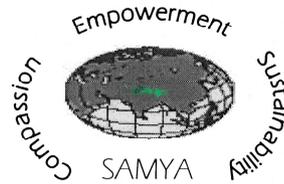


# SOCIAL AUDIT A PEOPLES MANUAL



Prepared by  
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Sponsored by  
**National Institute of Rural Development**



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Centre for Equity Studies

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## INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to help officials and representatives of people's organisations and movements, who want to facilitate the process of social audit. The manual describes the characteristics of a social audit and the method of conducting a social audit, both for specific schemes and for policies and programmes. It also describes the relationship between the Right to Information Act and social audits and includes details of a possible training module on social audits. The manual also contains examples of how these general principles of social auditing can be applied to various programmes and schemes, specifically the activities under the National Rural Employment Act, and the Rural Roads Programme (PMGSY) and the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

The preparation of this manual was sponsored by the National Institute of Rural Development and interactions with NIRD experts, especially Shri Lalit Mathur, former Director General, and Prof. Rajkutty, have been particularly useful.

This manual has evolved over the last year or so and has been "tested" in various social auditing exercises conducted by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan and the Centre for Equity Studies, including those held in Dungarpur, Udaipur, and Ranchi.

Many people have contributed to this manual. These include Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, Gireesh Bhugra, Harsh Mander, Vishaish Uppal, Suchi Pande, and Neeraj Kumar.

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# 1. SOCIAL AUDIT

## 1. What is a social audit?

A social audit is a process by which the people, the final beneficiaries of any scheme, programme, policy or law, are empowered to audit such schemes, programmes, policies and laws. A social audit is an ongoing process by which the potential beneficiaries and other stakeholders of an activity or project are involved from the planning to the monitoring and evaluation of that activity or project. It thereby tries to ensure that the activity or project is designed and implemented in a manner that is most suited for the prevailing (local) conditions, appropriately reflects the priorities and preferences of those affected by it, and most effectively serves public interest.

## 2. What are the basic principles of a social audit?

The basic principles of social audit include:

- Complete transparency in the process of administration and decision-making, with an obligation on the government to *suo moto* give the people full access to all relevant information in an easily understandable form
- A right based entitlement for all the affected persons (and not just their representatives) to participate in the process of decision making and validation;
- In those rare cases where options are pre-determined out of necessity, the right of the affected persons to give informed consent, as a group or as individuals, as appropriate.
- Immediate and public answerability of elected representatives and government functionaries, to all the concerned and affected people, on relevant actions or inactions.

## 2. How is it related to other types of audits?

Broadly speaking, there are at least three types of audits. There are

- a. Government or institutional audits,
- b. Social audits, and
- c. People's audits.

Government or institutional audits are those that are conducted in-house or through external, professional, auditing institutions, and are ordinarily conducted without the significant involvement of the affected people and/or the intended beneficiaries.

Social audits are those that are conducted *jointly* by the government and the people, especially by those people who are affected by, or are the intended beneficiaries of, the activity being audited.

People's audits are those that are conducted by the people themselves, including those who are directly affected or are the intended beneficiaries, sometimes with the assistance of movements and NGOs, but invariably with the sincere effort to involve the concerned department or institution.

### **3. How is a social audit different to other types of audits?**

As government or institutional audits do not significantly involve the affected persons, or the intended beneficiaries, they end up at best assessing outputs rather than outcomes and are also not able to assess whether the decision making processes had the inputs and support of all the critical stakeholders. Such systems are also very corruptible, as those involved in the audit do not have a real stake in the outcome of the process that they are auditing.

Public audits do not have these problems, because they are usually conducted by the affected persons and/or the intended beneficiaries. However, the findings of a public audit might not be easily acceptable to the government and other implementing institutions as they are not intrinsically involved in the process of audit and, despite best efforts, might not participate. Besides, without the participation of the implementing departments/institutions, their side of the story does not get told.

On the other hand, social audits do not have a uniform approach and methodology and many local factors affect their efficacy. To conduct social audits a huge amount of public mobilisation is necessary and, in the absence of that, social audits might not be effective. They could also be affected by populism. Therefore, they are most effective when they are done in collaboration with the government.

#### **4. What would be the ideal option?**

Ideally, government or institutional audit would remain the basic auditing practice, but would become far more transparent and inclusive of affected persons and intended beneficiaries, incorporating and integrating some of the practices of social audits.

For a sample of activities, especially for those that involve distribution of disaggregated benefits at grassroots level, or very large investments, social audits would be conducted *in addition* to government or institutional audits. The findings of such social audits would be publicly compared to those of the government or institutional audits and correctives identified and incorporated in both. There would also be a public rendering of action taken.

Only where there was dissatisfaction among the public with one or both of these auditing processes would the public take the initiative of conducting a public audit. When this happens, the government or other implementing institutions would fully participate in the public audit, thereby making it comprehensive, and take on board the findings. The concerned institution would also come back to the public and report on the action taken on the findings.

#### **5. What is the scope of a Social Audit?**

Social audits are conducted not only on schemes and programmes but also on policies and laws and, indeed, on the functioning of a public agency. The task of auditing is relevant right from the stage when an issue or an approach is identified, through planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and audits are done not just of the decisions taken or the actions done (or not done), but also of the processes followed.

#### **6. How does one conduct a social audit of a policy/law?**

Whereas the process of conducting a social audit for policies and laws is not very different from that of conducting such an audit for specific schemes, as described a little later, obviously some of the questions asked and the issues discussed differ. Therefore, given below is a sample of generic questions that need to be raised, both about the process of formulation, and the outcome, of a policy or law.

**A Sample Set of Generic Questions Relating to the Social Audit of a Policy/Law**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Process questions</b>	<b>Outcome questions</b>
1. Identifying the issue.	Who all were involved in identifying the issue? Were they appropriately representative?	Has the correct issue been identified? (eg. Providing assured employment to rural populations; facilitating people's access to information; providing a humane process and package for resettling people displaced by development activities).
	Were they adequately and appropriately informed? (eg. Given clear and understandable documentation in local languages, with enough time for assimilation?)	Has the issue been formulated appropriately? (eg. Is employment formulated as a right? Has the right to information been recognised as a fundamental right with minimum exclusions? Has displacement been seen as the last possible resort?)
	Were the views of all the stakeholders given due importance?	Is it really the highest priority from among the various issues that could have been identified? (eg. NREGA, should the right to universal health or universal education be given a priority over this right?)
	Was the process appropriately transparent and participatory?	
2. Formulating the policy/law.	Who all were involved in formulating the policy/law? Were they appropriately representative?	Is the policy/law desirable? ( eg. NREGA, would this divert too many financial resources from other, more important issues, or would it make people dependent on government schemes?)

	Were they adequately and appropriately informed?	Does the policy/law protect all relevant interests, especially those of the weakest/least articulate? Is it just? (eg Rehab. Policy, does the policy protect the interests of project proponents, especially, does it protect the interests of the landless, the widows, and the host communities?)
	Were the views of all the stakeholders given due importance?	Is it implementable in part or whole? (eg. RTI Act, will it work if the information commissions are manned by bureaucrats? Eg. Rehab. Policy, would the rehab. policy work if there is no independent rehab. Commission?)
	Was the process appropriately transparent?  Was there feedback?	
3. Implementing the policy/law.	Who is implementing the policy/law? Are these individuals/institutions appropriate?	Is the policy/law having the intended impact? (eg. For RTI, is it leading to greater empowerment of the people and lessened corruption and mal-governance?)
	Is it being implemented in an appropriate manner?	If not, why not?
	Are all the resources required available and the individual and institutional capacities in position?	Is it having any unintended and undesirable effects? (eg. For RTI, is it leading to paralysis in government functioning, or delays in decision making?)
	Is the implementation appropriately transparent?	If so, why? How can this be prevented?

## 7. What is involved in conducting a social audit for a scheme/programme?

A social audit is conducted over the life span of a scheme or programme, and not just in one go or at one stage. The activities that constitute a social audit include:

- a. Making people aware of their rights, entitlements and obligations under the scheme/programme.
- b. Specifically, making them aware of their right to participate in the ongoing process of social audit.

- c. Making sure that all the forms and documents are in simple, easily understandable, language and structure and available in local languages.
- d. Also ensuring that all relevant information is publicly displayed on boards and through posters and is also read out at appropriate times for the convenience of the people, especially those who cannot read.
- e. Ensuring that the decision making process, especially for those decisions that are critical and/or vulnerable to distortions, is transparent and open and carried out, as far as possible, in the presence of the affected persons.
- f. Making certain that all decisions, along with reasons, as appropriate, are also communicated as soon as they are made to the affected people, and in manner that makes it easy for them to comprehend.
- g. Where there is a need for measuring, inspection or certification, ensuring that randomly selected individuals, from among the affected persons, are involved on a rotational basis.
- h. Also ensuring that members of the public and especially those directly affected, are facilitated to inspect and verify records, inspect works and generally monitor planning and implementation.
- i. Where required, to have a formal public hearing (*jan audit manch*) where pertinent information is put before the public and verified in consultation with the affected persons.
- j. Ensuring that the findings of the social audit process are acted upon as they become available and that apart from addressing the specific issues, systemic changes are also brought about.

## **8. How does one conduct a social audit of a scheme/programme?**

The process of conducting a social audit for specific schemes or programmes is described below, step by step, to help those from among the government and people's institutions who want to organise a social audit. The specific examples taken are from the NREGA. However, though the general structure will remain the same for all schemes and programmes, specific changes will need to be incorporated for each scheme in order to accommodate the unique characteristics of each scheme.

**Step 1:** Study the details of the scheme and familiarise oneself with all the provisions and requirements of the scheme and of the Right to Information Act.

**Step 2:** Identify the various stages of the scheme, especially those where decisions have to be made, beneficiaries identified, sites selected, strategies determined, details specified, etc. Given below is an example from the NREGA of identification of stages.

*For the NREGA, which provides employment as a right, the identification of stages can be best done in terms of the entitlements provided under the act. These are:*

1. *The entitlement to register one's family.*
2. *The entitlement to a job card.*
3. *The entitlement to apply for work.*
4. *The entitlement to participate in the process of preparation of shelf of projects/ selection of sites.*
5. *The entitlement to participate in the development & approval of technical estimates/issuance of work order.*
6. *The entitlement to get work allotted within fifteen days of applying for it.*
7. *The entitlement to participate in the supervision of works.*
8. *The entitlement to receive full wages for the work done, as per the prescribed rates.*
9. *The entitlement to receive unemployment allowance, if work is not allotted in the stipulated fifteen days.*
10. *The entitlement to be involved in the evaluation of the works undertaken under this act.*

**Step 3:** For each of these stages, identify the vulnerabilities, in terms of what can go wrong, what can be corrupted, what distortions can occur or what biases can creep in. Given below is an example of possible vulnerabilities from the NREGA. Detail methodology for conducting a social audit for activities under the NREGA are given in chapter 3. Similarly, details of how to integrate social auditing into the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) and the Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDP) are given in chapter 6 and 7 respectively.

<i>ENTITLEMENT</i>	<i>VULNERABILITIES</i>
<i>The entitlement to register one's family as Potential Beneficiaries In The Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Absence of the concerned functionary.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Denial of registration to persons applying to the scheme</i></li> <li>3. <i>Incomplete list of adults in each household</i></li> <li>4. <i>Registration of bogus families/individuals</i></li> <li>5. <i>Rejection of "incomplete" registration forms.</i></li> <li>6. <i>Asking for money for registering names/ families.</i></li> </ol>
<i>The entitlement to a job card</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Delay in receiving job cards</i></li> <li>2. <i>Issuance of false cards</i></li> <li>3. <i>Issuance of cards to ineligible persons</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>To non-residents</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p><i>b. To minors</i></p> <p><i>c. To those not members of the listed family</i></p> <p>4. <i>Non-issuance of a job card</i></p> <p>5. <i>Asking for money for issuing job card.</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to apply for work</i>	<p>1. <i>Non-acceptance of work application by the relevant functionary</i></p> <p>2. <i>The wrong date or no date recorded on the work application.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Rejection of “incomplete” forms</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to participate in the process of preparation of shelf of projects/ selection of sites to be taken up in a particular Ward Sabha and/or Gram sabha.</i>	<p>1. <i>Selection of a low priority or inappropriate work.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Selection of work that serves a vested interest.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Lack of public participation/ consultation for selecting work/sites.</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to participate in the development &amp; approval of technical estimates/issuance of work order</i>	<p>1. <i>Exaggerated/ inaccurate technical estimates.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Inclusion, in estimate, of unnecessary expenditure.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Excessive rates and material.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Unclear work order that does not make the details of the work clear/leaves scope for mis-interpretation.</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to get work allotted within fifteen days of applying for it</i>	<p>1. <i>Giving out-of-turn allotments.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Favouring or discriminating against people in allotting type/location of work.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Not respecting the gender quota.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Not informing the applicant and then showing him/her as absent.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Demanding money for allotting work</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to participate in the supervision of works.</i>	<p>1. <i>Recording of non-existent (ghost) workers.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Recording of fictitious (Ghost) works.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Work not conforming to work specifications/ prescribed standards</i></p> <p>4. <i>Supply of less than sanctioned/poor quality materials and tools.</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to receive full wages for the work done, as per the prescribed rates.</i>	<p>1. <i>Non-payment of wages</i></p> <p>2. <i>Late payment of wages.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Under payment of wages.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Payment of wages to the wrong person.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Payment of wages in the name of non-existent (Ghost) workers.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Payment of wages for non-existent projects.</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to receive unemployment allowance, if work is not allotted in the stipulated fifteen days</i>	<p>1. <i>Denial of unemployment allowance by wrongly accusing a person for not reporting to work</i></p> <p>2. <i>Late payment of unemployment allowance</i></p> <p>3. <i>Payment of unemployment allowance to the wrong person</i></p> <p>4. <i>Payment of unemployment allowance to non-existent (ghost) persons.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Demand of bribe for paying allowance.</i></p>
<i>The entitlement to be involved in the evaluation of the works</i>	<p>1. <i>Taking and/or recording of improper measurements</i></p> <p>2. <i>Not consolidating the information regarding the works in</i></p>

<i>undertaken under this act</i>	<i>one place.</i> 3. <i>Issuing of false completion certificates</i> 4. <i>Works not conforming to specifications/ standards.</i> 5. <i>Data recorded in a confusing/ Incomprehensible manner.</i>
<b>The entitlement to participate in a People’s Audit Meeting (Jan Audit Manch) , where all the projects and activities related to the NREGA are assessed and publicly verified.</b>	1. <i>No public hearing actually takes place, but is shown on paper to have taken place.</i> 2. <i>The public hearing is manipulated so that only those interested in one point of view are allowed to attend.</i> 3. <i>People are prevented from fully participating or from speaking the truth.</i> 4. <i>The hearing is disrupted by rowdy elements.</i>

**Step 4:** Identify, for each stage, the appropriate measures to be taken to ensure that the identified vulnerabilities are addressed through the relevant social audit mechanisms. These could include one or more of the measures listed at point 6 above and essentially includes making all relevant information available public, and in a form that is easily understandable, ensuring that critical decisions are made jointly with the affected people and in their presence, and that the process of verification, measurement and certification is done with the involvement of the affected people.

**Step 5:** Identify the functionaries and institutions that would be responsible for ensuring that the social audit is conducted, and conducted properly (see chapter 5 for allocation of responsibility in the NREGA).

**Step 6:** Call a meeting of the village/community and discuss the principles and method of social auditing in detail with them.

**Step 7:** Ensure that the identified institution and functionary complies with all the requirements of a social audit.

**Step 8:** Every six months, prepare for a public hearing or a Jan Audit Manch. In this manch, the affected persons collectively review the process of social audit. Also reviewed is the progress of the scheme. The reports and data related to the scheme are publicly verified and people are given an opportunity to discuss their problems with the implementing institutions, and understand their problems. A step by step guide to how a jan audit manch is to be carried out is given below, with examples of how they can be applied to various schemes and programmes in chapters 5, 6 and 7).

## **9. What is a Jan Audit Manch ?**

Apart from the ongoing process of social audit (described above), there should be a mandatory periodic review of all aspects of social audit in ward sabhas (where they exist) and in the Gram Sabha, meetings to be held at least once every six months for this purpose (to be called “Jan Audit Manch”). These will not only give people an opportunity to review compliance with the ongoing requirements of transparency and social audit for any scheme, programme or project, they will also serve as an institutional forum where people can conduct a detailed public audit of all the decisions that have been made and the work that has been carried out in their area in the preceding six months.

The importance of this platform is not only the independent value of publicly auditing a particular scheme or work, but also that it provides an opportunity to review the functioning of all the transparency provisions at various points in the implementation of the scheme or activity, with beneficiaries and all the stakeholders residing in the area. The social audit compliments the financial audit, and facilitates examination of various aspects of the scheme/project/activity by the people. This is beyond the scope of the financial audit. It provides an institutional platform for people to seek and obtain information, verify financial expenditure, examine the provision of services, assets or entitlements, the reflection of priorities through choices made, quality of work, and quality of services of the staff, etc. While the social audit must be seen as an ongoing process, the ward/gram sabha Jan audit manch is a crucial platform for ensuring peoples participation in all aspects of the audited entity.. Because of the requirement **to read information out aloud**, the manch facilitates the participation of people who don't have the literacy skills to understand documents. It is therefore mandatory that such social audits be conducted on a bi-annual basis, and that the concerned officers be made responsible for ensuring they take place.

## **10. How to conduct a Jan Audit Manch?**

The Jan Audit Manch has three phases: The preparatory phase, the organisational phase, and the implementation phase.

### **A. The Preparatory Phase**

The success of a social audit is dependent on the open and fearless participation of all the people- particularly the potential beneficiaries of the programme. Effective public

participation is dependent on adequate publicity about the meeting as well as informed public opinion, dependent on prior information provided to people in a demystified form.

### *Publicity*

It must be ensured that sufficient publicity be given to the date, time, importance and sanctity of the social audit, so that maximum participation is ensured. This must be facilitated through at least the following measures:

- People should be aware of the months when the Jan Audit Manch is to be held so that it becomes a regular event that people are aware of. The governments should issue instructions about the time of year when it is convenient for people to attend such meetings
- Announcement of the specific date, time and location of the Jan Audit Manch at least one month in advance.
- Use of traditional modes of publicity like informing people through beating of drums, and modern means like mike announcements.
- Notices on the notice board, in newspapers, and through pamphlets etc.
- Conducting these audits in a campaign mode so that the entire administration gears up to meet the institutional requirements of the manch, and the campaign encourages people to attend.

### *Preparation of Documents*

The full and efficient participation of people in the social audit manch is dependent on full information. This is not only facilitated through easy access to all documents and information while the scheme/activity/works are in progress, but preparing for the social audit by collating information and demystifying the information so that people can look at summaries of information before the social audit, and these summaries can be read out aloud during the Jan Audit Manch. In this connection it is essential that:

- All the relevant documents, including complete files of the works or copies of them be made available for inspection at the gram panchayat office at least fifteen days in advance of the jan audit. There should be free and easy access to all residents of the panchayat to these documents during this period, and no fees should be charged for inspection. During this period, if anyone wants copies of the

documents, they should be provided at cost price as soon as possible, but no later than five days of the request being made.

- Summaries of muster rolls and of Bills, where relevant, must be prepared (in a specially designed format) in advance for presentation in the Jan Audit. If possible, these summaries should be put onto charts for public display on the day of the jan audit, and to put up at the panchayat office during the fifteen day pre-audit phase
- The original files should be available on the day of the jan audit, so that any information can be cross checked
- The activities/works to be taken up for audit should be listed in advance, and the list should be put up on the notice boards, along with the other items on the agenda

## **B. The Organisational Phase**

The Jan Audit Manch is a platform where the independence and facilitating nature of the institutional arrangements will contribute directly to its credibility. It is essential to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a transparent and non-partisan manner, where the poorest and most marginalized can participate and speak out in confidence and without fear. Care has to be taken that the manch not be manipulated by vested interests. Towards this end:

- The time of year for the manch meetings must be such that it is convenient for as many residents to attend- in particular, those who are directly involved with the entity being audited, and all marginalized communities.
- The timings must similarly be convenient so that women can also attend.
- The quorum of the manch must be the same as for all gram sabhas, and the quorum must be maintained as per separate categories (in a specially designed format) Social audit objections must however be recorded at all times, and lack of a quorum should not be taken as a reason for not recording objections.
- The social audit Manch must be chaired by an individual independent of the implementing agencies in the panchayat. The ward panch/ panchayat president must not chair this meeting.
- The secretary of the manch must also be an official from outside the panchayat.

- The person responsible for presenting the information should not be a person responsible for implementing the work. The vigilance committee, or a school teacher for instance could be considered for the purpose of reading aloud the information as per the required format.
- All officials responsible for implementation must be required to be present at the jan audit manch and be required to answer queries from members of the gram sabha.
- Decisions and resolutions must be made by vote, but dissenting opinion must be recorded.
- Minutes must be recorded as per the format (in a specially designed format), by a person from outside the implementing agencies, and the minute register must be signed by people at the beginning and end of the meeting (after the minutes are written).
- The agenda (generic agenda given below) must be gone through including the transparency checklist, and all objections recorded as per format (in a specially designed format).
- The action taken report of the last social audit must be read out at the beginning of each jan audit manch.
- In addition, every district should also have a team of technical people from outside the district (with the appropriate expertise, for example in engineering, accountancy, etc.) who will help in the preparation of information for dissemination, who will attend selected jan audits, take detailed notes, and immediately after the jan audit, visit all the sites and conduct detailed enquiries where people have testified that there is corruption.
- During the jan audits, right to information provisions and ward sabha social audit manuals, should be publicized so that this serves as an ongoing training for the public vigilance process.

### **C. The Implementation Phase**

The agenda for the social audit in the gram sabha must include a checklist to review whether norms, provisions, rules and guidelines are being followed. The questions and issues raised in the jan audit manch would include:

a) Whether the process of identifying beneficiaries (where relevant) was conducted in a transparent manner

- Was a list prepared of all the possible beneficiaries?
- Was the first identification/selection done in a special ward sabha/gram sabha conducted for the purpose?
- Was the list of identified/selected persons read out for verification in the Gram sabha?
- Is the list of beneficiaries updated on an ongoing basis?
- Is the updated list regularly put up on the Panchayat notice board?
- Are there any eligible beneficiaries who have been left out of the list?

b) Whether the applications for benefits/entitlements being dealt with appropriately?

- Where potential beneficiaries have to apply for their benefits/entitlements, are their applications being received and acknowledged?
- Are they getting their benefits appropriately and in time?
- Is the distribution of benefits/entitlements being done in a transparent manner, with lists being put up on the panchayat notice board for public notice and display?
- Are there any pending complaints about the receipt of applications, the allotment of benefits/entitlements, etc.?

c) Transparency in the sanction of work/project/activity

- Was the sanctioned work/ activity appropriate and optimal?
- Was the final identification done in a transparent manner with the involvement of local stake holders?
- Was there involvement of the local stake holders in the preparation of the technical estimate?
- A list of all the works/activities sanctioned in the six month period must be read out aloud, along with amount sanctioned, and amount spent on the works.
- Has the list of work/activities sanctioned been made public through notice boards etc., and kept updated?

d) Transparency in the implementation of work

- Was there a board on the work site giving details of sanctioned amount, work dimensions, and other requisite details?

- Was an open transparency meeting held **before** commencement of the work to explain the work requirements to the workers, including the labour and material estimates as per the technical sanction?
- Were the muster rolls (where relevant) available for public scrutiny at all times at the work site?
- Was there a work site material register maintained, along with verification by at least five workers whenever material came to the site?
- Was a daily individual measurement of work conducted in a transparent manner where piece rate norms were in force?
- Was the measurement of the work done by the junior engineer in the presence of a group of workers?
- Were any complaints made? Were they addressed within prescribed/appropriate period by the grievance redressal authority?
- Was an open transparency meeting held **within seven days of the completion** of the work, where all those who worked on the site, and residents of the village where the work took place are invited to look at the entire records. Compliance of the requirement to hold this meeting must be made necessary before the completion certificate is issued

e) Making of wage Payments (where relevant)

- Were wages paid within prescribed/reasonable period?
- Were wages paid at a designated public place at a designated time?
- Were all payment details available for public scrutiny before the payments were made (for example, by putting up muster roll copies on notice boards etc)?
- Were payment details read out aloud in public while making payments”
- Were payments made by an agency other than the one implementing the work
- Was compensation given as per the provision of the payment of wages act for late payments?
- Are there any wage payments which are still due?

f) Post Facto auditing of the records and accounts of each work undertaken

- Does the file have all the documents required?
- Were all the documents available for scrutiny at least 15 days before the jan audit manch?

- Were charts prepared of the summary sheets for public display and scrutiny before and during the social audit?
- The muster roll summary (where relevant) must be read out aloud to check for discrepancies.
- The summary of the bills must be read out aloud to check for discrepancies.
- The measurement book summary (where relevant) must be read out aloud
- The photographs taken, before, during, and after the work must be available for public display and scrutiny during the jan audit manch.

### 3. SOCIAL AUDITS AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT

#### A. USING THE RTI ACT FOR SOCIAL AUDITING

One essential and critical requirement for conducting social audits is the availability of all relevant information and decision making processes that are totally transparent. The beginnings of social auditing owes much to access to information, especially to bills, vouchers and muster rolls related to expenditure by Panchayats and other government institutions. Initially, this information had to be accessed despite stout resistance from the concerned officials, and without legal backing. Initial right to information acts, in some states, though relatively weak and ineffective, provided some legal basis for accessing these documents. Fortunately, a very powerful and comprehensive national act was passed in 2005. The Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 significantly facilitates the process of conducting social audits. There are many provisions in the RTI act that directly support public scrutiny of schemes and programmes.

Section 4 (1)(b) of the RTI act lists the information that public authorities need to make public *suo moto*. This includes information relating to the norms set by it for the discharge of its functions (S. 4(1)(b)(iv)) ; the rules, regulations, instructions, manuals and records, held by it or under its control or used by its employees for discharging its functions (S. 4(1)(b)(v)); the particulars of any arrangement that exists for consultation with, or representation by, the members of the public in relation to the formulation of its policy or implementation thereof (S. 4(1)(b)(vii)); the budget allocated to each of its agency, indicating the particulars of all plans, proposed expenditures and reports on disbursements made (S. 4(1)(b)(xi)); the manner of execution of subsidy programmes, including the amounts allocated and the details of beneficiaries of such programmes (S. 4(1)(b)(xii)); particulars of recipients of concessions, permits or authorisations granted by it (S. 4(1)(b)(xiii));. Therefore, this information is required to be publicly available for all programmes and schemes, without being asked for.

In addition, section 4 (1)(c) of the RTI act requires that each public authority “ publish all relevant facts while formulating important policies or announcing the decisions which affect public” (emphasis added). This ensures that the public has an opportunity of evaluating

draft public policies while they are being developed. They also have the option to evaluate all decisions in terms of the facts on which it was based.

Similarly, section 4(1)(d) requires all public authorities to “provide reasons for its administrative or quasi-judicial decisions to affected persons”. Therefore, each public authority is already required, under the RTI act to give reasons for all decisions made relating to the implementation of any scheme or project, to all the affected people. This makes the conduct of a social audit very much easier.

The RTI act also allows any one to access information regarding the functioning of a scheme or project even after it is completed, by filing a specific request. Therefore, people incharge of implementing schemes and projects are conscious that their records can be publicly scrutinised at any time, even years after the event. This is a great deterrence to those who might be able to manipulate a clean official audit and think that once the formal audit is over they are safe from public scrutiny.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the RTI act is that it has made people aware that they have a right to access information, a right that is legally enforceable, and is not restricted to just a few bits of information but covers almost all the information that they might be interested in. The RTI act not only assures them of this but also, given the penalties that are prescribed for illegitimate delay or refusal, ensures that they can exercise this right and actually get this information.

The RTI act guarantees to the people that they can always, on their own, conduct a social audit of any scheme or programme that they think needs their scrutiny, even if the concerned public authority has not organised a social audit. They can independently access this information and ask explanations of the government. The fact that the RTI Act allows them to do this makes it futile for public authorities to avoid holding formal social audits or holding them only on paper.

A brief description of the RTI act is given below.

## B. THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005

### Coverage

The RTI Act 2005 covers all central, state and local government bodies and, in addition to the executive, it also applies to the judiciary and the legislature. It covers all bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed, either directly or indirectly by the government, and non-governmental organisations and other private bodies substantially funded, directly or indirectly, by the government. This would seem to include private schools, hospitals and other commercial institutions that have got subsidies in the form of land at concessional rates or tax concessions, among others.

Apart from these, the law, interestingly, also covers the private sector as it provides the citizen access to all information that the government can itself access through any other law currently in force.

### Definitions

The act gives a detailed definition of the term 'information', and significantly includes "opinions and advices" as subject to disclosure. This clearly means that file notings are also to be disclosed, unless their content falls under one of the exemptions specified in section 8 of the act. The definition of 'information' also includes the right to inspect work, documents and records held by the government, and allows for the extraction of certified samples for verification. Therefore, the act moves beyond the realm of files and documents and enables the public to actually examine the field reality.

### Process of Access

The act has set out a relatively simple process for accessing information. Each public authority must appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO), who accepts requisitions and provides information. The PIO must ordinarily respond to a requisition within 30 days, but extensions are allowed in some cases, for example when a third party is involved. Information relating to the life or liberty of a person must, nevertheless, be provided in 48 hours.

### Exemptions

The act exempts certain categories of information from disclosure. Included are the obvious exemptions of information, the disclosure of which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, relation with foreign State or lead to incitement of an offence; or information which has been

expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or tribunal or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court. It also exempts information, the disclosure of which would cause a breach of privilege of Parliament or the State Legislature.

Information, including commercial confidences, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party, or information available to a person in his fiduciary relationship, is also exempt. However, there is a public interest override that specifies that such information can be made public if the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

Also exempt is information received in confidence from foreign governments, or information, the disclosure of which would impede the process of investigation or apprehension or prosecution of offenders, or would endanger the life or physical safety of any person or identity the source of information or assistance given in confidence for law enforcement or security purposes.

Though cabinet papers, including records of deliberations of the Council of Ministers, Secretaries and other officers are exempt, the decisions of Council of Ministers, the reasons thereof, and the material on the basis of which the decisions were made becomes accessible after the decision has been taken, and the matter is complete, or over, unless they are exempt under any other section of this act.

Also exempt is information that might violate copyright, except that of the state, or personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual. However, here also it can be disclosed if larger public interests so warrants.

There are some general clauses qualifying the exemptions. These include a clause that specifies that any information that cannot be denied to the Parliament or a State Legislature cannot be denied to any person. Also, where a part of a document is exempt the whole document cannot be withheld. Thus, the section that contains exempt information can be removed, and the remaining part disclosed.

In another clause, it is stated that notwithstanding the exemptions specified in the law or provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, “a public authority may allow access to information, if public interests in disclosure outweighs the harm to the protected interests.” In addition, most of the exempt information becomes accessible after twenty years.

### Complaints and Appeals

The act envisages the setting up of independent Information Commissions, one at the centre and one at each state, comprising one Chief Information Commissioner and up to ten Information Commissioners. Complaints against violations of provisions of this act can be made to the Information Commission. The act also provides for two levels of appeals against the PIO, the first to an officer senior to the PIO, and the second to the central or state Information Commission, against delay in supplying, or refusal to supply, information by the PIO. The section on appeals specifies that the onus of proof that the denial of a request was justified would be on the PIO. This necessitates the appellate authorities treating all information as “disclosable” unless proved otherwise. The act also specifies that appeals should be disposed off within 30-45 days.

### Penalties

The act stipulates penalties for PIOs found to be in violation of the act. For unreasonable delay, the Information Commission can impose penalties at Rs. 250 per day, and also penalise for refusal to accept requests, for malafide destruction of information, knowingly giving false information etc., with an upper limit of Rs. 25,000. However, PIOs are given immunity for actions done in good faith.

### Universal Access

The act also has provisions to ensure that all categories of people, especially the rural and urban poor, can access information,. Towards this end, the act specifies that fees would be reasonable, and must be waived for persons below the poverty line. There is no need to give reasons for requisitioning information, nor for providing information about yourself beyond your contact details. The government is also obliged to assist all requisitioners to formulate requests, especially in the case of sensorily challenged individuals.

### Suo Moto Disclosures

Public authorities are obliged to publish a great deal of information *suo moto*, including relevant facts while formulating policies and making policy decisions. They are also bound to explain administrative and quasi-judicial decisions to affected persons and to raise awareness and educate the public about the law.

## 4. SOCIAL AUDITING: A TRAINING MODULE

### **Objective:**

The objective of this training module is to equip government servants, representatives of people's movements and NGOs, and members of local communities to conduct social audits for a variety of programmes and schemes.

### **Methodology:**

This is a "hands-on" training module where theoretical knowledge and simulation is supplemented by being involved in the actual process of social auditing. Consequently, only those who are both trainers and practitioners of social auditing can impart the training described in this module. The module complements the manual on social auditing that has been prepared by the Centre for Equity Studies and MKSS, with the support of the NIRD. This module is designed for a seven-day training programme.

Note: The details of the training module would have to be modified depending on the scheme being audited and the details of the area and community involved in the social audit.

### **Training Schedule:**

#### **First day**

#### **Half day**

1. Introduction to the concept of a social audit
2. Contrast it with other types of audits.
3. Discuss advantages and constraints of social audits.
4. Describe the history of social auditing.
5. Introduce case studies and show films.

#### **Half day**

6. Introduce the participants to the social audit manual.
7. Explain the steps of social auditing.
8. Describe, in detail, how each step is to be carried out.
9. Introduce the problems that can be faced in each step.
10. Do a mock social audit by dividing up the participants into groups.

## **Second day**

### **Half day**

11. Continue a mock social audit.

### **Half day**

12. Make preparations for participating in a social audit.
  - a. Get acquainted, in detail, with the scheme to be audited and with the Right to Information Act 2005.
  - b. Make sure that all the forms and documents are in simple, easily understandable, language and structure and available in local languages.
  - c. Prepare/have prepared charts and boards with all the relevant information.

## **Third day**

### **First half**

13. Participate in a genuine social audit exercise – go out into the community and:
  - a. Make people aware of their rights, entitlements and obligations under the scheme/programme being audited.
  - b. Specifically, make them aware of their right to participate in the ongoing process of social audit.

## **Third and fourth days**

### **One and a half days**

14. Get involved in the conduct of a social audit (along with the PRI or the government department responsible), specifically:
  - a. Ensure that all relevant information is publicly displayed on boards and through posters and is also read out at appropriate times for the convenience of the people, especially those who cannot read.
  - b. Ensure that the decision making process, especially for those decisions that are critical and/or vulnerable to distortions, is transparent and open and carried out, as far as possible, in the presence of the affected persons.
  - c. Make certain that all decisions, along with reasons, as appropriate, are also communicated as soon as they are made to the affected people, and in manner that makes it easy for them to comprehend.
  - d. Where there is a need for measuring, inspection or certification, ensure that randomly selected individuals, from among the affected persons, are involved on a rotational basis.

- e. Ensure that members of the public and especially those directly affected, are facilitated to inspect and verify records, inspect works and generally monitor planning and implementation.

**Fifth day**

- 15. Prepare for the conduct of a public hearing (a *jan audit manch*).
  - a. Compile all the relevant information and reduce it to easily understandable formats.
  - b. Inform all the community members about the time and location of the *jan audit manch*.
  - c. Prepare the posters and banners required for the *jan audit manch*.
  - d. Identify the key speakers and draw up a programme.
  - e. Allocate responsibilities.
  - f. Go over, in detail, the process and method of conducting a *jan audit manch*.

**Sixth day**

- 16. Participate in the conduct of the *jan audit manch*.

**Seventh day**

- 17. Debriefing session. Revisit the theory of social audits and have a detailed discussion to address the questions that the participants might have.
- 18. Valedictory and farewell

## **5. INTEGRATING SOCIAL AUDITS INTO THE NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT**

### **A. INTEGRATING SOCIAL AUDITING**

The NREGA provides to the people certain entitlements. These are:

1. The entitlement to register one's family.
2. The entitlement to a job card.
3. The entitlement to apply for work.
4. The entitlement to participate in the process of preparation of shelf of projects/  
selection of sites.
5. The entitlement to participate in the development & approval of technical  
estimates/issuance of work order.
6. The entitlement to get work allotted within fifteen days of applying for it.
7. The entitlement to participate in the supervision of works.
8. The entitlement to receive full wages for the work done, as per the prescribed rates.
9. The entitlement to receive unemployment allowance, if work is not allotted in the  
stipulated fifteen days.
10. The entitlement to be involved in the evaluation of the works undertaken under this  
act.

In order to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to get all that he/she is entitled to, the process of social audits has been integrated and institutionalised in the process of implementing this act and certain measures have been provided for to ensure full transparency and participation of all stakeholders. These measures, as they correspond to each specific entitlement, are listed below. Also listed are the dangers that confront the potential beneficiary, as they try and get what they are entitled to. What each individual needs to do, in order to ensure that these measures are effective, has also been indicated.

Sn.	ENTITLEMENT	DANGERS	TRANSPARENCY AND SOCIAL AUDIT MEASURES TO BE INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT ( <i>With suggested action by the people in bold italics</i> )
1.	<p>The entitlement to register one's family as Potential Beneficiaries In The Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</p> <p><b>[Responsibility to register: Gram Sewak/ GP Secretary]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Absence of the concerned functionary.</li> <li>2. Denial of registration to persons applying to the scheme</li> <li>3. Incomplete list of adults in each household</li> <li>4. Registration of bogus families/individuals</li> <li>5. Rejection of "incomplete" registration forms.</li> <li>6. Asking for money for registering names/ families.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The process of registration is required to be transparent. As per the rules, it must be carried out publicly with facilities for people to verify their own details, or those of others.</li> <li>2. Initial registration would be carried out in a special gram sabha convened for the purpose.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>The people must attend all such gram Sabhas in large numbers and be vigilant. They must carefully observe the process to ensure that no outsiders or ineligible people are being registered, but they must also watch the entries that are being made and check from time to time that only eligible persons are being registered.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Where an eligible person or family is being denied registration, the people must always be ready to intercede on their behalf and question the concerned functionaries on why these eligible persons are being denied registration Where the concerned functionaries are not co-operative, the people must jointly complain to the relevant authority.</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A prior survey has to be conducted by the gram panchayat to enumerate all the families and their adult members who are eligible to</li> </ol>

			<p>register. This is supposed to be the basis for ensuring that all persons who are eligible and wish to be included in the scheme, are accounted for.</p> <p>4. This enumeration is also supposed to help in preventing the registration of fictitious/ineligible names, but is not to be used to exclude the eligible who might not have been listed.</p> <p><b><i>Where there is any doubt about any family, the people should insist on consulting this survey. They should also demand to see the enumeration to ensure that no eligible person has been left out.</i></b></p> <p>5. Subsequent to the initial registration, there must be a public reading in the Ward &amp; Gram Sabha of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists of all households registered under the scheme</li> <li>• Lists of adults in each household registered under the scheme</li> </ul> <p>6. A form, with a tear away receipt at the bottom, must be used for registration, and the receipt given to the registered person/family</p> <p>7. If a form is incomplete in any way, it would be the responsibility of the concerned functionary to have it completed there and then.</p> <p>8. The final list of registered families/adults must be verified, and complaints of exclusion settled.</p> <p><b><i>Again, the people must attend all such ward and gram Sabhas in large numbers and be vigilant. They must carefully listen to the names, as they are being read out, and be ready to raise objections if any</i></b></p>
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			<p><i>ineligible or fictitious names have been included.</i></p> <p><i>Where an eligible person or family has been denied registration, the people must demand their inclusion. If this is denied, then they must collectively complain to the relevant authority.</i></p> <p><i>They must also examine the lists that are being read out, in order to ensure that what is being read out is not different to what is on the list.</i></p> <p>9. The final list must be put up for public display at the Gram Panchayat office and updated every three months.</p> <p><i>The people must ensure that this list is put up and regularly updated, and also that it is authentic and does not contain any fictitious/ ineligible names.</i></p> <p>10. Subsequent to the initial registration, the process of registration must remain perpetually open at the gram panchayat.</p> <p><i>The people must also monitor this and if there is any problem in eligible people registering their names subsequent to the initial registration, this must be taken up with the concerned functionary and, if necessary, with higher authorities.</i></p>
2.	<p>The entitlement to a job card</p> <p><b>[Responsibility for timely distribution: Gram Sewak/ GP Secretary]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delay in receiving job cards</li> <li>2. Issuance of false cards</li> <li>3. Issuance of cards to ineligible persons <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To non-residents</li> <li>b. To minors</li> <li>c. To those not members of the</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a one month time limit for the supply of job cards, from the date of registration.</li> <li>2. The list of job card holders must be updated every month, and be available for inspection at the Gram Panchayat office</li> <li>3. A file containing photocopies of all job cards issued must be open for inspection at the Gram Panchayat office.</li> </ol>

		<p>listed family</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Non-issuance of a job card</li> <li>5. Asking for money for issuing job card.</li> </ol>	<p><i>The people must ask the concerned functionaries to explain the reasons for any delay in distributing job cards over and above the prescribed time limit. If necessary, the RTI Act can be used to get this information. Where the reasons for delay are not justifiable, or where there is a very long delay, the matter must be taken up by the people with the higher authorities.</i></p> <p><i>The people must also examine the list and file on a regular basis to monitor whether the distribution of job cards is on schedule and being done in a fair manner.</i></p>
3.	<p>The entitlement to apply for work</p> <p><b>[Responsibility to receive and acknowledge applications: Sarpanch]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non-acceptance of work application by the relevant functionary</li> <li>2. The wrong date or no date recorded on the work application.</li> <li>3. Rejection of “incomplete” forms</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individuals are entitled to send applications for work by post or to deliver by hand.</li> <li>2. They have a right to an immediate, written, signed and dated receipt.</li> </ol> <p><i>Insist on a written and dated receipt.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A date wise list, that is updated weekly, must be displayed at the Gram Panchayat office, along with a register detailing the applications received.</li> </ol> <p><i>The people must regularly check this list and ensure that the information is correct.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. If an application is incomplete in any way, it is the responsibility of the concerned functionary to have it completed. Applications cannot be rejected just because they are incomplete.</li> </ol> <p><i>The people should insist on this.</i></p>
4.	<p>The entitlement to participate in the process of preparation of</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Selection of a low priority or inappropriate work.</li> <li>2. Selection of work that</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The shelf of projects/ works/sites to be taken up must be determined by the gram sabha.</li> <li>2. They must also be assessed for relevance and priority by the gram sabha</li> </ol>

	shelf of projects/ selection of sites to be taken up in a particular Ward Sabha and/or Gram sabha.  <b>[Responsibility to facilitate this: Sarpanch]</b>	<p>serves a vested interest.</p> <p>3. Lack of public participation/ consultation for selecting work/sites.</p>	<p>3. A list of the finally selected projects, works, and sites, in their order of priority, must be publicly displayed at the Gram Panchayat office.</p> <p><i>The people must insist on deciding the projects and sites that are to be taken up. They should participate fully and actively in the process and ensure that the final list contains only those project sand sites, and in the order of priority, decided by them.</i></p>
5.	The entitlement to participate in the development & approval of technical estimates/issuance of work order  <b>[Responsibility to facilitate: Junior Engineer/ Sarpanch]</b>	<p>1. Exaggerated/ inaccurate technical estimates.</p> <p>2. Inclusion, in estimate, of unnecessary expenditure.</p> <p>3. Excessive rates and material.</p> <p>4. Unclear work order that does not make the details of the work clear/leaves scope for mis-interpretation.</p>	<p>1. Technical estimate has to be done with the involvement of the local people, and has to be approved by the gram sabha.</p> <p><i>The people must participate in this exercise and ensure that the estimates are realistic, that the rates being quoted are as per local availability and that no unnecessary items of expenditure are being included.</i></p> <p>2. The format for the technical estimate must be simple and understandable by the people.</p> <p>3. Similarly, the sanction and work order format must be people friendly.</p> <p>4. This format must be put on public display so that people can access this information and understand the details of the work.</p> <p><i>The people need to remain vigilant and check the final estimate and work order to ensure that they are in accordance with what was collectively decided.</i></p>
6.	The entitlement to get work allotted within fifteen days of applying for it	<p>1. Giving out-of-turn allotments.</p> <p>2. Favouring or discriminating against people in allotting</p>	<p>1. All work allocation registers have to be maintained for public scrutiny at the gram panchayat office.</p> <p>2. It is the duty of the concerned functionaries to ensure that the public is informed through</p>

	<p><b>[Responsibility: Sarpanch]</b></p>	<p>type/location of work.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Not respecting the gender quota.</li> <li>4. Not informing the applicant and then showing him/her as absent.</li> <li>5. Demanding money for allotting work</li> </ol>	<p>notice boards and through other measures ( like drum beating) every time a new batch of work is allotted. The date up to which work has been allocated must also be made public every time work is allocated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A specific day (typically Sunday – as it is a holiday) and a specific time and place (typically at the gram panchayat office) will be fixed to disburse information about the EGA.</li> <li>4. On that day, the public will be informed of the work allotted or ready to be allotted, along with the names of allottees, their date of application, location and type of work, and other relevant information, including explanation of how the job card works.</li> <li>5. At these meetings, for each of the work allotted, the wage norms will be explained to the people and put up on the notice board. The questions that must be answered include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What is the wage?</li> <li>b. What is the wage norm (How much per day/how many of what will constitute a full days work).</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><i>It is very important that as many people as possible attend these weekly meetings, on the designated day. They must be vigilant and ensure that all the stipulated information is given to them and must also verify the fairness and authenticity of the list of allotted work.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. There will be individual measurements of each persons work, unless a group collectively decides to have joint measurements.</li> </ol> <p><i>This is a right, and must be insisted upon by the</i></p>
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			<i>people.</i>
7.	<p>The entitlement to participate in the supervision of works.</p> <p><b>[Responsibility to facilitate: Gram Sewak]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recording of non-existent (ghost) workers.</li> <li>2. Recording of fictitious (Ghost) works.</li> <li>3. Work not conforming to work specifications/prescribed standards</li> <li>4. Supply of less than sanctioned/poor quality materials and tools.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A board with details of work – estimates and running costs – material, labour and funds, will be put up at every site, and updated regularly. The format will be user friendly.</li> <li>2. The muster rolls will be accessible upon demand.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>The people must periodically verify the information on the board and in the muster rolls.</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Every week five randomly selected workers will have to verify and certify all of bills/vouchers of their work site, before they are passed.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>The people must ensure that the five workers selected are all reliable and independent of the authorities. These five workers must verify all the documents after carefully checking them.</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A copy of the sanction/work order will also be available for public inspection orders at the work site.</li> <li>5. There would also be provisions for access to samples of works, to be taken as per the procedure developed for the RTI Act.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>The people must also periodically ensure that the work is going as per the sanction/work order. They must also take random samples of the material as this would put pressure on the authorities to ensure that standards are maintained.</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. A daily materials-register must be kept, and verified by five randomly selected workers every day.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>The people must ensure that the five workers selected are all reliable and independent of the authorities.</i></b></p>

			<p><i>These five workers must verify the daily materials register after carefully checking the relevant facts.</i></p> <p>7. The daily/individual measurement records for each work and worker must be available for public inspection.</p> <p><i>This will only be an effective check if people regularly inspect these records and ensure that they are accurate.</i></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p>The entitlement to receive full wages for the work done, as per the prescribed rates.</p> <p><b>[Responsibility: An independent functionary ]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non-payment of wages</li> <li>2. Late payment of wages.</li> <li>3. Under payment of wages.</li> <li>4. Payment of wages to the wrong person.</li> <li>5. Payment of wages in the name of non-existent (Ghost) workers.</li> <li>6. Payment of wages for non-existent projects.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Payments will be made in a Public place on fixed days (like in the weekly Sunday meetings) to ensure that there can be no ambiguity regarding payments</li> <li>2. All recipients and amounts of payment will be read aloud to ensure that the illiterate are not cheated, and also to check ghost payments.</li> <li>3. A list detailing all payments to be made will be put up in a public and easily accessible place prior to the reading aloud of the list.</li> </ol> <p><i>The people must attend, as already stressed before, these meetings and must remain vigilant, carefully listening to the list, as it is read out. They should also verify the authenticity of the list that is pasted.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Provisions will be made to facilitate payments through the post office and other financial institutions.</li> <li>5. Payments will be made, as far as possible, by an agency independent of the implementing agency.</li> <li>6. Disclosure of piece rate measurement will be made individually, and not en masse so as to provide each worker with his/her due exactly. This would prevent division of the wage</li> </ol>

			earned by ghost workers etc.
<b>9.</b>	<p>The entitlement to receive unemployment allowance, if work is not allotted in the stipulated fifteen days</p> <p><b>[Responsibility: Project Officer/Gram Sewak]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Denial of unemployment allowance by wrongly accusing a person for not reporting to work</li> <li>2. Late payment of unemployment allowance</li> <li>3. Payment of unemployment allowance to the wrong person</li> <li>4. Payment of unemployment allowance to non-existent (ghost) persons.</li> <li>5. Demand of bribe for paying allowance.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A weekly public announcement of work allocation will be made, and work allocation orders will be displayed publicly (see 6 above).</li> <li>2. Payments will be made in a Public place on fixed days (the fixed Sunday) to ensure that there can be no ambiguity regarding payments</li> <li>3. All recipients and amounts of payment will be read aloud to ensure that the illiterate are not cheated, and also to check ghost payments.</li> <li>4. A list detailing all payments to be made will be put up in a public and easily accessible place prior to the reading aloud of the list.</li> <li>5. Provisions will be made to facilitate payments through the post office and other financial institutions.</li> <li>6. The Gram Panchayat will automatically generate, each week, in advance of the weekly meeting, a list of those eligible for receiving the allowance.</li> </ol> <p><i>The people must attend, as already stressed before, these meetings and must remain vigilant, carefully listening to the list, as it is read out. They should also verify the authenticity of the list that is generated by the Gram Panchayat.</i></p>
<b>10.</b>	<p>The entitlement to be involved in the evaluation of the works undertaken under this act</p> <p><b>[Responsibility:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking and/or recording of improper measurements</li> <li>2. Not consolidating the information regarding the works in one place.</li> <li>3. Issuing of false</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verification of works, for conformity with work order in terms of specifications and quality, will be carried out by a Ward/Gram Sabha.</li> <li>2. An assessment of relevance of new works, along with appropriateness, will also be carried out by a Ward/ Gram Sabha.</li> </ol>

	<b>Gram Sewak/ EG Officer]</b>	<p>completion certificates</p> <p>4. Works not conforming to specifications/ standards.</p> <p>5. Data recorded in a confusing/ Incomprehensible manner.</p>	<p><i>The people must participate in the verification and assessment exercise, and ensure that the work done conforms with what was commissioned and is of use to the people.</i></p> <p>3. Completion data will be made public in a people friendly format.</p>
<b>11.</b>	<p>The entitlement to participate in a People’s Audit Meeting (Jan Audit Manch) , where all the projects and activities related to the NREGA are assessed and publicly verified.</p> <p><b>[Responsibility: Gram Sewak/ EG Officer</b></p>	<p>1. No public hearing actually takes place, but is shown on paper to have taken place.</p> <p>2. The public hearing is manipulated so that only those interested in one point of view are allowed to attend.</p> <p>3. People are prevented from fully participating or from speaking the truth.</p> <p>4. The hearing is disrupted by rowdy elements.</p>	<p>1. Comprehensive public hearings will be held, relating to works and individual entitlements, bi annually at the Ward/Gram Sabha level for all works completed in that period. The details of the requirements for this public hearing are given in the next section.</p> <p>2. On a random sampling basis, these hearings will be attended by state/central observers and also by independent research groups.</p> <p>3. Wherever possible, audio-visual records of the public hearing will be maintained.</p> <p><i>This peoples audit meeting (Jan Audit Manch) is perhaps the most important element of the social audit and people must participate fully in this and raise issues, without fear or favour, in order to ensure that the NREGA is being properly implemented.</i></p>

### Institutional Structures

Though the main responsibility of ensuring that all these measures are properly and faithfully implemented would be primarily of the panchayati raj institutions, with the gram sabha being involved in all decision making and in planning, monitoring and evaluation, the people will have to ensure that the PRIs do what is necessary. The sarpanch, the gram sewak, and the gram panchayat secretary will be the critical functionaries. The junior engineer, the project

officer and the EG officer (as and when he/she is appointed), would also share some of the responsibility.

#### State and Central Monitoring

As per the obligations under the NREGA, the over all responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the NREGA rests with the Central and the State Governments. In order to fulfil this obligation, the state and central governments will designate a sufficient number of state and central observers who would, on a random sampling basis, attend the bi-annual public hearings and determine the state of implementation. It would be important for the people to ensure that these observers are made aware of the true nature of things and that all problems and complaints are brought to their notice.

In addition, both the state and the central governments will also sponsor independent surveys through reputed institutions that can, at a community and household level, collect information about the functioning of the REGS. A related exercise can also assess, in retrospect – say after two years, the durability, maintenance and public utility of the assets created. Again, the people must assist in the carrying out of these surveys and ensure that all critical facts are made available to the surveyors.

#### Capacity Development

If the process of social audit has to be effectively used, the capacities of the people and people's organisations will be developed and they would be familiarised with the method and oriented towards the philosophy. For this, a network of institutions is being identified and a cadre of trainers are being trained.

#### Complaints and Grievance Redressal Mechanism

If the social audit process is to be successful, there has to be an effective institutional mechanism that can deal with complaints and grievances, and functions transparently, while providing some protection to vulnerable individuals and families. The functioning of this mechanism would be within time bound norms and it would be answerable to the affected people for its actions and inaction.

## B. METHOD OF ORGANISING A PEOPLES AUDIT MEETING (JAN AUDIT MANCH)

### Mandatory Social Audits in the Gram Sabha

Apart from the ongoing process of social audit enumerated above, there will be a mandatory periodic review of all aspects of social audit in ward sabhas (where they exist) and in the Gram Sabha meetings to be held at least once every six months for this purpose (To be called “Jan Audit Manch”). These will not only give people an opportunity to review compliance with the ongoing requirements of transparency and social audit, they will also serve as an institutional forum where people can conduct a detailed public audit of all NREGA work that has been carried out in their area in the preceding six months. The importance of this platform is not only the independent value of publicly auditing a particular work, but also that it provides an opportunity to review the functioning of all the transparency provisions at various points in the implementation of the act with beneficiaries and all the stakeholders residing in the area. The social audit compliments the financial audit, and facilitates examination aspects of the programme by the people. This is beyond the scope of the financial audit. It provides an institutional platform for people to seek and obtain information, verify financial expenditure, examine the provision of entitlements, the reflection of priorities through choices made, quality of work, and quality of services of programme staff. While the social audit must be seen as an ongoing process, the ward/gram sabha Jan audit manch is a crucial platform for ensuring peoples participation in all aspects of the NREGA. Because of the requirement **to read information out aloud**, the manch facilitates the participation of people who don't have the literacy skills to understand documents. It is therefore mandatory that such social audits be conducted on a bi-annual basis, and that programme officers be made responsible for ensuring they take place.

There are three essential aspects regarding the bi-annual Jan Audit manch: The Publicity and preparation before the social audit takes place; Organisational and procedural aspects of the social audit; and the mandatory agenda for all aspects of an EGA social audit.

## The Preparatory Phase

The success of a social audit is dependent on the open and fearless participation of all the people- particularly the potential beneficiaries of the programme. Effective public participation is dependent on adequate publicity about the meeting as well as informed public opinion, dependent on prior information provided to people in a demystified form.

### Publicity

It must be ensured that sufficient publicity be given to the date, time, importance and sanctity of the social audit, so that maximum participation is ensured. This must be facilitated through:

- People should be aware of the months when the Jan Audit Manch is to be held so that it becomes a regular event that people are aware of. State Governments should therefore issue instructions about the time of year when it is convenient for people to attend such meetings
- Announcement of the specific date, time and location of the Janta Audit Manch” atleast one month in advance
- Use of traditional modes of publicity like informing people through beating of drums, and modern means like mike announcements,
- Notices on the notice board, in newspapers, and through pamphlets etc
- Conducting these audits in a campaign mode so that the entire administration gears up to meet the institutional requirements of the manch, and the campaign encourages people to attend

### Preparation of Documents

The full and efficient participation of people in the social audit manch is dependent on full information. This is not only facilitated through easy access to all documents and information while the works are in progress, but preparing for the social audit by collating information and demystifying the information so that people can look at summaries, of information before the social audit, and these summaries can be read out aloud during the Jan Audit Manch. In this connection it is essential that:

- All the relevant documents, including complete files of the works or copies of them be made available for inspection at the gram panchayat office atleast fifteen days in advance of the jan audit. There should be free and easy access to all

residents of the panchayat to these documents during this period, and no fees should be charged for inspection. During this period, if anyone wants copies of the documents, they should be provided at cost price as soon as possible, but no later than five days of the request being made.

- Summaries of muster rolls and of Bills must be prepared (see format) in advance for presentation in the Jan Audit. If possible, these summaries should be put onto charts for public display on the day of the jan audit, and to put up at the panchayat office during the fifteen day pre-audit phase
- The original files should be available on the day of the jan audit, so that any information can be cross checked
- The works to be taken up for audit, should be listed in advance, and the list should be put up on the notice boards, along with the other items on the agenda

### Requirements for the jan Audit manch

The Jan Audit Manch is a platform where the independence and facilitating nature of the institutional arrangements will contribute directly to its credibility. It is essential to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a transparent and non-partisan manner, where the poorest and most marginalized can participate and speak out in confidence and without fear. Care has to be taken that the manch not be manipulated by vested interests. Towards this end:

- The time of year for the manch meetings must be such that it is convenient for as many residents to attend- in particular, those who are EGA workers, and all marginalized communities
- The timings must similarly be convenient so that women can also attend
- The quorum of the manch must be the same as for all gram sabhas, and the quorum must be maintained as per separate categories (see format) Social audit objections must however be recorded at all times, and lack of a quorum should not be taken as a reason for not recording objections
- The social audit Manch must be chaired by an individual independent of the implementing agencies in the panchayat. The ward panch/ panchayat president must not chair this meeting
- The secretary of the manch must also be an official from outside the panchayat
- The person responsible for presenting the information should not be a person responsible for implementing the work. The vigilance committee, or a school teacher

for instance could be considered for the purpose of reading aloud the information as per the required format

- All officials responsible for implementation must be required to be present at the jan audit manch and be required to answer queries from members of the gram sabhaa
- Decisions and resolutions must be made by vote, but dissenting opinion must be recorded.
- Minutes must be recorded as per the format (see format), by a person from outside the implementing agencies, and the minute register must be signed by people at the beginning and end of the meeting (after the minutes are written)
- The agenda (given below) must be gone through including the transparency checklist, and all objections recorded as per format (see format)
- The action taken report of the last social audit must be read out at the beginning of each jan audit manch.
- In addition, every district should also have a team of technical people from outside the district (engineers and accountants) who will help in the preparation of information for dissemination, who will attend selected jan audits, take detailed notes, and immediately after the jan audit, visit all the sites and conduct detailed enquiries where people have testified that there is corruption.
- The report of these sample jan audits and the reports of the technical team should be submitted to the district employment guarantee council in a specified time frame for necessary action.
- During the jan audits, right to information provisions, ward sabha social audit manuals, should be publicized so that this serves as an ongoing training for the public vigilance process.

#### The Agenda for the Gram Sabha Social Audit

The Agenda for the social audit in the Gram sabha must include the following:

A checklist must be prepared to review whether norms and provisions in the act, rules and guidelines are being followed:

a) Whether the process of registration was conducted in a transparent manner

- Was a list prepared by the panchayat of all the possible households who might seek registration.

- Was the first registration done in a special ward sabha/gram sabha conducted for the purpose
- Was the list of registered persons read out for verification in the Gram sabha
- Is Registration Open in the panchayat on an ongoing basis
- Is the registration list regularly updated and put up on the Panchayat notice board
- Is there anyone remaining who wants to register, but who has not yet been registered

b) Whether Job cards were prepared, issued, and updated in a transparent manner

- Were job cards issued within one month of registration
- Is the list of job cards regularly updated, and put up on the panchayat notice board?
- Is a file containing photocopies of all job cards available for inspection in the panchayat office
- Was the job card issued free of cost, or was there a charge imposed for issuing the job card
- Is there anyone who has not received a job card, or is there any other pending complaint

c) Whether the applications for work are being treated as per norms

- Are workers receiving dated receipts for their application for work
- Are people being given work on time
- Is the allotment of work being done in a transparent manner, with lists of work allotments being put up on the panchayat notice board for public notice and display
- Are those who have not been given work on time, received unemployment allowance? How many people have outstanding payments of unemployment allowance, and are they being compensated for late payments as per the guidelines?
- There must be a reading aloud of a list of workers who have received unemployment allowance (if any) in the last six months, along with the amounts disbursed, and the basis for calculation of the amounts
- Are there any pending complaints about the receipt of work applications, the allotment of work, and the payment of unemployment allowance
- Is the gender quota being satisfied in the allotment of work

- Is the roster based on date of application received being followed for the allocation of work
- Are those who are allocated work outside the five km radius being given extra payment equal to 10 % of the minimum wage

d) Transparency in the sanction of work

- Was the shelf of projects prepared in the Gram sabha
- Was the technical estimate prepared by the Junior Engineer along with the residents of the village
- Were the works sanctioned from the shelf of projects as per norms?
- A list of all the EGA works sanctioned in the six month period must be read out aloud, along with amount sanctioned, and amount spent on the works. This list must include works sanctioned from both the panchayat/ and non panchayat list which were undertaken within the ward/ gram panchayat
- Has the Panchayat board been updated with the list of works painted on it (see format)

e) Transparency in the implementation of work

- Was there a board on the work site giving details of sanctioned amount, work dimensions, and other requisite details (see format)
- Was an open transparency meeting held **before** commencement of the work to explain the work requirements to the workers, including the labour and material estimates as per the technical sanction (see simplified format)
- Were the muster rolls available for public scrutiny at all times at the work site
- Was there a work site material register (see format) maintained, along with verification by at least five workers whenever material came to the site
- Was a daily individual measurement of work conducted in a transparent manner where piece rate norms were in force
- Was the measurement of the work done by the junior engineer in the presence of a group of workers
- Did members of the vigilance committee make regular visits to the work site, and monitor the implementation of various aspects of the work
- Were any complaints made? Were they addressed within seven days by the grievance redressal authority as specified in the guidelines
- Was an open transparency meeting held **within seven days of the completion** of the work, where all those who worked on the site, and residents of the

village where the work took place are invited to look at the entire records. Compliance of the requirement to hold this meeting must be made necessary before the completion certificate is issued

f) Making of wage Payments

- Were wages paid within seven days
- Were wages paid at a designated public place at a designated time
- Were all payment details available for public scrutiny before the payments were made (through putting up muster roll copies on notice boards etc)
- Were payment details read out aloud in public while making payments
- Were payments made by an agency other than the one implementing the work
- Was a record maintained of payments made beyond the specified time limit
- Was compensation given as per the provision of the payment of wages act for late payments
- Are there any wage payments which are still due

g) Post Facto auditing of the records and accounts of each work undertaken

- Does the file have all the documents required (see file check list and format)
- Were all the documents available for scrutiny atleast 15 days before the social audit meeting
- Were charts prepared of the summary sheets for public display and scrutiny before and during the social audit
- The muster roll summary must be read out aloud to check for discrepancies(see format)
- The summary of the bills must be read out aloud to check for discrepancies (see format)
- The measurement book summary (see format) must be read out aloud
- The photographs taken, before, during, and after the work must be available for public display and scrutiny during the social audit
- Was the vigilance committee formed as per norms
- Has the vigilance committee submitted its report (see format)
- The report of at least the following aspects of the vigilance committee and its findings should be read out and form the basis of discussion in the ward/gram sabha- a) quality of work b) work dimensions c) selection of location d) were minimum wages paid e) were wages paid on time f) have all bill payments

been made g) were there any complaints made to them during the work h) what redressal took place for complaints or grievances. i) were the work site facilities made available j) what are the maintenance requirements of the project

h) Other general issues connected with EGA works

- There must be an action taken report prepared by the programme office on the resolutions and findings of the last social audit read out aloud at the beginning of each meeting
- Are there any general maintenance issues to be looked at related to development works in the panchayat
- Has the last financial audit report been submitted? It should be made available to the social audit manch, and audit objections if any should be read out aloud
- Any UCs or CCs issued since the last social audit should be read out aloud
- Are there any persons with outstanding wages or unemployment allowance to be paid? These should be listed and reported to the programme office for necessary action
- Are all the boards in the panchayat updated as per requirements.
- The services of the EGA staff like the Panchayat Rozgar sevak, and the junior engineer, and any other staff, need to be audited for quality of service.
- The timely flow of funds from the programme office to the gram panchayat needs to be monitored

## **The procedure for conducting a model social audit**

Notice

Publicising

Quorum (category wise)

Minutes (as per format)

Chairing the session

Presenting the information

Keeping minutes

Mode of decision making- vote, consensus, dissent

## **5. INTEGRATING SOCIAL AUDITING INTO THE PRADHAN MANTRY GRAM SAGAK YOJANA (PRIME MINISTER'S RURAL ROADS PLAN)**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

“The primary objective of the PMGSY is to provide Connectivity, by way of an All-weather Road (with necessary culverts and cross-drainage structures, which is operable throughout the year), to the eligible unconnected Habitations in the rural areas, in such a way that all Unconnected Habitations with a population of 1000 persons and above are covered in three years (2000-2003) and all Unconnected Habitations with a population of 500 persons and above by the end of the Tenth Plan Period (2007). In respect of the Hill States (North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand) and the Desert Areas (as identified in the Desert Development Programme) as well as the Tribal (Schedule V) areas, the objective would be to connect Habitations with a population of 250 persons and above.” (PMGSY Schemes and Guidelines - Web Site )

With the launching of the PMGSY, the Government of India has initiated an ambitious plan to drastically increase rural connectivity across the country.

An analysis of the functioning of the PMGSY suggests that there are various vulnerabilities which, if not adequately addressed, would not only significantly lessen the benefits of the programme but, in some cases, might even result in there being more harm than good done. It is almost impossible to effectively address these weaknesses without involving the various stakeholders in a meaningful way right from the planning stage.

In order to ensure that such a meaningful involvement of the potential beneficiaries and other stakeholders gets institutionalised, this manual describes the various steps that need to be taken by the people and their groups and organisations to ensure transparency and accountability by the government, the Panchayati Raj institutions and other implementing agencies. The focus is on integrating people's participation in the planning and auditing process of the PMGSY.

### **B. INTEGRATING SOCIAL AUDITING INTO PMGSY**

The PMGSY is planned and implemented in various stages. Some of the critical milestones include:

1. The identification of the link.

2. The alignment of the road.
3. The assessment of environmental impacts.
4. The assessment of social and economic impacts.
5. The awarding of contracts/ giving work orders.
6. The construction of the road –
  - a. implementing agencies.
  - b. employment of labour.
  - c. following of specifications.
  - d. quality control.
  - e. controlling of adverse environmental impacts.
  - f. controlling adverse social impacts.
  - g. keeping to time lines.
7. The Evaluation of the road.
8. Maintenance of the road.

In order to ensure that at each stage there is a proper involvement of stakeholders, the process of social audits needs to be integrated and institutionalised in the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme to ensure full transparency and participation of all stakeholders. These measures, as they correspond to each specific aspect and stage, are listed below. Also listed are the potential vulnerabilities and what needs to be done in order to ensure stakeholder involvement and scrutiny.

<b>Sn.</b>	<b>STAGE/MILESTONE</b>	<b>VULNERABILITIES</b>	<b>TRANSPARENCY AND SOCIAL AUDIT MEASURES TO BE INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT (<i>With suggested action by the people in bold italics</i>)</b>
<b>1.</b>	The identification of the link.	7. Identifying a non-eligible link. 8. Identifying a low priority link. 9. Identifying a link serving political/private rather than social objectives.	11. The process of identifying a link is required to be transparent. The process must be carried out publicly, with people of the area, specifically of the villages that have potential eligible links. 12. Before finalisation of the links in any block, a public meeting must be organised where people from all the villages in the block can

		<p>10. According to inappropriate priorities to the identified links.</p>	<p>participate and question the proposed identification and selection. The concerned authorities must be able to answer these questions and to record the questions/objections and the response and put them in the public domain.</p> <p><b><i>The people must attend all such public meetings in large numbers and be vigilant. They must carefully observe the process to ensure that no ineligible or inappropriate links are being proposed.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Where an eligible/priority link is not being taken up, the people must always be ready to intercede and question the concerned functionaries on why these eligible/ priority links are being ignored.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Where the concerned functionaries are not co-operative, the people must jointly complain to the relevant authority.</i></b></p> <p>13. A prior survey has to be conducted by the concerned department to identify and describe all the eligible links, and to prioritise them according to accepted criteria. This is the basis for ensuring that all the eligible links are identified and prioritised.</p> <p>14. A social and environmental impact statement should be developed for at least three of the best alignments. This should be conducted in a transparent and participative manner, with the full involvement of the local people.</p>
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			<p>15. This enumeration is also supposed to help in preventing the listing of fictitious, ineligible, or inappropriate links.</p> <p><b><i>The local people should fully participate in the conduct of the social and environmental impact studies. Where there is any doubt about any link, the people should insist on consulting the report of these various studies and surveys.</i></b></p> <p>16. Subsequent to the initial studies and survey and listing, there must be a public reading in the block of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists of all the links considered during the survey.</li> <li>• Lists, along with reasons, of links rejected as ineligible or inappropriate.</li> <li>• Priority accorded to the various eligible links, along with the reason for the priority.</li> </ul> <p>17. The final list of eligible links, in order of priority, should be finalised after complaints/objections are settled.</p> <p><b><i>Again, the people must attend all such block meetings in large numbers and be vigilant. They must carefully listen to the list and details of the proposed links, as they are being read out, and be ready to raise objections if any ineligible or inappropriate links have been included, or the priorities accorded are wrong.</i></b></p> <p>18. The final list must be put up for public display at all the Gram Panchayat offices.</p> <p><b><i>The people must ensure that this list is put up and also that it is authentic.</i></b></p>
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<p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p>The alignment of the road.</p> <p>The assessment of environmental impacts.</p> <p>The assessment of social and economic impacts.</p>	<p>6. As the land for the road has to be donated free by the villagers, the alignment could be biased towards the lands of the weaker sections of the village population.</p> <p>7. The alignment could have other significant and adverse social impacts.</p> <p>8. The alignment could be sub-optimal in terms of its utility to the villagers.</p> <p>9. The alignment could be unnecessarily destructive to the environment.</p> <p>10. The alignment could be unnecessarily long, expensive or difficult to maintain.</p>	<p>4. The alignment of the road must be finalised in a public meeting specifically called for the purpose. The villagers of the area, especially those who live in the proximity of the road or are likely to be impacted by it, must be invited. There should also be a public announcement so that other concerned persons, especially non-governmental experts, could also have an opportunity to attend.</p> <p>5. Copies of the social and environmental impact statements, as also the rationale for the proposed alignment, must be made available on the web and in at least one local office at least a month before the proposed meeting and along with the public notice for the meeting.</p> <p>6. Copies should also be available in the local language and placed in the gram panchayat office of each of the villages that are in the locality or otherwise affected.</p> <p>7. During the public meeting, the rationale for the alignment as also the findings of the social and environmental impact statements must be presented in the local language and questions relating to these or any other aspects of the link answered.</p> <p><b><i>The people must educate themselves about the details of the proposed alignment, discuss it among themselves in advance, seek independent professional help, if required, and ask the concerned functionaries to explain the reasons for the proposed alignment, as also the ways in</i></b></p>
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			<i>which the social and environmental impacts will be prevented or mitigated.</i>
<b>5.</b>	The awarding of contracts/ giving work orders.	<p>4. The awarding of contract to a non-eligible contractor.</p> <p>5. The awarding of contract on the basis of political/other pressures..</p> <p>6. The awarding of contract on the basis of illegal gratification or other illegitimate considerations.</p> <p>7. Exaggerated/ inaccurate technical estimates.</p> <p>8. Inclusion, in estimate, of unnecessary expenditure.</p> <p>9. Excessive rates and material.</p> <p>10. Unclear work order that does not make the details of the work clear/leaves scope for mis-interpretation.</p>	<p>5. As soon as the contract is awarded, the details of all the bids, along with the criteria for selection and the reasons for acceptance/rejection of bids should be put on the web.</p> <p>6. The work order, along with the conditions and specifications, should also be similarly posted.</p> <p>7. A local language version of all these should be placed in the gram panchayat offices of each of the concerned/affected villages.</p> <p><b><i>Insist that details of the bids and contracts, including details of the work order are placed in the gram panchayat office. Discuss this among yourselves and take the help of outside experts, if required. If any discrepancies are discovered, file formal complaints and pursue them with the help of the Right to Information Act, 2005.</i></b></p> <p>8. Technical estimate has to be done with the involvement of the local people, and has to be approved by the gram sabha.</p> <p><b><i>The people must participate in this exercise and ensure that the estimates are realistic, that the rates being quoted are as per local availability and that no unnecessary items of expenditure are being included.</i></b></p> <p>9. The format for the technical estimate must be simple and understandable by the people.</p> <p>10. Similarly, the sanction and work order</p>

			<p>format must be people friendly.</p> <p>11. This format must be put on public display so that people can access this information and understand the details of the work.</p> <p><b><i>The people need to remain vigilant and check the final estimate and work order to ensure that they are in accordance with what was collectively decided.</i></b></p>
6.	<p>The construction of the road.</p> <p>h. Implementing agencies.</p> <p>i. Employment of labour.</p> <p>j. Following of specifications.</p> <p>k. Quality control.</p> <p>l. Controlling of adverse</p>	<p>4. Sub-contracting by the contractor to ineligible/inappropriate contractors.</p> <p>5. Non-payment of minimum wages/late payment of wages/non-payment of wages.</p> <p>6. Non-provision of required facilities to the labour.</p> <p>7. Employment of child labour.</p> <p>8. Not following physical specifications.</p> <p>9. Not following quality standards, in materials or in workmanship/process.</p> <p>10. Not following environmental safeguards, especially</p>	<p>4. The details of the authorised contractor and any authorised sub-contractors must be prominently displayed, in the local language, at the work site and in the Gram Panchayat Office of the concerned/affected villages. This should include photographs along with the name of the main functionaries (mate, overseer, JE, foreman, machine operator, etc.). Whenever there is any change in staff, this display will be updated within the week.</p> <p>5. The muster rolls/salary accounts of the workers must be available at the work site for inspection by the public, during working hours.</p> <p>6. A board with details, in local language, of work – estimates and running costs – material, labour and funds, will be put up at every site, and updated regularly. The format will be user friendly.</p> <p>7. Every week five randomly selected workers will have to verify and certify all of</p>

	<p>environmental impacts.</p> <p>m. Controlling adverse social impacts.</p> <p>n. Keeping to time lines.</p>	<p>in excavating fill material, dumping overburden and waste, use of water, destruction of vegetation, use of biomass for fuel, air, noise and water pollution, work related health hazards.</p> <p>11. Blockage of access/passage.</p> <p>12. Adverse impacts on agricultural fields/ grazing lands.</p> <p>13. Threat to safety, especially of children and women.</p> <p>14. Impact of influx of outsiders, especially in remote regions.</p> <p>15. Avoidable delay due to diversion/insufficiency of labour/ machines/ capital etc.</p>	<p>bills/vouchers of their work site, before they are passed.</p> <p><b><i>The people must ensure that the five workers selected are all reliable and independent of the authorities. These five workers must verify all the documents after carefully checking them.</i></b></p> <p>8. A daily materials-register must be kept, and verified by five randomly selected workers every day.</p> <p><b><i>The people must ensure that the five workers selected are all reliable and independent of the authorities. These five workers must verify the daily materials register after carefully checking the relevant facts.</i></b></p> <p>9. The daily/individual measurement records for each work and worker must be available for public inspection.</p> <p><b><i>This will only be an effective check if people regularly inspect these records and ensure that they are accurate.</i></b></p> <p>10. A list of the facilities required by law to be provided to the workers on site and off site, must also be put up, in local language, at the work site and in each gram panchayat office in the area. The public will have a right to inspect these facilities when they are supposed to be operative, and the contractor/concerned agency will facilitate this.</p> <p>11. The public will also have a right to observe and interview the labour working on the project to determine that they are being properly treated and paid, and that there is</p>
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			<p>no discrimination and no employment of child labour.</p> <p>12. As already mentioned, copies, in local language, of the work order, along with a list of conditions and specifications, including environmental and social conditions, will be kept in each of the concerned gram panchayat offices. In addition, these documents will also be available at the work site so that the public can examine them and also inspect the measures being taken to meet with the specifications and conditions. The contractor/ concerned authorities will facilitate this.</p> <p>13. Any member of the public can ask for a sample of the material being used, or proposed to be used, and such a sample will have to be provided as specified in the right to information act, 2005.</p> <p>14. At each work site a table will be displayed in the local language showing the time schedule for various phases of the work, the current progress, and reasons for shortfalls, if any. This must be updated weekly.</p> <p>15. A similar table specifying the workforce (category wise) and equipment that is required and that is currently in position will also be displayed, and reasons given for variations, if any. This will also be updated weekly.</p> <p><b><i>The people must insist that each of these measures is implemented. They must also form</i></b></p>
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			<p><i>their own vigilance committees in the village and take turns too inspect the work site, examine the displays and documents, and talk to the workers, to ensure that everything is in order. They should participate fully and actively in the process and ensure that the final road link is according to specifications, with strict quality control, with a minimum of adverse social and environmental impacts, and where the labour has been treated well.</i></p>
7.	The Evaluation of the road	<p>6. Taking and/or recording of improper measurements</p> <p>7. Not consolidating the information regarding the works in one place.</p> <p>8. Issuing of false completion certificates</p> <p>9. Works not conforming to specifications/ standards.</p> <p>10. Data recorded in a confusing/ Incomprehensible manner.</p>	<p>4. Verification of works, for conformity with work order in terms of specifications and quality, will be carried out by the concerned Ward/Gram Sabhas.</p> <p><i>The people must participate in the verification and assessment exercise, and ensure that the work done conforms to what was commissioned and is of use to the people.</i></p> <p>5. Completion data will be made public in a people friendly format.</p> <p>6. At the completion of a road link, a comprehensive public hearing will be held within one month, relating to work at a convenient public place, perhaps in the largest concerned village. Wherever possible, audio-visual records of the public hearing will be maintained. The details of how to organise a people’s audit meeting is laid down in the handbook on people’s audit.</p> <p><i>This peoples audit meeting (Jan Audit Manch) is perhaps the most important element of the social audit and people must participate fully</i></p>

			<i>in this and raise issues, without fear or favour, in order to ensure that the PMGSY link has been properly implemented.</i>
<b>8.</b>	Maintenance of the road	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Road has fallen into disrepair and cannot be used.</li> <li>2. Road has become dangerous due to poor maintenance.</li> <li>3. The road is having an adverse impact on the surrounding environment because of poor maintenance.</li> <li>4. The life of the road has been severely curtailed because of poor maintenance.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The agencies responsible for maintenance must provide to all the concerned gram panchayats details of their maintenance schedule, in the local language. This must be updated every three months with details of work actually done/activities actually undertaken.</li> <li>2. Once a year a public meeting would be held in each block to discuss the state of maintenance of the PMGSY roads.</li> <li>3. The concerned villagers would be invited for this meeting, with at least a month's notice.</li> <li>4. The concerned agency should carry out a survey of the state of the PMGSY roads in that block, in consultation with the local people, and present the findings in the public meeting.</li> <li>5. People should be encouraged to share their perceptions both of the state of the road and the performance of the agency given the charge of maintaining the road.</li> <li>6. Where contractors/agencies are found wanting, they should be penalised and even blacklisted, where appropriate.</li> </ol> <p><i>The people must gather evidence regarding the maintenance activities on the road, including a record of the work being done by the maintenance agencies.</i></p>

## **6. INTEGRATING SOCIAL AUDITING INTO THE ICDS**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme offers an integrated delivery package of early childhood services so that their synergistic effect can be taken full advantage of. The Scheme aims to improve the nutritional and health status of vulnerable groups including pre-school children, pregnant women and nursing mothers through providing a package of services including supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, immunization, health check-up, referral services and nutrition & health education. In addition, the Scheme envisages effective convergence of inter-sectoral services in the anganwadi centres.

With the enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005, the people of India have finally got a facilitating law that can enable them to exercise their fundamental right to information. Through the exercise of this right they can initiate a process that could go a long way in ensuring that the various programmes and schemes of the government are properly implemented and that the intended beneficiaries receive the benefits that were meant for them.

An analysis of the ICDS reveals that there are various entitlements that the people have under this scheme. Many or most of these entitlements are vulnerable to distortions, if the stakeholders were not involved in a meaningful way right from the planning stage,.

In order to ensure that such a meaningful involvement of the potential beneficiaries and other stakeholders gets institutionalised, this manual describes the various steps that need to be taken by the people and their groups and organisations to ensure transparency and accountability by the government, the Panchayati Raj institutions and other implementing agencies. The focus is on integrating people's participation in the planning and auditing process of the ICDS.

B. INTEGRATING SOCIAL AUDITING INTO ICDS

	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Vulnerabilities</b>	<b>Steps to be taken by the government</b>
1.	Demarcation of area to be covered by a new anganwadi centre  [Responsibility: Child Development Programme Officer]	1. Dominant / politically active communities might be able influence this decision	1. Publicly display and have read out the criteria for demarcation. 2. Also, publicise how the final demarcation meets with the prescribed criteria. 3. Where there seems to be a high risk of the decision being dominated by one section of the community, have separate discussions with each segment of the community. Where feasible, have the community express its preference by anonymously putting stones next to a pictorial depiction of options (like in participatory rural appraisal exercises).
2.	Selection of the anganwadi worker  [Responsibility: CDPO]	1. Selected at <i>aam sabha</i> meeting, may be influenced by dominant communities	1. Publicly display and have read out the criteria for selection. 2. Also, publicise the list of applicants/potential appointees and the reasons for the final selection. 3. Organise selection by secret ballot organised by putting stones next to a pictorial depiction of candidate (like in participatory rural appraisal exercises).
3.	Location of the anganwadi  [Responsibility: CDPO]	1. Location selected at <i>aam sabha</i> , influenced by dominant communities 2. Often not located in SC / ST hamlets due to social pressures and political influence exercised by dominant community	1. Make public explicit criteria for location. 2. Within the area that qualifies, (eg. within SC/ST hamlets), determine specific location by first identifying feasible options through open discussion – if required by separate discussion with distinct groups – and then a secret ballot, as described earlier.
4.	Issuance of contracts for supplies (such as toys, weighing machines etc.)  [Responsibility: Director, ICDS]	1. Influenced by contractor lobby 2. Corruption: Supplied on paper but may not reach AWC 3. Quantity supplied	1. All purchases through open tendering. 2. List of goods purchased and corresponding list of the anganwadis to which they are supplied, to be published in local newspapers once a year and to be put up on the web. 3. Each anganwadi to be supplied the list of equipment and material that they have

	Stage	Vulnerabilities	Steps to be taken by the government
		<p>may be low, so material not used at all (for. E.g. in one centre there are only 6 slates and 30 children so the slates are not brought out)</p> <p>4. No facility to repair items that don't work (e.g. weighing machines)</p>	<p>officially been allocated, and the list to be made public and also read out.</p> <p>4. Five randomly selected citizen's to certify the receipt of the listed equipment and materials, once at the beginning of each year, and to certify their continued presence every three months. The certificates to be displayed outside the anganwadi and also become an essential part of the district and state accounts.</p> <p>5. Responsibility to be fixed (and resources made available) for ensuring that the toys and other equipment and materials are kept in good repair. The three monthly checks specified above would also assess the state of repair and use of the items.</p>
<b>SERVICE: Supplementary Nutrition</b>			
5.	<p>Establishment of system for service delivery for supplementary nutrition programme (SNP)</p> <p>[Responsibility: Director, ICDS]</p>	<p>1. Might be influenced by contractor lobby, even though contractors are not to be issued for the implementation of the supplementary nutrition programme as per a 7.10.2004 Supreme Court order</p>	<p>1. The guidelines and details of the Supreme Court order regarding delivery system to be publicly displayed and read out in a public meeting.</p> <p>2. Discussion of details every six months, of the delivery system being used, with the local people.</p>
6.	<p>Ensuring supply of food for SNP to the anganwadi</p> <p>[Responsibility: CDPO and Supervisor]</p>	<p>1. CDPO or supervisor posts might be vacant leading to an absence of supervision</p> <p>2. Or, individual appointed to a CDPO/ Supervisor post might have 'additional charge' of the anganwadi, again leading to poor supervision</p> <p>3. SNP food sold in black market at various levels</p>	<p>1. The norms for the supply of food under the SNP would be made public and displayed prominently.</p> <p>2. The stock register would also be made accessible to the public, who could examine it at will.</p> <p>3. A team of five randomly selected women would be empowered to make surprise checks and verify stock register with existing stocks, and the food being distributed compared to the prescribed norms.</p> <p>4. This check must be done at least once a month and the reports would be sent to supervisory officers and also displayed publicly.</p>
7.	<p>Implementation of SNP at the anganwadi</p>	<p>1. Restricted number of beneficiaries</p>	<p>1. Where there are inadequate allocations and beneficiaries have to be selected, the criteria</p>

	Stage	Vulnerabilities	Steps to be taken by the government
	[Responsibility: anganwadi worker (AWW)]	<p>catered to since limited allocations are made for supplementary nutrition programme per anganwadi.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Selection of beneficiaries is politically influenced.</li> <li>3. Distribution of Take Home Rations, might be done at a time when beneficiaries cannot be present at the AWC</li> <li>4. SNP food sold in black market at various levels</li> </ol>	<p>for selection must be publicly displayed and read out.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The list of beneficiaries finally selected must also be made public along with the reasons for their selection.</li> <li>3. The timings for distribution of Take Home rations to be fixed in consultation with the potential beneficiaries and the timings displayed publicly. The distribution of rations at times other than those specified should be discouraged and the timings of actual distribution (as opposed to scheduled distribution) be also displayed every week.</li> </ol>
<b>SERVICE: Immunisation and health care services</b>			
8.	<p>Supply of medicines to anganwadis</p> <p>[Responsibility: Director, ICDS]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor coordination between Health and Social Welfare/ Women and Child Development Departments</li> <li>2. Corruption in supplies</li> <li>3. Old stock supplied, including medicines which have expired</li> <li>4. There are supplies but not used so future supply is stopped</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The norms for the supply of medicines would be made public and displayed prominently.</li> <li>2. The stock register would also be made accessible to the public, who could examine it at will.</li> <li>3. A team of five randomly selected women would be empowered to make surprise checks and verify stock register with existing stocks.</li> <li>4. This check must be done at least once a month and the reports would be sent to supervisory officers and also displayed publicly.</li> <li>5. A list of medicines received, the ailments that they are for and the number used would also be displayed every month and read out in the public meetings.</li> </ol>
9.	<p>Provision of immunisation services</p> <p>[Responsibility: Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Might not visit AWC on scheduled day</li> <li>2. No supervision of ANM's work</li> <li>3. Refusal to open vaccines if a minimum number of children not</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scheduled time/day for immunisation must be fixed in advance and publicised.</li> <li>2. Norms for immunisation activities (minimum numbers required, etc.) must also be publicised.</li> <li>3. The ANM must get signatures/thumb impressions of at least five of the local women certifying the time and day she visited, and how many children she immunised. If no</li> </ol>

	Stage	Vulnerabilities	Steps to be taken by the government
		<p>present</p> <p>4. ANM visits at a time when women have already gone for work</p>	<p>children were immunised, then the reasons must also be certified.</p> <p>4. A copy of this certificate must be put up on the notice board in the village every week and the summary be read out to the villagers, including the names of those who certified, every six months.</p>
10	<p>Growth Monitoring</p> <p>[Responsibility: AWW]</p>	<p>1. Not done regularly</p> <p>2. Growth charts not maintained, so there may not be effective monitoring of malnutrition levels</p> <p>3. Does not cover ALL children but only those enrolled in the centre</p> <p>4. Those in the 0-3 age group left out and only those children who come to the centre everyday are weighed</p> <p>5. Purpose and meaning not explained to mothers</p> <p>6. Weighing machines may be out of order and not fixed, so growth monitoring stops for months on end</p>	<p>1. The responsibilities of the AWW be publicised regularly.</p> <p>2. The AWW publicly state in the scheduled meeting the names of those children that were not regularly monitored, along with reasons why they were not monitored.</p> <p>3. These public meetings also used to assess how well mothers understand the purpose and meaning of the various health related activities for their children. This can be done by once in six months or once a year having a quiz with some nominal prizes. The AWW whose group consistently gets low marks should be given a warning and, if there is no improvement, removed.</p> <p>4. Five randomly selected citizens to certify the receipt of the listed growth monitoring equipment and materials, once at the beginning of each year, and to certify their continued presence every three months. The certificates to be displayed outside the anganwadi and also become an essential part of the district and state accounts.</p> <p>5. Responsibility to be fixed (and resources made available) for ensuring that the growth monitoring equipment is kept in good repair. The three monthly checks specified above would also assess the state of repair and use of the items.</p>
<b>SERVICE: Pre-School Education</b>			
11	<p>Conducting pre-school activities everyday</p> <p>[Responsibility: AWW]</p>	<p>1. Centre open for too little time – only an hour or two</p> <p>2. No teaching aids</p> <p>3. AWW not trained on pre-school activities.</p>	<p>1. Scheduled time for centre to be open must be fixed in advance and publicised.</p> <p>2. Norms of activities in the centre, along with the aids prescribed and sanctioned, must also be publicised.</p> <p>3. The ANM must get signatures/thumb impressions of at least five of the local women certifying the time, each day that the centre was open.</p> <p>4. A summary of this certificate must be put up</p>

	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Vulnerabilities</b>	<b>Steps to be taken by the government</b>
			on the notice board in the village every week and the summary read out to the villagers every six months, including the names of those who certified.