

STUDY LAUNCH “THREE WHEELS ON THE ROAD OF REGULATION”

AND

POLICY DISCUSSION ON “CYCLE RICKSHAW IN JAIPUR”

On Tuesday (10 July, 2012), Centre for Civil Society organized an event to launch the study on cycle rickshaws in city titled “Three Wheels on the Road of Regulation” and discussion on the same “Cycle Rickshaws in Jaipur” happened successfully. The event was marked by the presence of authorities and representatives from various departments and organizations. Speakers from all the departments concerning the subject of the study participated in the event and gave voice to the event by making their stands on the various issues related to the Cycle Rickshaw Business aloud. The main speakers present during the study launch event were *Mr Manish Pareekh (Deputy Mayor, Jaipur Municipal Corporation), Mr Om Prakash Sharma (Additional Superintendent, Traffic Police), Mr P. N. Bhandari (Advocate, Rajasthan High Court), Mr K. K. Sharma (Superintendent Engineer, Department of Local Bodies), Mr Pramod Gupta (Labour Inspector, Labour Department), Mr Ashok Jain (Labour Inspector, Labour department) and Mr R. C. Sharma (Additional Director, Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation)*. Representatives of other organisations such as Kuhad Trust and Pravah Jaipur Initiative expressed their support both before and during the event. The whole Community Video Unit (Pravah Jaipur Initiative) which helped us in making of the documentary on cycle rickshaws was present throughout the event. Representatives from Kuhad Trust which works on the micro financing of cycle rickshaws, were active speakers with their deep knowledge on the current status of the financial status of cycle rickshaw pullers in Jaipur. Other Organizations present during the event were **ACCESS Development Services** which works for and on micro financing and livelihood of marginalized workers, **Jan Hit Manch**, a social welfare group and **Sphere India**, a humanitarian agency. The subject of the discussion i.e. cycle rickshaw pullers also actively participated in the discussion. Media Coverage of the event was done by around 25 correspondents from various print and electronic media agencies.

The first stone of the event was the screening of our documentary on the cycle rickshaws in Jaipur named “**Ae Rickshaw Wale**”. The Video projects the comment of all the stakeholders on various and specific points like advantage, disadvantage, problems, role of contractors, policies, social security schemes, registration and possible solutions to the problems of cycle rickshaw profession in Jaipur. Parties covered in the documentary are Rickshaw pullers, public, contractors and high authorities like *Mr Rohit Mahajan (Superintendent of Police, Traffic), Mr Ashok Singh (Law Director, Jaipur Municipal Corporation) and officials from other departments (Labour Department and Department of Local Bodies)* answerable for

the cycle rickshaw profession. Subsequently a brief presentation on the findings of the study on the cycle rickshaw in Jaipur was given by Research Associate at Centre for Civil Society, Ms Aprajita Sharma. The presentation highlighted the basic findings of economic status, social status, income and expenditure mode, financial status, awareness of government schemes, problems, policies, legal history and suggestions for the improvement of the status of cycle rickshaws. The event progressed further with the comments by all the speakers.

The first to start was **Advocate of Rajasthan High Court Mr. P. N. Bhandari**. Mr. Bhandari congratulated CCS for the event and expressed his wonderings on the reluctant comments made by the government officials on "the need to organize rickshaws" in the documentary. He further expressed absurdity of artificial and unnecessary regulation where free market forces work best and ban on rickshaw pulling on humanitarian basis where need to earn is most important. Commenting on the role of contractors, he said, *"So many professions around the world involve the element of harassment of the subordinates by the upper positions to a less or more degree than why government need to seek ways to hinder this (cycle rickshaw) small yet vastly employment giving profession."* Mr Bhandari also suggested inclusion of role of organizations already working on cycle rickshaw so that a model of working can be shown which can further be replicated for the welfare of poor people.

The Justification of the right to livelihood defined in our constitution was highlighted by the next speaker **Mr. Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor** of the city. He asked the organising team to organize the same kind of discussion at the Jaipur Municipal Corporation to further empower the importance of need to organize the cycle rickshaw profession. He also promised to execute actions on the policies for cycle rickshaw within a month once a feasible model bill is drafted.

Mr Om Prakash Sharma, Additional Superintendent of Traffic Police gave the increasing figure of motorized vehicles as the reason to the reducing number of non-motorized vehicle like cycle rickshaw with time. Further justifying the attitude of traffic police towards pullers, he stated that since most of the cycle rickshaw pullers come from rural background, they lack the traffic sense, knowledge of traffic rules and basic training to ply rickshaw. And traffic police are bound to control the traffic so unwillingly they give such treatment to the pullers to prevent traffic congestion. Commenting on provision of rickshaw stands, he said that stands for 15000 rickshaws can't be constructed in the city due to limited available space. He suggested the rickshaws needs to be area restricted so that both motorized and non-motorized vehicle don't run on the same road hindering each other's flow.

Mr Ashok Jain, Labour Inspector at Labour Department commented on the inability of pullers to avail the social security schemes. He made comments on the

insecurity of health and social services of pullers and need to ply rickshaws at the age of 65 or more due to poverty. He further elaborated the *Swawlamban* scheme and *Rastriya Swastha Bima Yojana* run by the department and the procedure to avail the schemes. RSBY has been started in Jaipur but yet to come to force. Another point he brought in notice was difficulties in Rajasthan specifically in Bharatpur, Rickshaw pullers are not able to register in BPL list so they cannot avail the facilities given to poor.

Mr K. K. Sharma, Supritendent Engineer at Department of Local Bodies highlighted the issue technological upgradation of cycle rickshaw. He stated that the proposal to government has been sent for the operation of solar and battery cycle rickshaws costing Rs 50,000/- each on the roads of Jaipur.

Further **Mumtaz bhai, a cycle rickshaw puller** came on mike to voice the problems of rickshaw pullers. Being in the profession for last 30 years he commented that the pulling was much dignified early when they were registered and they use to pay tax of 20/- Paise. Rickshaw stands, easy loan facility, respect and scope of growth were the issues raised by the pullers present in the event. Pullers also brought into notice of everyone the harassment caused to them by Traffic Police and the financial consequences of the same.

Mr Deepak Saxena, Manager of Kuhad Trust gave a presentation on the "**Own Your Rickshaw**" scheme of the trust under which they enable pullers to own the rickshaw by paying monthly installments with no interest.

Mr. R. C. Sharma, Additional Director at Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation suggested that instead of restrictions government should organize pulling profession by identifying pullers. He also suggested that pullers can further be economically empowered by constructing rickshaw stands at every metro station and that would be convenient for public and traffic also.

The last amongst speakers was **Mr. Om Prakash Gupta** (leader/president of pullers and manufacturer of rickshaws) who brought the most important point that till date many policies got implemented but no relief was brought to pullers. He also justified the role of contractors as helping hand and shouldn't be considered the Mafia. Mr. Gupta mentioned all the problems of pulling profession in brief including theft of rickshaw, no availability of stands, harassment, need of count and registration etc.

The discussion was contributed by questions to government officials from media and other organization's representatives present during the event. Moderation of the event was done by **Mr Amit Chandra, National Coordinator of Jeevika Campaign.**