

Social Audits and Public Hearings

Making governance accountable

What are Social Audits

- Auditing as a financial principle
- Peoples involvement in Audits

What are social audits

- A social audit is an accountability tool to understand, measure, verify, report on and to improve the performance of the governments. A social audit helps to narrow gaps between vision/goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness. It values the voice of stakeholders, including marginalized/poor groups whose voices are rarely heard. Social auditing is taken up for the purpose of enhancing local governance, particularly for strengthening accountability and transparency in local bodies.

Doing Social Audits

- Steps in Social Audits (forms can vary)
 - mobilising communities and clarifying the role of elected bodies and local governance mechanisms
 - Identifying stakeholders with a focus on their roles and duties
 - Definition of performance indicators which must be understood and accepted by all
 - Collection on indicator data by stakeholders regularly and periodically
 - Regular meetings to review and discuss information on performance indicators.
 - Summarising findings
 - Dialogues with elected bodies and officials (accountable body representatives)
 - **Public display of social audit findings**
 - **Public Hearings**

Steps in Social Audits

- Mobilising communities and clarifying roles
 - Community comes together on specific project/corruption/service delivery issues??
 - the community draw up the goals and functions of the body/office whose audit is being conducted.
 - the questions could be: what are the functions that the body is supposed to perform? What is its mandate?

Doing Social audits

- Identify Stakeholders and their specific roles
 - Social auditing aims to ensure a say for all stakeholders.
 - The stakeholders need to be identified and duties and roles need to be assigned. For eg: in case of food coupons, the stake holders would be all those families who are entitled to them.

Doing Social Audits

- Performance Indicators are collectively developed and agreed
 - clear indicators must be drawn up by the community on which the performance monitoring needs to be done.
 - such indicators need to be accepted by all.

Steps in Social Audits

- Indicator Data collected on a regular basis
 - the community needs to undertake periodic data collection on the above indicators. It could be a monthly, quarterly, half-yearly audits.



Steps in Social Audit

- Regular Meetings to discuss and review data
 - the community must hold regular meetings to review and discuss the data and findings
 - the data must be shared by the entire community for information and collective decision-making



Steps in Social Audits

- Dialogues with Accountable Body Representatives
 - Follow-up of social audit meeting discussions with the accountable body representatives.(district officials,collectors, village level officers etc.)
 - discussions here, could be on social audit findings, community decisions and viewpoints
 - making commitments on changes and agreeing on future action as recommended by the stakeholders.

Steps in Social Audit

Public Display of Social Audit Findings

- The findings of the social audit should be shared with all local stakeholders. This encourages transparency and accountability.
- A report of the social audit meeting should be distributed for auditing of the local elected body.
- Key decisions should be written on walls and boards and communicated orally.



Public Hearings

- Public hearings are large gatherings of the entire community/stakeholders in the presence of the accountable body representatives demanding accountability and answers from them. Public hearings are backed by hard evidence collected as part of social audits. Questions are then put to the representatives on the discrepancies and deficits between entitlements and actual services. Large scale corruption issues are brought to the fore-front. They are a very effective campaign tool for effective and accountable local governance.

When to conduct Public Hearings

- Public hearings are done usually when a large body of evidence on corruption and ineffective administration has been collected and presented to the accountable bodies, which has been dismissed by them.
- Public hearings are done after periodic social audits have been conducted. Since it is a huge mobilizing process and also involves costs and presence of a body of officials, it is to be undertaken when there is substantial to demand for.

Steps in a Public Hearing

- Summarising Social Audit Findings
- Mobilising Communities and Groups
- Ensuring Presence of Key People at the Hearing
- Conducting the Hearing
- Handling Rough Weather and Crisis

Steps in Public Hearings

■ Summarising Social Audit Findings

- The social audit findings, in terms of how much has been pilfered, what amount has been siphoned off, what are the governance discrepancies should be put up on charts in a clear and readable manner for the communities for mobilizing them.
- Each head should be written on a separate sheet of paper along with the amount of deficit, and details cleared indicated.

Steps in Public Hearing

Mobilising Communities and Groups on Large scale

- a massive campaign on the above findings need to be undertaken to mobilize people for the hearing much in advance, at least a week or more.
- the findings need to be put up on the walls of all the important community gathering places for information
- Folk Theatre/ Communication, Street song and dance need to be done to communicate the messages and mobilize people

Steps in Public Hearings

- Ensuring Presence of Key People at the Hearing
 - Key people, both from the community and the accountable body need to be present for answers.
 - it is also important to ensure the presence of the media(both for ensuring the presence of the accountable body representatives and also to report on the hearing.)

Steps in Public Hearing

Conducting a Hearing

- There should be a panel of people for conducting the hearing. They should ideally be the following:
 - the officials, the legislator of the area, community leaders, civil society representatives, media representatives, teacher of the school, a jurist
- The conductor of the hearing takes each corruption or budget head for discussion and reads out as prepared for earlier and displays to the gathering.
- Then testimonies from the community are presented regarding each case.
- Questions are then put to the representatives and explanations are sought.

Steps in Public Hearing

- Handling Rough Weather and Crisis
 - Public hearings can get very heated, since a lot of corruption is exposed and the representatives (legislators, village officials etc.) can get very defensive. Even the people's outbursts can get very explosive. The facilitator needs to pacify both groups in a cool manner

