



EDITORIAL

COPASAH

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Social Accountability: A Process Oriented Community Practice

THE accountability discourse is gaining momentum globally. However, the dominant discourse of accountability continues to be instrumentalist in its approach, which sees it as a technical report at the worst or merely as an intervention to improve health sector performance, at best. It is also tagged to efficiency, defined as value for money or getting things done at very low financial inputs. To this end, goals without fundamentally touching the core of accountability are set. The language that couches these goals is largely apolitical in its expression. The goals set in this school of thought range from producing a report or a score card to setting the millennium development (MDG) or sustainable development goals (SDG).

When the time-period set is complete, as it happened in the MDGs, question was not asked as to why these goals were not met or what the processes that achieved some of the goals are. It simply, moved to setting another set of goals, i.e. SDGs. Even at a micro level, CSOs which implement projects on community participation tend to follow such trends by developing score cards or technical reports, over and over again.

However, at the core of accountability practice the thrust is on questioning of inequity, inequitable distribution of resources and the skewed power relations which keep citizens or communities perpetually in a state of frustration. It also aims at changing the iniquitous power relations of the



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health system with the communities. COPASAH has foregrounded the community centred accountability practice which is process oriented that aims to change the power asymmetry of the community with the health care system. Such processes are aimed at advancing human rights of the marginalized with a broader

framework of realizing equity and social justice.

This COPASAH Communiqué highlights the process oriented community practice of social accountability. For practitioners of accountability, as highlighted in these stories of practice, accountability is not a finished product. It is a continuous

iterative process of engagement, mobilization, strengthening community's power and their ability to question and change things with multiple contextualized methods and tools, as well generating voice and participation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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To know more about the work of CHSJ and COPASAH please visit, www.chsj.org and www.copasah.net

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HEALTH RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY