

**An Evaluation of the Project Titled:
Improving Budgetary Practices in Orissa
for Greater Investments on the Poor**

Project Period: 2007-10

Project Implemented by: Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD)

Project Sponsored by: The Concern Worldwide

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Introduction:

As is well-known a government's budget is a financial statement which assigns priorities to its different programmes in terms of resource allocation and spending. Budget also reflects the broader objectives of fiscal policies and sustainability of such policies in an economy over time. It is the single most important policy document of the government, where policy objectives are reconciled and implemented in concrete terms. Since budget of a government deals with money that is financed by the people, the process of budget formulation and implementation demands adequate transparency. However, in India, the processes by which budgets are prepared and implemented do not perform well with respect to this yardstick. Essentially, this means a lack of transparency and openness. This means a lack of accountability on the part of the government. There is a growing effort thus, among civil society actors across the world, as well as in India, on analysing government budgets as a tool to seek government's accountability at different levels of governance.

Over the years, particularly since the early nineties, a number of attempts have been made and still continue to be made by different civil society groups to track budgets from the perspective of the marginalised sections of the society, thereby attempting to influence the budgetary process in favour of the poor, both in terms of allocation and utilisation. Hence, analysing the budget becomes an important tool of governance through which people can hold the government accountable for its macro economic and fiscal operations.

Several non-governmental organisations and budget groups in India have initiated research and advocacy activities designed to analyse and influence government budgets. Many of these non-government organisations, particularly those working at the Sub national level, have initiated work on analysing sub national budgets from the perspective of the poor and the marginalised. In the process of seeking governance accountability, they have used analysis of budgetary allocations and policies in general and priorities of social sector allocation/spending in particular, as a tool of governance. These organisations use information provided by the State government budgets for their research and advocacy purposes. Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), among others, has also taken the initiative in this regard since early 2000.

Brief Description on the Implementing Agency

CYSD, as a development organisation, has been working to improve the lives of the poor and deprived in Orissa since 1982. It carries out community development programmes in direct partnership with the poor and the marginalised in remote tribal districts of Orissa. It extends capacity building support to primary level Community Based Organisations, intermediary level development organisations and networks to accelerate the process of social change. It also engages in policy research and advocacy on issues concerning the poor and the underprivileged sections of society.

CYSD's mission of promoting transparent, accountable and participatory governance in the State of Orissa, and to advocate for governance structure that enables people-centered

perspective to be maintained during preparation and implementation of budgets, has, almost as a natural corollary, led the organization to initiate budget work. No doubt, budget work initiated by CYSD has added immense value in strengthening the organisation's vision on the theme of 'governance'.

Project Information:

In 2003, CYSD initiated a process of analysing the budget making policies and practices in Orissa with an aim to identify its implications on the poor and the marginalised and formulate an appropriate civil society response to the issue. In order to seek financial assistance to implement a project of analysing State Budgets, CYSD entered into a partnership with the Concern Worldwide in December, 2003 for a period of three years i.e. 2003-2006 for a project titled "*Influencing Orissa State Budget in Favour of the poor and Marginalised*". After the successful implementation of the first phase of the project, partnership between both organisations continued for the second phase i.e. for the period 2007-2010, under the project titled "*Improving Budgetary Practices in Orissa for Greater Investments on the Poor*".

The second phase of the project was formulated and premised on a shared concern between the implementing (the CYSD) and the sponsoring agency (The Concern Worldwide) that: the State of Orissa is among the most backward states of the country; the government's lofty pro-poor policy declarations is hardly backed by adequate budgetary allocations; huge unproductive investments have been made by the State during the past couple of decades; skewed allocation of resources exacerbate regional disparities in the State; unwillingness of the Government to devolve adequate resources to Panchayats so as to enable them to function as a unit of self-governance; and State government has shown little regard for assessment of needs and impact etc.

While initiating the second phase, the project proposal highlighted the cause and persistence of the above mentioned problems. There could be a number of reasons such as - inefficient budgeting, lack of systematic research on budgetary allocation and expenditure in the State; lack of participation in the budgetary process by the public as well as the legislatures; lack of informed debate in the civil society; and limited involvement of the media etc.

Both the implementing and the supporting agency agreed that it was crucial to identify and engage with elements of strategic interventions in order to address some of the above mentioned problems in the State. These included- formulation of a strong civil society response on the issue public finance; creation of a strong resource base on budgetary processes/ trends; identification of alternative routes of generating additional revenue; need for sector specific expenditure tracking; and need for examination of the State's response to regional disparities.

With the above objective as the backdrop, the CYSD and the Concern Worldwide continued the partnership to achieve the identified mutual goals within a given time period. By now, CYSD has successfully completed the second phase of the project.

During this phase, the major focus of the project was- to look at aspects of quality spending on social sector, particularly education and health; identification and use of additional resource generation for the State; tracking some important programmes implemented at the community level; and to strengthen the existing data base (software-budget package) developed by CYSD in analysing budgets.

Moreover, the key objectives of CYSD's budget work by now include the following:

- to assess the government's populist rhetoric against its actual performance in terms of budgetary allocation and spending;
- to facilitate public discourse on budget and governance issues, encourage citizens' participation in governance, and advance the rights of the most underprivileged in the State;
- to initiate public debates that demand government policies be more transparent and accountable to the cause of the poor and the deprived;
- to demystify the budget and to make the budget and budget-related documents accessible to the lay audience;
- to advocate for higher budgetary allocations towards social sector that promotes the well-being of the poor and the underprivileged;
- to conduct budget analysis at the grassroots level through participatory means of expenditure tracking, and use such information for achieving advocacy goals;
- to strengthen budgetary advocacy in the State by generating authentic and analytical information from the field and produce research reports for advocacy purposes;
- to strengthen and establish the existing and new links with various stakeholder groups to demand for quality expenditure;
- to explore and deepen understanding of the resource generation opportunities for the State and to suggest an alternate means of resource allocation towards social sector programmes;
- to analyse the district level allocations and expenditures for influencing greater allocations to the backward districts; and
- to deepen understanding on budget analysis from the perspective of quality spending and better means of advocacy strategies to influence the policy makers at various levels.

Thus, CYSD responds to the State budget and highlights the priorities and policies driving budgetary allocations and discussing the budget's implications for the poor and the marginalised sections of the population; analyses policy pronouncements of the State Government through its publications i.e. research reports, newsletters, posters, handbooks etc.; conducts research studies on critical issues affecting the poor and underprivileged; undertakes field research to connect grassroots issues with the overall macro budgetary policy issues at the State level in order to seek accountability and transparency from the government; and develops partnerships and networks with other organisations within and out side the States enables it to further its own objectives on governance theme.

Purpose of Evaluation/assessment:

The purpose of the evaluation of CYSD's budget project (second phase), funded by the Concern Worldwide, is to see whether the objectives (both wider and specific) are fulfilled or not. If not where are the problem lies and how to short out these problems?

Basically, the purpose of assessment to see how the policy environment of the state responded after the interventions made by the implementing organisation during this phase of the project as well as how these interventions also made an impact on the lives of the poor and the marginalised in terms of greater public investment through State Budgets.

Key dimensions of the assessment include:

- To conduct an assessment of the understanding and involvement of targeted stakeholders on state budget and the degree of influence made by the project implemented by CYSD's budget work during the period 2007-10;
- To assess the process adopted to analyse the trend of State Budget allocation, utilisation and impact made on the poor people's life;
- To identify gaps and factors which act as constraints;
- To assesses CYSD's programmes (including activities) and strategies adopted during the project period towards achieving the goals and objectives;
- To assess the effectiveness of the strategies being used by CBGA in pursuing advocacy goals; and
- To make recommendations that can guide CYSD's development in the future.

Methodology of Evaluation

Participatory methods were used in evaluating the project. The methods were: studying the research outputs generated during this phase; examining the monitoring visit reports, review reports etc.; interaction with the staff members (budget team and the management team) at CYSD, and the Concern Worldwide; and discussion with targeted stakeholders such as-legislators, media, academia, representatives from the civil society groups and NGOs involved in budget analysis work of CYSD during this phase of the project.

At the end of evaluation process, a debriefing session was organised consisting of key staff members of CYSD as well as representative from the Concern Worldwide to present and discuss the main findings and recommendations, which may be incorporated in the final evaluation report.

The reviewer was provided a set of pointers to capture the perceptions of different actors of the projects who have had either directly or indirectly involved in the project activity during this phase of the project. Further, CYSD's budget team members worked out with the reviewer to finalize a list of persons/groups to be interviewed, including CYSD's management team and staff of the budget unit, legislators, and partner organizations, etc. (a list of stakeholders interviewed in the process of evaluation attached as annex). An

attempt has been made by the reviewer to capture perceptions of the stakeholders on various dimensions of the project objectives, while interacting with a varied stakeholder groups. CYSD also provided the reviewer with a number of its publications, including its research reports, grant-funding proposal, annual/quarterly and monthly monitoring reports, etc. during the period of review. The reviewer conducted interviews/interactions and group discussions with the relevant persons from March 5-7, 2010.

On completion of the interviews, the reviewer met with all CYSD staff working on budget unit, including representative from the Concern Worldwide on 7th March, 2010 and undertook an extensive discussion on the inputs received from the stakeholders interviewed and then provided some initial thoughts on the future direction in which CYSD may want to advance based on the interviewer's assessment. During this discussion, members present in the debriefing meeting provided further information to the reviewer that is incorporated in this draft report.

This draft report seeks further comments and suggestions from the team of CYSD budget unit as well as from the representatives of the Concern Worldwide to be incorporated in the final report of evaluation.

In brief, the reviewer undertook the following activities during his assessment:

- An introductory meeting with the staff of CYSD Budget Unit;
- Review of secondary sources of information, including reports, publications, and other documents published by CYSD;
- Interviews (one to one) with different stakeholders of CYSD, who are directly or indirectly involved in this phase of the project;
- Presentation and discussion of preliminary findings with CYSD and representatives of the Concern Worldwide; and,
- Finalization of the report after feedback and suggestions received from CYSD and the team of the Concern Worldwide on the draft report.

As mentioned above, it was suggested by the host organisation that it would be useful to look at a set of indicators while carrying out the evaluation process. For which a standard log frame (given in the annexure) has been designed and additionally structured the process to complement and supplement the concerns set out in the above noted log frame. The log frame was basically set by both the implementing and sponsored agency of this project to monitor the progress of the project activities vis-à-vis the objectives set therein at the time of project formulation. Thus, a careful review and readings of the objectives and the strategies spell out in the log frame was one of the methods of current evaluation process.

The evaluation was carried out over a period of three days from 5th to 7th of March and the agenda copy is attached to this note. (Programme schedule is attached in this note). For proceeding to the evaluation, the host organisation had shared an outline of their interventions and it has also shared the list of important outputs e.g. monographs, reports most of which are in the website (a list of publications attached). The evaluation is also based on a survey of such reports, monographs etc.

At the time of interaction with the participants in the course of evaluation an attempt was made by the reviewer to elicit information, views, perspectives etc. from different stakeholders. Given the heterogeneity of the stakeholders, the discussion with each one of them had specific and different concerns at the centre stage. However, broadly the discussion attempted to capture the following questions and issues.

List of questions and pointers

- Assessment of the activities undertaken and outputs produced;
- The methods of research and relevance to the grassroots issues related to quality of life of the poor;
- The strategies followed to disseminate the findings and create quality debate on critical areas of state budget in the State;
- The reports prepared and usability (user friendly) for a common citizen;
- Relation with other civil society organisations, networks and right based forums involved in taking forward the issue both at the State and sub-state level;
- Effectiveness of the resources and support to the civil society organisations, media and other key stakeholders;
- Coordination and collaboration with government departments and officials involved in the budget making process;
- Outreach of the project in terms of direct and indirect beneficiaries;
- Opportunity for intensifying the budget work before the stakeholders at the districts and beyond.

Scope of the Evaluation:

As regards the scope of the present evaluation, the reviewer sticks to the clauses mentioned in the terms of reference (ToR) as a base to carry out the evaluation process. As per the ToR, the scope of present evaluation is only the second phase of the project implementation under the project titled, “Improving Budgetary Practices in Orissa for Greater Investments on the Poor”, which stretch over the period of 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2010.

Besides, as suggested by the host organisation, few organisational issues have also been included in the process of evaluation. These are:

- The appropriateness of the present project management structure for effectiveness and proper functioning of the project;
- The level of understanding of the project staff on project goals and objectives, strategies and activities;
- The steps taken by the organization for capacity building of the staff;
- The method of project monitoring mechanism in place and its effectiveness; and
- The major problems in project implementation.

Apart from this, the host organisation also requested the reviewer to include an assessment of the nature and dynamics of partnership between CYSD and the Concern Worldwide and other civil society organisations involved in this process. The broad strokes of such evaluation include:

- Type of support provided by the Concern Worldwide in implementing the project during this phase;
- Support of the Concern Worldwide to the needs of the implementing organisation and timely response of any changes that required by the implementing agency; and
- The level and frequency of interaction between both the implementing and supporting organisation.

Key Observations:

The reviewer, while in the process of interaction with the stakeholders of the project and the personals involved in implementing the project as well as survey of the research outputs produced, documents provided by CYSD relating to this project such as; media highlights, monitoring reports etc., clubbed the information into four broad categories and drawn the inferences from the perspective of strengths, challenges, opportunities and way forward for the implementing organisation. Within these four categories again observations captured under various stakeholders e.g. academia, media (electronic and print), civil society (mostly NGO partners and others), policy makers as sub-categories.

Hence, the observations emerged out of the process of evaluation were clubbed into the following broad heads;

Strengths:

Reflection on team's activities: At the time of evaluation, CYSD has a team of five members in place who look after the project activities. Out of these five members, two members are new to this type of work. While interacting with the team member, the team made a short presentation on; the context, rationale, objectives, out put produced, strategies used for advocacy with different stakeholders and the challenges faced during the project period. At the end of the presentation, the reviewer felt that the team members having good understanding on the project objectives and goals, and the strategies used for advocacy enhanced their skill of negotiations towards lobbying greater investment on the poor. Probably, CYSD's existence in the state capital since long and its outreach to all most all the scheduled districts either through direct intervention or through the partners in implementing the projects, is a great strength for the team members in terms of access to different policy maker groups to make them understand about budgetary implications, access to budget documents, organising timely pre and post budget workshops etc..

Budget work at CYSD and the academic in the State: In the course of interaction with the group of academia, the reviewer came to know that most of the academia showed

their high level of satisfaction and appreciation with the kind of work (strategies adopted) that the team did to influence the policy makers of the State. The outputs produced, particularly the research reports during the period were quite mark to the level of satisfaction in terms of understanding, analysis and presentations of the subject. Even the issues taken up by the team in analysing revenue generation possibilities for the state were highly appreciated by the academia as a credible and unique output of its kind that the team produced. Further, at different points of time, the activities organised by CYSD (either in pre-budget and post-budget workshops, strategic meeting and peer group discussions), the academia becomes the part of the initiatives and played a positive role in contributing through write-ups and research reports to create sensitisation over the issue among the public and intellectuals. Nonetheless, the hostile nature of the State Government towards the voices of the academia, in many a times, CYSD provided a platform to them and this has becomes the strength for CYSD in utilising their specialisations on the issue of public finance and make the government responsible for the poor.

Media become the fellow traveller of CYSD's budget work: While interacting with a couple of representatives from the media (State Chief of Bureau of The Business Standard, Senior Journalist of the Financial Express and senior editor of an Oriya Daliy The Sambad), the reviewer was inconvenienced that the team had made an attempt to reflect the issues of concerns in the media for bringing wider impact of the project. While answering to a question of the reviewer on whether have they (media people) ever been used the findings produced, and the quality of output of CYSD team in his news papers, many of them viewed that they have been using the study findings of the CYSD team as well as keep interacting with the team members in reporting critical issues of budgeting in media. Given the backdrop of little understanding of the media people on the issue, the level of satisfaction showed by the media people and the frequency of interaction by them with the team members reflects the strength of the project itself.

The outputs produced by the team are user friendly and the effort of demystifying the budgetary process as well as issues understandable by the common person are highly appreciated by the media representatives.

Budget work at CYSD and other NGO's in the State: While interacting with the management team of CYSD an observation made by the reviewer with regard to the openness of CYSD in accepting the partnership building, networking with other NGOs etc. while implementing projects at the grassroots level. As such the existence of CYSD in most tribal localities of the State has been strength of CYSD for smooth implementation of the projects. The attempt made by the budget team in tracking expenditure under the schemes like PDS and NREGS in four districts has been a successful one in terms of gathering information and compiling these information in a report form for advocacy purposes. The team could able to complete the mentioned studies successfully because of strong network building capacity of the organisation with the grassroots NGOs, selh-help groups as well as other citizen groups. The reviewer got a sense of satisfaction with regard to the strategies adopted by the team members and looking at the output produced.

During this phase of the project CYSD has taken good amount of initiatives in building networking and collaboration with the Utkal University, KBK Round Table, State Social Watch forum Orissa and few national level budget research and advocacy groups like Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), Wada Na Toda Abhiyan (WNTA), National Council for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and few international organisations like- International Budget Partnership (IBP), ESCR (e-group), Queen's University Belfast etc. becomes very crucial for the team members to deepen and sharpen their understanding on the issue and take up the advocacy efforts.

Further, during the course of evaluation, the reviewer interact with three group of grassroots civil society activist at CYSD on 6th March, 2010 convinced the reviewer about the strength of CYSD's budget unit in terms of partnership building. A sense of obligation and commitments towards activities showed by the partner CSOs of CYSD during the interaction could go along in serving the purposes of the project. It was felt that working for the community without taking the views and active participation of the community members into consideration hardly succeed the spelled objectives of the project.

Bringing Policy makers on Board to Discuss on the issue: It is viewed that advocacy efforts for bringing policy change is only possible if one brings the top policy makers (either bureaucrats or the political executives) on board to discuss the gravity of the issue and make them heard. The CYSD, in its attempt to bring at least the political executives on board to discuss and deliberate on the issue has become successful in this phase. Continuously, since last couple of years, during the pre-budget discussions the Finance Minister of the State himself inaugurates the occasion organised by the CYSD budget unit. Many times he (the Finance Minister) also promised for higher allocation towards social sectors and agriculture sector (See the media releases attached as annexure) becomes the baseline for CYSD budget unit to track these promises and to make government responsible and to act upon on these promises. Besides, regular interaction of the members of opposition as well as members of the treasury bench with the team members over phone and e-mail seeking inputs and trend analysis of allocation and expenditures shows the strength and success of the project. Many times presence of the Members of Legislatures during pre and post budget consultation process under taken by CYSD strengthened the advocacy efforts of CYSD team to excel and achieve the objectives of the project.

Other general observations on the success of the project:

1. Team has clearly made good progress in building networks and coalitions with different stakeholders to pressurize governments at different levels to act upon. Networking with the Universities and research institutions in the State has been clearly seen during this phase of the project, which could serve the purpose of the kind and nature of activities taken up by the implementing agency.
2. It has produced a valuable database which can provide accurate and reliable information on the state's budget for almost a decade now. This information is

- disaggregated with respect to major heads, minor heads etc. and is extremely useful both for analysis and advocacy purposes. The software prepared by CYSD in analysing unit level expenditures as well as collating information for a couple of years to draw inferences is a unique one. The modified version of the package enables the team member to deepen their understanding on the issue and to link the grassroots realities with the macro policy declarations. Not only this package provides benefit to the team members, but also it helped many of the researcher and user of budget information of the State.
3. Many civil society groups in the state depend on CYSD budget unit for the budget information to use this information for the purpose of advocacy at their respective level. Besides, media becomes the user of such trend information on budgets on a regular basis.
 4. Series of monographs produced during this phase of project by eminent academia and journalists become widely accepted among different policy circle and the information have been extensively used by different stakeholders. The credibility of such monographs and research reports gained much as these are prepared by the professionals who are either in academics or as a part of intellectual community of the State. These reports have been the base for discussion in the policy discourse of the State.
 5. In an attempt to demystify the budgetary process and the jargons used in budget making process, CYSD brought out two handbooks; one in English language and other in Oriya, added immense value in terms of spreading budget literacy in the State. These handbooks were written in a simple language which enables common citizen understand about the budget and its process.
 6. The news letter brought out by the team under the banner “Budget Round Up” has been quite acceptable by the civil society organisations to keep them alive and active to respond on the issue instantly.
 7. A poster prepared by the team to track the promises made in the election manifestos have been widely used by different stakeholder groups for deepening their advocacy agenda.

Challenges Faced:

During this phase of the intervention, the reviewer observed that the implementing agency faced a number of challenges while implementing the project. These challenges have been observed during the presentation made by CYSD team. Few of them also emerged out of the interaction held with concerned stakeholders. Many of these challenges emerged at the external environment and hardly the implementing agency can act to convert these to opportunities. Nonetheless, the team could able to make few of these challenges into opportunities during the process of project implementation.

As regards the challenges, team members were of the opinion that tracking policy declarations though not hard for a researcher, linking it to find out budgetary allocations for these policy declarations from the budget documents is not an easy task. They face a lot of problems in compiling budget information from the documents. This is clear that

one can see this as a challenge for a small team to keep tracking all those populist promises of the government vis-à-vis budgetary allocations.

Government of Orissa implements a number of Union Government schemes and programmes specially designed for the State. Many a time common people don't understand the rationale of the political battle fought between the Centre and the State. To facilitate the process, CYSD attempted to track the budgetary allocations for specific regions of the State such as allocations made to the KBK (undivided Kalahandi, Bolangiri and Koraput) districts. More precisely, the challenges that the team faced is to collect budget data for a specific region of the state in order to gear up and push the advocacy agenda and make these information as simple for a common men understanding.

Weak existence of civil society in the state as well as absolutely no participation of the civil society in the budget making process in the State is a major challenge for the team during the course of their intervention. Another major challenge before the CYSD team is the lack of systematic research on budgetary issues in the State. Even there is no such visible organization in the state who is involved in analyzing budgetary allocation/spending and its impact on the common men. Similarly, inadequate response of the civil society groups on budget advocacy due to lack of understanding on the budget complexities some time stand alone as a challenge before the team.

Though there is a promise made by the Finance Minister in the other day to include views of the civil society groups while formulating budgets for the State, lack of initiatives by the government to involve citizens and the voices of the citizenry groups in the process of budget making process foresee as a challenge.

Time and again, lack of synergy between planning and budget making process of the State has been an obstacle to bring any short of visible impact of the budgetary spending on specific programmes. Moreover, there is no such standard norms and indicators to measure the outcome and quality of spending. It becomes very difficult for the team to replicate the standard norms for each and every sector.

Frequent change in government officials at different levels of governance put forward major challenges for the team to bring visible impact of their interventions. The team spent a lot of time and energy to make the official understand on the issue for bringing changes in the policies. Even during the time of interaction with few stakeholders, the reviewer observed that bureaucrats are not at all in a mood to listen the concerns of the civil society actors.

Organising district level consultations and community interfaces and bringing all the concerned stakeholders on board is also a difficult task for the team members. However, the team could able to successfully complete the PDS study as well as tracking budgets of the OREGS in four districts of the State. Though tracking programme level budget information was a challenge for the implementing agency, they could able to do it through partner organisations based on the locality.

Way forward:

In this section, the reviewer consolidates the ideas emerged out of the interaction process as well as careful study of the research outputs produced by CYSD with specific reference to this phase of the project. An attempt also made to summarise the findings of the advocacy strategies used, strategies of disseminating study findings as well as impact of the activities organised by CYSD in relation to this project.

Need to intensify the use of budget analysis as a tool at the community level: It was emerged out of the interaction that many of the stakeholders were recommended for intensifying CYSD's budget work at the grassroots level. Hence, it is suggested that CYSD needs to replicate the methods of tracking budgets (PDS study/Study on OREGS) of the schemes and programmes that are implemented at the grassroots level with in regular interval. For this CYSD should venture into establishing district/sub-district and community level budget groups. The major activity that CYSD should focus on to strengthen the community level monitoring group through building capacity on budgetary issues as well as to take up the advocacy for better achieving results.

Tracking the expenditure at the grassroots level on Specific Schemes / Programmes: There was a growing demand from the stakeholders of this project that CYSD should take up initiatives in broadening its scope of activities down to the state level. Hence, it is suggested that CYSD need to focus on outcome budgeting and tracking the expenditure on various flagship programmes such as: tracking expenditure on the programmes on Sarva Sikhya Abhijan, National Rural Health Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana and other State specific development and entitlement programmes.

Need to go beyond the conventional budgetary analysis from social sector to other economic sectors like agriculture and rural development:

It was well articulated by many of the well-wishers and partners of CYSD's budget project that the time has come and CYSD should go beyond analysing programmes of social sector spending to other economic sectors. There is a need to establish the link between the threads of empowerment through analysing the priorities of economic sectors as well as ensuring the entitlement through increased spending on social sectors. Hence, it is suggested that besides analysing social sector spending and its priorities, other sectors too are important to look at from the perspective of the poor and marginalised. The economic sectors like Agriculture, Rural Development etc. should be part of CYSD's core budget activities in the coming years.

Deepening understanding of the budgetary practices at the district and sub-district levels: By now, whatever initiatives/efforts taken by CYSD in analysing district and panchayat budget seems inadequate to address the problems of the issue. Many of the stakeholders were viewed that there is a need to look at district budgets and its process as well as how the allocations were made for the districts from the State budget. In a similar way, the budgeting for the grassroots panchayat is the need of the hour. Hence, it is suggested that CYSD should impart capacity building workshops in a regular interval on

issue specific for the PRI members as well as community members to enable them in analysing budgets and its implications.

Need to strengthen networking with different Stakeholder groups: Though the team has performed good job in extending its networking with many stakeholder groups while retaining the existing one in this phase of the project, a lot is demanded on this ground. It was found that during the course of interaction with few partners of CYSD's budget work, there is a need to collaborate with the media houses. Need to strengthen the existing networking with media houses for wider impact or partnering with the media houses as a co-organiser of the events and regular follow up with them. It is also demanded to conduct training and capacity building workshops for the media people to make them understand and coverage on the issues regularly.

Wider networking and partnership with the academia, educational and research institutions is also needed for greater impact on the project outcomes. Frequent engagement with the academia on the issues relating to public finance and bringing them on board for increasing the credibility of the research outputs is another area of suggestion that CYSD need to explore.

In the similar way networking with grassroots NGOs and community based organisations should be tapped to bring change in the policy formulation at the districts and sub-districts level. Again special attention is needed to impart training and capacity building of these NGOs and CBOs.

CYSD should engage with major areas of concerns in contemporary public policies such as, what is happening on Public Private Partnerships, Coupon/Voucher systems either introduced or the State government is going to introduce in most of the social and development sectors, the practice of off- budgeting limiting the legislative scrutiny etc.

Need to devise strategies to bring bureaucrats on board: Somehow CYSD missed the opportunities of influencing the policy makers- particularly the bureaucrats in this phase. This has happened because of the non-cooperative attitude of the bureaucrats as well as regular turn over of the Staff in government apparatus. However, there is a need to put pressure on bureaucrats (as they are the key person in drafting the policies) through regular interface and organizing consultations.

Recommendations on few organizational issues:

No doubt, budget work in CYSD has confronted some challenges. Within the internal process of CYSD, there is some thinking going on to create an autonomous centre for carrying out budget work under the name of "Orissa Budget Accountability Centre". In this regard it is always advised that there is no harm in doing so. The kind and nature of work it demands either in implementing a project and the flexibility needed to the staff members while undertaking project activities, certainly my suggestion would be to go for an independent establishment. However, one obvious issue should be shorted out before hand. This demand a core team in place for a longer period of time and appropriate skills

need to be optimised and maximised. Furthermore, there should be an attempt to encourage specialised research skills by different members of the team so that they can compete with the best in the profession. Well multi-tasking is required for a small team, yet specialisation of skills is the minimum necessity.

Hence, it is suggested that there is a need to expand the team with having specialization. Given the backdrop that CYSD has already in the process of analysing State Budgets since couple of years, and deepen the understanding on the process, I recommend that CYSD should recruit more people to the team having preliminary level of understanding on the subject. Somehow, I felt that for advocacy purposes, there should be at least three-four member team headed by a senior person to carry out the advocacy initiatives for achieving better results. Regular exposure visits and orientation programmes for the team members should be part of the project activity to deepen the understanding and learn the new methods of advocacy strategies.

Another important concern is with regard to retaining the existing team members. I would like to suggest that an incentive based salary package for the team need to be devised at the earliest to motivate and retain them for a long term period.

Concluding Remarks:

Any budget work to be effective in a poorer state like Orissa must have a long term vision and this may enable the civil society groups to see the impact of their work. Alternatively, a long term determination to work on budgetary issues is essential to achieve any substantial impact. This does not mean that a periodic intervention on the matter would not serve the purpose. Although, this phase of the project cut the slice in pieces, where as a continuous and sustained effort in this regard by both the implementing and the sponsoring agencies need to be continued for a greater visible impact.

By and large there was a high level of appreciations with regards the budget work that has been done by CYSD. Given that no organisation is working on budgetary issues in general and from the perspectives of the marginalised and the poor in particular CYSD's attempt in this regard is quite commendable. Its attempt to connect grassroots issues with the macro policy is unique. It was also very strongly articulated that there is a need of go beyond the stakeholders, who have been very prominent strategy in terms of achieving the wider objective of equal and just society.

There is much more need to be done in this regard. Of course there are challenges still there are opportunities. I am sure CYSD will capitalise these opportunities given a chance of long term association between the CYSD and the Concern Worldwide. I hope that Concern Worldwide will continue to support towards this noble effort made by CYSD in the coming days.
