

Interface Meeting

Evolving Responsible Pharmaceutical Sector through Multi-stakeholder Engagement (BRCC Project)

Venue: Golden Park Hotel, Kolkata

Date: June 6, 2013,

The meeting started with welcome address from Keya Ghosh, Director, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre. She welcomed all the participants, dignitaries and outlined the objective of the meeting. She explained that the meeting aimed to brainstorm on a blueprint for a responsible pharmaceutical sector in the state with participation from some of the most knowledgeable experts and key players in the sector. The idea, she explained, was to have a small group of dignitaries (around 20 people) to contribute to the blueprint with concrete action points for each stakeholder category. She also mentioned that this interactive meeting was the beginning of the second phase, an extension of Business Regulation and Corporate Conduct (BRCC) Project, which is being implemented by CUTS in West Bengal, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

Prithviraj Nath, of CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre then briefly outlined the past activities of the BRCC project and also explained the upcoming activities that have been planned under the extension phase that is presently on.

He also dwelt briefly on the findings from the survey of stakeholders in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors that was done in the first phase which included 50 pharmaceutical firms, 50 corporate hospitals, 50 medical representatives and several sectoral associations. He touched upon the State Level Focus Group Dialogue that was organised in September 2012 in Kolkata and also on the National Policy Forum that was organised in New Delhi in October, 2012. These meetings, he shared, were aimed at deliberating on and disseminating the findings from the field surveys in the project territories. He went on to talk about the activities planned under the extension phase and shared the objective and outline of each of the activities that will be undertaken:

- Two Interface meetings in each of project states: First focused on pharmaceuticals, which was the meeting under progress and the other on healthcare sector that will be organised later on. The idea is to come up with a forward looking blueprint for a responsible pharmaceutical and private healthcare sectors
- Two Inter-state Regulators Meetings: This meeting will have regulators from all four project states and also other states as applicable and possible. The idea is to bring them together on issues to deliberate and come up with better looking policy recommendations.
- Four dissemination meetings on the study findings in states other than the four project states for further and wider dissemination of the findings and experience from the project.
- Two Capacity Building workshops: First one focused on capacity building of players from the pharmaceutical sector on responsible business conduct and has already been organised in April 2013. The other one focusing on capacity building of professionals and leaders from the private healthcare sector is to be organised at a later time.

He shared that the BRCC project in its extension phase aimed to enable a Policy discourse on relevant issues between and amongst policy makers, govt. regulators, industry players, and other stake holders like civil society organisation to see what could be an optimal way forward to promote responsible business behaviour in the two target sectors.

Rudra Shankar, CCIER shared the experience from the Capacity Building Workshop for pharmaceutical sector that was organised on 4-5 April, 2013 in Ahmedabad. He said the workshop was aimed at initiating a discourse between pharmaceutical firms and pharmaceutical associations on responsible way of doing business and emerging as champion of responsible business behaviour. He added that the effort was to understand two things, viz. the critical elements related to environmental impact of pharmaceutical firms and how to reduce it, and issues related to marketing and distribution. The workshop also discussed the challenges faced by pharmaceutical firms in becoming more responsible corporate citizens. He further shared that the matrix/structure of the proposed blueprint is based on the inputs and suggestions received during this capacity building workshop and it reflects the challenges faced by pharmaceutical firms. The same matrix was being used at the present workshop to collate inputs from all different stakeholders. Once the draft blueprint is ready, it will be shared with all key stakeholders, he added.

Keya Ghosh then requested Prof. Krishnangshu Roy, Director, Institute of Public Health, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal, to be the moderator for the discussion on the blueprint

Krishnangshu Roy started by observing that before the group provides inputs for each of the points in the matrix, it is important to agree that the members agree to all challenges that are mentioned and thereafter go ahead with the exercise. In this context, the first challenge mentioned as a challenge for the State Government (WB), "Lack of a common & operational framework/tool to analyse Responsible corporate conduct Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities of firms", gave rise to a lot of discussions and deliberations. There was a lot of debate and differences in opinion regarding the definition of CSR. Some of the points raised on this issue are captured below:

Dr. R. D. Dubey, President, Indian Medical Association (IMA), West Bengal Chapter: If any Corporate organisation builds school, hospital for their clients and staff, that is their business responsibility, not Corporate Social Responsibility. If they adopt some hospital hundred km far from city/town and take care of the health issues of the local people, then it may be considered as an action that conforms to Corporate Social Responsibility. Corporate Business responsibility and Corporate Social responsibility are different concepts, he stressed.

Ms. Barna Majumdar, Senior Scientist, West Bengal Pollution Control Board: she shared that from the environmental regulation perspective, treating of end products to appropriately make them harmless to the external environment forms an inherent part of the corporate sector's job since it is mandated by laws and regulations. That is part of their business responsibility because that is statutory law. Complying by such norms cannot be termed as coming under the social responsibility of the corporate since it is merely rules that they are conforming to. She opined that when a corporate entity goes beyond the norms to do things that provide positive benefits to the society at large, only then can it be termed corporate social responsibility. She however pointed out that if one corporate entity takes initiative to disseminate good environmental practices followed by them for adoption by other corporate entities, then that can come under corporate social responsibility.

Gour Kanti Paul, Assistant Director, Directorate of Drug Control, West Bengal: following statutory laws and regulations while manufacturing cannot be termed as corporate social responsibility. If the

company goes beyond the mandate to do that generates positive benefits for consumers it can be counted as an activity under Corporate Social Responsibility.

Alok Choudhury, Secretary, West Bengal Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association: Improving environment norms doesn't only generate positive benefits for the society at large but also helps in better resource utilisation and hence makes economic sense for the manufacturer. Hence they are correlated and with the right amount of advocacy and capacity building such improvements can be a win-win situation for both and can also help businesses to improve their CSR.

Keya Ghosh: A manufacturer polluting the environment while manufacturing and then undertaking beautification work surrounding their manufacturing unit or organising blood donation camps, etc. cannot be counted as entities that are fulfilling their social responsibility. There is a lack of clarity regarding what constitutes a responsible business, which is beyond just being philanthropic.

Krishnangshu Roy: there is lack of clarity regarding this term and Corporate Social responsibility needs to be replaced by "Responsible Corporate Conduct".

The house agreed with what Prof. Roy said and proceeded to provide inputs on the other challenges mentioned in the matrix for the blueprint. This entailed putting down action points against each of the challenges with envisaged short term and long term outcomes.

At the end of the exercise, Keya Ghosh thanked everyone for the rich deliberation and discussions and said that the inputs received through this brainstorming session will be a lot of help towards coming out with an inclusive and actionable blueprint for the pharmaceutical sector in West Bengal.

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June 6, 2013, Golden Park Hotel, Kolkata

DRAFT AGENDA

0930 to 1000hrs: REGISTRATION

1000 - 1015hrs: Welcome & Introduction

Keya Ghosh, Director, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre

1015 - 1030hrs: Presentation on the Project

Prithviraj Nath, Consultant, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre

1030 - 1045hrs: Presentation on the Discussion Paper titled "Blueprint of a Responsible Pharmaceutical Sector"

Rudra Shankar, CUTS CCIER

1045 - 1300hrs: Outline of a Blueprint for Responsible Pharmaceutical Sector at the State-level

Chair: Dr, Krishnangshu Roy, Director

Institute of Public Health, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal

1300 - 1330hrs: Summarisation and Closing

Keya Ghosh, Director, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre

1330 hrs onwards LUNCH

Annexure-II

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