



*"It's wonderful to see the youth participate in such programs. Let me know what you are looking forward to in the next couple of years because that will be of great help to me. Encouragement is what I get when I know there are people interested and thinking about better governance because we really need to see people say that Delhi Governance is better than the best. It's your aspirations we need to fulfill, not our own."*

– Mrs Sheila Dikshit, Honourable Chief Minister of Delhi at a special meeting with the CCS interns, 18 May 2009.

Midterm Report on

Delhi Citizen Handbook 2009

Submitted to Friedrich Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit

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## 1. Introduction: Delhi Citizen Handbook

An informed citizenry is vital for maintaining a vibrant and dynamic liberal democracy. Studying, understanding and reforming the institutions of democracy are essential for its survival and growth. This requires constant and concerted efforts on the part of citizens, civil society organisations, and governments. Citizens often do not know how their taxes have been used and lack access to feedback mechanisms to have a say in their own governance. In 2003, CCS developed the concept of *Citizen Handbook* that makes sense of the complex and previously undocumented information on government's budgets, management and program delivery and provides innovative ideas to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governance.

These *Handbooks* study agencies, boards, corporations, departments, schemes and programs of the state governments and Municipal Corporations. The criteria for evaluation of existing systems and the basis of policy recommendations are the universal yet rarely understood concepts of *New Public Management and the principle of subsidiarity*. These concepts challenge conventional wisdom and advocate government provision and private production, increased choice and competition, ward level and result oriented management as the means for introducing long-term and sustained improvements in the governance structures.

With the successful response to the *Delhi Citizen Handbook 2003*, CCS has used the same methodology to create *Handbooks* for Mumbai, Jharkhand State and of course Delhi as well (2006). Not only have these *Handbooks* provided well-researched information on governance but also have inspired hope that a little effort in the right direction can in fact lead to positive change. Some of this positive change attributed to the *Handbooks* can be seen in the fields of agricultural marketing reforms and introduction of private markets; flexible shop timings and privatisation of garbage collection. Widely discussed in the media, bureaucracy and political circuits, the *Handbooks* have been endorsed by prominent thinkers including Swaminathan Aiyar (*The Times of India*), Sunil Jain and Professor Deepak Lal (*Business Standard*), Dr Ashok V Desai (*The Outlook*) and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (Centre for Policy Research).

As with the previous *Handbooks*, the *Delhi Citizen Handbook 2009* hopes to further citizens' understanding of the workings of the government and encourage greater independent fact-based qualitative and quantitative research so that the next time citizens demand better governance, they can back their claims. Apart from focussing on public services, infrastructure and development, revenues and finance, mechanisms of accountability, the *Handbook 2009* also focuses on governance for underserved groups including refugees, street children, children with special needs and minorities. Given the importance of Commonwealth Games 2010 and their impact on the city, the *Handbook* addresses issues of displacement and future use of these facilities.

## 2. The Making and Meaning of the Handbook 2009

What makes these *Handbooks* unique and different from all the other similar publications, you would ask? One is recommendations based on principles of sound public policy and the second is the creators of the *Handbook* being the majority segment of the Indian population—Youth.

With India racing towards development (which some accuse as being non-inclusive), Indian citizenry is also transforming itself from being apathetic, cynical and ignorant to being concerned and informed about what is going on around them. *Bollywood* movies increasingly inspire citizens particularly youth to share the responsibility of changing the destiny of their country. India being the country with largest youth population in the world gives us the optimism about their potential to create change. However, youth need to be armed with not just the inspiration, passion and concern but also information and the ability to critically analyse that information for long-term desired change. Instead of *morchas* and *dharnas*, in this information age, youth need to “protest” constructively through their well-formulated questions and informed debates.

*Delhi Citizen Handbook 2009* is the outcome of Centre for Civil Society's constant and concerted commitment towards better governance. This extensive research was made possible by young student researchers and the book is a compilation of our studies on close to 28 departments, agencies, boards and issues that ignite public debate in Delhi today. The Handbook makes constructive and bold recommendations for improving the quality and effectiveness of governance and follows-up on some of the recommendations made in our previous books edition of 2003 and 2006.

### 3. Program: Book Launch Event

Centre for Civil Society planned a book launch and two panel discussions to initiate the debate on the findings of the book and reform ideas. We launched the *State of Governance: Delhi Citizen Handbook 2009* on 6 October 2009 at ASSOCHAM House, New Delhi. The program also saw thought provoking panel discussions on two important chapters of the *Handbook* - “Slum Free Delhi” and “Public Grievances System”. Attended by over 100 participants that included NGO representatives, civil societies, individual activists, parents, ex-government officials, youth and the media, the program and the Handbook was well appreciated by all. A CD format of the handbook was also released along with the book and it has also been put on our website for free access

(Please check [http://ccs.in/ccsindia/books\\_dch\\_2009.asp](http://ccs.in/ccsindia/books_dch_2009.asp))

The panelists for the launch program were Ms Kathrin Bannach, Project Manager, India, Friedrich Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit, Mr Pooran C Pandey, CEO, Times Foundation and Dr Parth J Shah, President, CCS. Here are a few pictures of the book launch panel:



*"This year we have been very fortunate to have solid partners who believe in the larger governance reforms in Delhi. We are hoping to be able to work with the Delhi government on a few key areas of focus of the Handbook in the near future."*

--- Dr Parth J Shah.

The panelists for the discussion on "Slum Free Delhi" were Mr Uttam Vaswani, Chief Engineer, Slum & JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi; Mr Dunu Roy, Director, Hazards Centre; Mr Vimlendu Jha, Director, Swechha; Ms Shivani Chaudhry, Associate Coordinator, Housing and Land Rights Network. Rajul Jain, CCS Research Intern made a presentation on "Sheltering Delhi's Slums - the Possibilities and Challenges" with the recommendations. The experts were then invited to give comments and discuss the reform ideas. The audience was also invited to share their comment which initiated a very engaged discussion.

Here are a few pictures of the first panel discussion:



The panelists for the second discussion on "Public Grievances System" were Mr Santosh Kumar Kain, Fulltime Member, Public Grievances Commission, Govt of NCT of Delhi; Mr Rudra Shyam, Convener, Grievances Committees of Delhi RWAs' Joint Front; and Ms Rashmi Singh, Executive Head, Samajik Suvidha Sangam (Mission Convergence). Cheistha Kochhar, CCS Research Intern made a presentation addressing the core problems of the restricted role of PGC to merely advisory, Executive Linkage of Vigilance, non-reachable help lines, under utilization of resources, and public private partnership modal for filing all sorts of complains including RTI with reform ideas. The experts were then invited to give comments and discuss the reform ideas. The

audience was also invited to share their comment which initiated a very engaged discussion.

Here are a few pictures of the second session:



Here is what the expert panelist shared about the reform ideas presented and the work of our centre/interns:

*"I congratulate the interns for the remarkable work. In just two months to explore such varied issues of governance with persistence, conviction and courage is something noteworthy. I hope it has prompted all of us present here today to think and reflect a little more and hopefully some of the recommendations made in the handbook would be taken up by policy makers to bring about better governance."*

--- Mr Dunu Roy.

*"I really like the recommendation of having one common helpline in Delhi, one where the numbers are easy to remember too. I will definitely advocate this idea to the right people in order to bring about necessary reforms to benefit the people in Delhi. Congratulations to all the interns and CCS for taking up this great initiative."*

--- Ms Rashmi Singh.

Here are a few pictures during the event:



The book launch event was well received by media too and our team in CCS is in touch with them to take up the issues and write in their respective media. Here are few clips of press cuttings covering the launch of handbook:



#### 4. Supporters: Other Partners

We had altogether four partners including FNF to reach to the level of work that we wanted to during the process of developing handbook. We had the summer research internship wherein we had interns to work on the issues which are there in the handbook. It required big budget for equipment facilities and resources for the interns which was financially supported by Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai.

*(Please check [www.srtt.org](http://www.srtt.org))*

During the internship we realized the importance of more like minded organizations which can help us with their contacts and reach to expose the work of our interns as well as help them. Here we were fortunate to develop partnership with Times Foundation, Delhi. They have helped and plan to help us with dissemination of the reform ideas from the handbook.

*(Please check [www.timesfoundation.indiatimes.com](http://www.timesfoundation.indiatimes.com))*

We also realized that we require more financial support to develop the research papers of our young interns to develop into nice looking and well drafted handbook and the follow up program. We once again found ourselves fortunate enough to get Friedrich Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit, Delhi on board and lend us their financial support.

*(Please check [www.freiheit.org](http://www.freiheit.org), [www.southasia.fnst.org](http://www.southasia.fnst.org))*

## **5. Follow Up Plan: What Next?**

The goal with handbook is to initiate a debate on the issues studied in the book and take the reform ideas to the concerned government departments and convince them to execute those reform ideas for better participatory and democratic governance in Delhi. We are approaching the policy makers, media, bureaucrats and NGO to write, act and advocate for the reform ideas of the handbook. CCS has been offered to hold up a workshop with the findings and reform ideas from the handbook for the officials at Delhi secretariat. CCS also has planned to organize at least three reform workshops for the concerned government departments.

**Workshops for Delhi Governance Reforms:** With the support of the three departments of Delhi Government we propose to organise two half day workshops—one workshop to discuss the chapters and chart out an agreed upon reform ideas and the processes to implement them, and a second workshop midway through to assess the work done and discuss and agree upon the final round of tasks. All the workshops would involve government officials, civil society representatives, and sympathetic media persons.

**Delhi Governance Reform Series:** Once the research papers are presented at the CM's Workshop with her officials and publicly debated through media we would identify three government departments/areas for reforms. For these three areas of reforms, we would need to involve a larger number of activists, civil society organizations as well as the people working in the concerned government departments/agencies. To achieve actual reforms we would also need to meet with the department personnel several times but at least a couple of times in a formal setting with other stakeholders. The Times Foundation, which is also our partner in this project, has a MOU with the Delhi government to engage citizens in the issues of governance. It would play an important role in our interactions with the government officials.

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