Towards an Integrated Vision: Non-Governmental Community Efforts in Fighting Corruption

17th WGFACML Meeting
at Abu Dhabi, UAE

Experience sharing by:
The Supreme Audit Institution of India

Structure of the presentation

- Government as an enabler

- Context for civic participation

- Kinds of engagement

- Case studies

  ❖ Right to Information Act

  ❖ Social Audit

- SAI India partnership

Government as an enabler

- **Anti-corruption Institutions**
  - Central Vigilance Commission: Oversight on investigation agencies
  - Lokpal: Ombudsman to inquire complaints of corruption
- **Enabling Legislations**
  - Right to Information Act (2005) & The Whistle-blowers Protection Act (2011)
- **Measures for Transparency**
  - E-Governance https://dashboard.rural.nic.in/dashboardnew/home.aspx
  - Inviting public to embed data e.g. Meri Sadak app
- **Supreme Audit Institution of India**
  - Watchdog for accountability
  - Synergies in fighting corruption

Government as an enabler

- **Campaigns**: Vigilance Awareness Week and outreach

- **Citizen's charter:** Assuring standards of service, time-limits and grievance redressal

- **Right to Public service Act:** Mandates that covered services are clearly stated and must either be completed or denied (with explanation) within a specific timeframe Including a monetary fine on the responsible officer for failure.

    https://aaplesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in/en/CommonForm/RigthToServiceAct

- **Media:** Create public awareness as well as more active role

Communities' vigil: Eternal price of democracy

- Collective bargaining:
  - Bhagidari: Citizens groups, Resident Welfare Associations, Market & Traders Associations.
  - School Development and Monitoring Committees: Involving parents
  - Vigilance Committees on the Public Distribution System
  - Self Help Groups
- Community feedback:
  - Surveys e.g. State Transparency Report
  - Complaints monitored through portals:
    https://railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in/madad/final/home.jsp
  - Complaints on Social networks:
    https://x.com/VishalKOfficial/status/1707373411175977286?lang=en

Fighting corruption

Civil Society

- Create awareness, collate instances, publish reports, data
- Hold govt accountable: approach anti-corruption agencies, courts
- Lend voice to the marginalized
- Advocacy for systemic changes

Public

- Media
- Campaigns
- Whistleblowers
- Social Networks

NGOs & Varied means

- **Transparency**: e.g. Association for Democratic Reforms

  Filed a Public Interest Litigation with Supreme Court for mandatory disclosure on candidates contesting elections. Access at https://myneta.info.

- **Surveys**: e.g. Transparency International India

  Publishes India Corruption Survey

  Also advocates Integrity Pact in public procurement.

- **Pressure group**: e.g. Praja, a NGO working on Urban Governance

  Citizen Charter and Grievance Redressal Mechanism for the Municipal Corporation

   Report on Status of Civic Issues inMumbai.

Using Technology

- I Paid a Bribe:

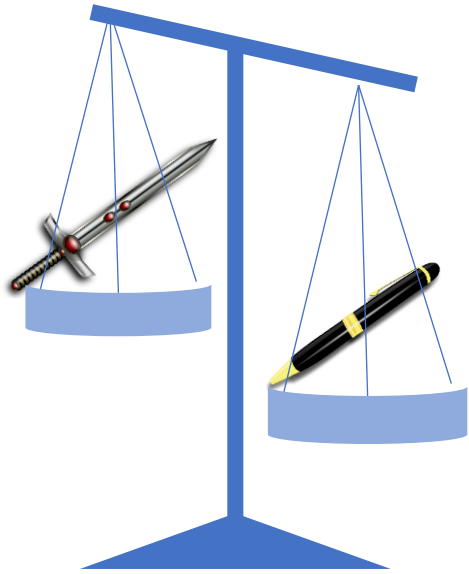 https://www.ipaidabribe.com/add-report?report-type=paid-bribe-type#gsc.tab=0

- 5th Pillar launched the 'Zero Rupee Note'.

Case Study 1: Right To Information Act

- Campaign by NGO started in 1996: legislated in 2005

- Asserts the citizen's right to know, not just once every five years, but every single day

- Slogans: 'hamara paisa, hamara hisaab'; 'hum janenge, hum jeeyenge'; 'Yeh desh hamare aap ka, nahin kisi ke baap ka'

- 5-8 million applications

- Preamble: WHEREAS democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold Governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed.

- Suo moto disclosures: Jan soochna portal
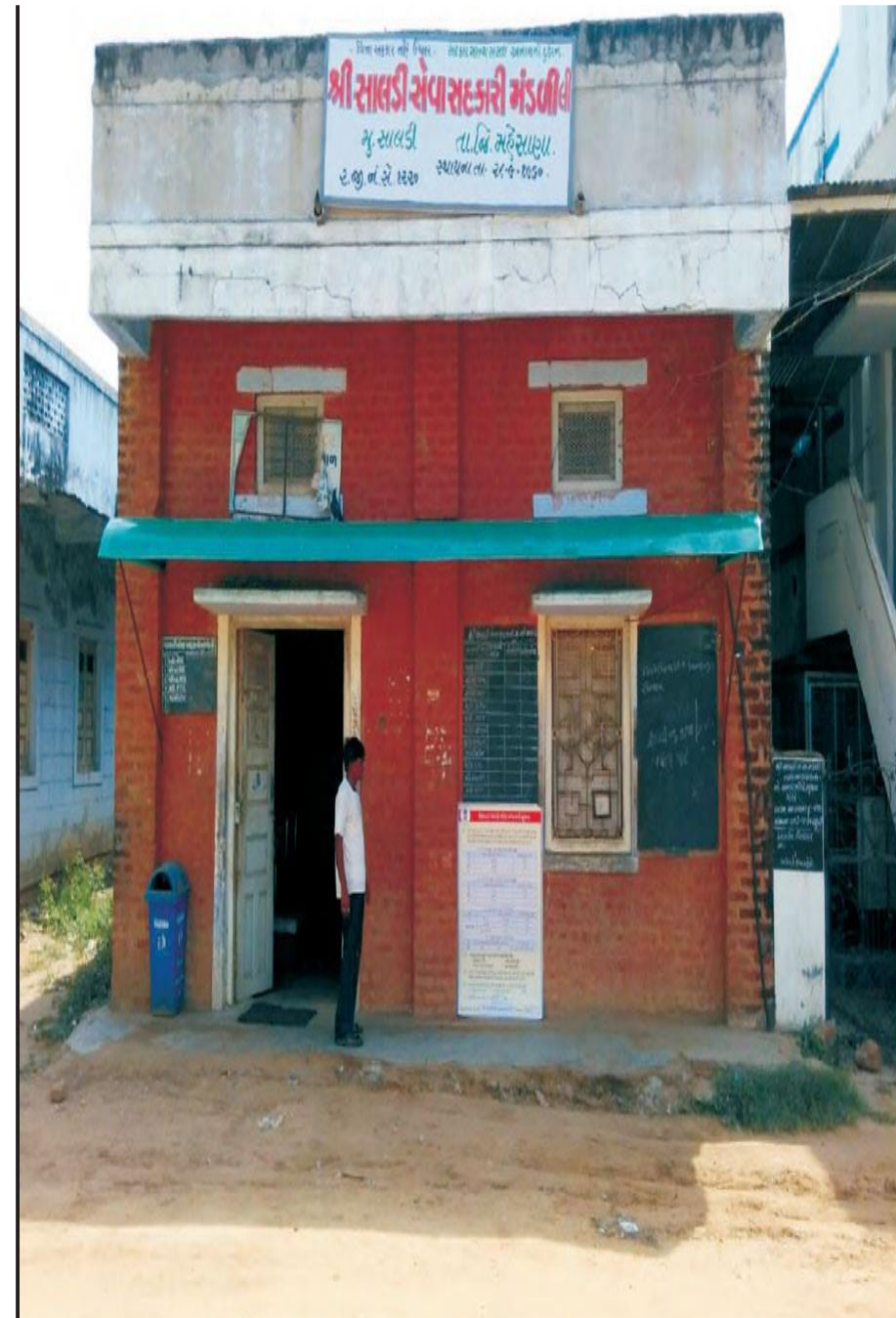https://jansoochna.rajasthan.gov.in/

RTI Act: Impact

- Bhadresh, a College student: on public distribution.

- 9/ 10 beneficiaries didn't receive the foodgrains and the shopkeeper blamed non-receipt of supply

- Through RTI application from the Tehsildar of Lilia, he found that stock was received and shown on records to have been distributed

- Action against the shopkeeper and a systemic change whereby all shopkeepers are to disclose stock and distribution details on the walls of their fair price shops.
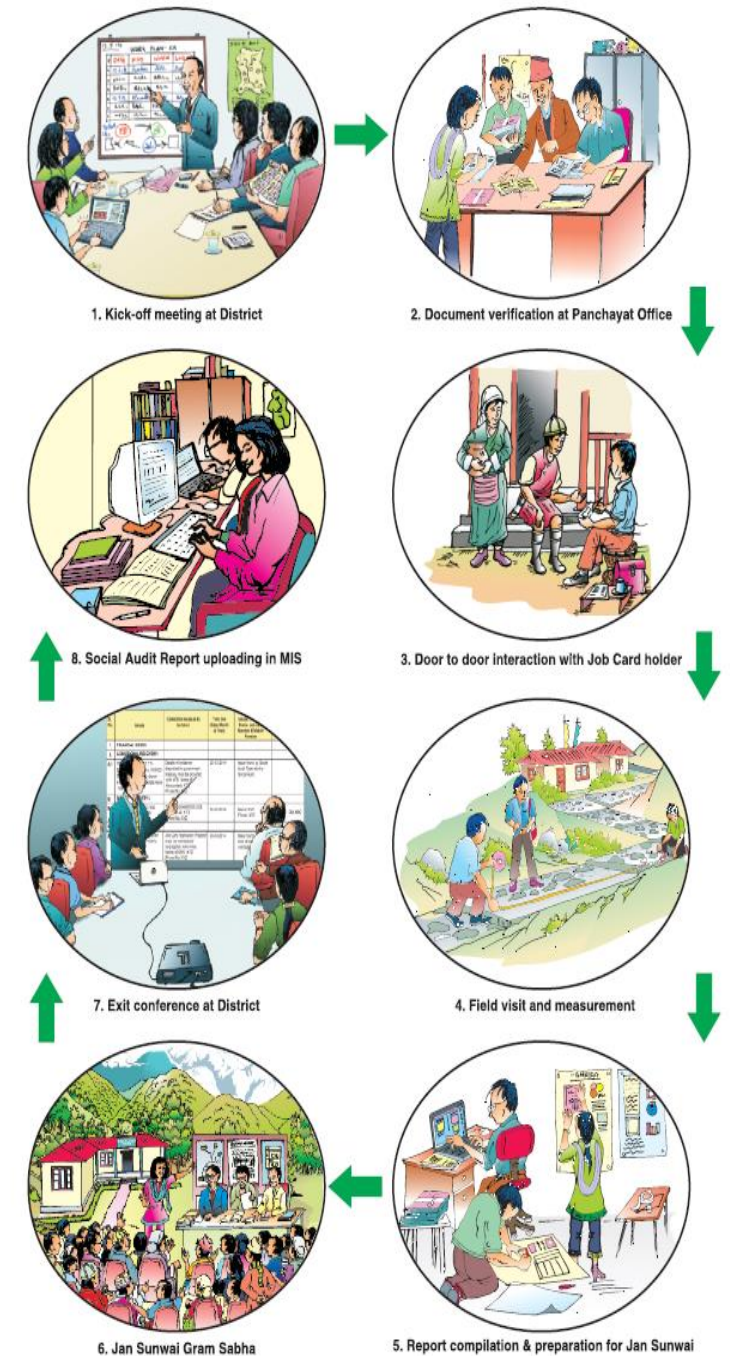
Success-stories:

https://rti.gov.in/rticorner/studybypwc/progress_made.pdf

Case study 2 : Social Audit

- Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)'s campaign
- An Act establishing rights-based employment guarantee (MNREGA) also gives legal mandate for Social audit: SAU identify and train volunteers as village social auditors for GP level
- Follow-up of recoveries, punitive action
- Embedded in schemes in India: Housing, Social Security, livelihood, Food security, Education, Health etc.
- Hand-holding by MKSS in S. Africa and Kenya
- Principles:
  - ➢ Platform for citizens as auditors
  - ➢ De-mystifying official records
  - ➢ Public hearing: transparency & monitoring

1. Kick-off meeting at District
2. Document verification at Panchayat Office
8. Social Audit Report uploading in MIS
3. Door to door interaction with Job Card holder
7. Exit conference at District
4. Field visit and measurement
6. Jan Sunwai Gram Sabha
5. Report compilation & preparation for Jan Sunwai

Social Audit: Impact

- Muslims for Human Rights undertook social audit of constituency development fund in Kenya: MP, Changamwe facilitated sharing

- Volunteers examined records; physical verification and then public hearing:

  - Market centre constructed using CDF funds: material from old market used but records showed new materials; of poorer quality than in records

  - Residents contributed to a high school which was later constructed using CDF funds, but no account of their collections

  - "What do you want?" said an artist;

    "twataka pesa zetu", said the people (We want our money)

Harnessing Non-governmental efforts at SAI India

- Complaints: considered in the desk review before taking up an audit

- Audit Advisory Board: drawn from across society

- Works closely with other Law-enforcement agencies:

   e.g. Lokpal sought CAG's comments on an Investigation Report on audited accounts of two Public Sector undertakings.

- Synergy with social audit:

  ✓ The CAG of India's performance audit of Social Audit Units: 2014-15

  ✓ Task Force set up with CAG representation: Auditing Standards for Social Audit, 2016

  ✓ Joint Task Force 2023: Terms of Reference include Revision of Social Audit standards, and measures for follow-up on Social Audit findings and reporting to legislature.