



सत्यमेव जयते

Planning Commission
Government of India



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Making Local Actions Matter

Good Practices in Decentralized Planning, Implementation and Monitoring



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Preface

The aim of this important compilation is to share good practices in decentralized planning. The cases represent ground-tested solutions for addressing many of the challenges impacting on the implementation of flagship programmes.

The document includes innovative ways to increase the participation of marginalized communities, reduce gender inequality, promote convergence across different programmes and departments, reduce attitudinal barriers to collaboration, optimize resources and use data for monitoring systems.

It has been a privilege for UNDP to collaborate with the Planning Commission and State Governments on this important initiative.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lise Grande', written over a light blue grid background.

Lise Grande,
United Nations Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative United Nations
Development Programme

Foreword

Indian economy has posted a high growth rate over the past two decades. However, performance on critical social indicators has been a matter of widespread concern, which was reflected in the 11th Five Year Plan making 'inclusive growth' its focus. The 12th Plan has also reiterated this perspective by setting the broad goal as 'faster, more inclusive and sustainable growth' and allocating huge amount of resources to the social sector. These desired objectives require a responsive and efficient delivery system brought about by decentralized planning and implementation processes.

Although decentralized planning and implementation has been an inherent goal through the Five Year Plans, it still needs to be strengthened in terms of strategic and operational measures. Good practices from the Government of India-UNDP project on Capacity Development for District Planning (CDDP) offer useful lessons in this direction. The CDDP project was implemented as an integral part of the GoI-UN Joint Programme on Convergence 2008-2012 by the Planning Commission and seven States (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh).

This booklet presents five good practices emerging from the CDDP project covering different dimensions of planning: integrating different levels of planning, including gender sub-plans, facilitating convergence, streamlining database and managing change for effectiveness. Since much of what is included refers to evolving practices, the attempt is to capture seminal elements and features. We are happy to place this booklet at the disposal of policy makers, government officials, elected representatives and other development actors for wider examination, contextual adaptation and replication.

The first piece analyzes the comprehensive decentralized planning system in Madhya Pradesh. There are three major distinguishing aspects: projecting local priorities for consolidation at higher levels, segregating district/sub-district resource envelopes and aligning activity planning with available resources, and using customized ICT applications for improving efficiency and accountability.

The second practice deals with initiation of gender sub-plan as a part of district plan in Udaipur. This process sought to address crucial gender issues in course of development planning.

The third is on the change management initiative in Odisha, which sought to transform government-Panchayat-community interrelationships to ensure citizen-centric programme implementation and better service delivery. It demonstrates how the broader objectives of

governance reforms and democratization of development can be achieved through incremental changes in attitudes, perspectives and behaviour of district officials and elected representatives.

The fourth one showcases a model village, where communities, government officials, Non Government Organizations (NGOs), banks, and other stakeholders converge to prepare and implement the village development plan. It demonstrates how government functionaries can immerse in social mobilization and local planning can drive multi-sector government programmes in a coordinated fashion.

The fifth practice is from Chhattisgarh and related to collection and usage of statistical data on key development and MDG indicators. It holds up the hope of merging all parallel data collection and collation processes and fulfilling data needs in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

We believe that good practices should speak to each other across sectors and thematic focuses. There is a need to break the isolation which often befalls diligent endeavours on ground, while they make a good impact in their line of specialized attention, but fail to reach relevant stakeholders in other locations and sectors. We need to seriously look at the scope of translating good ideas in one area into action in others. It is hoped that this set of case studies would set off reflections, critical analyses and wider dissemination of learning for improved decentralized district planning, implementation, monitoring and effective service delivery.

We would like to express deep gratitude to Dr. Mihir Shah, Member, Planning Commission, for having all along inspired the pursuit of good practices. We record our thankful appreciation of Ms. Lise Grande, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in India, for her active support. Our thanks are also due to Ms. Sumeeta Banerji, Assistant Country Director and Head-Governance, UNDP, for ensuring that the document comes out for the benefit of users. We appreciate the support of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in terms of provision of human resource at district and sub-district level, which was very useful in following up the good practice processes on the ground.

This publication is but a testament to painstaking efforts of the State governments concerned and associated resource persons. We would like to thank Mr. Mangesh Tyagi, Principal Adviser, State Planning Commission, Madhya Pradesh and his team for the case study on Decentralized Planning. Without the leadership of Dr. R. V. Singh, Officer on Special Duty, Planning and Coordination Department, Government of Odisha and the guidance of Mr. Pradip Prabhu and Dr. V. Suresh of the Barefoot Academy at Chennai, the Change Management initiative would not have been

successful. Mr. Rahul Sharma as the Deputy Commissioner, Gumla, Jharkhand played a central role in the convergence initiative. Technical support of Ms. Firoza Mehrotra, former Special Consultant to the Planning Commission, was critical to the gender sub-plan initiative. We thank Mr. P. P. Soti, Member and Mr. P. C. Mishra, Member-Secretary, State Planning Commission, Chhattisgarh for support to the Village and Urban Index Card process.



B D Viridi
Adviser, Multi-Level Planning
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Abbreviations

AIES	All India Education Survey
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund
CDDP	Capacity Development for District Planning
CHC	Community Health Centre
DRI	Differential Rate of Interest
DPC	District Planning Committees
DUDA	District Urban Development Authority
DPSO	District Planning and Statistical Officer
FRA	Forest Rights Act – The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
GDI	Gender Development Indices
GIS	Geographic Information system
GPS	Geographic Positioning System
GSP	Gender Sub-Plan
IAY	Indira Awaas Yojana
ICDS	The Integrated Child Development Services
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KCC	Kissan Credit Card
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NIC	National Informatics Centre
NPEGEL	National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level

NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NSSO	National Sample Survey Office
ODEC	Organization Development Excellence Consultants
PDA	Personal Digital Assistants
PRC	Panchayat Resource Centre
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSPHD	Strengthening State Plans for Human Development
TSG	Technical Support Group
UIC/UWIC	Urban Index Card/Urban Ward Index Card
ULB	Urban Local Bodies
VDC	Village Development Committee
VIC	Village Index Card



Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>ix</i>
Decentralized Planning	
From Planning to Good Governance	1
Engendering District Planning	
Integrating the Gender Sub-Plan	13
Change Management	
Strengthening Collaboration and Improving Service Delivery	25
Convergence for Local Development	
Working Across Departments and Programmes	39
Village and Urban Index Card	
Making Reliable Data Available Locally	51

Decentralized Planning From Planning to Good Governance







Strengthening decentralized planning and implementation from below is a major strategy in development management. This is largely believed to positively affect lives of disadvantaged people. The argument for greater devolution is premised upon the fact that transfer of funds, functions and functionaries is central to successful decentralization. The emergence of strong, democratic national governments can provide effective sub-structures for successful planning and implementation of economic development programmes in a country. Against such a context, decentralization is seen as essential by the development thinkers, practitioners, governments and international partners in most countries especially in a larger democracy like India.

Local self-governance institutions are an integral part of the democratic process and essential for participatory development initiatives. Grassroots democracy enables people to feel a sense of responsibility and participate in the democratic process. Effective, responsive local governments that are engaged with empowered communities are needed to

ensure accountable, transparent and efficient use of public funds and the effective delivery of local public services. Strengthening of local governments should be supported by central government institutions that adhere to principles of subsidiarity without sacrificing national fiscal balance or overall policy coherence.

The Context of Decentralized Planning

Community participation in planning and development found its first statutory foothold in Article 40 of the Constitution, which sought to establish village Panchayats as units of local self-government with necessary powers and authority. After the 1st Five Year Plan, Government of India constituted a number of Committees that led to the establishment of Local Self Government in stages and necessary institutional arrangements for managing development programmes up to the district level.

The Constitution 73rd and 74th amendments 1992, envisaged a major reform of governance by giving constitutional right to Panchayati Raj Institutions/Urban Local Bodies (PRI/ULB) to plan for economic development and social justice at local levels. The 11th Five Year Plan moved further and suggested a practicable action programme for local level planning in India. It also suggested in detail, the manner in which programmes of national importance in education, health, employment, poverty alleviation, housing and rural infrastructure could achieve their objectives better if centrality is accorded to Panchayats in working out implementation details.

Thus, through a series of reforms, decentralized district planning has emerged as a dynamic



[A poster from the awareness campaign on decentralized planning conducted by the district administration](#)

process that gives people the power and authority to articulate their views and make right choices for their own betterment. This is done through a set of institutions established to enable people to participate in the decision making process. Parts IX and IX A of the Constitution have provided space for institutions of local governance at the district and sub-district level. Article 243B ordains that “there shall be constituted in every State, Panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels.” Similarly, Article 243Q establishes the roles of Nagar Panchayats, Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporations as institutions for planning in urban areas. Article 243ZD of the Constitution

provides sanction for establishing District Planning Committees (DPC) to prepare development plans for the district as a whole by consolidating and integrating the plans prepared by Panchayats and municipalities in the district.

It has been noted that district is the suitable administrative and economic unit for decentralized planning below the state level as it possesses the required heterogeneity and is small enough to facilitate participation of all specified stakeholders. District Planning is the process of preparing an integrated plan for the whole district. This is done by taking into account the resources (natural,

human and financial) available as well as sectoral activities and schemes assigned to the district level and below, and those implemented through local governments. It incorporates and integrates the plans of Panchayats from all three tiers and the urban local bodies.

Decentralized Planning in Madhya Pradesh

Slowly evolving and getting important strategic boosts over the last two decades, decentralized district planning in Madhya Pradesh has now become a State-wide reality encompassing all 51 districts. Apart from involving all government departments, it now involves 23051 Gram Panchayats, 313 Janpad (Block) Panchayats, and 51 district Panchayats. On the urban side, it involves 360 urban local bodies (ULBs): 250 Nagar Panchayats, 96 Municipal Councils and 14 Nagar Nigams.

Decentralized district planning in Madhya Pradesh can be seen to have taken definitive shape in three stages. The first was with the passing of the District Planning Committee Act, 1995 in M.P. and the positioning of DPCs as key

District Planning is the process of preparing an integrated plan for the whole district, taking into account the resources (natural, human and financial) available as well as sectoral activities and schemes assigned to the district level and below, and those implemented through local governments.



An elderly lady making a point in a planning meeting

planning institutions at the district level. The next stage soon followed with the Government of Madhya Pradesh beginning to prepare separate budgets for rural and urban local bodies in 1999-2000. District-wise budgets were prepared and passed in the assembly. A year later, in 2001-02, all the schemes were categorized into two sectors: the State Sector and the District Sector. The power to plan was transferred to DPC for schemes and resources earmarked under the district sector.

The 3rd stage came in the year 2009-10, when the power to prepare plans was given to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) of different tiers and the ULBs. DPCs were given the mandate to prepare draft development plan by integrating and converging rural and urban plans together. Detailed district planning guidelines were issued to organize the planning process. Decentralized district planning was piloted in five districts with support from the Government of India-United Nations Joint Programme on Convergence. The guidelines have been subsequently revised to incorporate fuller perspectives of inclusive and outcomes-based planning and necessary operational steps. From 2010-11, the State is undertaking full-fledged decentralized district planning in all the 51 districts.

Guidelines and Operational Framework

State Planning Commission provides support and direction for preparation of District Plans. Key elements of the operational system as delineated in the District Planning guidelines and adhered to by different institutions involved are the following:

- DPC in consultation with subject matter specialists, Government officials, NGOs and other stakeholder(s) determines plan ceiling between rural and urban segments and formulates strategy to prepare and integrate plan proposals of local bodies.
- Rural Plans: Each Gram Sabha follows a participatory process with the help of Technical Support Group (TSG) and government functionaries to come up with a “vision of development” based on local needs. The Gram Sabha prepares its plan proposal after consultation with all the stakeholders especially with poor, SC, ST and women. The proposal of each Gram Sabha is integrated to prepare the plan proposal of Gram Panchayat. Similarly, Janpad Panchayat integrates the plan proposals of all Gram Panchayats including the interventions of Janpad. These are finally consolidated and integrated at the district level.
- Urban Plan: A similar process, as in rural areas, is adopted in urban areas as well. The ULBs form TSGs comprising selected ULB staff, ward corporators, retired government officials, and experienced individuals from the ward to provide technical support to *Mohalla Samitis* during participatory urban planning. Plans prepared at the *Mohalla* and ward level are consolidated at the municipality/municipal corporation level with integration of interventions spreading over more than one ward or sectors. The

District Urban Development Authority (DUDA) coordinates overall urban planning process in the district.

- The rural and urban plans are submitted to the DPC for consolidation and approval. The DPC consolidates the plans at the district level with the help of district level TSG. The consolidated and integrated plan is finalized by DPC after due deliberations. The DPC is expected to ensure that the integrated District Plan provides clarity on the roles of various government departments and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The District Plan is then submitted to the State Planning Commission,
- All the line departments are grouped into six key sectors. Further, working groups are constituted for each sector for preparing proposals keeping in view the needs and possible inter- and intra-sector convergence. Working groups also prepare position papers for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at their levels. The six sectors are as follows:
 - Education: School Education, Technical Education, Skill Education;

A similar process, as in rural areas, is adopted in urban areas as well. The ULBs form TSGs comprising selected ULB staff, ward corporators, retired government officials, and experienced individuals from the ward to provide technical support to Mohalla Samitis in the process of participatory urban planning.



Some planning exercises being conducted at the community levels in Rajgarh district

- Health and Nutrition: Public Health and Family Welfare, Public Health Education, Women and Child Development, Food and Civil Supplies;
- Livelihoods: Agriculture, Forest, Panchayat and Rural Development, Animal Husbandry, Industry, Social Welfare, Water, Fisheries, Handicraft, Cooperatives, Planning, Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes;
- Infrastructure: Public Works, Rural Development, Water, Power, Planning;
- Energy: Energy, Rural Development, Forest;
- Social Security: Social Justice, Women and Child Development, Revenue, etc.
- All government resources are included and district wise and department wise resource envelopes are calculated to facilitate the process. Budget is also earmarked separately for SCs, STs and women.
- Plan components are prepared focusing on specific social groups like SCs, STs, women and children at the level of habitation and then integrated. Revenue village is the basic unit of planning in rural areas and the urban ward in urban areas.
- Planning for natural resources is a part of planning for livelihood, infrastructure and energy.

Strategic and Innovative Features

ICT-Enabled Planning and Monitoring

The State uses its own software, called “decentralized planning”, which has the following major features:

- Digital space for blocks/municipality to enter data relating to needs of

communities from different habitations and planning data on activities and resources. Though the software does not allow the Gram Panchayats to enter their plans directly, they can see the demands/ plans entered for their Panchayats/ habitations concerned.

- Digital space for all the line departments working at district level to look into the activities demanded by community under each scheme.
- Each activity has to be linked with district sector schemes.
- It allows public viewing of demands and plans by each planning unit and the scheme wise response of government line departments.
- The software also asks departments to fill the allocation and utilization under each scheme in prescribed format, which would allow direct visibility of block/district wise resource envelopes and expenditure.

The State is using geo-mapping technique through a GPS-enabled personal digital assistants (PDA) for planning and monitoring purposes. PDA is a sophisticated mobile phone equipped with GPS facility and camera and with a capability of using customized geographic information system (GIS)-based application capable of land survey and capturing data on other attributes. In planning, it helps in thematic mapping to identify problem areas and in establishing/analyzing relations between different development variables/factors through overlaying layers of maps. In monitoring, it helps in visualization of land-based activities and tracking changes happening on the ground over a period of time.

The ICT-enabled planning process supports transparency and accountability apart from

several important functionalities for good planning as indicated below.

Village Master Plan and Status of Service Delivery

An important building block of the District Plans, the village master plans have information on immediate and long term prioritized needs of people, availability of basic infrastructure, planned activities and budget allocation, details including names of beneficiaries of different schemes, and more importantly, people's perception of service delivery. In case any basic facility is not available within the village limits, the distance at which it is available is mentioned. These plans are in the public domain and accessible online, and hence available to all the stakeholders. Of late, there has been a spurt in demands pertaining to education and health services, which reflects growing awareness amongst the community due to access to plan information.

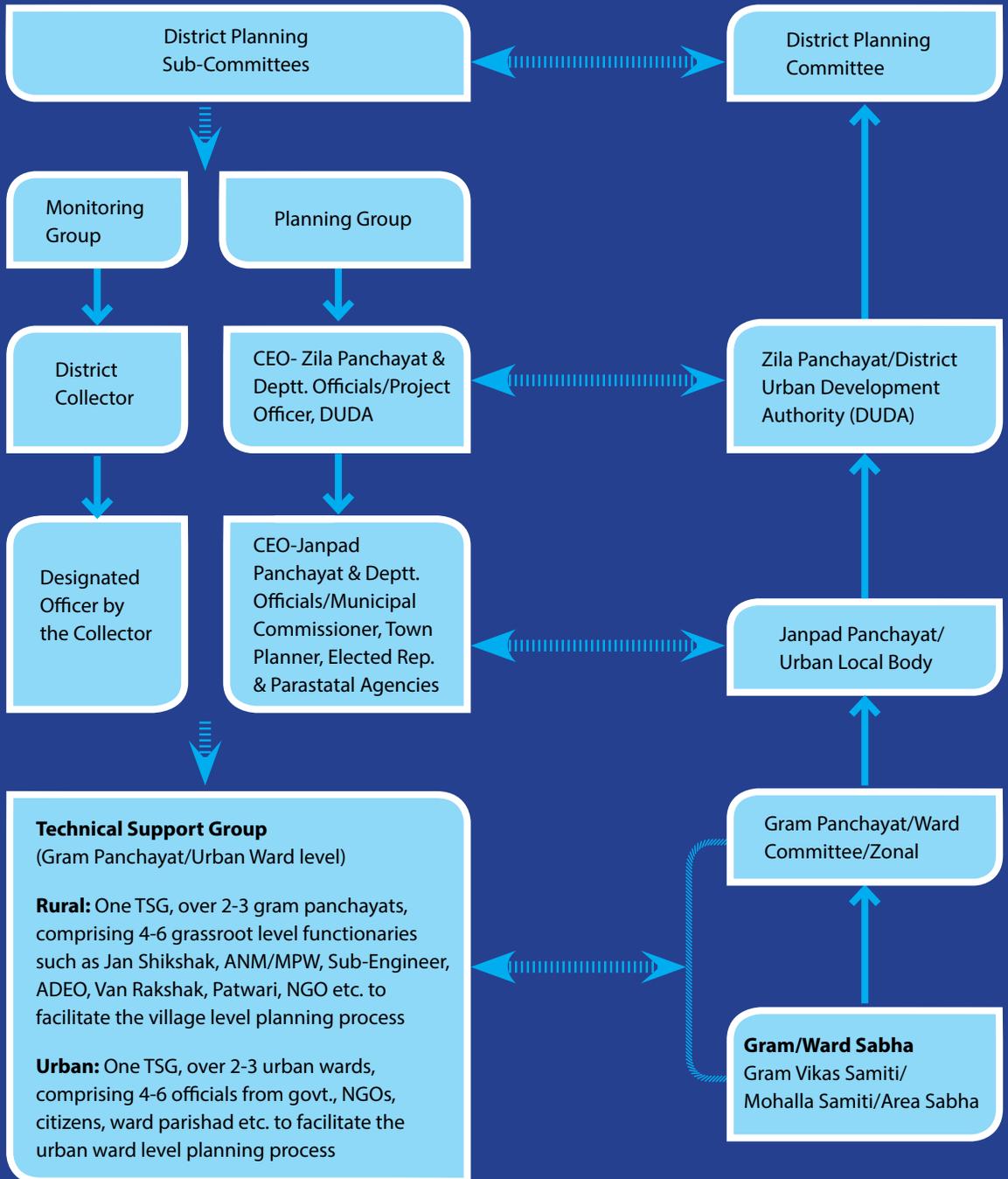
Sectoral and Schematic Plans

For the very first time, attempt has been made to link community demands to related sectors, like Education, Health, Livelihoods, etc. Now it is possible for a district, and even a block, to identify its focus area and plan accordingly. Further, plans under 150 schemes of 30 departments have been integrated into the district plan making it a comprehensive one. Any schematic plan (i.e. SSA, MGNREGS, IAY, etc.) can be culled out from the District Plan. The software helps draw out the overall Education Plan, Livelihood Plan, Social Security Plan etc. of any planning unit. The issue of intra-district variations can now be effectively addressed.

District Resource Envelope

Earlier decentralized planning, central resources/matching shares were not reflected

Fig.1: Decentralized Planning Process (RURAL & URBAN)



Source: State Planning Commission, Madhya Pradesh

in the district plan documents, making it impossible to know total resources flowing to a district. The present framework has made it mandatory for departments at the district level to reflect all State, Central and other resources, through which community needs and demands can be catered to.

Departmental Response Plan

Each department at the district level now gives a 'response plan' to the proposed activities in the district plan based on the schematic norms and resource availability. The department either 'approves' the activity or keeps in its data base for 'future' action or demarcates it as 'non-feasible' if the activity does not match available schemes and their norms. The 'approved activities,' appearing in the public domain, make the departments accountable and their implementation process easily amenable to community monitoring.

Recording Entitlements

People entitled to and eligible for different beneficiary oriented schemes, such as IAY, MGNREGS etc. are identified and listed in the plans. These records facilitate monitoring of the relevant schemes in terms of the status of fulfillment of the identified entitlements.

Monitoring Implementation Status

After the first year roll-out of the decentralized planning process, it has now been made mandatory to capture work completion status of the approved activities of previous year. This helps monitoring and also supports transparency and public accountability.

Supporting Social Inclusion

Data related to sex, age, caste, BPL status and educational level of the prospective beneficiaries are collected and analyzed, which facilitates better planning and targeting of different relevant schemes. This also provides opportunity to go beyond and address the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized communities.

Upcoming Milestones

At present, planning for around 150 district sector schemes from across 28-30 departments are linked up to the decentralized planning process. It is being planned to cover 'state sector schemes' which are outside the compass of district level planning and managed by State level departments.

As also discussed above, GIS applications have begun to be integrated. Digitized maps of all villages and spatial database of existing assets and proposed/ongoing worksites are being developed combining satellite images and *Khasra*¹ maps. All block offices have been provided with PDAs to map the assets and worksites and help update the centralized database. It is also being planned to evaluate the land-based activities by using satellite images of 0.45 cm resolution and other necessary satellite data. Three different GIS applications are also being developed targeting the web, desktop and mobile platforms to view and analyze planning data from different sources.

The 'decentralized planning' ICT application is also being integrated with the newly

¹A legal agricultural document which specifies land and crop details including ownership, measurement, soil and crop types, etc.

developed 'Integrated Financial Information Management System' operated by the Finance Department of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. It would bring in the facility of financial monitoring into the district planning, implementation and monitoring process.

Lessons Learned

In only a few years of practice, the decentralized planning system/process in Madhya Pradesh has proved to be helpful and effective. While a lot still remains to be done – some of which are indicated below – it has spawned several useful lessons.

- The decentralized planning process provided opportunities to elicit communities' response and perceptions and make them play a critical role in showing the directions in the planning process. Thus, it is a composite tool for planning, monitoring, transparency, accountability and advocacy. However, all these aspects have many ramifications, much of which remains to be fully developed and utilized.
- This process has revealed that there is huge gap between the budget ceiling and the demands generated from the community. The juxtaposition of people's demands and departmental responses show the need for better matching of priorities.
- It demonstrated that convergence is rather a need to utilize resources effectively than a strategic or administrative nicety. The interlinking of the flagship programmes is proving to be very convenient and productive.
- The TSG set a good example of convergence of government functionaries across several departments and sectors for planning. Their working with the village development committee of the Gram Sabha and other

tiers of PRIs as well as ULBs, has also been useful in bringing the departments and people closer.

- The practice of 'Response Plan' has enabled line departments to state clearly what can or cannot be delivered from the block up to the district level. This also helps them to relook at their allocation practices minutely and accountably. Combined with declaration of resource envelope, this could be a big step towards addressing governance concerns around accountability, transparency and performance management.
- The combined effect of various applications of the decentralized planning system, if handled carefully, can lead to need-based allocation of resources, increased ownership of work, strengthening the institutions of local self governance and transparency in planning, implementation and monitoring.

Challenges and Way Forward

From the analysis above, it is clear that the decentralized planning process in Madhya Pradesh has enormous potential for effective bottom-up planning, participatory monitoring, institutional and financial convergence, strong outcomes-orientation and accountability. However, several emerging issues and challenges still need to be addressed:

- The system does not yet involve direct participation and planning by PRIs and ULBs as suggested in the Panchayat and Municipal Acts. In order for this to happen, there is a need to strengthen the institutional practices of Gram Sabha and build capacities of the Panchayat/municipal representatives and community leaders. More capacity development efforts are required for the TSGs who

facilitate grassroots level consultation and planning. Given the already heavy demand for capacity building, alternative learning mechanisms are needed to creatively address the needs.

- The DPC plays a pivotal role and its institutional strengthening is important. Constituting its sub-committees as already provided in the structure and building up their capacity would go a long way in the right direction.
- Given that convergence with flagship schemes has already been demonstrated to be feasible and effective, the programmes of the health department may be brought under the purview of district planning. The inclusion of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) would add a lot of value to the decentralized planning process.
- The system has excellent opportunity to use data effectively for planning purposes. District level data available from sources such as census, economic census, National Family Health Survey (NFHS) and nutrition data can be very useful for stock taking and envisioning. It would be beneficial to identify district-specific issues first and draw up the state vision based upon the district situations.
- The planning system already provides a conducive context for social inclusion. The SCs, STs and women should have institutional space that reflects the critical

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issues affecting their lives and helps incorporate locally-viable solutions. There is a need for space and capacity support for integrating gender sub-plans, tribal sub-plans and special component plans.

- Different planning cycles of flagship programmes (SSA, BRGF, NRHM, etc.) need to be aligned with decentralized planning. Inter-departmental and inter-schematic convergence needs to be addressed more deliberately and effectively drawing from field experiences and with a focus on concrete outcomes on the ground.
- Consideration of locally generated resources by rural and urban local bodies in district planning is still a challenge. More attention and technical breakthroughs are needed here.
- The focus on urban planning needs to be intensified along with its linkages with rural planning.

Engendering District Planning Integrating the Gender Sub-Plan







Gender equality is a critical element of good governance. Equal representation of women and men in public decision making and the quality of their participation are key concerns in achieving gender equality. It is important to integrate a gender perspective into decentralized planning and implementation processes and strengthen women's representation at all levels of governance, starting from the local level.

One of the key initiatives of the CDDP Project was to demonstrate methods of gender sensitive and inclusive planning and to generate district plans that prioritize the needs of excluded groups, especially women, which can then be implemented and monitored. It strove to develop capacity of districts for result based, gender sensitive, inclusive development, with a great emphasis on the women especially from the disadvantaged groups having an important role to play in district plan preparation.

Gender planning “consists of developing and implementing specific measures and organizational arrangements for the promotion of gender equality and ensuring that adequate resources are earmarked. It means identifying how to mainstream gender concerns in the planning process (ILO, 1995²).” It, therefore, refers to the process of planning developmental programmes and projects that are gender sensitive and which take into account the impact of differing gender roles and gender needs of women and men in the target community or sector. The gender sensitivity in planning developmental programmes and projects can be accomplished by the selection of appropriate approaches to address not only women and men's practical needs, but also identifying entry points for challenging unequal relations (i.e., strategic needs) and for enhancing the gender-responsiveness of policy dialogue. Gender planning helps not only in the management of resources, but more importantly in using a gender lens in economic governance.

A noteworthy feature of gender planning is that it may not treat women as a 'homogeneous collective and hence can provide feedback to government on whether it is meeting the needs of different groups of women and men, girls and boys. These different groups might be rich or poor and belong to different castes and tribes, rural or urban areas, etc. Besides these primary stakeholders, the others who should be involved in gender planning are government officials, women's organizations, other civil society organizations active on gender issues, academia, the donor community, members

² International Labour Organization (ILO) (1995) Guidelines for the integration of gender issues into the design, monitoring, and evaluation of ILO programmes and projects; Geneva: Evaluation Unit, Bureau of Programming and Management, ILO.

of legislature, as well as ordinary citizens. For those outside government, it encourages transparency, accountability and participation and facilitates better advocacy, as it provides information that allows for better decision-making on how policies should be revised and resources allocated to achieve the goal of gender equality.

Gender Planning in India

The mainstream planning processes in India has traditionally been ineffective in addressing the gender concerns because of being steered mainly by male-dominated perspectives. Little attention is paid to the voices and concerns of women, thus upholding the status quo in decision making structures in which women, for the most part, remain invisible. Consequently, the plan documents have consistently been gender blind as they tend to ignore the fact that women and men access resources differently due to social, religious and cultural differences. They also have different concerns about how it meets their needs. It necessitates creation of adequate space for women in the decision making and planning processes. Access to social, economic and political decision-making structures is must to make a meaningful difference in the lives of this marginalized section. This inequity can be corrected by gender sensitive planning. Such realization has slowly evolved over the years.

Gender planning was first initiated in the 7th Five Year Plan (1985-90) in the shape of the Women Component Plan (WCP). The WCP found a fuller expression in the 9th Five Year Plan (1997-2002), which required both Central and State Governments to earmark “not less than 30 per cent of the funds/benefits” under ‘women-related’ ministries/departments. It

advocated ‘convergence of existing services’. It also directed that a special vigil be kept on the flow of the earmarked funds/benefits through effective means so as to make certain that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowering women. However, the WCP only pertained to plan allocations made by the Ministries and Departments.

The WCP brought in its train a more strategic and comprehensive approach known as ‘gender budgeting’. Gender Budgeting refers to the process of conceiving, planning, approving, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender sensitive manner. It implies analyzing impact of actual expenditure and revenue (usually of the Government) on the girls and women as compared to boys and men. Gender budgeting does not mean either having separate budgets for men and women or allocating certain percentage of the budget respectively for men and women. It expands our concept of the economy to include things that are not usually valued in money terms; especially it recognizes the unpaid care economy – the work that mainly women do in bearing and rearing children and caring for their families. It further recognizes the need to find ways of supporting those who do this unpaid care work, lessening their burden, and ensuring that the work is done well. It, therefore, is a tool for gender mainstreaming in the development process as a whole.

The 10th Five Year Plan (2002-07) provided another boost by envisaging a coupling of both WCP and gender budgeting to reinforce the gender differential impact of resource allocation and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 also recognized the importance

of gender budgeting and observed that the process of implementing the Policy will involve together with other initiatives “assessment of benefits flowing to women and resource allocation to the programmes relating to them through an exercise of gender budgeting.” The Policy also made room for collection of gender-disaggregated data by all Central and State primary data collecting agencies, development of “Gender Development Indices” (GDI), and gender auditing and evaluation mechanisms. The 11th Five Year Plan continued the focus and stated, ‘gender equity requires adequate provisions to be made in policies and schemes across Ministries and Departments. It also entails strict adherence to gender budgeting across the board’. The 12th Five Year Plan emphasizes mainstreaming gender issues and concerns in planning and programme implementation and addressing capacity development issues.

Even as the gender planning policy and practice situation continues to evolve, it is clear that a lot of initiatives are needed to strengthen the planning process from local to higher levels. There is a need to focus on closing the gaps between women’s and men’s access to economic, social, political and cultural resources and taking strong measures so that women can benefit equally. Women need to be involved in all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring. As already recognized, *gender sensitive planning is not a separate or a parallel process, but is about mainstreaming and integrating gender in the prevalent planning processes.* This is an effective tool to respond to deep-seated patterns of discrimination against women where women

collectively analyze and contribute to planning processes and policy-making.

Rajasthan Scenario

The status of women has been historically low in Rajasthan and feudal customs and values persist. The sex ratio in Rajasthan was 928 and has slightly increased since the last census of 2001 in which it was 922. But, the child sex ratio (females per thousand males in the age group 0 to 6 years) has declined from 909 in 2001 to 888 in 2011³. Government data shows that there is violence against women. Percentage of literates among young women (15-24 years) is 64 (national average is 80) as against 90 in case of males⁴. The female to male ratio for Rajasthan and all India is 0.71 and 0.88 respectively. Gender discrimination gets more evident while looking at the Gender Parity Index (2007-08) for Enrolment in Secondary Grades (Classes IX-XII), as it is 0.58 for Rajasthan as against 0.85 for India as a whole, while the same for Enrolment in Primary Grades (Classes I-V) is 0.95 and 0.98 respectively.

Women need to be involved in all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring. As already recognized, gender sensitive planning is not a separate or a parallel process, but is about mainstreaming and integrating gender in the prevalent planning processes.

³ Census of India, 2011

⁴ NSSO (2010) Participation and Expenditure in Education in India 2007-08 (NSS 64th Round, July 2007- June 2008). New Delhi: Government of India

These statistics underline that it is imperative to address gender concerns in planning and development in Rajasthan. Gender budgeting was initiated by Government of Rajasthan in 2005-06 with the objective of integrating gender concerns into the plans and budgets of six identified departments, namely, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health, Agriculture, Education, Registration and Stamps and Social Justice and Empowerment⁵ (SJE). In 2006-07, the exercise was replicated with six more departments namely Tribal Area Development, Rural Development, Local Self Government, Industries, Cooperatives, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture and Forest. In the next phase, gender focal points were identified and Nodal Officers were nominated along with Gender Desks in key departments. Further, to analyze gender budgeting initiatives of various departments, formats were devised by Planning Department in consultation with Finance and WCD Departments and shared with other Departments. In order to orient the officers in Gender Budgeting, regular training programmes and orientation workshops were being organized. A high level Committee under the Chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary with Principal Secretaries of Finance, Planning, and WCD as Members and the Secretary, WCD as the Member-Secretary has been constituted along with a Gender Budget Cell at the Directorate of WCD.

The Gender Sub-Plan Initiative

With the objective of integrating gender concerns into the overall plans and budget allocations of the identified departments, the State made budgetary allocation for new schemes for women through Department of Women's Empowerment, Rajasthan. However, it

is required that all departments not only do their budgeting with the gender lens but also involve women in planning and decision-making process. To address the issues of inclusiveness in the planning process, it is being realized that the plans need to be engendered to include issues of women's empowerment. Though the State makes budgetary allocation for new schemes for women through Department of Women's Empowerment, it is important that all key departments involve women in planning and decision making. Thus, Gender Sub-Plan (GSP) has been an effort to engage government officials and elected representatives on gender issues; to enable reflections on programme strategies; and to explore ways of improving women's participation in planning and implementation. In Rajasthan, the initiative was taken up in Udaipur district. The intervention strategy had the following components:

- Gender sensitization and district planning orientation for district officials and local NGOs to prepare GSPs;
- Consultative finalization of the process and time-frame for draft district GSPs;
- Consultations with women stakeholders and Gram Sabhas for inputs prior to GSP formulation;
- Formulation of first draft of GSP based on inputs received and findings of evaluations or monitoring exercises;
- Review and feedback on first draft of GSP by technical experts and organizing follow up workshops;
- Revision of GSP and approval from the DPC for making it a part of District Plan;
- Discussion on modalities for operation and implementation of the GSP;
- Community-based monitoring and evaluation through gender impact analysis;

⁵ <http://evaluation.rajasthan.gov.in/details/SixGenderBudgetingReports/snap.pdf>



Block and district officials of Udaipur, Rajasthan making an appraisal of development schemes

- Integrating and mainstreaming gender into the district planning guidelines;
- District specific tentative road-map for integrating gender into district planning process;

It may be emphasized that this was not an isolated intervention, but was being made in conformity with the ten-point guidelines developed by the Planning Commission of India for GSP preparation. These guidelines provided a framework for mainstreaming gender concerns in the district development planning process in order to improve the social, political and economic conditions of women. Key steps were as follows:

- Gender orientation and sensitization of government and non-government stakeholders;
- Analysis of the situation of men, women, boys and girls;
- Spatial planning for micro level needs;

- An assessment of the extent to which the sector's policy addresses the gender issues and gaps described in the first step;
- Envisioning and participation of stakeholders;
- Goal Setting and mainstreaming;
- Gender Appraisal of all new programmes and schemes;
- Preparation of GSP;
- Monitoring whether the money was spent as planned, how much of it was delivered to women;
- An assessment of the impact of the policy, project and schemes and the extent to which the situation as assessed in the stock-taking exercise has been changed.

Engendering District Planning in Udaipur

The process started with a two-day district level workshop to augment awareness and

sensitize the district planners on gender issues and to enhance their capacities for preparation of the GSP. Principal stakeholders were government officials from the State Planning Department, other key line departments, the Collector of Udaipur District and local NGOs working on gender and development issues. Salient features of this exercise were as follows:

- To facilitate mainstreaming and integrating gender in the prevalent planning processes;
- To provide a framework for mainstreaming gender concerns in the district development planning process in order to improve the social, legal/civic, political and economic conditions of women;
- To demonstrate methods of gender sensitive and inclusive planning and to generate plans that prioritize the needs of excluded groups especially women.

Preparation of the GSP was considered as a first step in an effort to transform the prevailing social discrimination against women and enhance direct action to rapidly improve the social and economic status of women. It was being considered as the tool to identify problems at local level and attempt to address them through making the district plan gender sensitive.

Government departments at the district level were clubbed into major sectors, and met regularly to review the progress of activities towards developing a consolidated GSP under the supervision of Chief Planning Officer and District Collector, Udaipur. After submission of the draft plan, a review meeting was held on 26 August 2011, to prepare a road map for the year 2012-13 on the lines of 'Gender Mainstreaming Strategy' of the State as well as Union Government. The outcome of the workshop was 'Concrete inputs related to GSP', which was envisaged to be used in

The guidelines provided a framework for mainstreaming gender concerns in the district development planning process in order to improve the social, political and economic conditions of women.

course of the planning process during the year 2012-13.

In course of the process, village and block level workshops and planning exercises were held with Gram Sabhas, Gram Panchayat and other PRI representatives, local NGOs and self-help groups. The process of preparation of village plans was facilitated by identification of issues of women themselves especially from minority communities and excluded groups in remote and backward villages. There was an increase in participation of women in decision-making structures such as Gram Sabhas. This has led to the empowerment of women not merely by increasing their numbers in Gram Sabha, but also equipping them to identify and articulate their needs and priorities.

District administration was the key implementer of this initiative. Local faculties from Officers' Training Centre, Udaipur were also engaged. District Officials were trained to develop engendered district development plan along with orientation on gender and hands-on group exercise for formulating GSP. Active civil society organizations such as *Aastha* and *Seva Mandir* participated in the process and provided inputs. A working group was formed to finalize the GSP. Regular meetings were held by the working group under the leadership of CPO, Udaipur. Main elements of the initiative were to do

situational analysis of women and men, girls and boys in each sector. Specific targets and goals related to women were identified for each sector. Gender sensitive indicators were developed. Assessment of legislations, policies, programmes and schemes related to women was done. All district line departments were part of the process. Directorate of Women Empowerment was actively involved. Role of UN agencies was to provide strategic inputs and guidance for the implementation of the project. UNDP played a key catalytic role in this initiative.

The working groups shared their reports in March 2011, which were then consolidated, reviewed and finalized. As a result, the district GSP was included in district plan. As far as the budget is concerned, the size of Udaipur District plan was Rs. 976.15 crores, of which 205.68 crores (21.07 percent) were allocated to the GSP.

A review meeting was held to clarify the doubts of district officials and to prepare a road-map for the next financial year 2012-13. It was decided that from next year, gender concerns would be integrated into each sector/scheme of the district plan. It may be highlighted that the process followed has laid a foundation for preparing gender sub-plans in consonance with national guidelines. The need is to build on the positive endeavours to transform it to a sustainable process.

This has been among the very few such initiatives where developing and integrating gender sensitive plans in mainstream have been thought about. This has led to understanding the current levels of sensitivities of the key district officials, their concerns, prejudices and biases. Useful processes were initiated; there is a need to build more capacities and a leadership

to institutionalize the GSP. It needs to be emphasized that it is a part of district planning and not an additional activity.

Challenges Faced

The initiative focused on participatory gender planning, as a core element of decentralized planning. Grassroots stakeholders such as Gram Sabha members, SHGs, NGOs and community leaders joined the process. However, the bottom-up approach was not adopted, making the exercise completely driven by district officials. Key attitudinal aspects like disinterest in participatory processes and working in the isolated comfort zones of departmental silos posed hindrance. These blocks were found to be even more obdurate in the context of gender planning. While some of it could be neutralized in course of the initiative, a persistent effort for a longer period is needed for sustained impact.

Many officials even now consider the GSP as a particular extent of budget allocation for women, as was done through the WCP. This undermines the key thrust area of the GSP as an effort to transform the prevailing social discrimination against women and to rapidly improve their social and economic status.

Sex-disaggregated data was not available at district level which was a big hurdle in preparing the GSP. This not only prevented

Role of UN agencies was to provide strategic inputs and guidance for the implementation of the project. UNDP played a key catalytic role in this initiative.



A group work session in a district level gender sub-plan workshop

understanding of the conditions of women as well as tracking of the impacts of schemes and policies but also impeded allocation of resources in equitable manner.

Gender integration is being considered as an extra activity for which officials think more resources are required. Despite sensitization workshop and conceptual inputs provided to officials, many of them still expect additional resources for this to be conducted as a distinct process. It is to be noted that districts receive mostly tied funds through central and state governments and it is difficult to allocate resources at the district level.

Many of the line department officials, who were part of the process, got transferred during 2012, which hampered the initiation of institutionalization of this pilot initiative.

Specific Outcome and Impact

Participation of women in Gram Sabha has improved in terms of number of people attending and also interventions made. Their roles in decision making discussions have also been more visible. This conclusion is based on feedback of community leaders from different Panchayats in Udaipur district.

By acquiring knowledge and necessary inputs for developing gender sensitive plans, district officials gained clarity to deliver on gender development objectives. Their sense of ownership was also increased and showed effective commitment towards the cause. Key aspects of analysis of the GSP⁶ of the district made an emphatic impression on them. It was identified that Udaipur has a low sex ratio which decreased to 958 (2011) from

⁶ Gender Sub Plan, 2011-12, District Udaipur

971 (2001); high imbalance in child sex ratio in the age group of 6 to 14 years, which is 740; low work participation rate for females (31.83 per cent as against 51.49 per cent for males), low female literacy rate (35.28 per cent as compared to 59.71 per cent for men as of 2011) etc. The plan focused on these indicators in terms of support interventions and budget allocation.

Lessons Drawn from Practice

Having a GSP is clearly not enough. As mentioned above, gender components should be strongly brought in the departmental plans and all sectors of the district plan. The Gender Cell of Women Empowerment Department, which is already facilitating Gender Budgeting exercise, needs to be more systematically involved in the planning process at district and sub-district levels.

There is need for convergence among different departments so that the GSPs find ownership and implementation support from these departments. Notwithstanding the fact that the Department of Women's Empowerment makes budgetary allocation for new schemes for women, all key departments like health, education, rural development, agriculture, water and sanitation etc. need to do their planning and budgeting with the gender lens. There is a need to develop consensus that women's empowerment requires not only adequate resource allocation in areas like health, education, water sanitation and nutrition, sustained employment, access to credit and asset ownership, skills, research and design technology, but participation of women in planning and decision-making on these issues is of utmost importance.



A woman community representative discussing the issue of girl's education

Though the GSP process has been initiated, it needs institutionalization, which can be furthered through a two-pronged strategy: regular capacity-building including sensitization and rigorous monitoring of action taken.

There is no single model of gender planning/budgeting, though common to all of them is a perspective and approach for gender mainstreaming which problematizes the impact of governmental budgets on women, men, girls and boys. The international and national experience suggests that, despite its potential contribution to development, initiatives may fall by the wayside if those who are responsible for doing the work do not understand why they are doing it, or feel that the added value is not worth the added work. It should not be construed and implemented as an add-on to the existing planning and budgeting process, but should rather be embedded in the planning policy and practice.

Conclusion

The idea and process followed have laid a foundation for strengthening gender sub-planning further to make it institutionally grounded. The gaps and suitable measures to fill those have been mentioned in the earlier sections.

There is a need to deepen the process of mainstreaming and integrating gender perspectives in the district planning process. Analysis of all new policies and schemes through gender lens and integration of gender sensitive elements in the older schemes is required so that the process is institutionalized.

There is a need for sustained campaigns amongst local communities, media and

There is a need for sustained campaigns amongst local communities, media and government officials to raise awareness on women's rights and entitlements.

government officials to raise awareness on women's rights and entitlements. Capacities need to be developed and strengthened in planning institutions to keep a focus on gender sub-plans on a continuous basis. Such interventions, if maintained throughout the 12th Five Year Plan period at all the stages of planning, monitoring and evaluation, would pave the way for sustained impact at the district level.

Change Management
Strengthening Collaboration and
Improving Service Delivery







of district level government officials and elected people's representatives. This was a long process punctuated by human process workshops and action on the ground by each of the participants.

Change Management Principles

The first principle affirms the *citizen as the focus* of governance. The programme attempted to trigger a perspective shift and attitudinal change of the government functionaries to observe the welfare and advancement of citizens as the primary objective of government.

Inclusion, 'equitable growth', 'sustainable development', 'convergent and participative processes' – these continue as the key elements of the vision of India's development approach. Nevertheless, the progress has been tardy. In order to understand the barriers and bottlenecks, and to demonstrate a strategy for change, a 'change management' pilot was initiated in Odisha in the district of Sundargarh between November, 2010 and July 2012 by the State Government and the Planning Commission supported by UNDP. Four key dimensions of change were targeted by the end of the initiative: shift towards inclusive and participatory planning; convergence of programmes and resources; outcomes-oriented planning; and transparent and accountable implementation process.

The second principle that underlay the initiative was that perspective and attitudinal shift of the government functionary has to be accompanied by a *change in the organizational culture*. Hence participation in the programme was not enough. The participants had to bring into the ambit of change, her/his colleagues, subordinates and superiors. While stimulating individual attitudinal change, the process had also to facilitate a shift in the organizational culture, which would nurture the pro-citizen attitudinal change of the government functionary and develop into a pro-citizen organization. Hence, it is necessary that the leadership of the organization, whether at the district, block or village is made an integral part of the programme by way of a conscious design of inclusion.

The Change Management process was guided by a team of experts from the Organization Development Excellence Consultants (ODEC), Chennai. After a rapid ground-level assessment of development planning and implementation processes, an experiential learning-action process was carried out with a core group

The third principle that ran right through the programme of change management was that governance reform is a *continual process*. It was a dynamic that infused the mind and feeling of the participant at all times, it cannot be switched on and off according to one's moods. Hence each workshop was

the spring from which change projects issued forth into the participant's life space (family and friends), work space (colleagues, subordinates and superiors) and work site (community), which were the site for action and experimentation.

The fourth principle, in a large measure a corollary of the previous one, was that change is a continuous *cycle of praxis* (reflection-action-reflection). Hence the workshop as a site of 'reflection' has necessarily to be followed by change projects as the site of action. The change projects at the work site in turn trigger the process of reflection at the work space and the workshop. This cycle of praxis draws the participant into a vortex of change primarily in the collaborative relationship with the citizen, which reflects itself in improvements in the delivery process, i.e. improvement in school environment and health centres. The change projects in the work place draw colleagues and subordinates into the governance reform process and assist in the process of transformation of institutional culture, making the whole organization supportive of pro-citizen change initiatives.

The fifth principle lays stress on the fact that governance reform is a *comprehensive process*, which embraces the change maker, her colleagues and subordinates at the workplace, the citizen at the work site and the organization itself. Hence, the first workshop triggers a movement towards change on the part of the participant by encouraging the participants to initiate simple, appropriate and effective change projects for the work place and the work site. These projects have their own dynamic and set into motion both intended and unintended effects like heightened employee morale, greater sense of ownership of the change agenda, openness to co-operation, a stimulus to collaboration and

an infectious enthusiasm, slowly but surely triggering a change in institutional culture and an attraction to governance change. Subsequent workshops are at best moments of celebration of change initiatives, sites of learning, sharing of creativity, review and revision, mutual infusion of enthusiasm, an impetus for further action and above all a sense of bonding of change makers. The workshop, work-place, work-site triad emerges as an inter-change site for learning-doing-reflecting-sharing- learning-doing and is a self-perpetuating process.

The sixth principle is that change management recognizes *governance as partnership* which begins with an interaction between the public servant and the public (citizen) in a process of unmaking and remaking of a partnership from benefactor-beneficiary mode to that of equal partners. Though difficult and fraught with remission on the part of both partners, establishing the partnership is an imperative of any change management exercise for governance reform. It is necessary to recognize that the citizen is a 'rights holder' and the public servant a 'responsibility bearer', a relation which flows from the Preamble to the Constitution. The rewards in this partnership are of a very different order in a 'heightened sense of satisfaction of having done ones' duty to the nation'. In this sense the nature of the partnership between the public servant and the public is the essential difference between change management exercises for corporate or any other agency and the process of change management for governance reform.

The seventh principle revolves round the *principles of adult learning and emotional learning*. While the principles of adult learning are based on auto reflection and reasoning, the principles of emotional learning are broadly grounded on human experience.

Any activity of most humans is sustained by the emotional gratification that it gives in the present or in the proximate future. This gratification in the change management process is associated with the person's self-identification with the values which are dear to her/him coupled with the urge to move faster, rise higher, reach farther.

These principles constitute the paradigm of *egalitarian learning*, which is best reflected in the construct of the '**Koodam**', which has been adapted from an age-old practice of community leadership observed in South India and all over South Asia. The earliest known adherent of this practice was Emperor Ashoka who viewed the '**Sangha**' as a paradigm of democratic governance. The *Koodam* is a non-hierarchical, non-invasive, non-imposing forum for free, open, critical and constructive exchange of views, opinions, agreements and disagreements, with a view to reach a consensus in action. The *Koodam* also emerges as a space that stimulates thought, actionable ideas, offers for collaborative ventures. It also contributes to building a sense of unity based on equality and shared commitment to free and frank exchange and an invitation to co-operative action. Thus, *Koodam* is where all participants meet as equal, adult members of society and discuss issues to arrive at consensus. Within *Koodam*, the norms for relating as members are based on the acceptance that all are equal irrespective of differences in status, wealth and learning. Above all, *Koodam* is an honoured space, sacred because all participants value and respect it.

Aspects of Change

Changes in Mindset

The government functionaries of the different departments at the district level are virtually the 'face of the government', the cutting edge of all development processes and the people

The *Koodam* is a non-hierarchical, non-invasive, non-imposing forum for free, open, critical and constructive exchange of views, opinions, agreements and disagreements, with a view to reach a consensus in action.

who play a vital role in translating government schemes into concrete deliverables directly impacting the lives of citizens throughout the length and breadth of the district. As public officials they enjoy an exclusive mandate for providing essential services, right from revenue and administration functions to building infrastructure like roads, buildings and power, to development functions like provision of drinking water, health services, agriculture and related functions and many other similar departments.

Normally the state functionaries, especially the functional specialists, operate as exclusive specialists answerable only as providers. Growing failure and consequent demand for 'good governance' have however dramatically altered their situation and context. The government functionaries now have to re-negotiate their relationships with a whole new plethora of interest groups and stakeholders. Thus, from being sole decision makers, the officials have to now function as a body whose future is intrinsically linked with community choice.

The context of functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is similar, but with a slightly different manifestation. While their re-election is dependent on a number of broader factors, they nevertheless are judged by their electoral constituencies, in terms of their performance,

in the manner they have delivered on their promises and the real impact they have brought about in the lives of people. Being locally based, they are per force answerable to people directly. Thus, their ability to interface with government functionaries and plan and deliver development programmes impacting on people, has a direct bearing on their acceptability by their electorates. They too face the dilemma of dealing and coping with change!

All this calls for a major re-examination of the nature of relations between the officials and PRI functionaries on the one hand, and the larger public, by individuals at their **personal levels** and by the government departments and PRIs as **institutional entities**. The exploration will naturally have to cover the issues of social, cultural and economic relations and forces.

Strategically, this process required that a conscious intervention focus on:

- a) **Attitudinal changes amongst individuals** – Covering the manner in which individuals perceive their own roles and functions and nature of relationship between themselves, the Government/ PRIs, and the community at large.
- b) **Attitudinal changes within the organization** – Encompassing the manner in which the organization relates to the ordinary citizen who is now being addressed as a ‘rights bearer’ of the services offered by the government/ departments/PRIs, with the aim of reaching the unreached.
- c) **Attitudinal changes amongst key stake holders** – The larger change effort will also have to include a concurrent change in the way other stake holders and the community at large also perceives the relevance and importance of the

government functionaries and PR leaders and the services it offers. This is premised on the fact that where people see possibilities of meaningful and purposive interaction with the service provider they will naturally engage in a sustained relationship for mutual benefit, leading to sustainable and equitable services.

Institutional Change

The government system is a repository of the accumulated wisdom, knowledge and experiences of hundreds of officials and experts and a vast treasure house of information about individual sectors in Odisha. It is thus strategic to utilize the technocratic and managerial expertise of the government officials as the starting point to transform the organization into a more **people focused, community responsive and publicly accountable organization**.

We may highlight the challenge as one of transforming the organization into one of being:

- **Responsive** in RELATIONS and **Responsible** in PRACTICE
- **Transparent** in CHARACTER and **Participative** in ACTION
- **Accountable** in ATTITUDES and **Articulate** in EXPRESSION

The dynamics of such a change process typically covered the following dimensions:

- (1) Ensuring ‘Convergent Community Action’ by bringing together state service providers and officials with an active, involved and better informed community;
- (2) Establishing meaningful interface between community and service delivery systems;
- (3) Ensure convergence and coherence in policy formulation, planning and implementation;

- (4) Strengthening service delivery systems by focusing on improving efficiency and effectiveness of individuals and systems and self-sustaining change efforts;
 - (5) Capacity building of different stake holders including government officials, women and local communities, local bodies and NGO representatives and elected representatives.
- To break hierarchical modes of relating and encourage free interaction;
 - To ensure people do not take recourse to strategic 'silence' in presence of seniors;
 - To prevent people from saying 'YES' when they actually meant 'NO';
 - To instil a sense of individual and collective ownership of the process of change.

Praxis of Change

Basic Assumptions

The training effort is premised on the following important assumptions:

- Individuals should be willing and committed to exploring the need for change in themselves and in the department.
- Senior officials in the department should openly exhibit their own willingness and readiness to work for bringing about change and be ready to lead by personal example.
- Individual level changes will be successful and sustained only when the system also demonstrates its readiness to stand by individuals during the process of bringing about a more efficient, responsive and human concern based system.
- Just as individual behaviour reflects one's own sense of values, attitudes, norms, vision, culture and worldviews, systems too reflect similar characteristics.
- Thus, all change projects can succeed only when they address the imperatives of change at both the individual and the system level in the entirety of issues listed above.

Setting the *Koodam* into Action

Difficulties of working in a hierarchical, government system made it necessary

to address some critical issues at the very beginning of the process:

- To break hierarchical modes of relating and encourage free interaction;
- To ensure people do not take recourse to strategic 'silence' in presence of seniors;
- To prevent people from saying 'YES' when they actually meant 'NO';
- To instil a sense of individual and collective ownership of the process of change.

The transformation process was begun with an invitation to the functionaries participating in the process to create a '*Koodam*' in which they would interact with each other as equal persons engaged in the common purpose of learning from and with one another, without distinction of rank, position or privilege.

In a dramatic manner, the concept of the *Koodam* helped establish a new sense of relating, belonging and purpose for the 150 senior officials who had been invited to be part of the exercise to bring about changes within the organization. The officials were of various ranks ranging from District Head of Departments and senior officials of different departments, such as School Education, Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, and the lead Bank in the district to revenue department functionaries like Tahsildars, BDOs, CDPOs and representative of PRIs from all three levels of Gram Panchayat to Zilla Parishad.

The *Koodam* was the place where people learnt to engage in critical analysis of themselves, their dreams, values and vision for themselves, and saw themselves as dynamically interrelated with others, in the governance process. As they became more comfortable with sharing and 'critiquing' themselves and others, and learnt to work as a team, they also expanded the quality of

their relating thereby widening and deepening the '**circles of consensus**', bringing more and newer people into the process of change.

Exploring the Change Process

The change process can at best be described as an amalgam of multiple processes, as a continuous dialectical dialogue between thinking, learning and doing in three spaces, namely the work-shop, the work-space and the work-site. These processes can best be described as a triad of recall-reflect-revise or experience-analyze-synthesize. The workshop therefore was never visualized as the site of the change process; it was best understood as a site of critical engagement with one's own experience. The sites of the change process were the work-space, where the change makers, whether referred to as catalysts or champions, initiated change projects involving their colleagues, sub-ordinates and superiors. These change projects were geared both to make the work-spaces as sites of change, but also the sites where the thesis of change met with the anti-thesis of resistance challenging the change maker to evolve new learning syntheses. The work spaces were also the sites where the change makers attempted replicating the **Koodam** and when the attempt was successful, the workspace became a locus of support, collectivity and creativity. The work-space became the locus of both expanding consciousness blending with widening circles of solidarity. The change initiatives at the work space were intended to provide the impetus for change initiatives at the work-site, the locus of engagement of the change maker with the citizen, who was both a partner as well as a beneficiary in the change. The work-site was hence the central point for creative energies of the change maker to be invested in the betterment of the citizens at the bottom of the

pyramid, who were invited in turn to become change makers in their own human and social environment, triggering yet another cycle of experimentation, engagement and change, a veritable amalgam of multiple spirals of qualitative betterment of human and social environments.

The process comes full circle when the change maker brings her/his experimental and experiential learning through engagement with her/his human and social environment to the work-shop as the melting pot of learning allowing for new synergies of discovery to trigger new syntheses of understanding in an effort to bridge the gap with the others and their experiences of the energies of change. The workshop also provides an opportunity for a celebration of creativity through mutual recognition of the initiatives and investments of others in the transformation of the living realities of the citizen. Each workshop therefore revolved around three multilateral processes:

- 1) 'Breaking Barriers - Building Bridges';
- 2) 'Confronting Challenges - Creating Convergence', and
- 3) 'Synergizing Strengths - Strategizing Success'.

It is important to note that the three processes elaborated below are neither in the order of importance nor in an order of sequence. Each workshop can best be understood as a churning or melting pot with the participants traversing one or other process, individually or collectively. Each workshop is also a manifestation of the change makers moving in a rising spiral of expanding knowledge, deepening experience, intensifying engagement, sharpening analyzes and enriching syntheses of knowing, feeling and doing.



Students in their nutrition garden at Rupadihi UP School, Sundargarh, where students, teachers and community collaborated to educate all children

In effect, the challenge of designing the workshops necessitates constant improvisation and adaptation depending on the willingness of the group to engage in critical, analytical, open and honest sharing and discussion. This means that the overall goals of each workshop are reached not necessarily through typecast training methods and exercises but by changing methods to suit the dynamics of each situation.

‘Breaking Barriers - Building Bridges’

Addressing issues of the ‘person’ and the ‘personal’, exploring the ways in which people relate to one another and creating a climate of camaraderie based on shared experiences and group learning.

The first process that the participants engage in every workshop is “Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges”, a term that admits of many facets:

- Questioning ideologies, stated or unstated, recognized or not, but consciously adopted or unconsciously acquired, which determines the manner in which we see, perceive, understand and interpret phenomena;
- Reconstructing identities, generally inherited and unconsciously internalized hierarchies of difference, caste and class, which condition interaction and association;
- Dismantling imbibed hierarchies of the mind in terms of imparted and received knowledge, rectitude and error;

- Resolving acquired hierarchies of administrative practice surrounding superior - sub-ordinate positioning, obedience and subservience;
- Recognizing hierarchies of relationships that spill over from work space into social spaces.

Breaking barriers was a self-initiated critical exploration of the force-field of difference in an effort to enter into the space of oneness. Building bridges focused on horizontalizing the learning, sharing and caring space, through internalization of a collectively created space of equality, trust, honesty, un-conditionality and equanimity through the creation of the *Koodam*, a space for the 'exchange of wisdom' and the maturation of the 'wise'. Building bridges addressed itself to building a new social order of equity and equality that would take the place of an order constructed on hierarchy and difference. Building bridges also consisted in creating new networks of solidarity between the participants based on shared ideals and convergent initiatives.

'Confronting Challenges, Creating Convergence'

Exploring issues of collective living and survival as members of different stakeholders and from the prism of different stakeholders to examine the issues of sustainable development and inclusive, equitable, participatory democracy in rural areas based on an assessment of each other's priorities and conflicts and willingness to contribute, or 'converge' resources – knowledge, best practices, human, financial, technological.

While the first stage, 'Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges' was an intense process of deconstruction of the generally unconscious and very rarely willed, dimensions and manifestations of diversity, difference, discrimination, sub-ordination and subservience, accompanied by the reconstruction of the self and the other in an egalitarian, equitable, free and open forum of partners in the agenda of expanding freedoms, the second stage was geared to confronting challenges of multiple un-freedoms in the personal, organizational and communitarian spaces in creating convergence of minds, wills and energies.

In this phase, the workshops deepened the exploration of un-freedoms which began in the first stage and discovered the freedoms created in the *Koodam* as a construct of internal solidarity and external authenticity. With the *Koodam* as the springboard of creative consciousness, the participants dissected the abundant un-freedoms in the wider environment and in particular the communities that they had sworn to serve. Un-freedoms manifest in hunger, thirst, illness, illiteracy, shelterlessness, unemployment, environmental degradation,

Building bridges addressed itself to building a new social order of equity and equality that would take the place of an order constructed on hierarchy and difference. Building bridges also consisted in creating new networks of solidarity.

bondage, violence, discrimination, denial and death. The *Koodam* also triggered a search for the un-freedoms in the organizational environment that culminated in their personal and professional dis-empowerment. In the *Koodam* they also explored development as freedom, the multiple bonds that they required to build to create new synergies of collectivity, co-operation and collaboration, synergies that come from convergence.

Seen thus, convergence was not the formal act of different functionaries sitting together to contribute their respective resources. Convergence was the process of the 'integration' of different functional specialists into a single, cohesive team fired by a common concern to ensure equitable development in which the 'responsibility' of change was commonly shared. Moving away from the compartmentalized functioning of every specialist contributing only with resources they had command over, they also took responsibility for the entire process; thus sharing was not when 'asked' but also by 'giving' voluntarily. This sets the context for the third stage.

'Synergizing Strengths - Strategizing Success'

Examining the strengths of different stakeholders is critical to the success of any venture leading to sustainable development, to bring about synergy in the use of energies and resources and evolving strategies to ensure success of such schemes in a practical manner in the actual field context.

The second stage engaged in the dialectical dialogue while engaging with challenges

Convergence was the process of the 'integration' of different functional specialists into a single, cohesive team fired by a common concern to ensure equitable development in which the 'responsibility' of change was commonly shared.

of multi-tiered un-freedoms in the effort to create convergence of thought and action across hierarchies and regimentation that accompanies variance of goals, guidelines and grounded action. The dialogue was through strategic collaborations with colleagues and with communities in the numerous self visualized change projects that the participants engaged in with their colleagues in the work-space and the community in their work-sites. The change projects triggered creative imagination, stimulated joint action and often led to new synergies of collaboration.

The third stage delved into the learning from the new synergies of creativity and strengths of collaboration. Collective reflections led to recognizing the value of collectivity, the discovery of internal solidarity, the strengths of collaboration and the celebration of the *Koodam* as the root of synergistic energy of expanding freedoms.

Results on the Ground

Through a series of workshops, a reflection process was cascaded, which was interspersed with implementation of individual and collective 'change projects' in the 'work



Water harvesting structure at Langaleswar, Koira Sundargarh - one of many joint initiatives between people, panchayat and block officials for water security

areas' (colleagues in office) and 'worksites' (community or the chosen villages/Gram Panchayats etc.). The 'change projects', designed and later on reviewed by the participants during the workshops, related to different sectoral schemes and programmes including the following:

- a. Improving routine service delivery in government departments represented by participants;
- b. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) projects addressing water and food security;
- c. Decentralized and participative planning at village and Panchayat levels;
- d. Improving infrastructure and style of functioning in work-areas;
- e. Addressing entitlement under the Forest Rights Act (FRA);
- f. Meeting child health goals through ICDS.

The intervention focused on several strategic change areas:

- Change in the attitude of the government functionaries at an individual level towards their work and citizens: Through a sustained process of reflection and analysis, participating government functionaries appreciated the significance of rights and entitlements of citizens and inculcated a sense of responsibility and responsiveness in planning and implementation processes.
- Developing a spirit of collaboration and team work among colleagues within and across departments: It involved finding commonalities across programme areas and supporting and complementing each other in accomplishing programme objectives. This helped break departmental and sectoral silos.

- Facilitating institutional transformation: Work culture was improved by promoting positivism and cooperative ethos and valuing encouragement and appreciation towards each other. Further, simplifying cumbersome procedures and making work decision-oriented improved efficiency in functioning. Communication channels were built up across vertical levels of bureaucracy, and between bureaucracy and elected representatives, which facilitated better information inputs and other necessary support.
- Promoting partnership with people: Various forms of engagement of officials with people (with focus on the deprived and excluded) for identifying problems, and seeking, planning and executing solutions. Several issues, often ignored or inadequately attended to, were resolved relating to land rights, water and food security, child and maternal morbidity, etc.
- Building up skills: While working on issues, necessary communication, planning and project management skills were developed in a need- and context-based manner.
- Personal and institutional changes went on hand-in-hand in a reflexive process. Attitudes and orientations of the participants changed, while new modes of collective and institutional action were experimented.
- All actions germinating during the process were voluntary and self-initiated by the participants. So, there was a high degree of ownership, motivation and effort.
- While working on development problems and issues, the positioning of different institutions and functions changed. For instance, the Tahsil, the block, the CHC, dealt with their clients more equally as duty-bearers, significantly addressing issues of correlation between governance and development.

Future Directions

If up-scaled, the strategies and methods of change management, as applied in Odisha, can considerably contribute to inclusive and decentralized planning and equitable development. These can make significant difference to current practice of governance and development at sub-State levels in terms of:

- The Change Management Initiative in Odisha has demonstrated certain unique features, which are definitive of the intervention:
- *'Koodam'* was the key principle and tool of association, interaction and participation during and beyond the workshops. *'Koodam'* or *'gathering place'* is the space where participants freely interacted non-hierarchically, discussed and decided by consensus. This practice helped to deal with the prevailing culture of a closed organization, and engendered candid discussion and critical analysis of each other's views, positions and perspectives non-threateningly to address issues at hand.
 - Enabling different government departments to work across departmental boundaries converging programmes and resources towards shared outcomes;
 - Better targeting of local issues and harnessing of local knowledge and expertise in planning and programme implementation through collaboration with local governments and communities;
 - Development management becoming more responsive to the rights and entitlements of citizens (particularly the vulnerable and marginalized);
 - More pro-active adoption of the values and processes of accountability in planning implementation.

Convergence for Local Development Working Across Departments and Programmes







Decentralized and inclusive planning and implementation leading to equitable sharing of development benefits by all social groups has been the cherished goal in development planning in India. This requires different government departments, specialized programmes, local rural and urban governments and other institutions to work in a convergent manner in planning, positioning resources and implementing programmes so that desired development outcomes are achieved. The idea, strategy and practice of convergence have been emphasized in the 12th Five Year Plan as a seminal aspect of development programming. However, the practice of convergence has proved to be difficult and challenging. Hence, all experiences of convergence are very useful from the point of view of solutions and learning they bring. Such an experience came from the State of Jharkhand during 2010-12 within the ambit of the Government of India-United Nations Joint Programme on Convergence.

The Context of the Intervention

The convergence initiative taken up under the programme was a targeted intervention with

the district government taking a lead role. It got initiated when there were no Panchayati Raj Institutions in Jharkhand (after elections in 2010, the PRIs have become active). Further, decentralized and participatory village plans were neither being made nor was there any conceptual and practical understanding related to this among district and block level officials. Different line departments had been making annual plans in isolation without any community participation and any semblance of convergence.

The initiative was to provide support for achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the district level through decentralized, integrated and participatory planning and convergence of development programmes and schemes. The focus was a village, namely 'Jhargaon' in Gumla district, which was selected through consultations with key district officials according to the following criteria:

- Close proximity to the district headquarters;
- Presence of tribal population;
- A certain level of mobilization and organization already existing in the community (presence of women SHGs) and evidence of earlier community efforts in some government programme (the village community had taken up joint effort for an ICDS centre);
- Availability of some basic infrastructure.

The experiment began with a perspective that, if decentralized planning through community involvement is practiced, generation of volunteerism and ownership followed by partnership of community in the process can be expected. This would enhance the influence of convergence from joint building of assets to strengthening sustainability of

the process. Field experience exemplifies that community-involvement enhances resource pool and strengthens the relevance of the investment. Moreover, community knowledge and innovations could be useful inputs in designing interventions and improving their efficacy.

Situation before the Project Intervention⁷

About 100 out of 202 households were affected by alcoholism. Only about 45 children (about 25%) were attending the primary school. Girls' enrolment was thin. About 70% of the households used to migrate with entire family after monsoon season, leading to adverse socio-economic effects especially on children, adolescent girls and women. The

community had little awareness of education, health and hygiene, effective management of natural resources, and different government schemes available for socio-economic development. Farming was not efficient; about 140 acres of private land belonging to 45 families remained fallow. Available infrastructure (i.e. the primary school, roads, street lights, etc.) was in dismal condition. Financial and business development services were negligible. People had poor market access and had to fall back on exploitative moneylenders for meeting their credit needs. A few powerful people in the village cornered whatever developmental opportunities emerged and the disadvantaged sections of the community remained unreached. A ray of hope existed in four women SHGs being active there and community taking up joint effort for setting up an Anganwadi centre.



Block/district officials and community leaders in an early planning meeting at Jhargaon, Gumla

⁷ Source: Information obtained through FGDs and interviews with key informants at the community level, e.g. members of Village Sansad, SHGs, direct beneficiaries, school headmaster, Local Government functionaries etc.

Intervention Strategy

In order to understand the situation in the village, a baseline survey was conducted with the help of volunteers from the village. The volunteers, including three women, were selected from among active and enthusiastic participants in group meetings held on the development situation of the village. The findings were shared in a joint meeting of all the district department heads and banks. The discussions led to development of a commonly agreed broad action perspective which outlined the next steps and was one of the key instruments of the initiative. Further, the plan was discussed with the village community and the indicators were decided with them. It was followed by a joint visit of representatives from line departments and banks to the village, where they educated villagers about different development schemes and programmes. This set off a process of mobilization in which the Anganwadi worker played the critical role. She facilitated continuous internal reflection and social analysis in regular meetings of the four women's SHGs, which remarkably improved the awareness levels across the village.

Then sector-specific action plans were detailed out. District level officials of line departments visited the village and interacted with the village community, Mahila Mandals and the Gram Pradhan (village headman). These meetings were held in a series and the officials also carried out certain Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises (social and resource mapping, transect walks, etc.) to detail out various aspects of development action to be taken up by their departments, i.e. irrigation, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, education, health etc.

The district facilitation team invited credible NGOs like PRADAN who took the responsibility of organizing communities and identifying and preparing beneficiaries for various livelihood opportunities. In order to enhance the capacity of the community and other stakeholders, a series of exposure trips were organized within the district. District officials and community members, farmers, SHG members were taken to other villages of the district wherein exemplary works have taken place in diverse fields, for example agriculture and horticulture, irrigation, community organization in form of SHGs and cooperatives, poultry, vermin-compost, fishery etc. Also, film shows on successful model villages like Hiware Bazar, Maharashtra were shown to motivate them. Ongoing capacity building on issues of community organizations and strengthening Gram Sabhas was conducted. Other trainings were imparted on livelihood programmes of piggery, fishery, dairy, and goatery by the departments concerned. Banks played their role in organizing the farmers and other entrepreneurs to link them with the various schemes and benefits available with the bank. The activity plans developed in the process were put up in Gram Sabha meetings for approval and adoption. These plans were compiled to develop the detailed and comprehensive village plan with significant components of convergence. The

District officials and community members, farmers, SHG members were taken to other villages of the district wherein exemplary works have taken place in diverse fields.

villagers, especially women, resolved to take responsibility to make Jhargaon a model village. Thereafter, the 'model' village was formally inaugurated in a ceremony attended by the Deputy Commissioner of Gumla and all district heads of departments. This process got completed in about five months.

As mentioned above, the key elements of the model 'convergence' initiative were the following:

- To develop a village as laboratory of convergence where the communities, government departments, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), banks, private agencies and other stakeholders came together to work for the overall progress of the villages;
- To develop a need-based comprehensive village development plan by the villagers with technical support from government departments and NGOs;
- To implement the plan in a time-bound manner with sufficient ownership and partnership of the people;
- To demonstrate a model for replication in other villages of the district.

Encouraged by the success of this initiative, the second model convergence village 'Tilwari' in the same district (Gumla) was selected, in contrast to the criteria adopted for Jhargaon, as this village is situated in one of the remotest part (60 km away from district headquarters) of the district in the forested and hilly region. Tilwari lacked basic infrastructure. It was also a predominantly tribal-inhabited area with a section of the PTG (Primitive Tribal Group) population residing on the hilly and forested area. There was a very positive role played by the local media, which not only resulted in boosting the confidence among villagers of Jhargaon but also created awareness on

'Model Village Initiative' in the other areas of Gumla District.

Activities and Outputs

Community Institution Development

The villages had a few SHGs, which were much disorganized. The support of local NGOs was taken to strengthen them by regularizing their meetings; developing accounting systems for thrift and credit and helping them make and enforce necessary rules and regulations. As a result, the SHGs became functional and useful in a period of few months and almost every family became associated with one SHG or another. There came to be 11 organized SHGs in Jhargaon and 3 in Tilwari. Also, the banks came up to form the Kishan (farmers) clubs in the villages under a scheme of NABARD. The villagers of Tilwari were organized in the form of a Fishery Development Co-operative Society having 27 members, through the district Fishery Department, as this village was identified to have substantial prospects for fishery development due to the existence of the big Tilwari-Jaipur water reservoir.

In the absence of PRIs, Village Development Committees (VDCs) were formed with the entire community selecting the members and its office bearers. The traditional village head known as Gram Pradhan was unanimously decided to lead the VDC, while the secretary, treasurer (mandatorily a woman member), and other members were selected by the community. These committees became the primary institutions to plan, execute and monitor the implementation process. They became capable of conducting Gram Sabha to discuss and take decisions on vital issues. The VDC bank accounts were opened and government funds for development works were transferred thereto. Department officers

provided technical support and monitoring in the whole process.

The VDC grew into the Gram Sansad, which expanded the scope of decentralizing power and responsibility to specific members of the community for different development sectors. The members were selected by the Gram Sabha. Key leaders were designated as ministers for specific sectors like health, education, MGNREGA, agriculture, etc. The Ministers took charge and identified needs and problems related to their sectors with the help of other villagers and developed and executed sectoral plans in coordination with the district administration. The Prime Minister had the leadership of the Gram Sansad and was accountable to the Gram Sabha.

Livelihoods and Poverty Alleviation

People traditionally engaged in agriculture, forest-based activities and animal husbandry in the form of piggery, goatery, poultry and fishing. The plan included expansion and diversification of such activities and the departments concerned provided support. The Gram Sabhas identified the entrepreneurs for different income generation activities mentioned above.

Agricultural crops were diversified to include wheat, maize and peas and varied vegetables. Financial support was extended to 43 farmers through Kisan Credit Cards, while 84 families got into improved livestock farming. An animal husbandry centre was set up with support from BAIF Foundation for first aid and other services. Horticulture was introduced and covered 45 households and 140 acres of their uncultivated land in crops like mango, guava, sapota, etc. The intercropping included ginger, potato etc. Marigold and rose were introduced in floriculture. Twenty four plastic line tanks

were constructed to facilitate irrigation after drawing water from seven existing wells. A new community well under National Horticulture Mission was constructed. Fishery development led to renovation and use of irrigation ponds for fish farming. Village youth were trained to work as seed growers. Families who traditionally brewed liquor to make ends meet were supported to develop farm-based livelihoods. The Differential Rate of Interest (DRI) Scheme of Bank of India was utilized for the purpose. Households had also been linked to MGNREGS for accessing supplementary employment. Desiltation of reservoirs and ponds, planned by the community and supported through MGNREGS have helped in better water conservation and harvesting. Old irrigation sources have been revived and new created in the form of wells, farm ponds and lift irrigation schemes.

Education and Literacy

Education being a prime indicator of human development has been focused as a major intervention in the model villages. Village Sansad and other community-based groups took up a leading role in ensuring enrolment of children in schools. They facilitated hiring of a person to take care of cattle grazing, which freed the children usually engaged in the task to go to school. The village community also took up school development programmes such as new school building, vegetative fencing, separate toilets for girls and organized an active school management committee. Another noteworthy feature is that 17 out of school adolescent girls were brought under the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), which started the process of getting all girls in the village into the school and pushing up the age at marriage. Night coaching centres were started, where village youth voluntarily taught school children.

Health and Sanitation

The district has been identified as a malaria and filarial zone afflicted with other ailments too. Timely medical check-up and treatment needed proper attention. Construction of buildings for the sub-centre started a new trend in provision of health services. The ANM, ASHA worker and the Anganwadi worker came regularly and collaborated to address health needs of people of all age groups. Basic health services for children and mothers, namely, immunization, ante- and post-natal care, anaemia control, de-worming and provision of Vitamin A etc. were also regularised. This has resulted in more people accessing government health care facilities. Weekly cleanliness drives in the village helped better cleanliness. Community toilets had been maintained through the initiative of the women's groups and used. However, individual toilet units needed to be introduced in all the households.

Basic health services for children and mothers, namely, immunization, ante- and post-natal care, anaemia control, de-worming and provision of Vitamin A etc. were also regularized.

Development Infrastructure

The village infrastructure has gone through a sea change. The Panchayat Bhawan, which is the seat of the Panchayat provides space for several development activities. The school had been renovated and expanded. The Anganwadi Centre (AWC) got a new building. Solar street lights have been introduced and functioning well. A Village Information Centre (VIC)

functioned to support community awareness, development and access to information. There are plans to furnish the VICs with computers. All activities related to strengthening and managing village infrastructure are being executed by the Gram Sansad with technical support, supervision and monitoring by relevant government departments.

Addressing Emerging Social Issues

Success and acceptability of the model village development programme was reflected in some of the initiatives taken by the villagers on their own. This also showed a paradigm shift in the perception of the community towards development. The village women joined hands to take an unprecedented step for enforcing an anti-alcohol drive. Another initiative taken by the community was towards making their villages fully literate. Youth groups of the village volunteered to make the people literate. In Jhargoan they also conducted coaching for the school children at the AWC building with contribution from the community in arranging kerosene oil required for lighting.

In both the villages they had started cleanliness drives. They were organizing participatory village sanitation campaigns. For this they had decided days and time and the community members came together to clean the streets, pathways and drains every week.

Outcomes

- Distressed migration stopped completely. Before this initiative, as many as 70 per cent of the households used to migrate (many with their entire family) after the kharif season.



Village primary school – the centre of educational mobilization

- All the children including girls are enrolled in schools and the dropout trend has been arrested.
- Backward and forward linkages for agriculture and allied activities have been established, which were almost absent before. This has led to better income both in farm and off-farm livelihoods.
- The local community not only started taking benefit of government schemes but also contributed in cash and kind, such as purchasing land for the school. Self-confidence of local communities has increased considerably and they are comfortable in dealing with senior officials, political leaders and other representatives.
- Demand for services by the village community from government delivery system, especially pertaining to health and education, has increased considerably.
- Replication of the initiative was initiated in another 38 villages of Gumla district. The State Government had also accepted model village concept for implementation in 89 villages across the state.

Challenges Faced

- The vested interests initially from government as well as community did not cooperate. Capacities of the community were weak in the initial stages to take up a leading role in developmental activities.

- The mindset of government functionaries, especially at block and sub-block levels, was not oriented to social engineering and participatory processes. The force of higher authority (of the Deputy Commissioner, Gumla) was critical for the initiative.
- Women had a considerable role in success of the initiative. Patriarchal social structure and gender insensitivity initially acted as a major hindrance.
- Government functionaries were used to implementing schemes but not sensitized and capacitated to include people's plan in their departmental plans. Thus there was a measure of incapacity and reluctance. Those at block level and below acted rather as followers of instruction from senior officials, than being facilitators of convergence.
- The local community did not have conflict management skills, which made group dynamics difficult to handle.

Lessons Learnt

- This initiative was led and facilitated by district level officials, especially the DC and District Planning Officer. Stability of their tenure is an important aspect in the success of such interventions to facilitate/institutionalize convergence and the risk of transfer always remained.
- It showed that convergence requires careful participatory/consultative processes and addressing local interests/needs. Support of capable and reputed NGOs is critical for developing capacities and institutional structures at the community levels.
- Breaking of silos and collaboration across different line departments is an essential feature of convergence.

In this case it was possible because of spirited leadership and initiative of the Deputy Commissioner. Secondly, it was nourished by an interactive context developed between the community and government officials.

- This initiative has demonstrated that government functionaries, NGOs, and local community can facilitate village level planning, if they join hands together. This ensures complementing strength of these different stakeholders. Communities, if properly facilitated and capacitated, can come up with assessment of their real needs, suggest appropriate solutions and mobilize local resources.
- The community, including the disadvantaged sections, can take a leading role in village development, thus reiterating the values and principles behind decentralization and decentralized planning.
- Women can participate effectively not only in addressing issues concerning them, e.g. violence against them, but also in the mainstream institutions provided an enabling environment is facilitated. Similarly, youth can take up important responsibilities if their enthusiasm and energy are put to use positively.
- The trust between the government officials and local communities, including from disadvantaged sections, gets established with regular interactions, concrete dialogue and desired sensitivity towards each other. This results in an efficient partnership between the two, helping achieve the objectives of both, thus ensuring a win-win situation. Care has to be taken to tackle vested interests from different stakeholders, including some from these two key stakeholder groups too.



Glimpses from the sanitation campaign in the village

- The local community gives lot of importance to physical infrastructure and do not articulate software aspects, which are of utmost significance as management and maintenance of physical resources can be effectively done only with effective software aspects. The facilitating agencies, therefore, need to sensitize the people to think about these aspects too, while carrying out participatory planning.
- For the sustainability of such initiatives, there is a need of strong support from the government system in the shape of appropriate government orders, guidelines, circulars and administrative will. Further, there is an equal necessity of change in attitude and perspectives of government officials for participating in and facilitating such processes. Building capacity of these functionaries, therefore, should be an important component of such projects.
- Political will is the key for institutionalizing such development initiatives. Necessary advocacy and capacity building has to be done at all levels and types of political institutions, including PRIs and urban local bodies.
- Considering that grassroots level functionaries, be they from people's institutions, political system or the government, have important roles in replication and scaling up of such initiatives, necessary user-friendly manuals and guidelines need to be developed.
- Since the new working arrangements under convergence demand a new work culture and also different roles for various stakeholders at different levels, the capabilities of these functionaries and also community have to be built up. As far as imparting of knowledge inputs including technology is concerned, the functionaries need to be educated on the benefits, costs and risks associated with the new technologies vis-à-vis the technologies in vogue; while the elected members and community need to be informed in a jargon-free manner.
- For scaling up initiatives related to convergence, there is a need for 'goal congruence' among the stakeholders, which needs to be followed up with identifying potential areas, activities and/or schemes for convergence.

- **Integrated Training:** The guidelines of different Ministries have provision for organizing training programmes for the functionaries. This compartmentalized system of training does not recognize the vital link between different programmes. Hence, training should be designed in such a way that the functionaries equip themselves with necessary skills to achieve convergence in implementation of the programmes by mobilizing resources of related departments.
- **Proper coordination mechanisms** at village, block, district and state levels, with clear roles division and accountability mechanisms are crucial for the scaling up of Jhargaoon initiative.

Conclusion

The local community now gives considerable importance to health, education and employment generation. A number of women and youth leaders have cropped up in the village, who are playing an important role in the development of the village. However, there is a need to build capacity of other such people in the village to take leadership roles, so that there are more democratic processes, leading to more effective decentralization.

Local resources are being utilized much better leading to improved quality of life of most of the households. The Gram Sansad has been

accepted as a people's institution for village development. It may be kept in mind that this mechanism was created when there were no PRIs in Jharkhand. However, now PRIs being there at all the three tiers, they need to take an active role in development of the local people. This aspect needs to be given considerable importance to avoid conflicts at later stage when these PRIs become strong institutions.

Jhargaoon has shown an example where convergence took place between the needs of the people and the intent of government schemes to meet those needs. There is a need to take the next step in district planning by formulating plans based on the needs of the local community and suitably feed into the designing of government programmes. The learning from this initiative calls for internalization by newly formed PRIs as they are the legal and legitimate institutions in decentralized governance with the mandate of accomplishing such developmental activities at village, Panchayat, block and district levels.

Such an experience creates a ray of hope in fragile areas like Gumla district, which has already witnessed significant level of left-wing extremism and related alienation. This hope comes in the context in which local communities can play a key role and legitimately join the mainstream development processes.

Village and Urban Index Card Making Reliable Data Available Locally







The 'Data' Question

In the quest to achieve national development goals including the MDGs, there is increasing recognition that this could only happen when the goals are translated into actions at the district levels and by active involvement of local actors. This in turn brought about renewed attention to planning for local development, which is output and impact-oriented and linked to the national level policies and budget processes. It is increasingly felt that reliable statistics are needed for improving decision-making and development outcomes at all levels, and supporting social, economic and policy decisions. Pursuit of MDGs also leads to increased demand for reliable data to track progress along different indicators.

Evidence shows that the capacity for baseline assessment and analysis at the local level is the missing critical element in the conduct of integrated local planning and achievement of MDGs. Most of the approaches at the district level to a great extent depend on

national data systems and related institutional arrangements. The process for local level data collection, analysis and the use of such disaggregated data have been supported in Chhattisgarh and Village Index Cards and Urban Ward Index Cards have been generated in Mahasamund district to map the crucial MDG indicators and feed into the district planning process.

Problems of Availability and Reliability

In India, data sources for many of the indicators are national level initiatives, mainly the Census of India (conducted once in every ten years), National Family and Health Survey (NFHS), National Sample Survey (NSS) as well as the All India Education Survey (AIES). However, data on various socio-economic indicators are not available uniformly for all the states of India. The above scenario explicitly indicates that accurate and reliable data are needed in order to generate awareness of the present situation, obtain a clear picture of the status of the poor and develop appropriate impact indicators for monitoring progress.

It has also been realized that a reliable database is urgently needed at sub-district level to assist the State in its endeavour for planning for human development. In the context of decentralized planning, village level data are required to be collected and compiled for formulating District Development Plans (DDPs). However, there is a concern regarding the quality of data presently being made available from various sources. There is acute shortage of advanced technical knowledge and technological inputs are required for collection and analysis of various Human

The VIC/UIC is a single and simple source of village and urban ward level information. It would strengthen and assist in improved planning by providing HD and MDG related data.

Development (HD) and MDG related indicators. As a result, crucial HD and MDG related data at sub-district level and below (Gram Panchayat and Village) are not available. This leads to lack of proper understanding, collection and analysis of data which are essential for planning and development. The situation is even worse in the case of urban data. There is no single platform which could show critical data at one place so that a holistic view could be taken. No software for comparative analysis of various development indicators is available for urban planners.

Without reliable and valid statistics, it is difficult to obtain systematic information or to estimate the real situation and to respond to the needs of both men and women. Lack of accurate information on critical issues such as situation of health, education etc, might have negative results in the development programmes and projects.

Rationale of the VIC/UIC

In order to address these issues, the initiative of developing Village Index Card (VIC) and Urban Index Card (UIC)/Urban Ward Index Card (UWIC) was first undertaken under the Strengthening State Plans for Human Development (SSPHD) project, which

was strengthened and expanded to the Mahasamund district under the GoI-UN Joint Programme on Convergence. The VIC/UIC is a single and simple source of village and urban ward level information. It would strengthen and assist in improved planning by providing HD and MDG related data. It will ensure that effective Management Information System is in place and hence aid easy analysis of available resources. For the first time, it enables collection of disaggregated data by sex, social groups etc. The collected data would reflect problems and questions related to the situation of women and men over the life cycle in social as well as economic and political spheres. It would provide necessary evidence for developing policy and action measures. It would also help raise consciousness, persuade policy makers and promote changes.

Objectives

The initiative had three objectives: a) generate primary data of each household of the district to help prepare decentralized district plan; b) ensure data availability in public domain through GIS/maps; c) develop web-enabled software to make updated data available in all Panchayat Resource Centres (PRCs).

Key Steps

State and District Level Consultations

State/district level consultations were held under the leadership of senior State/district officials (Additional Chief Secretary, and Principal Secretary, Finance and Planning, Government of Chhattisgarh/District Collector). UN representatives (UNDP and UNICEF), officials from all major line departments, State Planning Commission,

District Collectors, and relevant officials from Rajnandgaon and Mahasamund districts participated. Several tasks were accomplished in the consultation:

- Finalization of VIC and UIC/ UWIC formats;
- Strengthening ownership of line department officials and other stakeholders;
- Finalization of roadmap for implementing VIC/UWIC exercise in Mahasamund district.

As a result of State and district level consultations, 189 cells were increased in the existing format of VIC along with 54 cells in UWIC, which resulted in capturing data for a larger number of indicators and analysing the same.

Designing and Pre-testing of VIC and UWIC

The format for VIC and UWIC which was designed by the Chhattisgarh Human Development Resource Unit (CGHDCRU) on the basis of state and district level consultation and later shared with State Planning Commission formed the basis for this exercise. The new VIC format continued to be a simple two-page document. The first page presented institutional information of the various sectors, already available at village level. The second page presented the information, which was not available at institutional level and thus needed to be collected at household level. The UWIC also continued to be a single page document containing only the institutional data and information of an urban ward.

Training to 'Preraks' for Data Collection

Given the importance of training to data collectors, the team of consultants along with District Support Team provided intensive training to 'Preraks'/Anganwadi workers. Urban ward level 'Preraks' were separately trained. More

than 400 'Preraks' and Nodal 'Preraks' along with Anganwadi workers were imparted training. More than technical training, motivation was needed to complete the gigantic task. Thus, motivational aspects were designed and incorporated in the training module based on a careful study of trainee profiles.

Data Collection

Data collection work started in August 2010. As Mahasamund district has 1111 villages spreading across five Blocks, the *Preraks* (village volunteers) of Zilla Lok Shiksha Samiti (ZLSS) along with Anganwadi workers (where *Preraks* were not present) were engaged for data collection exercise as they had the reach to cover cent per cent households. The ZLSS had a good number of village *Preraks* at the village level. These village *Preraks* were deployed at Panchayat and village level. A similar process was followed for the UWIC exercise. The services of urban ward level *Preraks* of the District Literacy Mission (DLM) along with Anganwadi workers were taken for collection of urban ward level data.

The Departments of Panchayati Raj, Rural and Urban Development were also engaged in the process. Instructions from Zilla/Block Panchayats and Urban Development Department were issued to the respective local government units for necessary support and information. Approvals were taken from Gram Sabhas after completion of VICs.

Data Validation

Later, one team under the guidance of Consultants of CGHDCRU, District Support Team, and the District Planning and Statistical Officer (DPSO) was formed to identify the errors in completed VICs and UWICs. The errors which could be rectified at district level were rectified then and there, while some cards

with major discrepancies were sent back to the respective villages and urban wards for corrections. This team was also involved in collecting secondary information such as data related to land records and Women and Child Development Department.

District Level Sharing

The updated VIC (after pre-testing) was finalized incorporating the findings in consultation with DPSO and department/agencies, as suggested by State Planning Commission.

Software for Updating VIC/UIC

The software was developed through an experienced vendor. Data entry was rigorously supervised by CGHDRCU so as to ascertain that the data was correct and the software met the requirements. This software was installed at Panchayat Resource Centres (PRCs), established at block level under the BRGF programme. This would help the planners to have better and quick access of the data at block itself. As data updating was critical, it was done only through District Planning and Statistics Office. Thus, the software was also installed at District Planning and Statistics office for better integration and frequent usage of the data. A process was also initiated with National Informatics Centre (NIC), Raipur and Chhattisgarh InfoTech and Biotech Promotion Society (CHIPS), Raipur to integrate this data with GIS application and to make the reports/data available in the public domain so as to ease public accessibility.

Installation and Handover of Software

District officials agreed that the software

and the allied process would be beneficial in departmental and district planning and also accepted that steps had to be taken to improve the process of updating and usage of data. The Collector agreed to take steps to use these data for departmental and district planning in the future. He also agreed to provide human resources in the form of block and district coordinators to look after the data updating process. CGHDRCU advised the district to coordinate with NIC and CHIPS for incorporating the GIS application with this software for better map-based planning along with integration of all the block PRCs with district based database. It was also decided to designate the Zilla Panchayat as the nodal point for any future updating of data.

Challenges

The CGHDRCU had assigned the work of data collection and its monitoring to ZLSS⁸. The ZLSS had provided its *preraks* for this work, but since *preraks* were not available in all the villages, CGHDRCU had to assign data collection work of these villages to Anganwadi workers through the department of Women and Child Development. ZLSS was supposed to carry out data collection, with proper monitoring in two months. However, they took four months. Some of this delay occurred on account of the rainy season, strike by Panchayat secretaries and incidence of Left Wing Extremism in Saraipali and Pithora blocks.

- However, there were other reasons for this delay, which could have been avoided, such as inefficient supervision at

⁸ Saakshar Bharat, a centrally sponsored scheme of Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), GoI was launched from October 2009 to further promote and strengthen Adult Education and Literacy, especially of women. It is devised as the new variant of National Literacy Mission. Saakshar Bharat will cover all adults in the age group of 15 and beyond though its primary focus will be on women. ZLSS is the management structure for this scheme at district level.

district level by ZLSS, over-dependence on CGHDRCU consultants, lack of timely release of instalment by SPC and delay in payment to data collectors. Role of all government line departments was equally important to complete this exercise.

- 'Preraks' had to face lots of problems in the field to get support from some departments especially in collection of land related data from *Patwaris*. As it was hampering progress, the issue was taken up at district level and village-wise land records data was made available at the district headquarters itself. This helped in solving the issue and overcome the challenges being faced by *preraks* in the field.
- Most of the urban units either do not have the data or a dedicated cell, from where the required data could have been collected. This made data collection work very difficult as the sources of data were different at different units. Most of the data was collected through repeated follow up and thus took more time than originally expected.
- One of the major highlights of this process was involvement of Gram Sabha by seeking its approval once the work for the respective VIC was completed. Zilla Panchayat, Mahasamund had issued repeated letters to all the Gram Panchayats to organize special Gram Sabha after completion of data collection in the village. Despite this, there were a few villages where the Gram Sabha could not be held. To overcome this issue, it was decided to get such data authenticated by Panchayat Secretary/Sarpanch.
- Many officials, who were involved in the initial stages of the exercise, got transferred by the end of this exercise. This delayed the work as it took a while for the new officers to settle down and get involved.



A discussion with women on data and local planning

- The DES was facing serious shortage of human resources. The DES was also grappling with lack of technical capacity, which impacted quality aspects. Many of the districts and blocks were still facing a shortage of computer hardware, relevant software and technical support.
- As Chhattisgarh is a newly formed state, a sound statistical system was yet to be established. Most of the historical data pertained to erstwhile undivided state of Madhya Pradesh and disaggregation of data was a daunting task. Further, there was dearth of Human Resource in terms of both number and competency.

Specific Outputs and Uses

Reports

Two types (graphical and textual) of reports were generated. Major reports generated through this exercise were as follows:

(Graphical)	(Textual)	(GIS Mapping)
These reports provide graphical comparative analysis of various indicators among all the blocks/urban centres of the district	These reports provide textual form of reports which contain data and analysis in textual formats	It is proposed to use the textual and graphical reports generated through VIC/UIC to feed as inputs to GIS based mapping
Education Indicators Health Indicators Livelihood Indicators Gender Indicators Availability of Natural Resources Infrastructure Social Category and Institutions.	District Profile, Block/Urban Profile. Block/Urban Education, Health and Livelihood Profile. Block/Urban Infrastructure and Natural Resources Profile. Block/Urban Gender and Social Category Profile	Colour coded display of critical indicators in district profiles. Village/ward wise display of existing infrastructure and resources. Colour coded comparisons of different geospatial levels can be displayed through maps. Possibility of trend analysis through data from 2010 to 2015 and support in MDG tracking.

Impacts of the Initiative

- Analysis of out-of-school children after the VIC survey revealed a considerable number of out-of-school children in the age group of 6-14 years (7400 out-of-school children as against 2500 children as per Education Department data). Consequently, the district administration started a special drive to bring these children to school, which included home-to-home counselling. This was followed by special Gram Sabhas for the same.
- Situation analysis for the annual district plan was based on the VIC/UIC. The biggest achievement of VIC/UIC is the availability of sex disaggregated data. A comparison of VIC/UIC with Census survey reveals that VIC/UIC captures data of significant value such as data on migration, registered marriage, etc., which is not captured through Census survey and other surveys. The District Collector of Mahasamund commented, 'Through VIC/UIC I get the complete picture of my district in one go. Many things like number of ponds and other resources etc are not easily available, but through VIC/UIC authentic data collected by community workers and validated by community are available on my table'.
- Transparency and accountability was ensured through presentation of the results from data analysis in the Gram Sabha. The amount and quality of data available can definitely help in district planning. However, there is an immense need for building capacity at sub-block,

block and district levels for the usage of the data and there has to be rigorous monitoring of the same. This would ensure empowerment of local communities, as the more appropriate information they possess, the more effective would be their initiatives.

- Involvement of State Planning Commission, Department of Planning, etc. helped in desired ownership at the state level, resulting in decision to replicate this in all the other districts of Chhattisgarh. Involvement of District Collectors resulted in desired leadership to pursue it further at district level. However, there is a need to institutionalize this exercise at district and sub-district levels.

Conclusions

VIC/UIC can help in gathering village and ward level comprehensive data which can feed into the decentralized planning process at all the three levels of planning. It can also contribute to localizing the MDGs. It is noteworthy that policy environment has been created at state level for its replication.

Data of VIC/UIC can be added for analysis into Plan Plus. Plan Plus is the software being used by the State Government for plan preparation. The VIC/UIC exercise can help in conducting resource mapping down to the community level, but active participation of all line departments is a prerequisite for accomplishing this.

VIC/UIC data should be verified through random sampling. GIS mapping tool should be used in a big way along with VIC/UIC exercise, which will have tremendous effect on planning and presentation of data.

Data of VIC/UIC can be put on public domain. Much of the data is dynamic and tends to change more frequently than other data. This issue must be taken care of during data-collection and updating exercises.

Lessons Learnt

- The State governments took the initiative and ownership enabled scaling up of this endeavour. However, involvement of civil society institutions and academic institutions, as has already been demonstrated elsewhere, not only helps in joining the strengths, but also brings greater transparency, wider ownership and more effective utilization of resources. There is scope, therefore, for enhanced partnerships among researchers, academia, training institutes/centres, government agencies, NGOs, other development agencies, private sector, communities and local authorities.
- The processes and outcomes of such exercise should lead to empowerment and capability building of communities and local bodies. Their capacities need to be built up to collect, analyze, and use such data in local planning and programme implementation.
- Such a project has to take a 'mission' approach. There is need for adequacy, appropriateness and timeliness in providing resources – human, physical, financial and technological – for executing it efficiently.
- Seasonality for execution is of significant importance. Data collection from the field for this initiative was started 2010, at the peak of the rainy season. Some of the roads were not only cut off but more importantly the villagers were busy in agriculture season, affecting data collection adversely.

- The District is the key hub for such an exercise and the District Collector and the DPSO need to take the leadership role. It is also critical that different line departments take up responsibility and own the initiative. Necessary capacity building efforts for key officials are important, who in their turn can strengthen community capacity and participation at different levels.
- The uniqueness of each district has to be considered while carrying out this exercise, especially related to data collection. The infrastructure, (including technological), suitability, motivation level as well as availability of appropriate human resources for data collection, validation and entry have to be considered while designing and carrying out this exercise in a district. For example, in Rajnandgaon district, the *prerak* system was very efficient. On the contrary, the *Prerak* System in Mahasamund was not equipped to handle this work and the Project team had to involve Anganwadi Workers, who were found more efficient and capable for data collection.
- Resources put in such initiatives get justified more when the information available is used in mainstream planning. The DPSOs and other related officials should ensure that regular monitoring related to data usage is done. A quarterly review in the DPC and other such forums will be very useful.
- Preparation of VIC/UIC work can be done through BRGF funds in BRGF supported districts. This would help in replicating and scaling up the initiative.
- An important prerequisite in the localization of the MDGs is the availability of good statistics and the capacity of the local government, among others, to systematically measure, monitor and report on their economic and social progress. Capacity development of the Department of Statistics and its representatives at the local level in collecting disaggregating data, and in using interim proxy measures, therefore, is essential.



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