

EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN BUSINESS REGULATION & CORPORATE CONDUCT IN INDIA

State Inception Meeting

Shimla, April 24, 2012

CUTS in association with Gunjan Organisation for Community Development (GOCD) organised State Inception meeting of the project entitled 'Exploring the Interplay between Business Regulation & Corporate Conduct in India' at Shimla on April 24, 2012. Rakesh Kanwar, Mission Director, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Himachal Pradesh chaired the meeting.

The meeting commenced with the welcome note by Ashutosh Kumar from Gunjan. Further, he spoke on the corporate social responsibility, role of stakeholders, and provided an idea about the framework for the programme as well.

Vikash Batham of CUTS International provided a brief overview of the BRCC project and the organisation, i.e. CUTS International. He stated that BRCC project has been initiated to examine the existing relationship between business regulation and corporate conduct in various sectors in India. This programme proposed to initiate a dialogue in the country on the need to balance business development with sustainable and inclusive growth.

Given the Indian government's recent attempts at providing greater impetus to the issue of business responsibility in the contrary, it is anticipated that BRCC project would provide valuable insights (based on evidence from the ground) for moving the agenda of responsible business conduct forward. This project is being implemented by CUTS International in partnership with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Norway across four states of India in pharmaceutical and private healthcare sector.

Project Objectives

- Address the regulatory and operational constraints faced by businesses in India
- Motivate firms to adopt 'responsible' corporate conduct
- Evolve a policy discourse between the business community and policymaker to facilitate a policy environment that promotes business development in a sustainable manner

Vijay Kumar of Gunjan gave a brief introduction of GOCD, which is a state partner for this project and elaborated the performance of the organisation in the recent past.

Sameer Chaturvedi of CUTS presented overall project to the participants. Subsequently, Chaturvedi and Batham suitably answered various queries raised by participants. During this

session, Sanjay Sood, Member Secretary, Pollution Control Board (PCB), Himachal Pradesh mentioned about PCB Rules to establish the pharmaceutical firms in Himachal Pradesh and action taken against the pharmaceutical firms by PCB, which do not follow these rules.

Rakesh Kanwar addressed the audience and shared some of his experiences of working in the healthcare sector. On account of relatively lesser presence of private hospitals in the state and more reliance over public healthcare services, Kanwar suggested to cover certain public hospitals located in Chandigarh, Ludhiana or Himachal Pradesh (as a special case) as this would provide interesting contrast for corporate conduct in public as well as private sector.

The interplay between business regulation and corporate conduct is multidimensional and the evidence should be guiding enough to deal with the underlying elements. Regulatory barriers that cause harm to the people through their weakness/safe havens should be analysed for two sectors. In a similar vein, those regulations that hamper innovative business models should also be looked at. Huge information asymmetry and vested interest is a key issue to be tackled.

CUTS and Gunjan expressed gratitude to the chair for his precious time and valuable suggestions.

Ashutosh made a presentation on research methodology. Firstly, he introduced research problem matrix:

- Adverse environmental impact (especially in terms of pollution) from pharmaceutical companies
- Current status of incentives (cuts/commission) provided by pharmaceutical companies
- Act of cuts and commission to doctors (individuals/in hospitals) among diagnostic services
- Current status of biomedical waste management
- Standard treatment protocol

Further, the participants were provided with valuable information on approach to field work and told that in state and pharmaceutical sectors and in private health sector key respondent groups are governments, businesses and stakeholders.

Ashutosh thanked all the participants at the end of the programme and invited all for the lunch.

List of Participants

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