

Institutionalising Social Audits

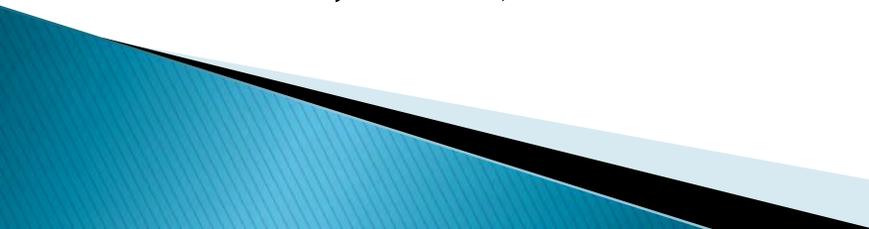
Learning from the Field

Presentation by SNPUPR

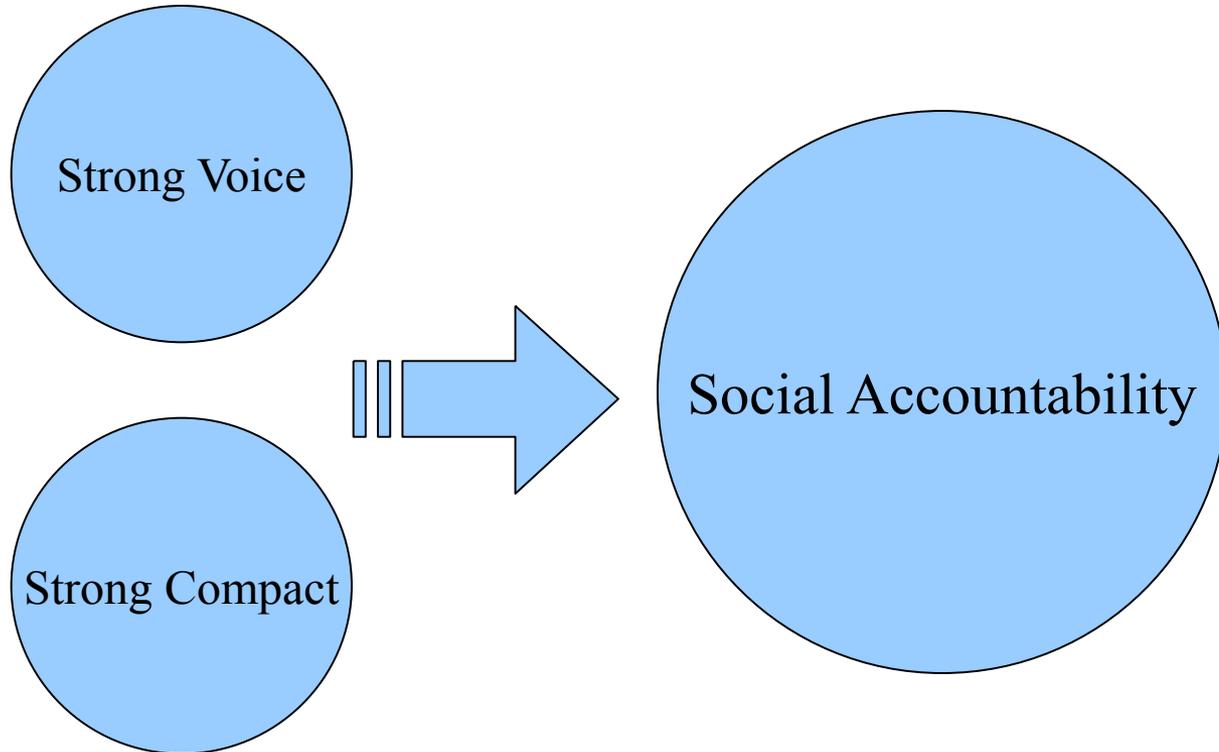
Audits: functions and limitations

- What is an Audit?
 - compliance with standards and norms, regulating relationships between institutions, measuring performance, reforming essential services and public service delivery.
- Limitations of Audits?
 - 'dead ends in chain of accountability' (Day and Klein, 1987); not meant to provoke or invite dialogue (Power, 1997)
- Social Audits can overcome limitations of traditional audits and regulatory bodies, such as those done by CAG, TRAI etc.

Potential of Social Audits

- Creates public dialogue and scrutiny; and raises questions of inclusion (Bhatty, 2006)
 - Furthers collective action through social networks (Bates, 1994)
 - Makes delivery of public programmes effective (Aakella and Kidambi, 2007)
 - Serve critical educational purpose in the exercise of democracy (Mukhopadhyay, 1996)
 - Arrests surveillance and inspection (Day and Klein, 1990)
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What is a Social Audit?



* From World Development Report, 2004 titled “Making Services Work for the Poor”

Lessons from the Field

Key Findings and Observations on
Use of Social Audits in Urban
Housing Projects

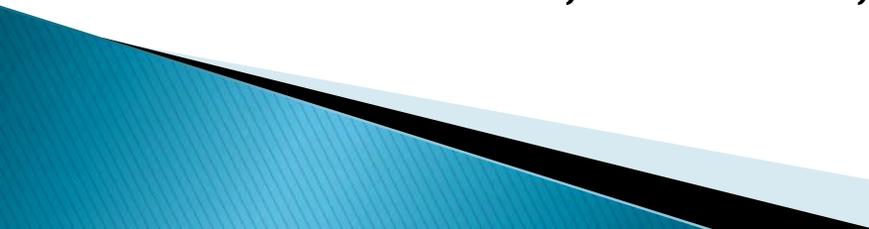


Learning from the Field

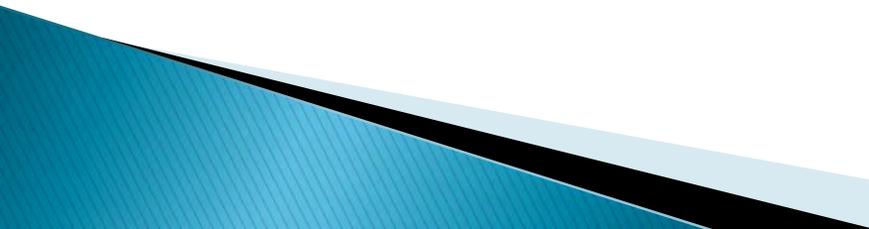
Social Audits and Urban Housing

- Social Audit Pilots undertaken by MoHUPA, Government of India
- In Phase 1, Social Audits were piloted in Ganj Basoda and Vijaywada for developing toolkits and manuals
- In Phase 2, Social Audits piloted in Agra, Ambala, Bhopal, Chandigarh and Rajkot for developing appropriate methods and guidelines.

Details of projects under Pilot Social Audits

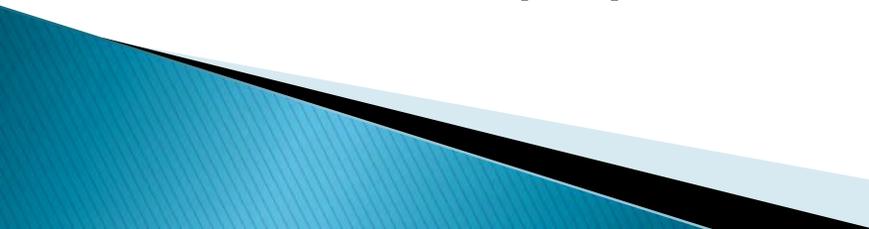
- ▶ Relocation of Flood Affected Slum dwellers under BSUP, Rajkot
 - ▶ IHSDP Projects for Housing the Poor, Ambala
 - ▶ BSUP, Projects for Housing the Poor, Agra
 - ▶ BSUP Housing in Shabri Nagar (redevelopment of Kotra Haat market with Shabri Nagar) and Madrasi colony (in situ)P Projects for Housing the Poor , Bhopal
 - ▶ Rehabilitation of 6368 Slum Families by Relocation, Phase I, Chandigarh
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Institutional Mechanisms

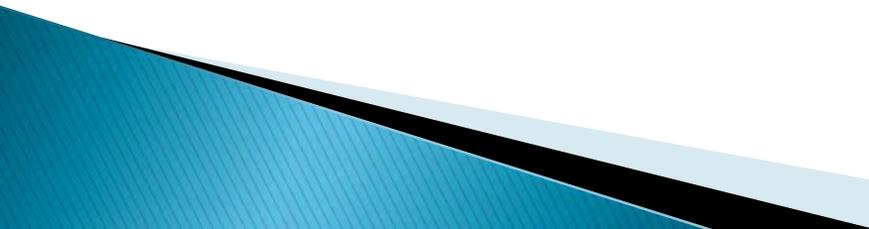
- NRC–NGO identified for each city
 - NRC–NGO formed and trained Social Audit Committees (SAC) for conducting social audits
 - After data collected, public hearings were organised
 - Follow up action in the form of letters to Principal Secretary, Local Authorities etc. and presentation in front of Addl Secretary, MoHUPA, Govt. of India
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Social Audit Process

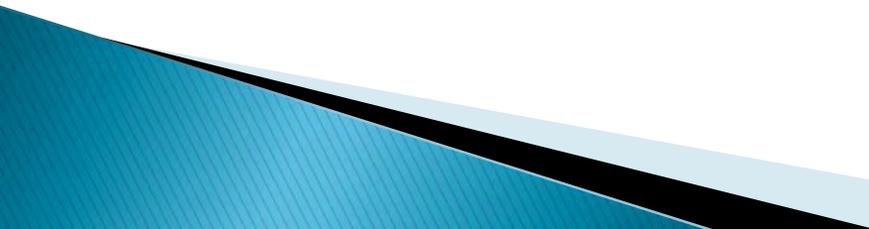
Issues and Concerns

- Anecdotal evidence (except in Bhopal where the *shikayat peti*, public scrutiny of records, and display of extensive project based information helped develop some gross estimates of extent of each complaint)
 - Need for greater rigor while mapping exclusion and inclusion
 - Community Meetings are not the best way of collecting all kinds of data on all issues: quick, but does it represent holistic or popular opinion (largely masculine, able-bodied, and focus on physical/harder components)
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Issues Identified by Social Audits

- Construction quality: Agra, Bhopal, Chandigarh
 - Access to essential services: Ambala (roads, W/S, sewerage); Agra (sewerage, solid waste), Bhopal (W/S, solid waste, sewerage), Chandigarh (street lights and drainage) and Rajkot (no electricity and W/S)
 - Other community-based services: Chandigarh (schools, public transportation) and Rajkot (schools and healthcare)
 - House design on account of regulatory and elevational controls: Chandigarh
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Issues Identified by Social Audits

- Exclusion and its gendered dimensions: Bhopal, Ambala, Agra and Chandigarh; but need to map it more rigorously
 - Corruption: Agra (payments without receipts), Ambala (wrong Inclusion) and Chandigarh (beneficiary contribution collection)
 - Transit accommodation is in-situ, incremental housing: additional costs/rent, living in the open etc.
 - Beneficiary contribution: Bhopal, Chandigarh and Rajkot
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Some (more) Issues

- Public Scrutiny and support to community is essential at various stages of project implementation (particularly beneficiary selection and building construction)
- Provisions for project-related information (good example is Bhopal where DPR information is prominently displayed)
- Moving from housing (~noun) to housing (~verb): thus including questions of home-based livelihoods, enhancing access to community-based services. Social Audits can help map this demand and create dialogue

Auditing the Social Audit Process



Social Audit Committees

Role and Experiences

- In Rajkot, invited RMC Chief Engineer and Deputy Commissioner as government nominated members of SAC, but this delayed implementation considerably: also repercussions on autonomy, community voice need to be considered; positive side is ownership at the initial stage itself
- Composition of SAC: Who? Typically the well-educated, articulate, better networked, with political affiliations: helps the process but do all voices find a space?
- However, the need to engage local authorities' officials remains in more constructive ways remains

Participation and Representation

Experiences from Public Hearings

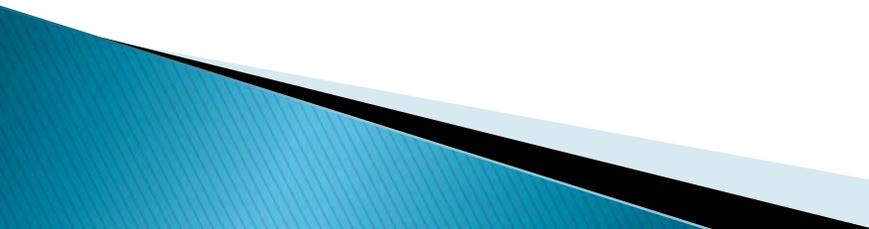
- Where?
 - At the housing site (Bhopal); In the Municipal Corporation precincts (Agra, Ambala and Rajkot); and at a common neutral site (Chandigarh)
 - Implications?
 - At the site, verification is easiest, thus people can make their concerns clear and help officials understand the gravity of their concerns; force of numbers on their side. Daily wage workers, women, youth and aged are able to participate in larger numbers.
 - In corporation offices, dimensions of power at play, thus, people are unable to speak without fear
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Response of Local Authorities

Crisis of Legitimacy

- In some cities, the officials were co-operative, made prior reports available, agreed to discuss, made responses to people's issues, while seniors officials did not attend. In some places, officials were not so co-operative.
- Thus, need for sensitising officials to Social Accountability and embedding it into the imagination of public policy and programmes remains

Action, post-Social Audits?

- From Phase 1 pilots (Ganj Basoda and Vijaywada), little follow-up in Ganj Basoda, construction is still underway and considerable confusion over allotment and related process.
 - In Vijaywada, some repair of common areas has been completed. Residents Associations have been formed for communities to undertake minor repair and maintenance work. Repayment and collection issues persist.
 - Responsibilities transferred to resident communities, but need for more institutionalised support from Municipal Corporations, other public authorities remains.
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Action, post-Social Audits?

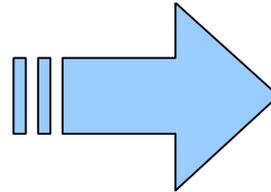
(phase 2)

- In Agra, CURE's presence in the field has helped sustain follow up
 - In Ambala, the SAC members have been asked to follow up
 - In Bhopal, local NGO has agreed to continue with the follow up; findings sent to Secretary for further action
 - In Chandigarh, PRIA needs to plot future course of action, though a local partner exists, and a CBO has emerged in Sector 49
 - Thus, need for institutionalising mechanisms for action
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Quick Assessment

Voice created,
but questions
of
representation,
exclusion,
legitimacy and
follow up
remain

Strong
Voice



Social Accountability

Compact needs to
be created and
strengthened, by
integrating
findings and
action into public
policy and
programme

Scaling up and Institutionalisation of Social Audits

Some Recommendations



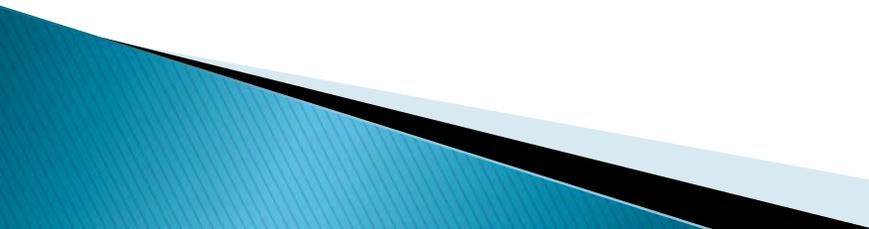
Scope of Social Audits

- Social Audits can be conducted for all themes and all development projects: livelihood, urban housing, essential services etc.
 - Need for developing appropriate methodologies: must be participatory and inclusive, should not threaten local authorities but involve them in during the later stages of public hearing and grievance redressal.
 - Social Audits help evaluate the performance and outcomes of development programmes by giving poor communities 'voice
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Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- Social Audit, its objectives and outcomes, should match the status and stage of project implementation and management
 - It must not be a one-off event and should be conducted periodically
 - There is a need for developing clear focus for each Social Audit: one audit cannot reveal everything, and solve everything
 - Wider institutional linkages are required: with academia, local authorities, local NGOs, NRCs and concerned departments at state and centre.
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Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- Create and further strengthen Voice:
 - Make beneficiary and allotments lists publicly available and open for scrutiny (though available, no one had seen these in the past)
 - Improving access to right information
 - Identify social fissures, recognise that communities are not homogenous
 - Ensure that the excluded are well represented, and that they have adequate space to present (build their capabilities to participate in public action)
 - Make every effort to encourage people to speak
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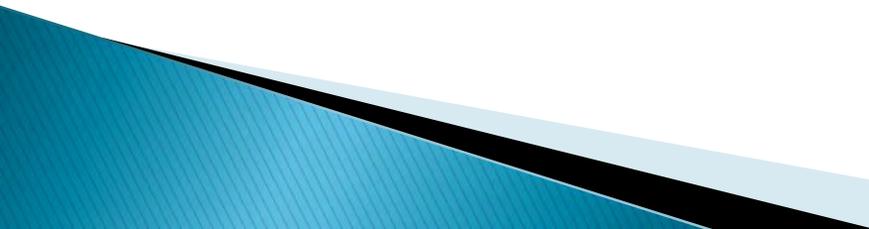
Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- Create Compact:
 - Develop guidelines for follow up (present summary reports to communities and officials, build capacities of selected SAC members but ensure access for all, in case of grievances)
 - Institutionalise complaints records and redressal (from offline at the community/local level to online at central level)
 - Engage communities through RWA and CBO for maintenance and dialogue with authorities

Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- Strengthening Methodologies for Social Audits
 - Strengthen methodologies for mapping exclusion and identifying wrongful inclusion (thus, tackling corruption)
 - Moving beyond community meetings for more rigorous data collection
 - To the extent possible, conduct Public Hearings with and within the community
 - Ensure (re)presentation by the most marginalised, often the poorest among poor
 - Allow for physical verification of complaints
 - Ensure spontaneity and display of emotion, thus honest feedback

Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- ▶ Social audits must be conducted independently, but in close coordination with the government, particularly at the state and central levels.
 - ▶ The concerned independent facilitating agency should be appointed at the state level, and it must have a demonstrated record in conducting social audits in any sector.
 - ▶ An appropriate institutional structure should be developed in the State and Cities for conducting the social audits.
 - ▶ Depending on the stage of project implementation, different objectives/ends can be audited. The social audits should be designed such that they match the stage of project implementation.
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Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- ▶ They should be conducted concurrently, on a periodic basis, at least after every six months.
- ▶ The findings of the social audits must be integrated within the fold of the project monitoring unit. It provides quality feedback on the scope and outcomes of the programme, including suggestions for modifications within the existing programmes and policies, particularly for urban areas.

Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- Legitimising Social Audits:
 - weaving into urban public policy and programmes as part of design: guideline reform as part of CAG (2010)
 - Earmarking resources at the Centre (like 0.50-0.75% in MNREGS) and actors
 - Unlike Gram Sabha in rural areas, no institutionalised dialogue forum in urban areas, thus legislative reform is necessary (longer run)
 - Sensitising senior officials on Social Accountability through regional workshops
 - Sustained dialogue and consultation at all levels (including auditing the Social Audits)

Recommendations for Institutionalisation

- Social Audits have transformative potential, in that:
 - It generates auto-critiques, from the ground: therefore, should be linked to central monitoring units (even provides for what third-party appraisals and expert reports don't say)
 - Provide co-ordinates for future policy and programme planning
 - It helps the poor negotiate with the State in an open, dialogical space, thus creating Voice
 - Bridges participation and accountability; thus works with strengths of each for transformation

MoHUPA's follow up Actions after the Social Audit

- ▶ Issued Advisory to states and cities where the social audit was conducted.
 - ▶ City reports have been shared with cities.
 - ▶ Revised Toolkits and Guidelines in line of the the pilots of 5 cities and disseminated the same to the states. Awaiting comments from them on institutional structure proposed therein.
 - ▶ These have been put on the website of MOHUPA
 - ▶ 0.5% of total ACA under RAY has been allocated for the conduct of social audits and Concurrent Evaluations.
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Thank You

