent • Level of completion of their monthly reports = 40 percent • Average time spent by CGCCs in the field with citizens = 6-7days in a month
2.1 Establishing RTI Advisory and information Centre (RAIC) at CUTS and providing guidance	<p>A total of 210 phone calls were received. Most of the callers were facing a situation in which service providers were demanding bribes. About 21 percent callers/visitors filed RTI applications in various departments (12 percent of them received the demanded information) and used it as a tool which helped these people to get the required services, which were denied earlier, without paying any bribes.</p> <p>Most of the people who benefited from RAIC were from rural areas. Only 16 percent urban people visited the RAIC to learn about the RTI and its filing process. 19 percent were women again, mainly from villages. It was good to note that government employees were also eager to know about it and about nine percent of them availed the services of RAIC. 79 percent were from the NGO sector.</p> <p>In all the cases, people wanted to know either the RTI application filing process or first or second appeal process. 54 percent of the parties wanted to use RTI, while 355 parties were interested in knowing about the RTI Act, 2005 itself.</p>
2.2 Maintaining records	All the records related to project including filled in monitoring, reporting

related to users and their feedbacks forms given.	and other formats by CGCCs and stakeholders are well filed and catalogues and kept in to office so that these can be used to analyse at the stage of report writing and evaluation.
2.3 Following up the users, to know about their satisfaction level, corruption freeness and time taken in resolving the problem	Through out the project period stakeholders, mostly CGCCs and beneficiaries were followed up on time to time to know about the their targets achieved, problems faced, activities conducted and their expectations from the project team.



<p>3.1 Developing questionnaires survey, keeping indicators of objectives and goal in mind</p>	<p>‘RTI Ground Realities and Corruption Vulnerability Survey’ questionnaires were developed after internal mutual consultations, reviewing relevant documents on the website of Transparency International, questionnaires of similar studies done by CUTS earlier. The same was also shared with PTF for comments. The draft questionnaires were developed for both service providers and beneficiaries/common citizenries.</p>
<p>3.2 Orientation of surveyors about used tools and techniques and field testing</p>	<p>A half-day training of CGCCs was conducted to make the exercise effective and in line with the methodology and research envisaged in the project. In the training, the focus was on vulnerability analysis and the level of corruption in the selected schemes of the Rural Development Department. Keeping the sensitive nature of the issue in mind, special emphasis was given to confidentiality of the findings and objectivity in the analysis of the data. Project team members facilitated the training.</p>
<p>3.3 Pre RGR and Post RGR Surveys, Data compilation, analysis and conclusion drawing</p>	<p>‘Post RTI Ground Realities and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis in NREGS, Swarnagayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana and Indira Awaas Yojana’</p> <p>Facts about the Interventional area: Jaipur and Tonk are two administrative districts of Rajasthan, where pre and post-surveys were conducted. Jaipur is the capital city of Rajasthan, comprising 11 rural blocks, with a geographical area of 11,117. 8 sq kms and a population of 52.5 lakh (urban – 25, 93,791, rural – 26, 58,597, males – 27, 69,096, females – 24, 83,292). It has a population density of 471 per sq kms, literacy rate of 70.63 percent and 13 sub-divisions and 13 tehsils and 2340 villages. This project was implemented in 11 rural blocks.</p> <p>Tonk district has a geographical area of 7194 sq kms, population of 1211671, population density of 168 per sq kms, literacy rate of 52 percent and seven sub-divisions and tehsils, spread over 1093 villages. The project was implemented in six rural districts.</p> <p>The Pre RGR and CVA survey was conducted in the second month of the project and findings were taken as base values. Similar survey was done after the end of the project activities which was know as Post RGR and CVA survey to measure the impact created and to know the progress made during the project period. Both, the baseline and endline surveys were carried out by CGCC members at block levels by CGCCs. These surveys were based on a structured questionnaire which was designed to gather general perceptions/opinions of the common citizens and service providers about various forms of corruption, corruption experiences of beneficiaries of select schemes, level of RTI awareness and its utilisation process and things related to other objectives. Both the CGCCs from each block were assigned this task.</p>

Both the surveys were carried out by CGCC members at the block level in all 17 rural blocks of both the districts. All the CGCC surveyors were thoroughly oriented for conducting these surveys and the methodology in both was the same. Survey methodology and all the questions were discussed individually and a mock exercise of filling the questionnaires was also done. It was a day-long exercise, done with the help of subject experts. At least two surveyors from each block were short-listed and trained. The total sample size of the questionnaires was 600, including 413 beneficiaries of NREGS, IAY and SGSY and other schemes and 187 of service providers from Rural Development and *Panchayati Raj* Departments of both the districts. The selection of respondents was done on the basis of the location of his/her residence.

In the pre-RGR Survey, 77 percent of the respondents were males and the rest were females. 52 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 30 to 45 years and 55 percent were educated up to middle and secondary level and 15 percent were college and above level. Of the respondents, 62 percent were the beneficiaries of NREGS, 22 percent were the beneficiaries of IAY and 16 were the beneficiaries of SJGSY.

In post-RGR survey, 84 percent of the respondents were males. 65 percent were in the age group of 26 to 45 years 56 percent were educated up to middle and secondary level and 21 percent were graduates and above. 46 percent of them were the beneficiaries of NREGS and 28 were unemployed youth. In this post-RGR survey, the classification of the respondents has been done on the basis of rural which include the villages and semi-urban areas which include the respondents of block head quarters, roadside villages and towns under the block.

Findings:

Awareness about location: Only 37 percent knew where the *Patwari* is available; 64 percent people knew about the *Sarpanch*. 64 percent respondents thought that *Gram Panchayat* members also sit at *Gram Panchayat* which is wrong. This showed that citizens were not aware about the location and availability of key officials.

The existence of *Sarpanch* was unknown to about 20 percent and of the *Gram Secretary* to 27 percent of the local people. *Rojgar Sahayak* appointed under NREGS was unknown to 61 percent.

Visits to Gram Panchayat Office: Only 25 percent of the respondents

visited often, 56 percent visited occasionally and 15 percent never visited *Gram Panchayat* office.

Awareness regarding Gram Sabha: At the start of the intervention, 47 percent respondents had not heard about the *Gram Sabha* which takes place at least twice in year. Eight percent of the respondents came to know about the provision of *Gram Sabha* during the intervention, but 39 percent remained unaware so lack of awareness is the main reason of poor community participation in *Gram Sabha*. 43 percent of the respondents expressed their willingness to participate in *Gram Sabhas*, if they were informed in time. The people who do not participate in Gram Sabhas said that it is due to time constraint or that it is a waste of their time.

Awareness of RTI Act, 2005: In the selected two districts, only 39 percent of the people had heard about the RTI Act, 2005. As far as awareness regarding the RTI application-filing process is concerned, 26 percent of the people knew about the application format, 19 percent about PIO, 21 about the fee rules for APL and BPL applicants, 08 about the Time Period in which information has to be provided to applicants and only seven about the provisions of first and second appellate authorities.

Awareness regarding the filing process: The percentage of people aware about filing RTI application was as low as 5.4. Only 12 filed RTI application out of 242 respondents. In only 33 percent cases information was provided by the PIOs, out of which 75 percent of the applicants were not satisfied with the information. As far as going for first appeal was concerned, merely 8.4 percent of the applicants opted for it.

It is clear that the use of RTI Act in rural areas is minimal and awareness thereof has been mainly generated through NGOs. It is also clear from the analysis that in 48 percent cases the use of the RTI Act was related to corruption issues; 32 percent to personal issues and the remaining 20 percent pertained to public benefit issues of the villages.

Prevalence of Corruption: 49 percent of the respondents reported that corruption in NREGS was more than in IAY and SGSY schemes. In IAY, *Gram Panchayat* officials give benefits after receiving bribe in some form.

After discussing with the stakeholders, certain areas were short-listed in NREGS. These are as follows:

Registration for job and making job cards: Corruption was rampant at the initial stage when registration for entitlement for job was done and then job cards were made. As this scheme progressed, service providers took bribes in 56 percent of the cases at an average of A146, which is higher than in the

pre-RGR survey, which was in 43 percent of the cases at an average A68. The main reason for this was that most of the job cards were already made and in issuance of new cards, which were fewer in number, the service providers charged heavier bribes. In the post-RGR survey, no case was reported in which bribe was paid.

Payment of wages: On every withdrawal, a person had to pay A40 as bribe to various service providers.

IAY: Selection of beneficiaries was the first stage in which favouritism was seen. During the pre-RGR survey, the total amount given as bribe was A8,059 and post-RGR it was A6,125.

In the post-RGR survey, it was noticed that service providers demanded bribes at the time of submitting the utilisation certificate of the first instalment. In this area, the rate of corruption was reported higher than before due to initiation of a new system of crediting the sanctioned amount directly in beneficiary's bank account.

SGSY: In the post-RGR survey, grading and granting of loans to self help groups (SHGs) emerged as big areas of corruption. However, in group formation and trainings, no corruption was reported. Banks are overloaded with social and commercial banking and grading and sanctioning of loans to SHGs is priority for these banks. NGOs and SHG members are, therefore, giving bribes to bank officials.

Corruption Vulnerability Analysis: In the post-RGR survey, 21 percent of the beneficiaries reported having paid bribes (pre-RGR 27 percent) to service providers and the amounts varied from one person to another, averaging A285 per beneficiary in NREGS, which was A18 less than the pre-RGR figure of A303.

In IAY, 34 percent reported (pre-RGR 52 percent) having paid bribes for availing the benefits of this scheme at various levels of service delivery. On an average, the bribes paid to various service providers, mainly to *Gram Sachivs*, was A960 in each case.

In SGSY, 13 percent of the beneficiaries paid bribes (pre-RGR 18 percent) mainly to bank officials. The amount on an average was A417. Another finding was that the NGOs which are facilitating the SGSY programme at block level and coordinating with the SHGs formed under the scheme also has to pay a fixed percentage of their remunerations received from the implementing agency which is *Zila Parisad*, as bribe while getting the cheque of it.

Trend in the level of corruption: In the opinion of majority of the respondents (48 percent), the level of corruption in NREGS is on the rise.

A large percentage of beneficiaries of IAY (34 percent) felt that the level of corruption is unchanged, but, at the same time, 28 percent felt that has decreased in the last one year. The beneficiaries of SGSY also felt that the level of corruption is static.

Conclusions: Awareness regarding RTI is very low in rural areas and awareness about filing process is further down

RGR&CVA Survey for Service Providers

‘RTI Ground Realities and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis in NREGS, Swarnagayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana and Indira Aawas Yojana’

Service Providers/PIOs/ First Appellate Authorities Survey

Methodology: A total of 187 (121 from Jaipur and 66 from Tonk) service providers were interviewed from the Rural Development and *Panchayati Raj* Department, including the *Gram Sachins* and *Sarpanchs* of selected *Gram Panchayats* and *Pradhans* of selected blocks of Jaipur and Tonk districts.

Advertisement of schemes: In the pre-RGR survey, 23 percent of the respondents could not correctly remember the number of schemes under implementation. They identified the print media, signboards, *Nukkad Nataks*, TV and radio as the means of advertisement. Some felt that *Panchayat* notice boards also helped in making the schemes known amongst the masses.

People’s sources about schemes and public participation: Most respondents procure information from local PRI members or by visiting *Gram Panchayat* office. Few respondents write to Gram Panchayat officials for enquiry.

Post-RGR survey findings reveal that Gram Panchayat officials make scant efforts for publicising the schemes and visits to their offices is the main source of gathering information.

Lack of Public Participation: 45 percent of the respondents feel there is lack of awareness among people regarding the services rendered by *Gram Panchayat*, due to lack of education. Some respondents mentioned lack of interest due to suggestions and requests not being entertained. Others felt that people are busy in their work and participating in meetings is a waste of time.

In the post-RGR survey, all the respondents mentioned that during the last one year, public participation in the decision-making and service delivery processes of the selected three schemes has gone up due to education and media involvement, mass mobilisation by NGOs and the IEC campaign of the government.

Awareness of RTI Act

78 percent of the *Gram Panchayat* respondents had heard about the Act, but not in detail. The real concern is that 22 percent of the functionaries at *Gram Panchayat* level are still not aware about the Act and this raises questions on their ability to implement it. The post-RGR survey, however, reveals that the awareness of the RTI Act among service providers of Rural Development Department is increasing every year.

Awareness regarding Filing Process

18 percent of the functionaries were not aware of the way in which applications should be processed. 80 percent of the respondents were aware about the required fee. What is more glaring is the fact that 46 percent of the functionaries were not even aware that they are designated as PIOs or First Appellate Authorities (FAAs). However, most of the respondents were aware that the demanded information has to be provided within the stipulated time of 30 days. 78 percent of the respondents were not aware of the provision of first appeal and 88 percent of the second appeal at departmental and state information commission levels, respectively.

In the post-RGR survey data, most of the service providers (90 percent) gained awareness about the format on which RTI applications are requested and that there is no prescribed format for RTI requests, which can be made on plain paper as well. 83 percent of the service providers became aware about the required fee. Awareness of these officials about the PIO being appointed under this RTI was at 68 percent. They also knew correctly that the stipulated time period was 30 days for providing the requested information.

Only 38 percent of the respondents knew correctly about the first appeal and 22 about second appeal. Knowledge about the PIOs and FAA of their own department was restricted to 64 and 48 percent, respectively.

Training on RTI

Only 22 percent of the functionaries were RTI trained, but in a superficial manner, without any in-depth formal training. Their sources of knowledge

about the Act were confined to the media and their fellow colleagues at work.

PIOs/FAAs in Offices

When *Panchayat* officials were asked about the PIO of their office, most of them were not aware about it and general perception among both *Sarpanch* and *Gram Sachiv* was that the *Sarpanch* is the PIO of the *Gram Panchayat*, which is wrong. Only 54 percent respondents know about the fact that *Gram Sachiv* has been designated as PIO at *Gram Panchayat* level and only 36 percent respondents know about the FAA which is the *Sarpanch* of the *Gram Panchayat*.

Response of PIOs before accepting RTI Applications: Most PIOs ask the applicants about the intended use of the demanded information. 14 percent of the PIO respondents accepted that they dissuade applicants on the plea that the information sought does not relate to any public welfare. 19 percent of the PIOs check personal/political motivation as well. 50 percent of the respondents thought that it was legal to ask the applicants for the reasons of filing a request under RTI.

Rejection of RTI Applications

Respondent PIOs, when asked about the possible grounds on which RTI applications could be rejected, were very cautious to respond. However, 32 percent of the PIOs said that applications can be rejected if the information sought is related to any other department. 30 percent said if the applicant is likely to misuse the demanded information, then his application would not be accepted. 17 percent said that applications were also rejected on account of a large number of questions or if the applicant's behaviour with them is not proper. Other reasons for rejection are information demanded is not clear or demanded information is not available with PIOs or address of the applicant is not written on the application.

In the post-RGR survey, two major categories of grounds for rejection came up: one, if the application is related to some other department; and, two, if they think that applicants would in any way misuse the requested information.

Problems Faced by PIOs and FAAs

- Proper training is not imparted;
- Record management is very poor at *Gram Panchayat* level;
- PIOs are heavily burdened with other work; and

- Attitude of the applicant is to create trouble.

RTI Applications

28 percent of the PIOs said that on an average two RTI applications per month were filed in their offices and that all were responded appropriately. 65 percent of the respondents said that in respect of section 4(1) b, *Gram Panchayats* have proactively published the filing process under RTI on office walls. They also publish the names of the beneficiaries of the schemes, annual budget and expenditures and most of the records are placed before the *Gram Sabha*, in which most of the elected members and villagers participate. They agreed that more is required to be done, for which infrastructure has to developed, particularly for disclosure and digitalisation of records.

During the post-RGR survey, 70 percent of the respondents said that during the year, the number of RTI requests had increased manifold, in comparison with previous years. They also said that these help in improving the quality of services provided by the *Gram Panchayat* and also promote public participation.

Potential of RTI Act

88 percent of the respondents felt that the RTI Act has the potential to promote transparency and accountability among service providers and policy makers and can control corruption. But, only 45 percent of the respondents felt that it would increase public participation in the decision-making and service delivery processes.

In the post-RGR survey, majority of service providers (75 percent) said that the RTI Act, 2005 is capable of enhancing accountability among officials and also forcing them to maintain their records properly. 44 percent of the service providers responded that this Act has successfully combated corruption.

82 percent of the respondents reported that transparency in the selection process of beneficiaries, decision-making process and public expenditure has increased. PIOs maintained that RTI work is putting extra burden and that they are unable to respond to these requests due to lack of human and infrastructural facilities at the *Gram Panchayat* level.

Steps Taken to Promote Transparency and Accountability

In the post RGR survey, 35-40 percent of the respondents stated that they had printed on the walls of *Gram Panchayats* the entitlements and qualifications of beneficiaries of the IAY and NREGS and about the RTI Act, 2005 for public and 70 percent respondents replied that they have also printed the annual income and expenditure details of the *Gram Panchayat* at its walls.

Prevalence of Corruption in Selected Schemes

39 percent agreed that corruption is prevalent in the NREGS and that most of the officials responsible for implementation are involved. Rest of the respondents did not accept corruption or maintained that there is no corruption in the department. In the IAY, prevalence of corruption was admitted by 20 percent of the respondents and the rest denied. Under SGSY, 31 percent admitted prevalence of corruption.

Reasons for Corruption in the Schemes

NREGS

- Lack of awareness among rural people;
- People do not want to indulge in paper work;
- Some people do not have supporting documents necessary for making job card and need to bribe concerned officials for issuance thereof;
- *Gram Panchayat* functionaries cite demand of higher officials; and
- Being a part of culture (*kbhai badi ke maai badi* phenomenon meaning that money is bigger and works well than a mother).

SGSY

As mentioned by respondents, SGSY scheme is not working effectively in the districts because bank officials are doubtful regarding repayment of the loans, which is correct to some extent. Instances of seeking gratification from NGOs to sanction loans exist. Respondents opined that NGOs are both victims as well as bribe seekers, as they are victim of the system and forced to pay bribes at the DRDA level.

IAY

Though benefits under this scheme are envisaged for BPL families only, but non-BPL powerful people create pressure by offering bribes to change their category at the cost of actual beneficiaries.

Measures for Controlling Corruption

- Credible CSOs should be included as a part of the tendering process
- BSR rates must be consistent with market rates.
- Social and CAG audits should be mandatory and regular to reform the processes.
- RTI Act should be promoted and public awareness programmes should be intensified.
- People have to be motivated to participate in the *Gram Sabhas*.
- Complaint redressal mechanism should be established.
- Proactive disclosure of information at *Gram Panchayat* level be should be systematised.
- Entitlements of BPLs must be well publicised.
- Pattern of payments in all welfare schemes must be transparent.

A two-day residential orientation was conducted for 135 RTI activists/NGO representatives (75 from Jaipur and 65 from Tonk) to mark the launch of the project in June 2009. It was divided into various breakout sessions, including group/mock exercises in understanding RTI Act, 2005, selected schemes, mode of their operation, maintaining team spirit, individual task formation and targets are set for them with their inputs. During the deliberations, the roles which have to be played and responsibilities which have to be borne by them as a member of CGCC were also discussed in detail. Lastly the way of periodic reporting to the Project team was shared with CGCCs. The orientation was fully interactive, open for comments and suggestions of the CGCCs in which CGCCs shared their experiences with each other.

In the Jaipur orientation workshop, Shailesh Gandhi, Central Information Commissioner, New Delhi, was the chief guest and Harinesh Pandya, the famous RTI Activist from Maheti Adhikar Gujarat Pahel (MAGP), Gujarat, was a resource person. Both shared their experiences and provided inputs to the project team and CGCCs. In Tonk, Rajesh Ranjan from CHRI, Madhya Pradesh, facilitated the orientation as a resource person. Both workshops received wide media coverage.

Outcome

- All 34 CGCCs were fully trained for using RTI as a tool against corruption, rather for redressing complaints. They were oriented towards project goals, outputs and objectives; and
- Wide media coverage at the state and national level.

<p>4.1 Scoping visit</p>	<p>17 Block Chaupals were organised in all the rural blocks for sharing the RGR & CVA survey findings, corrupt practices and areas of corruption in the selected schemes and for getting feedback from participants, in addition to providing a platform to the local participants. CGCCs, RTI applicants and corruption victims got together for further handholding and facilitating future strategies.</p> <p>Block level officials, leading NGOs, PRI representatives, the media, the youth, students, RTI applicants and RAIC callers were mobilised by local CGCCs in advance for these meetings, which were well attended by 876 (553 in Jaipur and 323 in Tonk) participants, including 211 service providers and 215 women. All the participants were provided with an RTI Resource Pack containing RTI newsletters, brief of CUTS publications, agenda of the <i>Chaupals</i> and issues to be discussed. These 17 BLRCs were covered in the local media on 29 occasions. These BLCs resulted in raising awareness about corruption and the use of the RTI Act through the <i>Chaupals</i> and the media.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants got courage to use RTI as a tool for combating corruption. They also came to know about the clear picture of corruption in the schemes and use of RTI in the concerned blocks. <p>A week-long exposure visit to Kerala, known for its transparent systems, service and decision-making processes, was organised to learn about the good practices of <i>Gram Panchayats</i> and to try to replicate them in Rajasthan. Government officials from the Rural Development Department, PRI members and CGCCs of Jaipur and Tonk, 10 motivated and committed stakeholders were chosen for the visit. The visit was to two <i>Gram Panchayats</i> in the Kozhikode and Wayanad districts of Kerala. The interactions with local service providers and elected <i>Panchayat</i> representatives resulted in a perceptible attitudinal change in the visitors to replicate the good practices seen and learnt there.</p> <p>Outcome of the visit</p> <p>Kerala is one of the most progressive state of India and lot of good practices have been innovated there. Learning by seeing successful and efficient endeavours and imbibing them is one of the best ways to initiate</p>
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desirable changes at the *Gram Panchayats* in Rajasthan.

Major learning:

It is significant to mention that, in India, it is the state of Kerala where 40 percent of the total plan outlay of the Rural Development and *Panchayati Raj* Department goes directly to the *Gram Panchayats*.

Replication efforts

As an outcome, one visiting official passed an order down the line in all *Gram Panchayats* and Block Development Offices to have a complaint-cum-suggestion box, fixed at some prominent place of their office so that common citizens could drop their complaints and later actions can be taken by concerned officials. The order was followed in some of the *Gram Panchayats* and the visiting official also placed a complaint cum suggestion box in his office just after returning from this visit. This exposure visit was extremely helpful in ensuring the participation of these key stakeholders throughout the project period.

<p>5.2 Base line: Citizen's Report Card of select schemes keeping project outcomes and their means of verification in mind, analysis of findings and targets setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two CRCs were prepared at both the MRGPs, namely, Harsulia in Jaipur and Mundia in Tonk, mainly to enquire into and assess the satisfaction level of the <i>Gram Panchayat</i> residents, who are the beneficiaries of the service rendered by the <i>Gram Panchayats</i>. In these CRCs, mainly three schemes (NREGS, IAY and SGSY) were selected, covering its service delivery and decision-making processes. • The findings were shared with the local community, service providers and the media through interface meetings and dialogues, with a view to bringing out malpractices in the public domain and to attempt getting rid of corrupt practices in the concerned <i>Gram Panchayats</i>.
<p>5.3 Promoting filing of RTI applications by corruption victims for quality services</p>	<p>Around 450 RTI applications were filed focusing on the corrupt issues came out of survey and experienced by CGCCs and local community/beneficiaries in the selected three scheme of the state government</p> <p>In NREGS total 199 RTI applications were filed and out of those 23 were related to registration for job and making job cards. 21 people filed RTI asking about the reasons of giving priority to few people (who were near and dears one of service providers) in providing jobs ignoring other entitlement holders. Under the scheme, 47 RTI applications were filed because service providers were lenient in work measurement and given extra benefits in comparison to other common people.</p> <p>In NREGS adding names of family members and friends of <i>Sarpanch</i> and other PRIs can be seen often so targeting this issue total 38 RTI applications were filed by beneficiaries/ CGCCs asking reasons of adding name without working in must rolls and photocopies. 05 RTI attempted to ask about taking commissions in payment of wages, and 65 were related to the worksite facilities.</p> <p>In SGSY total 89 RTI applications were filed and the issue of grading was targeted most. So majority of RTI Applications (69) were filed related to this issue, which has to be done by the concerned bank. There were some incidences of corruption in the selection of beneficiaries and group formation that was done NGOs so 11 RTI were filed to target that issue.</p> <p>At bank level bribe is demanded for granting loan and disbursement of that grant so such nine issues were identified and filed RTI asking the reasons of delay in disbursement of grants and in one case grant was immediately given, in 03 cases it took months to get the grant and in case of 05 cases still grants were not provided. In few cases, the NGOs responsible for mobilising and coordinating the SGSY activities at field level were taking money from beneficiaries and making savings from expenses sanctioned for them and compromising with quality.</p> <p>In <i>Indira Awaas Yojana</i> total 150 RTI applications were filed in which the issue, which came as, a most corrupt was selection process and for that 38</p>

applications were filed. Second issue was changing the orders of beneficiary in the list and for that 26 applications were filed to know the reasons.

The information demanded in most of the RTI applications were related to some act of corruption, and can be called an attempt to hit the corrupt service providers and the process itself. These RTI applications were need based, represent most burning issues among beneficiaries and filed individually but supported collectively and contributed in simplifying the processes, use of RTI by common people, satisfactory resolution of problems, enhancing responsiveness of services providers and reducing corruption experience of common people in interventional areas. Details of RTI applications in various schemes:

S. No.	Name of Scheme	Subject of RTI application	No. Of RTI	Info. Rece
1.	NREGS	Registration and making job cards	23	
2.	„	Priority in providing jobs	21	
3.	„	Payment of higher wages	47	
4.	„	Fake names in must rolls	38	
5.	„	Commissions in payment	16	
6.	„	Worksite facilities	65	
		Total	209	124
1.	SGSY	Selection of beneficiaries and group formation	11	
2.	„	Grading of the group	69	
3.	„	Disbursement of grant and granting loan	09	
		Total	89	66
1.	IAY	Selection of beneficiaries	26	
2.	„	Changing the order up in the list o	23	
3.	„	Giving sanctioned check by <i>Gram Sachiv</i>	16	
4.	„	Inspection of constructing house	05	
5.	„	Check Encashment at Bank	09	
6.	„	Proactive disclosure of list of beneficiaries	74	
		Total	153	98

5.4 Three interface meetings of beneficiaries and GP officials to discuss the Issues & experiences of corruptions and way forward	Total six interface meetings (three in each model gram panchayat) of <i>Gram Panchayat</i> service providers and common people were conducted. Various local corruption issues were unearthed, followed up later on by CGCCs and project also pursued the issues while visiting <i>Gram Panchayats</i> every month and having dialogues with them. Since these people were also part of evening classes and these issues were raised and followed up these as well.
5.5 RTI evening classes & Youth and women mobilisation meetings	A total of 20 RTI evening classes (10 in each MRGP) were organised in the villages of MRGPs in the evenings, so that in free time villagers, importantly the youth and women, could participate. This was done mainly to educate them about the importance, potential and filing process of the RTI Act, 2005. These evening classes were well-publicised one or two days in advance by local CGCCs. The team used to reach the villages in the afternoon itself to mobilise villagers and interact with them in detail and remained there till late evening. As a result of these evening classes, residents of these MRGPs were mobilised, local issues were discussed and then advocated before <i>Gram Panchayat</i> and district level service providers. MRGP people were mobilised and 70 RTI applications were filed.
5.6 RTI orientation of the service providers/ PRI members to educate & handle RTI applications	Two RTI orientation programmes were conducted in both the MRGPs including elected PRIs and GP Staff twice in the project period. One was done with older elected PRIs and second was done with the newly elected PRIs members of both MRGPs
5.7 Move for proactive disclosure of information	In both the MRGPs, to promote the proactive disclosure, role and responsibilities of <i>Sarpanch</i> and <i>Gram Panchayats</i> , selection process of beneficiaries in IAY, name of all six committees constituted at <i>Gram Panchayats</i> level and members, and RTI filing process was printed on the walls of Harsulia and Mundia <i>Gram Panchayats</i> . By this exercise local people came to know about functioning of <i>Gram Panchayats</i> and processes and benefited at well.
6.1 Continued support to CGCCs	An active network of CGCCs in all the 17 blocks of both districts was existing and able to own the project objectives and work as an citizen against corruption and resource person for wider local community
7.1 Issue, evidence and demand-based periodic meetings with multilevel target groups	A dialogue process was started in the beginning of the project itself and total 11 high level dialogue events took place between CUTS, CGCCs and policy makers including RD minister, Pr. Secretary/Secretary, CEOs, Collectors and others. There was not a action plan but a strategy was made that in preliminary round introductory dialogue was done and then dialogue was issues/findings based to take a commitment to suggest some policy changes in the select schemes but things happened in different way.

Dialogues were started from top level but ultimately these top policy makers deputed the project directors as their representatives to participate in such future dialogues and give direct feedback to them.

In the first round of dialogues only project details were shared with abovementioned policy makers. Since two secretaries and three principal secretaries changed till mid of the second quarter so more than one introductory meeting were held and that took lot of time.

After introductory rounds one round was held with Secretary, Directors of SGSY and IAY for talking about the issues came out of RGR&CVA survey and citizen report cards in the months of September and October, 2009. These officials including minister said that most of the policies are absolutely fine but all the problems come at implementation level so they made commitment to instruct the lower level officials to cooperate in the project activities and take actions accordingly and for that Minister instructed to his secretary and secretary deputed both the directors of SGSY and IAY for further dialogue events and give feedback to him directly.

Mid project level dialogues happened with happened with both the directors and Deputy Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Deputy Secretary of Rajasthan state Information Commission.

Final round of talks held with Secretary and Minister only and as a result of these dialogues events few official orders were passed but it is difficult to say that how far these orders helped in to curbing the corruption in select schemes but it is for sure that they helped in to implementing the schemes as per norms within the state.

<p>7.2 Ensuring participation of demand and supply side key stakeholders</p>	<p>Constructive engagement in form of dialogues with the policy makers of Rural Development Department and state government and the advocacy efforts of project activities contributed in passing of the following 11 general orders related to effective implementation of RTI Act at gram <i>panchayats</i>, enhancing transparency and accountability in the service delivery mechanism and decision making processes.</p>
<p>7.3 Analysing decisions and actions taken and their implementation and ground level impact on reducing corruption in select schemes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Proactive disclosure of the information related to construction work under NREGS at GP, ordered on November 19, 2009; 2) Painting the names of NREG labourers with payment details on <i>Gram Panchayat</i> walls, ordered on January 10, 2010; 3) Order for following the NREGA (Grievance Redressal) Rules, 2009 in letter and spirit, ordered on December 18, 2009; 4) Better record management under NREGA at <i>Gram Panchayat</i> level as per rules and guidelines, ordered on October 23, 2009; 5) Regarding NREGA help line, ordered on April 23, 2010; 6) Publicising NREGA Citizens Charter among common people by <i>Gram Panchayat</i> s, ordered on February 05, 2010; 7) Maintaining the NREGA records well and furnishing full details, ordered on December 15, 2009; 8) Constitution of NREGA permanent committees at <i>Gram Panchayat</i> level and effective role in NREGA monitoring, ordered on February 08, 2010; 9) Effective implementation of the RTI Act at <i>Gram Panchayat</i> level. Writing the NREGA related information on notice board and regularly updating of the details of NREGA labourers twice a month, ordered on March 11, 2010; 10) Ensuring transparency, accountability and making it corruption free by developing an effective complaint redressal mechanism at district and block levels, ordered on June 17, 2009; and 11) Ensuring effective implementation of the RTI Act in Rural Development Department through proactive disclosure of information. Project officials participated in the dialogue process with the government, along with other NGOs, at Jaipur on September 17, 2009.
<p>7.4 One-day Mid Term Dissemination cum Advocacy Meeting: A set of</p>	<p>Mid Term Dissemination meeting was successfully conducted on February 23, 2010 at Jaipur. The objective of the workshop was to disseminate the key findings of the 'RTI Ground Realities and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis</p>

<p>recommendations was emerge out with the stake of service providers and service recipients.</p>	<p>Survey' before service providers of select schemes, and other stakeholder participants and taking the critical views and suggestions to make these findings more logical. Based on their field experiences. Around 80 stakeholders participated including directors of SGSY, IAY, state resource centre and Deputy Secretary, Administrative Reforms. In the meeting findings were presented and accepted by policy makers with minor comments. During this advocacy meeting itself a decision of going for a joint monitoring visit (including CUTS and Govt officials) was taken to look in to the issues came out in the survey and with the permission of Secretary it was ordered for April 21, 2010 and done successfully. Important is that several good decisions were taken on the spot during this joint monitoring visit to take corrective measures.</p> <p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the spot several decisions were taken regarding quick service delivery and inclusion of some potential names in the beneficiaries in front of /on request of villagers. • Healthy interface of different level of officials and clarifications were made from each other. <p>Further follow up is required to see the implementation of the decisions taken during the visit but few evidences are there in which at GP level list of beneficiaries were painted at the wall and block level officials instructed to Panchayat officials about the decisions taken and instructed to implement at their office strictly since they have to report back to the higher authorities.</p>
<p>7.5 State level Advocacy Meeting: A set of recommendations for procedural changes was formed and put forward before state policy makers and programme implementers through a day long State Advocacy Workshop at state level.</p>	<p>This meeting was also well participated by different sort of stakeholders as in midterm. Wide media coverage in national and state daily newspapers which resulted in to discourses on reforms using RTI as an instrument.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>A set of recommendations was put forward before present policy makers which were later formally submitted to RD minister and department to take immediate actions so that processes in the selected schemes can be reformed: the recommendations are as follows:</p> <p>NREGS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive disclosure at all levels.(Model GPs has to be established as a test case by Govt.) • Multiple counters of availability & acceptance of form 06

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phasing out payments through post offices; Introducing mobile banking <p>IAY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists and names of beneficiaries has to be followed/printed at all levels.(Not written, if yes; not updated regularly) • Periodic meeting of all BPLs including media has to done at GP • Smooth Fund Flow. Special strategy for non-started cases <p>SGSY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible social banking norms & not as difficult as corp. loaning and for that sensitization is needed. • Interdepartmental convergence has to be ensured including ICDS <p>Further it was followed up to ensure the implementation of these recommendations.</p>
<p>Activity 8 External Evaluation</p>	<p><i>Evaluation visit of Stephanie, PTF advisor</i></p> <p>Stephanie de Chassy, Adviser, PTF visited CUTS to evaluate the RTI PTF project phase-II from May 10-13, 2010. Stephanie met with S P Baswal, Deputy Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms, Government of Rajasthan; MD Kaurani, State Information Commissioner; Salauddin Ahmed, Additional Chief Secretary; and Kailash Narayan Meena, Sub Divisional Officer, Niwai to discuss the implementation of RTI Act in Rajasthan. She visited both the Model RTI <i>Gram Panchayats</i> – Harsulia and Mundia on May 10-11, 2010 respectively and National Rural Employment Gurantee Scheme (NREGS) worksite where large number of women and other RTI applicants were present and discussed project related issues.</p>
<p>Activity 9 Exposure visit to MKSS, Dev Dungari, Rajsamand, Rajasthan</p>	<p>After conducting a highly successful and well appreciated learning cum exposure visit to Kerala described above, all the CGCCs were interested to go for such similar visit and as per the decision unanimously taken this exposure visit was organized with the aim of strengthen the capacity of CGCCs and providing first hand experience of the model work done by the Mazdoor Kisaan Shakti Sangthan situated in Dev-Dungari in Rajsamand district. It was two days learning cum exposure visit from August 12 to13, 2010 in which 21 CGCCs participated. The group visited MKSS office and met with Mr. Nikhi Dey, Shanker Singh, and other who are the leading known RTI activists and practicing and helping in doing the historic work to implement the RTI Act, 2005 in its true spirit at few Gram Panchayats in the neighborhood and advocacy at state and national level. The CGCC members not only learnt but seen the things actually to happen so that they can also adopt these good practices in their respective field areas. They all were happy to see this good work in Rajasthan itself.</p>

10.1 Eight Focus Group Discussions	As a part of the project impact study at the end level 08 Focus Group discussions are done. These were three in Tonk and Five in Jaipur district. In first round four FGDs (Harsulia, Niwai including Mundia, Tonk and Malpura) were conducted. In Second round remaining four FGDs were conducted at Phagi and Chaksu and at Dudu and Sambhar. In these FGDs RTI applicants of the local area were invited to share their experiences in detail for documentation to showcase the project results at grassroots. Total 98 RTI applicants who came along with CGCCs members of the block shared their experienced of using RTI and getting their entitlements without paying any bribe or cutting any share from grants and benefits received from selected three govt. schemes
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10.2 Analysis and Documentation of FGDs	<p>Documentation of all these FGD cases has been done and most of these RTI Applicants can be shown as a success story since they had been able to get corruption free service delivery of the selected three schemes otherwise it would not had happened without paying bribe or giving some cut from the grant money or wages. Few of the success stories are being attached herewith.</p> <p>Case 01</p> <p>Applicant: Badri Lal Bairwa Gram Panchayat: Kathawala, Chaksu, Jaipur Problem: Non-sanction of Indira Aawas Date of application under RTI: 2009-07-03 Date of resolution: 2009-07-22</p> <p>The Case: Badri, a young below-poverty-line (BPL) person, lived in a small thatched house and was toiling hard as a mason to support his seven-member family. He often wondered how some people better off than him could manage to obtain benefits under the IAY and he could not under the said scheme.</p> <p>Badri came into contact with local CGCC member, who advised him to file an RTI application at the <i>Gram Panchayat</i> office and he did that, seeking his waiting number in the IAY list and the reasons for not sanctioning Indira Aawas to him so far. 11 days after filing this application, the <i>Gram Sachiv</i> visited his residence and assured sanctioning of Indira Aawas to him in the next <i>Gram Sabha</i>. The <i>Gram Sachiv</i> requested him to withdraw his RTI application and later on tried to pressurise him through the local wardpanch, but Badri refused to do so.</p> <p>On 19th day, the <i>Gram Sachiv</i> came back with written information about Badri's waiting number, which was on the top of the list, and handed it over to Badri. He informed Badri that his Indira Aawas has been sanctioned and guided for starting construction work, assuring him that the first instalment of the grant will reach in his account in coming months, which happened. Badri himself did masonry work and his house was constructed.</p> <p>Learning: The delay in service delivery is common, but RTI can change the scenario.</p> <p>Case 02</p> <p>Applicant: Manni Devi Raigar w/o Prahald Raigar Gram Panchayat: Natwara, Niwai, Tonk Problem: Delaying in the grading process.</p>
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Date of application under RTI: 2010-06-16

Date of resolution: 2010-07-06

The Case: Manni Devi, aged 59 years, was member of a well functioning Shoba Swayam Sahayata Samooh, a SHG, made for starting a dairy business under the SGSY scheme. The SHG was entitled for granting a revolving fund by the Bank, but the concerned bank official was demanding some bribe for doing that and had been delaying the process for long. All women members were helpless. One day, Manni Devi's son came in contact with a visiting CGCC and told him the entire story. The CGCC suggested filing an RTI application with the bank, asking the reasons of delay in the grading process of the Shoba SHG. Next day, an RTI request was filed and with the bank by Manni Devi, asking the reasons for delay in the grading of the group.

On June 22, 2010, the local NGO coordinator of the scheme received a call from the concerned bank official who was enquiring about the 'SHG and Manni Devi' and told him that on July 05, 2010, he will visit this group for grading, without mentioning about the RTI request. The bank official visited the group and completed the formalities of grading on given date of July 05, 2010 and, in the same week, revolving fund was granted, without any bribe.

Learning: RTI changed the preference of bank from commercial banking to social banking.

Case 03

Applicant: Gumani Devi Bairwa w/o Sheonath Bairwa

Gram Panchayat: Chimanpura, Chaksu, Jaipur

Problem: Delaying in the granting loan to SHG

Date of application under RTI: 2010-12-09

Date of resolution: 2011-01-15

The Case: Gumani Devi was a member of the Shagun Swayam Sahayata Samooh which was constituted under SGSY for starting 'Breeding of Goats and Dairy Business'. The SHG was granted revolving fund and had its own income from group members, who deposit monthly fixed amount and the second grading was pending since long, which was the basis on which loan was to be granted to the SHG. The bank official was demanding money for doing so. The coordinator of the NGO given the responsibility of facilitating the activities of concerned SHG, Mr. Norat Lal called in 'RTI Advisory and Information Cell' and as per given suggestions came in touch with the local CGCC, who supported him in filing an RTI application with the bank by Gumani Devi, asking about the reasons of delay in the second

	<p>grading and sanctioning of the loan to the SHG.</p> <p>The RTI application reached the Bank Manager directly, who instructed the concerned bank official to complete the second grading process of the SHG within 30 days and it was done within that time. As a result of this grading, the SHG was able to get a loan of A2.25 lakh to start the planned business activity.</p> <p>Learning: Though RTI is not a complaint redressal mechanism, but it puts in place the complaint redressal mechanism if it is not there.</p>
<p>10.3 Preparation and distribution of Newsletter, mainly publishing project outputs</p>	<p>All the newsletters have been printed and distributed among project stakeholders, CGCCs, policy makers and service providers to share the project activities and findings/experiences to larger community and the government. The web links of these newsletters are given below in sequence.</p> <p>http://www.cuts-international.org/cart/pdf/RTI_in_Action01-09.pdf</p> <p>http://www.cuts-international.org/cart/pdf/RTI_in_Action02-09.pdf</p> <p>http://www.cuts-international.org/cart/pdf/RTI_in_Action01-10.pdf</p> <p>http://www.cuts-international.org/cart/pdf/RTI_in_Action02-10.pdf</p>
<p>11 RTI Toolkit, which can be used for wider dissemination and replication</p>	<p>The RTI Toolkit or Model Framework of Replication has been designed and finalised with the inputs from '<i>Partnership for Transparency Fund</i>'. The introductory part of this product is as follows.</p> <p>What is the aim of the toolkit?</p> <p>The Toolkit, entitled, 'Model Framework for Replication: Usages of RTI in Rural Rajasthan: Enhancing Transparency and Reforming the Processes', is published under the project Reforming the Processes in the Rural Development Department through Policy Dialogue and Civic Engagement, Based on RTI Act (2005) in Rajasthan, India. It explores the need of reforming the service delivery and decision-making processes in three selected national flagship schemes implemented by the Rural Development Department, Government of Rajasthan. The main aim of this Toolkit is to enhance the capability of the citizens to use the RTI Act constructively, which would contribute to reducing the systemic forms of corruption <i>vis-à-vis</i> reforms.</p>

How Was It Developed?

The Toolkit is designed for citizens/coalitions working against corruption in India and across the world and has been developed as part of focused and welfare schemes targeted in two project districts of Rajasthan by involving CGCCs, proactive citizens, scheme beneficiaries and local CSOs. It is an analytical compilation of experiences gained during the implementation of the project, including a wide range of diverse activities, public and stakeholders' consultations/peer learning and formation of RTI support groups in rural areas and CSOs' networking for promoting strategic use of RTI.

What Is the Structure?

The Toolkit is divided into four sections. Section 1 contains the introduction, aims, objectives and usage of the Toolkit. Section 2 deals with the rationale behind the project and emphasises the need of reforming the processes in the Rural Development Department and sheds light on the RTI Act, 2005 as an effective tool. Section 3 is related to the effective implementation of the RTI Act through people's participation and constructive policy dialogue. Section 4 carries several success stories, in the form of real case studies while using RTI.

How to Use It?

This Toolkit has been designed to assist and guide the citizens to use the RTI 2005 and exercise this right more effectively. The Toolkit consists of a set of tools that can be used to obtain and use information on various aspects related to the functioning of public agencies to improve governance. It can be effectively used to increase transparency and accountability in government agencies and thus directly benefit marginalised groups. The Toolkit can be used for making the recently introduced RTI Act effective.

Who Can Use It?

The Toolkit is mainly targeted at NGOs, activists and civil society groups that are working on governance issues. It will also be useful for individuals and organisations working on human rights, justice and corruption issues. Community members (either individually or collectively) can also use this Toolkit. It will be particularly useful for NGOs and activists working in those countries/areas where the RTI has been enacted on paper, but its implementation is poor. While the presence of an enabling environment, in the form of a specific RTI law helps, the Toolkit can be also used effectively in areas/countries where there is no specific law on RTI.

7. Project Outcome/Impact (Please describe what difference the project has made)- This section is a bit repetitive with above –may need to review format?

<p>a) <i>Corruption free delivery of targeted services to the citizens in the project area</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced level of response capacity of PIOs about RTI Act. So record management has improved and demanded information is provided. • Before the commencement of this intervention, beneficiaries of IAY used to get grants in cash so big corruption was there at this level. It was demand of CSOs/NGOs including CUTS International and project team during dialogues with policy makers and pressure of Central Government as well to stop this practice since most of these BPLs are also entitlement holders of NREGS and having their bank accounts. It was decided that grants should be disbursed through checks only rather than in cash with effect from mid 2009. Though it has not been implemented fully in case where beneficiaries are not having bank accounts but in coming years not a single grant would be disbursed in cash as assured by Director, IAY who is a key stakeholder of this project and has been part of dialogue and most of the meetings held under the project. • As a result of constructive engagement and dialogue with state government and RD Depot, total 11 orders passed during the project period by state government regarding effective implementation of RTI, proactive disclosure of information and name of beneficiaries etc. • It was came out repeatedly during the discussions, statements of block officials and participants of block Chaupals as well as one to one meetings or dialogues with officials that most of the service providers at all levels are fearful about RTI applications and are being alerted by their colleagues as well that any body can ask any sort of record and documents through RTI and project CGCCs are playing that role of filing RTI applications in select schemes and demanding for documents related to various corruption incidences. This practice is forcing them to reduce the level of corruption which shows that they are less corrupt than before, though no such research has been done in this regard.
<p>b) <i>Enhancing the capacity of your organisation for mobilising citizens against corruption and controlling corruption</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance team is getting stronger and enhancing its professional skills with the time and having formal/informal discussion with other teams of the organisation. • Organization has been known in wider circles in NGO sector for working on good governance issues and developed good resource material for people's reference and advocacy point view. • The amount of coverage on the issue of corruption has increased in the publications of the organisation so as a result this not only organisation's staff but also other partners of CUTS are getting sensitised on the issue and initiatives taken under project.

	<p>Though the organisation is one of the most transparent organisations even than there is increased internal demand for proactive disclosure of financial statements and other documents.</p>
<p>c) <i>Enhancing the capacity of the community to control corruption</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An active network of two-three CGCCs in all the 17 blocks • Enhanced capacity of citizenries to use RTI as tool • Enhanced level of awareness regarding RTI among common people. • RTI applicants themselves are propagating for use of RTI where corruption has happened. • Community is more sensitive and clear about the areas of corruption and their power of 'Say no to Bribe' has increased in the interventional area especially the selected scheme's beneficiaries. • Several RTI applicants have expressed during their follow up that instead of paying bribe as usual for getting the benefits of select schemes they preferred filing RTI application for asking the reasons of exclusion from benefits and delay in service delivery in select schemes. So at least 23 such cases (including two women and 06 youths) have been reported from the two MRGP areas only who denied to pay bribes but used RTI as a tool. These people are common villagers and got that strength only after knowing about RTI and having support of CGCCs and other RTI applicants of the area.
<p>d) <i>Advocating and impacting actions taken by authorities to control corruption</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total 11 official orders were passed to strengthen the transparency and accountability within the system that provided a framework of action for service providers to comply with. • A high level of monitoring visit was ordered, jointly by CUTS and state/dist/block officials of state government related to selected scheme and district bankers meet, which resulted in to several on the spot decisions/clarification/going into reasons of poor implementation of any scheme. • Few selected officials take up the project goals and talked and worked for those.
<p>e) <i>Peer learning experiences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>With other CSOs</i> • <i>With other communities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer learning was a good experience for project team and during this the team came to know about different areas of corruption and approaches to combat it through community initiatives under the project. • Peer learning provided a platform to share the good as well bad experiences and than a way forward was also discussed. • As a peer learning; visit to RLEK, Dehradun and participating in national workshop on corruption in Bhuvneshwar were only two opportunities during the project period. As far as peer learning from other CSOs is concerned, since RLEK visit was only two days long and intervention of CUTS is at advance stage in comparison of RLEK so one

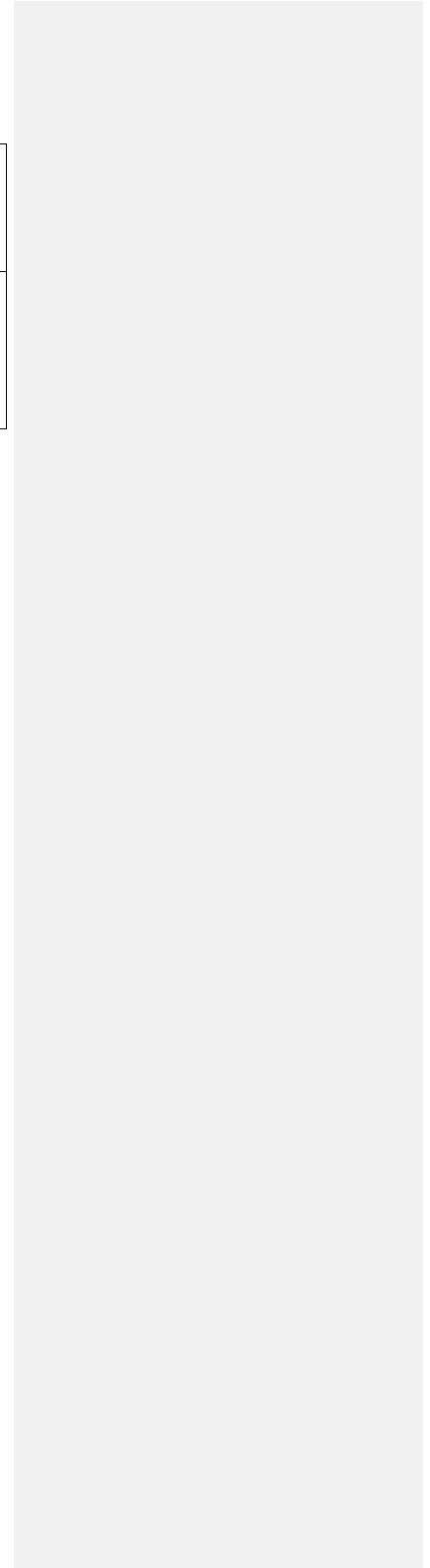
	<p>learning was to ensuring the participation of ‘Self Help Groups’ which work at community level and down the NGOs in project activities and another was establishing the convergence between more than one interventions in the same area so that project results can be ensured up to bigger extent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the national corruption workshop in Bhuvneshwar there was an opportunity to know about the interventions, project strategies and tools to combat corruption in government schemes and how to work as part of coalition and developing a strong network of NGOs for that and advocating jointly rather than single handedly such as in Orissa more three NGOs are doing conducting similar activities • It was also tried to debrief these learnings among project CGCCs during meetings and field visits. The project team invited 09 SHGs members in Bassi, Shahpura, Niwai and Tonk block <i>Chaupals</i> to know the findings and about RTI and all of them (around 96 women members) participated in these and 05 women filed RTI applications under NREGS. • There was an opportunity to meet again with the PTF funding partners who are working on NREGA and some of the PTF Advisors at Bhuvneshwar in February 11, 2011 where the all the partners met and shared the results, constraints faced and lessons learnt during the project implementation. It was a huge opportunity to learn from each other’s experiences and replicating in the concerned areas of implementing organisation.
f) Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the project two ‘Model RTI <i>Gram Panchayats</i>’ are proposed and these MRGPs are now different from other <i>Gram Panchayat</i>’s in terms of transparency, awareness of RTI Act, bribe taking and other forms of corruption as a result of rigorous intervention under the project. • As a result of mass mobilisation and RTI awareness programme, around 20 RTI evening classes in both the MRGPs were organised in which around 1100 villagers participated. Therefore, awareness level on RTI has definitely gone up multifold as against 02 percent before intervention. • Around 90 people filed RTI applications in these two MRGPs targeting some issue of corruption/demanding bribes in select schemes so rate of using RTI as a tool increased. • All the PRI members of these <i>Gram Panchayats</i> were also trained about RTI and response capacity of <i>Gram Panchayat</i> officials was enhanced by this and as result of this acceptance of RTI applications, maintaining a separate

	<p>register for receiving RTI was started and more importantly duration of replying these RTI has substantially come down in both the MRGPs. Proactive disclosure of information has increased as some official orders and wall writings about RTI Act can be seen at notice board/<i>Gram Panchayat</i> walls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though such research has not been done but it can be inferred that after rigorous RTI awareness and mobilisation of local community, proactive people and service providers, mind set of these people and service providers has been transformed from negative and non-cooperative to positive and cooperative in terms of participation in <i>Gram Panchayat</i> meetings and attending grievance of people.
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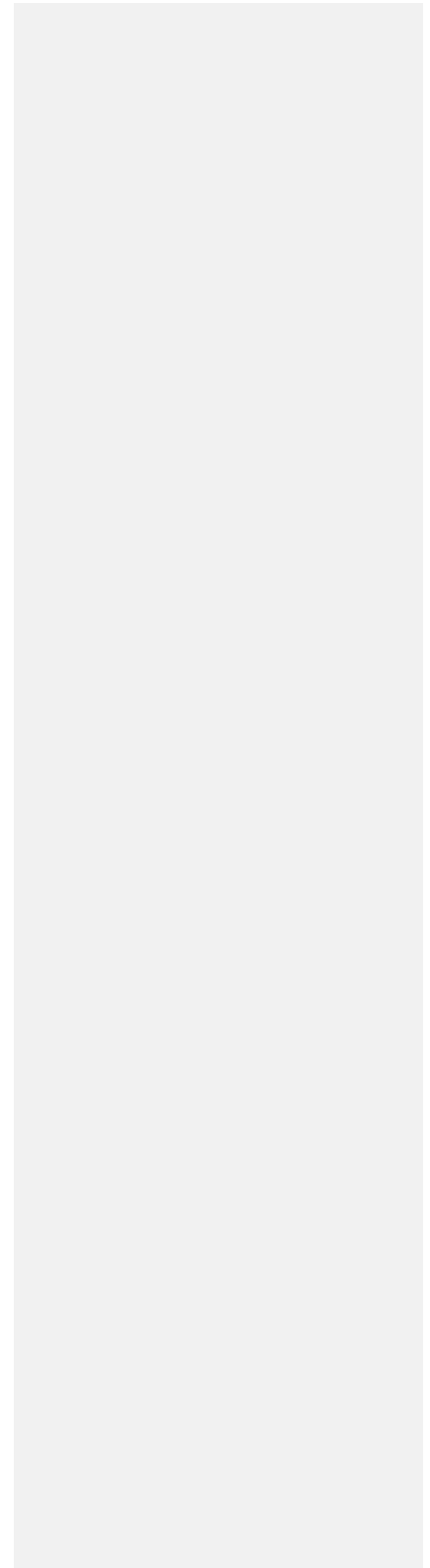
8. Major Learning

<p>a) Constructive engagement – Working with government and other stakeholders like media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of officials and political leaders are supportive of such initiatives taken under various projects but their motivation has to be maintained during the intervention. • Media people are very much supportive of such initiatives against corruption and play a good role in giving wider coverage to the initiatives and issues.
<p>b) Community mobilisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community mobilisation is a very important activity that results in awareness and action lead by them. For community mobilisation some local community facilitator has to be always there among them so that he/she can watch all the concerned things and acts appropriately.
<p>c) Peer learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer learning widens the scope of experience sharing and provided the opportunity to learn the best practices. It is always good to be part of such peer learning programmes. • Concrete examples of new learnings?
<p>d) Knowledge generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with community/government on issue of corruption opens opportunity for huge learning regarding all the aspects, factors, policies and tools/approaches and instruments to combat this problem etc. • One side gaining the practical experience at ground and on the other side participating in workshops/peer learning events where this experience can be shared and expressed and by this way knowledge is strengthened. • What about institutionalising the knowledge and disseminating it? Newsletter, website, case studies with photos.,

e) Documentat ion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentation of outputs, outcome and impact created is extremely important which helps in showcasing produced results, keeping this fact in mind; project outputs/outcomes, case studies, success stories were documented to share with wider stakeholders for replication.
f) Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a network of CSOs/NGOs and proactive citizens is also an activity, which needs lot of efforts, but if once it is formed and become active then it widens and deepens the effort involving many stakeholders. During this intervention, project team learnt how to make an active and vibrant network of stakeholders against corruption.



<p><i>Difficulties faced: -</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the service providers either stay away from the discussions on public platforms. Such cooperative officials and public representatives shall be pursued and motivated through inviting them in other programmes of their interest where they can get opportunity to meet with ministers or international experts/professionals. • The problem of frequent transfer of bureaucrats and other service providers break the rhythm of project progress but provide opportunity to replicate the model at new place where the official has to be transferred. • The lengthy election process of <i>Panchayati Raj</i> Institutions also created problems in advocacy, dialogue process and ensuring participation of service providers in few block <i>Chaupals</i> and exposure visit to Kerala. • Advocacy with government regarding reforming the corrupt process was very difficult but the top-down approach of advocacy and involvement of state Rural Development minister also motivated down the line officials to take some actions and behave responsibly. • Most of the NGOs are small budget turnover and heavily depend on government's small grants so it is difficult to talk against corrupt officials whom they are dealing with. • Completing all the project activities within the stipulated time. • Tracking success of all the RTI applicants was a challenge. • Setting up a Model RTI <i>Gram Panchayat</i> in terms of fully transparent, accountable and corruption freeness is difficult. • Getting feedback from government officials and most of the RTI applicants about the extended help by CGCCs was a bit difficult.
<p><i>Successes met: -</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of community is essential for the point of view of sustainability as well as owning the project's goals. • Dialogue with concerned state minister/bureaucrats and service providers who are willing to bring some change. • Internal monitoring system of the project activities has to be inbuilt in the organisation and project so that project goals can be achieved.



<p><i>Operational issues with other stakeholders like government, community, Panchayat/ municipality etc.:-</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government: State government always says that they are trying hard to bring good governance by motivating NGOs to do so. Higher level officials talk in good terms but lower level service providers never favour the move of ensuring corruption free service delivery of selected schemes. • Panchayats: The elected PRI representatives are bigger disappointment than government officials and they are not ready to works against corruption.
<p><i>Explain where and how your experiences can be replicated:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CGCC model can be replicated where public participation has to be ensured and a network formed against corruption. This can be done through selecting proactive CSOs, people and citizens and building their capacity to work as a local resource agency for providing help to general masses and act as a watchdog against corrupt officials and system. • The Model RTI <i>Gram Panchayat</i> experience can also be replicated and this can be done through wider community mobilisation, identifying the areas of corruption in <i>Gram Panchayat</i>, sensitisation of service providers for the corruption-free system and enhancing their response capacity.

9. Constructive engagement:

Please include instances of useful interactions and constructive engagements with other stakeholders (government officials, media, CSOs, NGOs including other CAC partners etc.) and how they have helped

The Rural Development Minister of Rajasthan government was very cooperative throughout the project period and always available for discussions and ensured the things to happen on ground. The Director of IAY, RP Chaudhary and Director of SGSY Pankaj Agrawal were extremely useful and cooperative in terms of participating in project meetings and dialogue events.

Throughout the project period, *Gram Sachivs* of both the MRGPs (Suraj Bhan Giri and Vikar Ahmad) and *Sarpanch* (Bajarang Lal Pareek and Ram Gopal Meena) were highly cooperative including their ward members. They worked as project partner. One SDO of Niwai block Kailash Narayan Meena and Chief Executive Officer of Jaipur *Zila Parisad* Nishkam Diwakar were also very supportive throughout the project period.

Last but not least, all 34 CGCCs who belong to various small NGOs, were real actors of this intervention in all the blocks and both the districts.

10. Community Organisation:

Community Organisations Developed or Supported through this Project:

Please list and comment on quality of CBO contribution to the objectives of CAC

The contribution of CBOs/NGOs has been very crucial as well as effective in this intervention and remarkable in terms of community mobilisation, sensitising the community against the issue of corruption in governments and benefits meant for the poor. They helped in identifying the areas of corruption etc. Under this project, a network of 34 CSOs/NGOs was formed and made active up the extent that they can contact and share their experience with each other. They are sustainable in the sense that they have inbuilt this work agenda in their organisation's mission work and will carry forward till organisation is functional.

11. Peer learning:

Please comment on the peer learning experiences in terms of your organisation under review and you reviewing other organisations and comment on the quality of such exercise and contribution to success of CAC project

The experience of such peer learning visits is always good if things are clear to visitors that what good things are their in the proposal which can learnt whole visiting the interventional area but it shall be the burden of the host organization to make clear that which model piece of work/approach/innovation can be learnt during such visits. Peer review always provides an opportunity to a wider exposure bilaterally and learns with each other, which ultimately contributes towards the success of the project.

12. Project Sustainability

Technical:

- *What measures have been taken to ensure sustainability of project processes like knowledge generation, constructive engagement and community empowerment adopted in the project?*

The sustainability of knowledge generated among the CGCCs, RTI Applicants, and CSOs/NGOs who ere trained under the project is very much there. These people are trained in a practical manner so they cannot forget lifelong and since they are in touch with other CBOs so this message will go in to that second layer and further deep.

Constructive engagement: The sustainability of this activity is a big challenge. Some strategy will have to be evolved for this in coming future.

Community empowerment: This is the activity, which gained most success during the project period as a result of knowledge generation about RTI, issue of corruption and its consequences. Community was also educated about the

	<p>areas of corruption in form of bribe, cutting the share of benefit from grants, poor quality of construction and service etc. So as result of this project These common people are capable enough to deal with incidences of demanding bribe for delivering any service of benefit of any government scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What plans for upcoming initiatives to ensure sustainability of project outcomes?</i> <p>All the project activities are almost over and only few activities are left. In upcoming activities evaluation of impact was done through survey and FGDs and a Model Framework of Replication (RTI Toolkit) was developed. So in terms of these activities aspect of sustainability does not play any role.</p>
Social:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How much ownership does the community have of the process?</i> <p>Community understands the issue in a much better way now and about use of RTI as well so they are not only cooperating with CGCC members but consider as their leader in this regard. Community people themselves are suggesting to their fellows about saying no to bribe and using RTI as a tool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How far the community is independent in dealing with the corruption issues on their own?</i> <p>Since community is having knowledge, required tools and motivation for taking up this issue and using RTI as tool own its own sp it can be said that in the interventional areas community people who participated in some project activities and received training are capable to do their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How far the community can independently organize the road shows or protests for their rights and curbing corruption?</i> <p>Organizing the road shows and protests are not the tools used by CUTS CART during the project implementation so this question is not applicable for us</p>
Institutional:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the organizational plans to continue the project on your own?</i> <p>As such organization is in principal agreed to continue few of the activities like running a RTI Advisory and Information Centre at CUTS CART office and integrating access to information with other projects at proposal stage itself so these project activities will remain sustainable. Organization has already decided to work on good governance more intensively and rigorously with result based management (RBM) approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How far the CBOs formed/ strengthened can work on their own?</i> <p>CGCCs formed and CBOs trained under the project are sustainable enough in terms of knowledge, courage to fight against corruption and working in networking mode to help each other. So during the project period itself these people have proved that they can work independently in their field areas with the issue of corruption using RTI and this network of CGCCs as a tool</p>
Financial:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the community financially contribute to the project?</i> <p>As such communities are not contributing towards project activities but NGOs/CBOs have inbuilt this issue in their areas of work and hopefully</p>

<p>work in future as well among community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How much financial support can your Organization mobilize on its own from other donors?</i> <p>It is very difficult to make any comment but it is sure that Organization has that capacity that if donors are their it can proposed for widening and deepening the experience anywhere in south Asian region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have any other donors expressed interest in supporting such initiatives?</i> <p>No</p>
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13. Self-Assessment of Project Progress:

<p><i>Project team's capacity and contributions;</i></p> <p>Team was good in terms of knowledge, communication skills, rapport building, extensive field visits and networking and all these qualities contributed towards achieving the project outcomes and goal.</p> <p><i>Community involvement and support; any significant impact seen</i></p> <p>Community involvement was good during the project period in terms of participating in the activities, using RTI as tool, raising the issue in front of service providers; filing RTI applications on areas of corruption in selected schemes.</p> <p><i>External factors affecting project success – positively or negatively for the past one year</i></p> <p>Attitude of policy makers and bureaucrats in general towards initiatives against corruption. Frequent transfers of service providers slowed down the progress of outcomes and it was difficult for team to orient the new officials about the project activities and sensitise them.</p>

14. Financial progress:

Expenditure statement May 2009 to Feb.2011

Item	Total Budget (12 Months)	Budget Extension	Total Budget	Total Expenses
	1	2	1+2	1+2
I. Personnel Costs [No .X Months X Salary per Month X Time]	516,000	64,000	580,000	564,773
1.1 Project Coordinator [1 X 12 X 18,000 X 100%]	216,000	36,000	252,000	252,000
1.2 Assistant Project Coordinator [1 X 12 X 12,000 X 75%]	108,000	18,000	126,000	126,000
1.3 Support Staff [1 X 12 X 10,000 X 50%]	60,000	10,000	70,000	70,000
1.4 CGCC members [40 X 11 X 300 X 100%]	132,000		132,000	116,773
II Programme Cost	982,000	112,000	1,094,000	1,028,005

2.1 Setting up & functioning of the RAIC at CUTS CART off.	40,000		40,000	40,000
2.2 Dialogue with Govt.& project Officials.	20,000		20,000	18,000
2.3 Selection of 35 Consortium of Groups Combating Corruption (CGCCs)	10,000		10,000	10,000
2.4 Two District Level CGCCs Orientation Programme.	100,000		100,000	98,062
2.5 Developing 'RTI Ground Realities (RGR) and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis' questionnaire and field testing	8,000	15,000	23,000	19,000
2.6 Administering 600 RGR and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis Survey	60,000	63,000	123,000	119,490
2.7 Consolidation of RGR and Corruption Vulnerability Analysis.	25,000	30,000	55,000	57,000
2.8 Organising 17 Block Level Chaupals (BLCs) (17x8, 000)	136,000		136,000	138,387
2.9 Filing 340 RTI application, analysis & Documentation	10,000		10,000	10,000
2.10 RTI Exposure Visit (REV)	65,000		65,000	77,588
2.11 Eight FGDs	40,000		40,000	25,532
2.12 Impact assessment	7,000	4,000	11,000	-
2.13 Developing two Model RTI Gram Panchayat (MRGP)*	200,000		200,000	154,614
2.14 Mid Term Dissemination cum advocacy Meeting	40,000		40,000	34,657
2.15 Networking & advocacy	20,000		20,000	18,000
2.16 State Level Advocacy Meeting (SLDM)	60,000		60,000	59,175
2.17 Development, finalization & distribution of the RTI Tool Kit	50,000		50,000	64,600
2.18 Submission of quarterly & final narrative reports with actual expenditure statements	6,000		6,000	5,000
2.19 Production of 4 issues of quarterly newsletters (In Hindi & English) [4X10, 000]	40,000		40,000	38,900
2.20 Monitoring and Evaluation (Internal)	35,000		35,000	30,000
2.21 Audit Fees	10,000		10,000	10,000
Total	1,498,000	176,000	1,674,000	1,592,778

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Overheads 5%	75,000	9,000	84,000	79,190
Grand Total	1,573,000	185,000	1,758,000	1,671,968
Received USD	26,000	4,000	30,000	
Received INR	1215268.45	185621.3	1,400,890	(271,078)

15. **Date of Report Submission**

February 21, 2011

16. **Name of persons preparing the report with e-mail contact**

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