Implementing RTI Act: TIB experience during 2010-12

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has been working on access to information for ensuring peoples’ rights since 2006. In coalition with other NGOs under the banner of RTI Forum TIB played lead catalyst role in the enactment of RTI Act in 2009. Since then TIB is actively engaged in the promotion of RTI Act with wide-range of civic engagements activities both at national and local level. These include a series of outreach programme, media communication and capacity building programme for Committees of Concerned Citizens’ (CCC) in 45 areas and Youth Engagement and Support (YES) in CCCs and Dhaka.

Promoting the use of the Right to Information Act 2009:

- **Assigned designated Information Officers and responds to applications:**
  TIB assigned a total of 92 designated Information Officers and alternative Information Officers in all CCC areas including Dhaka office and disclosed their names on its website. Since then, TIB responded to 60 RTI applications submitted by the people and other organizations.

- **Filling RTI applications:**
  A total of 275 applications were made following the formats revealed in RTI Act during this period. These were submitted by the members of CCC, YES and TIB staffs to the different authorities of local government, land, health, education and climate change. Information were sought on issues like eligibility of getting stipend for the students of primary school, recruitment process in education board, list and quantity of the free medicine in hospital, listing process for social security programs in local government institutions, annual budget of relevant local government institutions, process of getting KHASH LAND, Mutation fees and land tax, procedure to get electricity connection from district level offices, fund of climate finance in Bangladesh, published result of teacher registration examination etc.

- **Practical Demonstration on filling RTI format for mass people:**
  Some 2000 people got acquainted with the process of filling RTI application during Information Fairs held in 17 CCCs.

- **Satellite AI-Desk promoting proactive disclosure:**
  TIB’s Satellite Advice and Information Desk (AI-Desk) services focused on health, education and local government in all CCCs and Dhaka Medical College Hospital in Dhaka. Through these desks the services information distributing information leaflets. More than 60,000 people got health services information in Dhaka and 45 CCC areas.

- **Cultural Campaign on RTI:**
  Some 150 street theater shows by the YES theater groups reached to some 33,000 people that emphasized RTI movement in CCC areas and Dhaka. Dhaka YES Theater groups produced two RTI focused story of ‘Shonger Bidhan’ and ‘Tathay Pathya’. In the International RTK Day observance mass people were gathered through cultural programme, GOMVIRA, BAWOL and JARI GAN (Folk song).

- **Institutional capacity on RTI and filling application:**
  Workshops for TIB staffs and Dhaka YES members were organized with the support of CHRI (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives) of India explaining how to get information using RTI in 2010. Dhaka YES was also made an annual work plan on RTI. YES members of CCCs and Dhaka successfully organized study circles, seminar workshops and training on the
effective implementation of RTI Act, opportunities, and challenges of RTI and some 300 YES members also learnt how to file RTI application.

Support Increasing of Public Awareness on the Act:
TIB observed 28 September, the International Right to Know Day to raise public awareness on the need and use of RTI Act all over the country.

- **Information Fairs for International RTK day:**
  TIB organized more than 80 Information Fairs in CCC areas including Dhaka and more than 550 government and non-government institutions showcased their information. Here RTI was used to linking peoples demand with the service providers.

- **Outreach Campaign:**
  On the event of International RTK day observance, TIB organized round-table discussions, seminar, human chain, rally, debate, quiz, essay and painting competitions and signing campaign in CCC areas and Dhaka on the issue of RTI Act and its implementation.

- **Publishing IEC materials:**
  Almost 30 items of IEC materials such as concept note, leaflet, T-Shirt, sticker, booklet were produced and disseminated to some 4,00,000 people both in Dhaka and CCC areas.

- **Campaign with visual documents:**
  Three television commercials (TVC) and three radio commercials (RDC) highlighting issues of health, education and local government were produced and aired by selected electronic media. Dhaka YES opened a facebook page on RTI (https://www.facebook.com/rtibd).

Support the RTI regime in other ways:

- **Literary publication:**
  Executive Director of TIB presented the key note paper titled ‘Towards People’s Right to Information in Bangladesh: High Expectations, Tentative Progress, the Way Forward’ in 2010 and ‘Implementing Right to Information in Bangladesh: Opportunities and Challenges’ in 2009 during observance of the International RTK Day.

- **Research & policy:**
  As a member of RTI Forum, TIB was actively engaged in a report ‘Review of the progress of implementation of RTI Act: Analyzing Citizen and Institutional experiences’.

- **Joint publication:**

- **Public Interest:**
  TIB also produced 45 Fact sheets on 45 different public service issues such as RTI Act, ACC, Police, Passport, Postal Service, Consumer Rights Act, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Mental Hospital, Public Interest Litigation, Law of Emergency, Legal Aid, Pension, Driving License etc. in 2010-2012.