

SOCIAL AUDIT

Social Audit (SA) has gained special significance in India, particularly in the context of Right to Information Act, 2005 and the GoI flagship programme of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) wherein SA has been made mandatory. Even as SA is envisaged in the Implementation Framework of NRHM, the process of SA is yet to gain momentum in NRHM.

Though achievements in the health sector in Kerala is laudable, there is a need for continuous assessment of the performance of health facility, particularly at grass root level through participation of various stakeholders, using the tools of SA. This will facilitate in increasing more awareness among the community on the various services as well as to bring in necessary improvement based on public scrutiny. Besides, such an exercise can facilitate NRHM to plan strategies to institutionalize the process of SA thereby ensuring its sustainability.

. Social Development Wing of NHM shall develop methodology, including tools of data collection, for carrying out the Social Audit. The wing shall also identify Resource Persons, recruit and train Social Audit Volunteers (SAVs) for data collection/information gathering, monitor/ oversee the conduct of SA including Public Hearings, Submit final report with recommendations to NHM Kerala and conduct a Dissemination Workshop in Thiruvananthapuram.

Aim/Objective

The project broadly aims to make Social Audit an integral part of NHM programmes in Kerala with a view to enhancing its transparency, efficiency and responsiveness of the Sub Centres in terms of Service/Programme delivery, so as to meet the demands of the local community. The following are the specific objective of SA

- To increase awareness among local community about the various services and programmes provided by the Sub Centres.

- To provide a platform for multiple stakeholders to review the overall function of Sub Centres regarding infrastructure, facilities, services/ programmes, performance of committees, utilization of funding and issues and problems.
- To assess the gap between the perceived community needs and the actual service delivery at Sub Centre,
- To identify strengths/ weakness in the performance of Subcentre, and
- To make recommendations for enhancing the service delivery of Sub Centres so as to meet the expectation of local community.

APPROACH/ STRATEGY

It is proposed to adopt a participatory approach and inclusive approach involving representatives of service providers at various levels, service recipients, Community based Organizations, NGOs , elected representatives of Panchayats, health officials at District and PHC/ PHC Sub-centres, women's groups, activists, and all vulnerable sections such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, BPL families and the larger community at various stages of SA.

The first pilot SA will be first carried out in one PHC Sub-centre in Thiruvananthapuram district and based on the experience, the methodology and tools tried will be fine tuned and used in extending the same to the Sub Centre in the other Districts.

Subjects Areas Covered

The SA at Sub Centre level will cover areas such as staff and infrastructure, medicine and equipments, registers maintained services available/ programmes conducted, utilization of funds and functioning of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees and Sub Centre Committee.

ACTION PLAN

Based on the approved proposal on SA, a draft Action Plan was prepared by Social Development Wing of NHM. This document was finalized after holding discussions with the State Mission Director and Head, Social Development, NRHM, Kerala.

Methodology

Sample

NRHM has selected Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Thrichur and Palakkad representing the Southern, Central and northern region of the State, as sample districts

and one PHC Sub Centre from each district to pilot SA. The District Wise sample PHCs and Sub Centres are shown below.

DISTRICT	PHC	Sub Centre
Thiruvananthapuram	Kallikad	One Selected Sub Centre
Ernakulam	Thattur	
Thrissur	Adat	
Plalakkad	Muthuthalai	

PRESENT STATUS

Social Audit has been completed Pilot Study in Pantha Sub Centre, Kallikad PHC in Thiruvananthapuram District. It is for the first time that Social Audit is being conducted in Health Sector. It is based on an analysis of secondary data collected from the Sub Centre and Primary data provided by multiple stakeholders such as elected representatives of Kallikad Grama Panchayath, Medical Officer- in charge of Kallikad PHC health staff including ASHAs, of Sub Centre, beneficiaries, small groups among vulnerable sections and a sample of households from the two Wards coming under the area of the Sub Centre.

A **Public Hearing** was also organised at Pantha to present the major findings of the report, seek the opinion of the community on the services, programmes, personnel, infrastructure, medicines and equipment, etc and to develop action plans- both short term and long term- to enhance the quality of service delivery at the Sub Centre. Dr. Ramankutty, Public Health Expert was the moderator. Hon Minister for Health inaugurated the Valedictory session. People representatives of District Block and Grama Panchayath address the participants.

Based on the success of this pilot study, Social Audit replicated to other selected District- Viz Ernakulam, Thrichur and Palakkad and will be completed shortly.