District Accountability Report-Multan

November 15, 2015
Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) would welcome reproduction and dissemination of the contents of the report with due acknowledgments.

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary............................................................................................................................................. 1

1. Background: .................................................................................................................................................. 2

2. Accountability Strategy: Establishing Citizen Information and Accountability Forum ............ 2

   2.1 Involving Punjab Information Commission and Multan Press Club in the Accountability Process: ........................................................................................................................................ 3

3. CIAF Accountability Initiatives: .................................................................................................................... 3

   3.1 Using RTI as a Tool for Public Accountability: ...................................................................................... 3

      3.1.1 State of Proactive Disclosure of Information: ............................................................................... 3

4. CIAF Monitoring Visits of Development Projects: ..................................................................................... 5

5. Findings: ....................................................................................................................................................... 10

6. Recommendations: ....................................................................................................................................... 11
Executive Summary

Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, (CPDI), in collaboration with UNDP established Citizens’ Information and Accountability Forum, (CIAF) in Multan to promote public accountability and public participation in development projects. CIAF, consisting of 36 members from diverse backgrounds and belonging to different spheres of life held interface meetings with public officials of health, education, environment and agriculture departments, visited public bodies to monitor development schemes and submitted information requests to seek information from public bodies from April 24, 2015 to October 31, 2015. A total of 6 interface meetings with public officials were held during this time in which CIAF members shared their concerns pertaining to the delivery of services with the officials. One of the major achievements of is that Education Department Multan has designated Public Information Officers, (PIOs) in all its attached departments and EDO, Education Department shared the list of designated PIOs with CIAF Members in the Interface Meeting held on November 12, 2015. They also submitted a total of 32 information requests under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 on pertinent issues pertaining to delivery of services by district public bodies. Moreover, CIAF members carried out a total of 24 monitoring visits of development schemes during this period.

Under-staffing in public bodies, culture of secrecy prevalent in government departments, missing basic facilities in primary schools and lack of information about the budget allocated for development schemes are some of the key findings of this process.

CPDI suggests that all posts lying vacant in Multan district public bodies should be filled on priority basis and requisite funds should be allocated to provide basic facilities in public schools. Section 4 of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 should be implemented; laws and procedures hampering citizens’ access to information should be brought in line with the spirit of Punjab right to information law. Trainings should be imparted to public officials on their responsibilities under the Punjab right to information law.
1. Background:

One of the primary reasons for the corrupt practices of public officials that the citizens of Pakistan have to deal with on daily basis lies in the fact that citizens do not know how to get their entitlements and rights. This lack of access to information not only creates disconnect between citizens and the public bodies but also adversely impacts on their livelihoods and living standards. As a result, it incentivizes corruption as citizens, in the absence of information, have to pay bribes or use connections to get things done when they come into contact with public officials. This was confirmed when CPDI conducted Information Need Assessment Survey in Multan from January 18, 2015 to February 04, 2015. The survey revealed that the majority of citizens want to have access to information pertaining to their personal needs but all citizens cannot get access to information about their personal needs as 28% in health sector, 24% in environment sector, 14% in education and 14 % in agriculture sector could not get access to information. In all the four sectors surveyed, 39% citizens complained about incomplete information being provided by the staff, 31% complained about misbehaviour of the staff and 19% shared that the staff was reluctant to share information. Furthermore, Key informant interviews and focus group discussions reveal that citizens have to use personal contacts and references to have access to information.

2. Accountability Strategy: Establishing Citizen Information and Accountability Forum

Lack of access to information not only hampers public participation in development processes, it also contributes to the design of development projects based on wrong priorities and embezzlement of public funds from development projects and schemes. Realising that fact CPDI decided to establish CIAF, a citizen led group in Multan. The CIAF consisted of 36 people including representatives of youth, women rights organizations, minority groups, bar associations, traders association, farmers association, teachers association, NGOs/CBOs, University Faculty, and press clubs.

CIAF members were imparted training on the use of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 on April 22-23, 2015 for public accountability. During this meeting, CIAF members decided that they would send information requests to public bodies in order to seek key information about their functioning and the utilisation of allocated budget. They also decided to undertake visits to development projects to monitor progress of these projects. For this, it was decided that CIAF subcommittees in education, health, and environment and agriculture sectors will be formed. Lastly, they also decided to hold interface meetings with public officials to share with them their concerns.
2.1 Involving Punjab Information Commission and Multan Press Club in the Accountability Process:

CPDI also decided to involve Punjab Information Commission and Multan Press Club to strengthen accountability process to be carried out with the help of CIAF. As a result of this engagement with Punjab Information Commission, Punjab Information Commissioner participated in one of the interface meetings of CIAF with public officials on August 18, 2015. Furthermore, our engagement with Multan Press Club proved to be useful in achieving CIAF objectives.

3. CIAF Accountability Initiatives:

Following initiatives were undertaken in this regard.

3.1 Using RTI as a Tool for Public Accountability:

The Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 empowers citizens to hold public officials accountable by giving citizens right to ask questions from elected and public officials about matters of public importance. That the citizens can hold them accountable and ask questions about their performance is a concept entirely alien to officials. Similarly, the whole paraphernalia of managing delivery of services to citizens stems from legal and administrative regime of colonial era. As a result, citizens do not feel confident enough to believe that public officials are public servants and not masters. Moreover, citizens find it difficult to articulate their questions in writing, notwithstanding the simplicity of the process of seeking information envisaged in the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. It is in this context that the CIAF members were engaged to use RTI as a tool for public accountability.

CIAF members submitted a total of 32 information requests to Multan district bodies. Information was provided in the case of only 8 information requests by public bodies when information was sought under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. A total of 20 complaints were lodged with Punjab Information Commission. All the complaints are still pending with Punjab Information Commission. It clearly reveals that there are serious challenges with regard to the implementation of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013.

3.1.1 State of Proactive Disclosure of Information:

On June 08, 2015, CPDI submitted an information request to 32 public bodies in district Multan to gauge level of understanding of Public Information Officers about their responsibilities with
regard to the implementation of Section 4\(^1\) of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 and the status of proactive disclosure of information in these public bodies. Only 4 out of 32 public bodies provided the requested information within stipulated time. Significantly, only one Public Information Officer demonstrated understanding about proactive disclosure of information and the 3 others who responded did not have understanding about proactive disclosure of information. For example TMO Bosan Town, replied to an Information Request that they have appointed Public Information Officer, (PIO) under Section 4 of the Act. Conversely, PIOs are appointed under Section 7 of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. On July 10, 2015, complaint was lodged with Punjab Information Commission which directed public bodies on July 24, 2015 to share the requested information by August 07, 2015. Following this, PIOs started calling CPDI and asked as to what was proactive disclosure of information. We explained to PIOs that under Section 4 of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013, information pertaining to specific categories was to be shared in proactive manner by putting this information on web sites and by displaying it on prominent places on the premises of the public bodies. Following this, CPDI started receiving information from public bodies and yet again the responses reflected their lack of understanding about proactive disclosure of information.

\(^1\) 4. Proactive disclosure.— Subject to the provisions of this Act, a public body shall proactively disclose—
(a) particulars of the public body, its functions and duties;
(b) powers and functions of its officers and employees;
(c) norms and criteria set by the public body for the discharge of its functions;
(d) Acts, Ordinances, rules, regulations, notifications, circulars and other legal instruments being enforced, issued or used by the public body in the discharge of its functions;
(e) a statement of categories of information being held by the public body;
(f) a description of its decision-making processes and any opportunities for the public to provide input into or be consulted about decisions;
(g) a directory of its officers and employees with their respective remuneration, perks and privileges;
(h) budget of the public body including details of all proposed and actual expenditures;
(i) amount of subsidy and details of beneficiaries if the public body provides any subsidy;
(j) particulars of the recipients of concessions, permits or authorizations granted by the public body;
(k) facilities available with the public body for obtaining information held by it;
(l) name, designation and other particulars of the public information officer of the public body; and
(m) any other information that the Government may notify in the official Gazette.
### 4. CIAF Monitoring Visits of Development Projects:

As the following table shows, a total of 24 monitoring visits were undertaken by CIAF members to development projects.

#### Monitoring Visits of CIAF Members to Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No.</th>
<th>Development project</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Issues identified</th>
<th>Follow up Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Construction of Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif General Hospital, Multan</td>
<td>17-06-2015</td>
<td>No issue observed during the visit</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Establishment of Environment Protection Agency (EPA) at Multan</td>
<td>01-07-2015</td>
<td>No issue observed during the visit</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Construction / Expansion of 150 Beds for provision of Sub-Specialist services at Children hospital complex, Multan</td>
<td>06-08-2015</td>
<td>No issue observed during the visit</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Up Gradation of Drug Testing Laboratory, Multan</td>
<td>11-08-2015</td>
<td>14 sanctioned posts of staff out of 31 were still vacant at the hospital</td>
<td>RTI request to ask the reason of not filing the vacant positions was filed by CIAF member on Oct 6, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pulses Cultivation in Punjab under the department of Agriculture department in Multan</td>
<td>12-08-2015</td>
<td>They did not know the detail of allocated and consumed budget of this development project</td>
<td>Information request submitted by CIAF member to get details of allocated and consumed budget on Oct 6, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Construction/upraising of boundary walls in GHS 8-MR, Multan</td>
<td>18-08-2015</td>
<td>Two position of science teacher was lying vacant from last 2 years</td>
<td>RTI request to ask the reason of not filing the vacant positions was filed by CIAF member on Oct 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S No.</td>
<td>Development project</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Issues identified</td>
<td>Follow up Action</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Construction/upraising of boundary walls in GHS 5-MR</td>
<td>28-08-2015</td>
<td>Sanctioned posts of teaching staff was 19 and 4 positions of teachers were lying vacant</td>
<td>RTI request to ask the reason of not filing the vacant positions was filed by CIAF member on Oct 19, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Provision of additional class rooms in Govt. Girls Elementary Chungi No. 14 Multan</td>
<td>02-09-2015</td>
<td>No issue was observed</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Establishment of 20 Beded Hospital S-Block New Multan</td>
<td>03-09-2015</td>
<td>17 sanctioned posts out of 35 were lying vacant</td>
<td>RTI request to ask the reason of not filing the vacant positions was filed by CIAF member on Oct 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Construction/upraising of boundary walls in GMPS Gopal pur</td>
<td>09-09-2015</td>
<td>Head Teacher shared that allocated fund was not enough for the construction of whole boundary wall and SMC fund and FTF fund was also used for its completion.</td>
<td>RTI request was filed by CIAF member on Oct 6, 2015 to know the certified detail of total allocated budget and consumed budget for this scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Construction/upraising of boundary wall in GHS 14-Faiz, Multan</td>
<td>04-09-2015</td>
<td>4 sanctioned teaching staff posts out of 22 were lying vacant. Head teacher also did not know the budget details of the project.</td>
<td>RTI request by CIAF member was filed on Oct 14, 2015 to know the budget details of reason of not filling the vacant positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Completion of DHQ Hospital building for conversion into kidney centre, Multan</td>
<td>21-09-2015</td>
<td>They did not share the budget details of the project.</td>
<td>RTI request was filed by CIAF member on Oct 6, 2015 to know the total allocated and consumed budget details of the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S No.</td>
<td>Development project</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Issues identified</td>
<td>Follow up Action</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Establishment of DHQ Hospital, Multan</td>
<td>21-09-2015</td>
<td>They did not share the detail of sanctioned and filled positions</td>
<td>Information request was filed by CIAF members to know the total number of sanctioned and vacant positions in the hospital and detail of total budget consumed for this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Provision of additional class rooms in Government Junior Model girls High School Chungi no. 6, Multan (4C/Rooms)</td>
<td>18-09-2015</td>
<td>3 sanctioned posts out of 65 were lying vacant.</td>
<td>RTI request was filed by CIAF member to ask reason of not filling the vacant positions on Oct 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Construction/upraising of boundary wall of GGHS Basti Nau, Multan</td>
<td>13-10-2015</td>
<td>Head teacher did not know the detail of allocated and consumed budget of the scheme.</td>
<td>Information request was filed by CIAF member on Oct 29, 2015 asking detail of total allocated and consumed budget for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Construction/upraising of boundary wall of Government Primary School Ran Lab Deriya, Multan</td>
<td>13-10-2015</td>
<td>It’s being observed that almost in all primary schools teachers’ complaints of lack of staff according to the number of students enrolled as it affects the quality of education and overburden the teachers.</td>
<td>There is need to highlight the issue at provincial level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Management of Fruit Fly with special Reference to non-conventional Methods</td>
<td>16-10-2015</td>
<td>Staff of agriculture department did not know the details of allocated and consumed budget of the visited project as its being operated directly from provincial agriculture secretariat.</td>
<td>CIAF members visited the web site of agriculture department Punjab and it was found that detail of budgets of all on-going schemes of agriculture available there.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Revamping Agriculture Extension Activates/Services in Punjab</td>
<td>17-10-2015</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Targeting Malnutrition and Low Productivity through balanced use of fertilizer in Punjab</td>
<td>17-10-2015</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Enhance Vegetable production in Punjab</td>
<td>17-10-2015</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Wheat Productivity Enhancement Project in Punjab</td>
<td>16-10-2015</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Provision of additional class rooms in GPS Chak Gagra Multan (2C/Rooms)</td>
<td>22-10-2015</td>
<td>Sanctioned teaching staff posts were 3 and 2 posts were lying vacant</td>
<td>RTI request was filed by CIAF member on Oct 29, 2015 to ask the reason of not filling the vacant positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Extension of CPE institute of Cardiology Multan (Construction of new OPD &amp; inpatient Block)</td>
<td>22-10-2015</td>
<td>No issue was observed by CIAF members</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Productivity Punjab Irrigated Improvement Project (Water Management Wing)</td>
<td>22-10-2015</td>
<td>Staff of agriculture department did not know the details of allocated and consumed budget of the visited project as its being operated directly from provincial agriculture secretariat.</td>
<td>CIAF members visited the web site of agriculture department Punjab and it was found that detail of budgets of all on-going schemes of agriculture available there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following are the key findings of these monitoring visits:

**Under Staffing in Public Bodies:**

In almost all the public bodies visited, posts were lying vacant when seen in relationship with the sanctioned posts. This is especially worrying given the fact that the public bodies visited are supposed to perform crucial and basic services in education, health, environment and agriculture sectors.
The filled posts of teachers were less than the sanctioned posts in almost all the primary schools monitored. As a result, teachers were overburdened.

**Missing Facilities in Schools:**

Apart from vacant posts of teachers in primary schools, absence of basic facilities like incomplete furniture, unavailability of class rooms and lack of clean drinking water facility, especially in the schools situated in the rural areas, was observed during these monitoring visits.

**Lack of Information about Allocated Budget for Development Schemes:**

It was observed that public functionaries, especially Head Teachers did not have any information about the budget allocated in the development schemes to tackle the issue of missing facilities.

**Reluctance to Share Information:**

During the course of these visits, it transpired that public official were reluctant to share even basic information. Especially, public official working in health sector were reluctant to share information.

Apart from not sharing information when it was requested, it was observed that departments, especially Health Department did not designate Public Information Officers as required under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013.
5. Findings:

Following are the key findings:

1. Posts are lying vacant in public bodies impacting performance of these public bodies.
2. Posts of teachers are lying vacant in primary schools impacting quality of education.
3. Basic facilities were missing in almost all the primary schools that were visited.
4. Head teachers do not have information about the budget allocated for development schemes to provide missing facilities.
5. Majority of public bodies did not share information when requested under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013.
6. **Recommendations:**

1. All posts lying vacant in district public bodies should be filled on priority basis.

2. Requisite funds should be allocated in the education sector to provide basic facilities in schools.

3. Section 4 of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 needs to be enforced through the Punjab Local Government Rules of Business 2001 or any rules framed to operationalize any law about the functioning of district public bodies.

4. Training should be imparted to Public Officials on the value of sharing information with citizens. Such trainings are within the mandate of Punjab Information Commission and should be carried out on regular basis.

5. Punjab Information Commission and Punjab Law Department should review all Provincial Laws, Rules, Regulations, Executive Orders and Secretarial Instructions and anything found in these to be in conflict with the provisions of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 should be removed.
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