

SOCIAL AUDIT

A PEOPLES MANUAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Foreword	
Acknowledgement	
I Social Audit	1
II Social Audits and The Right To Information Act (RTI)	29
III Integrating Social Audits into the NREGA	37
IV Social Auditing: A Training Module	64
V List of Resource Persons/Institutions	67
Annexure 1 Report of the Bhavanipatna, Kalahandi (Orissa) Social Audit	77
Annexure 2 Report of the Hardoi (UP) Social Audit	84
Annexure 3 Social Audit Work-site Verification Report (Samples)	91
List of Boxes	
Box – 1 Implications of Social Audit	1
Box – 2 Social Audit – A Tool for Bottom-up Accountability	2
Box – 3 Social (SA) and Financial Audit (FA)	3
Box - 4 When Should Social Audit be Conducted?	4
Box - 5 Some Models of Social Audit Arrangement	5
Box - 6 Social Audit as a Monitoring Tool	6
Box - 7 Social Audit as Evaluation Tool (External Agents/ Agency for Social Audit)	7
Box - 8 Benefits of Social Audit : The Case of NREGS (Experiences Across the Country)	8, 9 & 10
Box - 9 Different Stages in Social Audit	14
Box - 10 Social Audit at Identification Stage in NREGS	15
Box - 11 Conducting Social Audit (Experience in Pargi Mandal, A.P)	19
Box - 12 Items to be Social Audited under NREGS	20, 21
Box – 13 Threats to Social Audit	28
Box – 14 Public Information Officer for NREGS	31
Box – 15 Specimen Application for Seeking Information under the RTI Act, 2005	32
Box – 16 What Does it Cost to Get the Information?	34
Box – 17 The Power of RTI : Experiences from the Field	36
Box – 18 Social Audit – A Democratic Ideal	47
Box – 19 The Social Audit Forum : Tasks	47
Box – 20 Social Audit in the Gram Sabha	54


FOREWORD

Participation, Transparency and Accountability are the three pillars of good governance. Social Audit is one such initiative which is gaining ground and it encompasses all the three elements. With the enactment of the NREGA, the Social Audit has become mandatory and is widely talked and written about. However, the Social Audit is still an emerging and evolving concept and not much literature in terms of guidelines or handbook or manual is available for use by either the development functionaries or civil society organisations. Keeping this in mind, NIRD had interacted with Smt. Aruna Roy, Dr Shekhar Singh and Shri Nikhil Dey and had come out with an idea of publishing a manual based on field level experiences. Shri Lalit Mathur, former DG, NIRD and Shri Chinmay Basu, former DDG, NIRD played a key role in formalising an arrangement with Centre for Equity Studies. I may also mention here that NIRD has also brought out four booklets on the use of Right to Information for Rural Development Programmes.

In order to develop this manual, NIRD entered into an agreement with the Centre for Equity Studies to organise six experimental Social Audits across the country which will also be a training ground with hands-on-experience for large number of academicians, government officials and NGOs. Such Social Audits were organised in Rajasthan, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Sikkim.. The experience of experimental Social Audits helped us in giving a shape to our original draft into a manual. Dr S. Rajakutty, Prof. & Head, Centre for Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation has coordinated the whole effort from NIRD with the Centre for Equity Studies.

It is hoped that this manual will be useful for all practitioners of development programmes, not limited only to Rural Development. This is only our first attempt and we do hope to revise this manual and bring out a second edition based on further experiences gained from the field. We would appreciate and welcome comments and suggestions from readers and practitioners of this manual.

28, December 2007


V.S. SAMPATH
Director General
NIRD

Acknowledgement

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 taking the National Rural Employment Act as an example.

The preparation of this manual was sponsored by the National Institute of Rural Development and prepared along with NIRD experts, especially Shri Lalit Mathur, former Director General, and Prof. S.Rajakutty.

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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