

See Hindi Version of the [Query](#)  
See Hindi Version of the [Summary](#) (available from 11 July 2008)



## Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community



## Water Community



## Work and Employment Community

### Consolidated Reply

#### *Query: Methods for Integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at District Level – Examples; Experiences*

Compiled by Tina Mathur, Research Associate; Nitya Jacob and Ranu Bhogal, Resource Persons and Ramya Gopalan and Warisha Yunus, Research Associates

Issue Date: 08 July 2008

---

From [Suraj Kumar](#), UN Resident Coordinator's Office, New Delhi

Posted 03 June 2008

The United Nations is looking for a common set of tools or methodologies for upward integration of local plans to the district level, collaborative implementation of large programmes and their M&E. This would be required for a programme that we are planning on convergence of government resources at the district level.

India is off target in many of the goals it has set for itself in the areas of employment, health, education, and nutrition. The Planning Commission (with the concerned Ministries) allocates significant resources to the districts through the Centrally Sponsored Schemes. These are aimed at helping accelerate results, amongst other areas, in employment and livelihoods, health, education, drinking water and sanitation. While accurate figures are not available, it is known that a significant proportion of the funds are un-utilized. It is also known that results are not commensurate with the resources utilized as intra and inter-sectoral convergence in planning and implementation is weak.

In the past there have been successful experiments that have not been replicable mainly because they depended on 'special purpose vehicles' in terms of creating new organizations outside government structure led by Chief Ministers and/ or heavily supported by external resources. The Government of India and the United Nations now believe that effective and efficient use of

government resources can produce results if the following three elements of convergence are met:

- That the district plan is developed through a participatory process of needs assessment and a district vision (NOT a stapling together of departmental plans) and that local governments and district administration work together to prepare a budget based on the district plan
- Intra and inter departmental coordination to make implementation more effective, ensuring budget allocations do not lapse, on the one hand, and on the other, achieve expected results
- That quality of monitoring and evaluation, both of plan implementation and of results will feed back to improve the District Plan for the next cycle

In this context, I would request members to share with us:

1. Tools and methodologies (including case studies and ICT based tools) which incorporate the following (singularly or in combination)
  - Participatory planning and upward aggregation of micro plans at district level such as in the case of natural resource management
  - Districts' experience in effective implementation of flagship programmes such as NREGA, NRHM, ARWSP, TSC, SSA etc.
  - Experience of, and tools for large scale Monitoring and Evaluation of implementation
2. Information on bottlenecks and hurdles (expected and experienced) in the same

Your inputs will aid in a more robust design of our programme. All inputs from members will be gratefully acknowledged.

---

### Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Satyajit Singh](#), Department of Political Science, University of Delhi
2. [Kris Dev](#), Lifeline to Business, Chennai
3. [Vikas Kanungo](#), The Society for Promotion of E-Governance, New Delhi
4. Anil Prasad, Finance Department, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
5. [Vikas Dagur](#), National Rural Health Mission, Jaipur
6. [M. Moni](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi
7. [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), Consultant, New Delhi
8. [Manoj K. Teotia](#), Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development(CRRID), Chandigarh
9. [P.K Thampan](#), Peekay Tree Crops Development Foundation, Kochi
10. Puran Singh Yadav, Government of Haryana, Chandigarh ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
11. [N. C Saxena](#), Former Secretary Planning Commission, New Delhi
12. [M. Neelakantan](#), Consultant and Former Dy. DG, NSSO, Thrissur
13. [Ashok Kumar Sinha](#), Karma Consultants, New Delhi
14. Jasveen Jairath, SaciWaters, Hyderabad ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
15. [Asoke Basak](#), NMIMS and Kelvani Vile Parle Trust, Mumbai
16. [Tarun Seem](#), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi
17. [Harsh Singh](#), UNDP, New Delhi
18. [P.K Chaubey](#), Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
19. [Ratnakar Gedam](#), Planning Commission, New Delhi
20. [Megha Phansalkar](#), Mumbai

21. [Lathamala](#), MYRADA, Bangalore
22. [Raj Ganguly](#), New Delhi
23. [Manju Panwar](#), Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, New Delhi
24. [R.R Prasad](#), National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad
25. [Leena & Amitabh Singh](#), Debate, Bhopal
26. [Latha Bhaskar](#), Kerala
27. [Alok Srivastava](#), Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal
28. [D.C Misra](#), National Informatics Centre (NIC), New Delhi
29. [Ajay S. Gangwar](#), Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal
30. [A.J James](#), Pragmatix Research and Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd., Gurgaon
31. [S.T Chandrasekhar Babu](#), MFTOT ADBI, Secunderabad
32. [A.K Paikaray](#), Mahavir Yubak Sangh, Bhubaneswar
33. [Aruna Sharma](#), National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi
34. [Junaid Ahmed Usmani](#), Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi
35. [Amit Agrawal](#), Government of India, New Delhi
36. [Ashok Malhotra](#), UNDP, New Delhi
37. [Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan](#), WaterAid India, Bhopal
38. [Nishant Bhaskar](#), Tata Consultancy Services & Aptivate IT International Development, London
39. [Rajesh Kapoor](#), Cohesion Foundation Trust, Ahmedabad
40. [Toms K. Thomas](#), Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Thrissur
41. [S.C Jain](#), Action for Food Production (AFPRO), New Delhi
42. [Chandan Sinha](#), Government of West Bengal, Kolkata
43. [H.P Shiva Shankar](#), State Administrative Training Institute, Mysore
44. [K. Gayithri](#), Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore
45. [Subhransu Tripathy](#), Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Gandhinagar
46. [Rajan Katoch](#), Government of Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi\*
47. [Phil Crook](#), Singapore\*
48. [Anant G. Nadkarni](#), Tata Council for Community Initiatives, Mumbai\*
49. [Ruturaj Pattanaik](#), RCDC, Bhubaneswar
50. [Chandreyee Das](#), INSPIRATION, Kolkata
51. [Anjan Mitra](#), The Appropriate Alternative, Kolkata
52. [R.S Julaniya](#), Government of Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi
53. [Rohit Asthana & M.S Vani](#), Development Centre for Alternative Policies, New Delhi
54. [Rajendra Joshi](#), SAATH, Ahmedabad
55. [Ramakrishna Nallathiga](#), Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad

*\*Offline Contribution*

*Further contributions are welcome!*

---

[Summary of Responses](#)  
[Comparative Experiences](#)  
[Related Resources](#)  
[Responses in Full](#)

---

[Summary of Responses](#)

The query on integrated planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes highlighted the issue of convergence of resources at the District level, recognized by the Government of India and the United Nations as critical to produce results in national development goals. Members responded in large numbers to the query and shared their experiences on participatory planning, implementation of flagship programmes and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

### **Methodologies and tools of Participatory planning and upward aggregation of micro plans at district level**

Respondents highlighted the anomalies in the existing practice of planning- that budgets are decided first and plans follow later. They felt that it is important to differentiate between planning and budgeting. Respondents also said that in the existing system funds are released in piecemeal manner through various Ministries, integration could start at Central level and sector wise funds could be earmarked and disbursed through a single window. The planning process itself could be improved to make it more participatory. To support this, members mentioned the system followed in [Kerala](#) , comprising Working Groups, whose deliberations are shared with Gram Sabha, making planning more participatory. This is an experience which other states could learn from, felt members.

Discussants also pointed out that the planning guidelines are often too many in number and very rigid in nature. A partly flexible set of guidelines on the lines of [Kerala's Tenth Plan guidelines](#) would work better and aid participatory planning. Moreover, respondents stressed the importance of information availability and database to aid planning such as the [DISNIC-PLAN](#) developed by the [National Informatics Centre](#). In addition respondents spoke about Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools such as [PlanPlus](#) to strengthen grassroots level planning by local bodies and mentioned various approaches that have been tried out to support participatory planning ([Read more](#)).

### **Districts' experience in effective implementation of flagship programmes**

Respondents shared experiences with implementation of National Rural Health Mission, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Integrated Child Development Services in particular and other Centrally Sponsored Schemes in general. Members agreed that in most of the programmes, implementation is hampered by manpower shortage, expectation to carry out multiple activities, weak community involvement and a lack of capacity among implementers (panchayats and programme managers) (see [IDHAP](#) example). Implementation is also rendered ineffective due to lack of coordination between various departments and the existence of too many programmes that districts are expected to implement.

### **Experience of and tools for large scale Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of implementation**

Members opined that different levels of government require different systems of M&E; a framework of M& E is required at the Central level. The focus could be on benchmarking and developing a benchmarking tool to evaluate programmes. Further, respondents felt it is important that midway corrections be made in programme implementation guidelines based on monitoring. Members also highlighted the importance of using ICT in M&E of programmes, and suggested online monitoring at the district level. Methods such as unique identification of beneficiaries, community based reward and punishment and e-Administration to integrate programmes are also useful tools, felt members.

Respondents opined that M&E is useful when it is continuous and feeds into programmes as they progress. The lack of follow up on M&E for improving programmes is a big gap that needs to be addressed. In addition, evaluation, said members, should preferably be carried out by independent agencies.

Among M& E tools, members mentioned [District Information and Planning System](#) (DIPS) and shared information on approaches to [Performance Monitoring and Evaluation](#) (PME) and [Programme Performance Budgeting](#).

### **Information on bottlenecks and hurdles (expected and experienced) in planning, implementation and monitoring**

Members shared their experiences of bottlenecks in programme planning and implementation and agreed that the process is hampered as facilitators of local planning lack basic information about the programme to be implemented and of the availability of resources at various levels. Further the support of departments is often lacking and participatory processes are mechanical because of which effective grassroots level planning and implementation is not possible.

Moreover, respondents felt that states have little discretionary funds to allocate to districts, rigid guidelines are prescribed for planning and implementation, there is little consultation with districts in designing programmes and planning generally remains vertical. The lack of capacity in district bodies (See [Karnataka](#) experience) and poor leadership are significant hurdles in effective programme delivery, felt respondents. Members opined that resources at district level are still not under one umbrella and one authority and accountability is diffused as control over funds and approvals does not rest at district despite the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment. This hampers effective planning, implementation and monitoring. Discussants mentioned local infighting and panchayat level politics and low linkage between line departments and community organizations as additional bottlenecks.

### **Suggestions on methodology for integrated planning, implementation and monitoring**

Members recognized the need for leveraging resources, either Central or State for the integration exercise envisaged. They felt that initiatives like the [Backward Regions Grants Fund](#) (BRGF) could provide this leverage. BRGF not only holds great potential to improve capacity at all levels but provides an opportunity to streamline planning since districts would be planning according to prescribed guidelines that make it mandatory for consolidation of plans to take place at the district level. The intervention of convergence, felt discussants could therefore be attempted in the BRGF districts. Members also mentioned the approach of [Results Based Management](#) in aiding the process. They felt that focus on outcomes rather than outputs could help integration. An outcome budget approach could be used, establishing a relationship between Financial Budget and Outcome Budget, for aggregating resources and targets horizontally and vertically. ([Read more](#)).

Additionally, discussants gave the following suggestions:

- Benchmarking and baseline surveys at village level are useful in measuring performance
- Many reforms such as human resource related reforms and procurement protocols need to be included in district plans as do softer issues such as health and education
- ICT tools could provide critical support to integration

Respondents emphasized that broader governance reforms are required as the base for successful integrated planning, implementation and monitoring. These could include changing the attitudes of grassroots workers, setting standards of service delivery (See [Service Delivery Policy of Kerala](#)) and performance measurement. Institutional strengthening is also a critical prerequisite, especially strengthening the District Planning Committees. Members felt that it is equally important that there be a vision and strategic roadmap for planning.

Members shared further information on the methodology that may be used in this exercise which may be seen [below](#).

---

## Comparative Experiences

### Kerala

**Development Strategy by Working Groups** (from [P.K. Thampan](#), Peekay Tree Crops Development Foundation, Kochi)

Kerala follows the practice of creating working groups comprising 10-15 members to visualize panchayat level development strategy. The vision is placed before Gram Sabhas for discussion and finalization. The proposals are then passed on to Block panchayats and upward to the DPC. This method has demonstrated a participatory process. But this could be further refined as felt needs of people are not reflected in planning through this method.

**Flexibility in planning to Local Self Governments (LSGs) results in better outcomes**

(from [M. Neelakantan](#), Consultant and former Dy. DG NSSO, Thrissur)

The existence of suitable guidelines for effective micro planning is critical. However, the guidelines must allow for sufficient flexibility for local governments to incorporate their felt needs into the plans. Kerala Government issued detailed guidelines to LSGs during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period but left the LSGs with freedom for action within their framework of responsibilities, resulting in a better planning methodology. [Read more](#).

### Many States

**Planning process in context of NREGA** (from [Ashok Kumar Sinha](#), Karma Consultants, New Delhi)

The provisions under NREGA provide for a central role to Gram Panchayats in planning of works and other activities, planning at Block level and monitoring and supervision is the responsibility of Intermediate Panchayats and supervisory role for District Panchayat. However, integrated planning is not happening for NREGA and is resulting in irregularities in implementation of the programme

**Integrated District Health Action Plans (IDHAP) under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** (from [Tarun Seem](#), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi)

IDHAP under NRHM are supposed to articulate locally sensitive issues for action under NRHM. Experience of this has been varied, and true integration has been difficult given the limited capacities at various levels. The experience has shown that provision of flexible funds may not always be the answer, what is required is comprehensive capacity building for integrated planning.

### Karnataka

**Limited capacities hinder participatory planning** (from [Lathamala](#), MYRADA, Bangalore)

In Karnataka Gram Panchayats (GP) where plans are being prepared for the Eleventh Five Year Plan, it has been found that the capacities of GPs are low and time given for plan preparation is too little. The information available on budget availability is restricted to the officials at the ZP level. These have become hurdles in effective participatory planning.

### Andhra Pradesh

**Monitoring under one umbrella experimented** (from [S.T. Chandrasekhar Babu](#), MFTOT ADBI, Secunderabad)

In 2002 the attempt to bring all departmental schemes under one umbrella was made in Andhra Pradesh. All schemes were to be monitored by Project Director DRDA. However, the effort was given up as it was felt that the system of monitoring by departmental heads who are in turn

accountable to the District Collector was more appropriate. The experience could provide insights into convergence efforts elsewhere.

## West Bengal

### **GIS is a useful tool for local level planning** (from [Ashok Malhotra](#), UNDP, New Delhi)

Under a project supported by UNDP and Department of Science and Technology, GIS based decision support tools were developed to facilitate management, monitoring and evaluation of centrally sponsored schemes. In Bankura district sectoral issues were addressed and preparation of district plan was done based on these tools with good results. The experience is a pointer to the usefulness of GIS in integrated planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes.

## Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh

### **District Planning Exercise indicates requirements for integration** (from [Leena and Amitabh Singh](#), Debate, Bhopal)

A district planning exercise was undertaken in few districts in Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The process comprised constituting thematic groups on sectoral lines, finalizing a vision for sectors, assisting local bodies in planning, integrating activities and budgets and local planning with sector status and district vision. The exercise highlighted hurdles like lack of database and that clear guidelines are needed for Centre for departments to participate in planning. [Read more](#)

## Gujarat

### **Community Resource Centre for Convergence, Ahmedabad** (from [Rajendra Joshi](#), SAATH, Ahmedabad)

The ward based Community Resource Centres connect service providers like government, NGOs and private sector with service users- the urban poor. They facilitate micro-planning and monitor service delivery in existing schemes. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation uses these centres to monitor sanitation and public health. The Centres are examples of effective convergence between schemes and agencies for better service delivery

---

## Related Resources

### *Recommended Documentation*

#### **DISNIC-PLAN: IT for Micro Level Planning** (from [M. Moni](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi)

Report; National Informatics Centre; New Delhi; October 2005.

Available at <http://disnic.nic.in/DISNIC-PLAN-Village-Proforma-final1.pdf> (PDF; Size:1 MB)

*Report on village information requirements; outlines the role of DISNIC PLAN in convergent planning*

From [M. Neelakantan](#), Consultant and former Dy. DG, NSSO, Thrissur

#### **Methods for integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at District level**

Note; by M. Neelakantan; Unpublished; June 2008

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060801.pdf> (PDF; Size: 30 KB)

*Detailed note on integrated planning, implementing, monitoring including tools for convergence, strategies, bottlenecks in planning and resource utilization*

### **Modified Guidelines for the Preparation of the Annual Plans for the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan by Local Governments**

Government Order; Planning and Economic Affairs Department, Government of Kerala; Thiruvananthapuram; 31 March, 2004

Available at <http://www.keralaplanningboard.org/html/gopb.pdf> (PDF; Size: 180 KB)

*Modified guidelines on decentralized planning by local governments for implementation of Tenth Five Year Plan; provide for flexibility to local bodies in the process*

### **Convergence in Planning for Targeting Development Investment: A Note (from Chandan Sinha, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata)**

Note; by Chandan Sinha; Unpublished; June 2008

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060807.pdf> (PDF; Size: 35 KB)

*Provides essentials of convergent planning, emphasizes importance of public data analysis, speaks of informed consultation for convergent action by district government*

From [Tarun Seem](#), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi

### **Broad Framework for Preparation of District Health Action Plans**

Guidelines; National Rural Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; New Delhi

Available at [http://mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/Documents/Distt\\_health\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/Documents/Distt_health_action_plan.pdf) (PDF; Size: 879 KB)

*Outlines the broad framework for the preparation of Integrated District Health Action Plan (IDHAP) under NRHM*

### **District Health Action Plans**

Plan documents; National Rural Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India; New Delhi

Available at <http://www.mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/DHAP/DHAP.htm>

*Provides details of District Health Action Plans prepared under NRHM in states like Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir among others*

### **Annual Project Implementation Plans under NRHM**

Project Implementation Plans; National Rural Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India; New Delhi

Available at <http://www.mohfw.nic.in/NRHM.htm>

*Detailed programme implementation plans prepared by states; provide insights into district visions and integration into district plans*

### **District Information and Planning System**

Paper; Megha Phansalkar; Mumbai

Available at <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/application/urban/overview/urbano0030pf.htm>

*Describes the potential of District Information and Planning System (DIPS) in aiding district planning*

### **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) (from Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan, WaterAid India, Bhopal)**

Booklet; WaterAid India; Bhopal

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060805.pdf> (PDF; Size: 138 KB)

*Explains in detail the steps, process, methods for institutionalizing PME in projects and presents formats for documentation of the process*

**Methods for Integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at District Level – Cohesion's Approach** (from [Rajesh Kapoor](#), Cohesion Foundation Trust, Ahmedabad)

Paper; Cohesion Foundation Trust; Ahmedabad

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060806.pdf> (PDF; Size: 51 KB)

*Describes Cohesion Trust's approach and methodology for Community Led Planning for planning at Village, Block and District levels*

**Program Performance Budgeting: Concepts and Methodology** (from [K. Gayithri](#), Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore)

Presentation; by Dr K.Gayithri, Institute for Social and Economic Change; Bangalore; 18 June, 2008.

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060808.pdf> (PDF; Size: 75 KB)

*Gives overview of performance budgeting, concept of indicators, outputs and outcomes and data collection methods for the process*

**Planning at the Grassroots Level- An Action Programme for the Eleventh Five Year Plan** (from [S.C Jain](#), Action for Food Production, New Delhi)

Guidelines; Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India; New Delhi; March 2006

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060810.pdf> (PDF; Size: 527 KB)

*Detailed guidelines for integrated local level planning, for planning for the Eleventh Five Year Plan*

**Strengthening Decentralized District Development Planning System in Madhya Pradesh** (from [R.S Julaniya](#), Government of Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi)

Note; by Manoj Jhalani; Unpublished

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060816.doc> (MS-Word; Size: 141 KB)

*Outlines the key initiatives towards strengthening the planning system at the district level in the context of Madhya Pradesh*

From [Suraj Kumar](#), United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, New Delhi

**District Human Development Reports- Malda and Bankura**

Report; Development and Planning Department, Government of West Bengal; Kolkata; April 2007

Available at <http://wbplan.gov.in/htm/HumanDev/DHDR.htm>

*Present the data related to human development indicators such as health, education, standard of living, gender and vulnerability in Bankura and Malda*

**Support to District Planning-State of play and future imperatives**

Presentation; Suraj Kumar; June 2008

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060817.ppt> (PPT; Size: 48 KB)

*Presents the challenges in effective district planning and outlines the imperatives for convergence at the districts*

**Decentralized Planning for Backward Regions- Opportunities and Challenges**

Presentation; Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India; New Delhi; October 2007

Available at <http://www.brgf.gov.in/presentations/FinalPresentation1-Participatedistrictplanning-opportunitiesandchallenges.ppt> (PPT; Size: 1.1 MB)

*Discusses the essential ingredients in district planning and pre-requisites for effective district planning in the context of Backward Regions Grant Fund*

From [Tina Mathur](#), Research Associate

### **Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme Guidelines**

Guidelines; Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India; New Delhi; 15 January 2007

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060809.pdf> (PDF; Size: 536 KB)

*Outlines the planning process for BRGF and guidelines for its operationalization; the details are a useful approach to integrated planning*

### **Backward Regions Grant Fund District Plans**

Plans; Various State Governments

Available at <http://www.brgf.gov.in>

*Practical demonstration of the integrated planning approach followed by BRGF districts in line with the guidelines issued by the Planning Commission*

### **Decentralised Governance through GIS**

Paper; by Jacob George and V. Madhava Rao; NIRD Guwahati and Hyderabad

Available at <http://www.isprs.org/istanbul2004/comm7/papers/105.pdf> (PDF; Size: 49 KB)

*Describes an Action Research Project taken up at Panchayat level to create an interactive Geographical Information System for participatory planning and monitoring in Tamil Nadu*

### **A People Centred Service Delivery Policy for Kerala**

Policy document; Modernizing Government Programme, Government of Kerala; Thiruvananthapuram; 20 September 2004

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res030608012.pdf> (PDF; Size: 77 KB)

*Describes principles of service delivery, standard setting, working towards outcomes in government and useful pointers towards effective monitoring and evaluation*

### **Public Service Delivery: A Possible Framework from a Results-Based Management Perspective**

Note; by B. Muralidharan for Government of Kerala; Unpublished; 2004

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res030608013.pdf> (PDF; Size: 21 KB)

*Gives important linkages between policy, strategy, planning, implementation and accountability for service delivery; demonstrates criticality of the RBMS approach*

### **Rapid Poverty Reduction and Local Area Development for the Eleventh Five Year Plan**

Report; Planning Commission, Government of India; New Delhi

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res030608015.pdf> (PDF; Size: 484 KB)

*Discusses integrated planning and development and strategies for the Eleventh Five Year Plan in context of poverty reduction programmes*

### **Sixth Report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 'Local Governance an Inspiring Journey into the Future'**

Report; Second Administrative Reforms Commission; Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; New Delhi; October 2007

Available at <http://arc.gov.in/6-1.pdf> (PDF; Size: 11.32 MB); <http://arc.gov.in/6-2.pdf> (PDF; Size: 15.79 MB); <http://arc.gov.in/6-3.pdf> (PDF; Size: 2 MB)

*Examines issues related to rural and urban local governance, part 1 pertains to general issues, part 2 focuses on rural governance and part 3 pertains to urban local governance*

### **Sleeping on our own mats- An Introductory Guide to Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation**

Report; World Bank, Africa Region; October 2002

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060814.pdf> (PDF; Size: 2 MB)

*Overview of Action Research in 18 African villages to develop locally relevant M&E system to help communities sustain results of their community development projects*

From [Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate

### **Constitution of District Level Implementation and Monitoring Committee on "Artificial Recharge of Ground Water through Dugwells"**

Order; Government of Andhra Pradesh; New Delhi; 10 March 2008

Available at [http://www.rd.ap.gov.in/APWALTA/GOMSNo\\_82\\_10.03.08.pdf](http://www.rd.ap.gov.in/APWALTA/GOMSNo_82_10.03.08.pdf) (PDF; Size: 24 KB)

*Ministry of Water Resources, GoI approved the said Scheme and requested the State Government to constitute a District Level Implementation and Monitoring Committee*

### **Rural Decentralization and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction**

Project Brief; Planning Commission and UNDP; New Delhi

Available at <http://rdprd.gov.in/PDF/Rural%20Decentralisation%20Brief-7.3.pdf> (PDF; Size: 109 KB)

*Emphasizes need for a conscious and vigorous initiative for strengthening of the PRI's and supports an empowerment strategy for people's participation in decision making*

### **Evaluation of Caribbean Experiences in Participatory Planning and Management of Marine and Coastal Resources**

Executive Summary; by Tighe Geoghegan, Yves Renard, Nicole Brown and Vijay Krishnarayan; Canari; 1999

Available at <http://www.canari.org/259marine.pdf> (PDF; Size: 14 KB)

*Provides case studies and draws lessons from recent experiences from the Caribbean in participatory and collaborative management of coastal and marine resources*

### **Integrating Stakeholders in Participatory Natural Resource Management: Ecotourism Project Of El Limon Waterfall, Dominican Republic**

Technical Report; by Patricia Lamelas; Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI); Publisher; 2001

Available at <http://www.canari.org/limon.pdf> (PDF; Size: 103 KB )

*Analyses 6 case studies to identify common themes and concepts related to stakeholder approaches, developing selected principles and skills relevant to the Caribbean context*

### **Orientation for Panchyats on Participatory Water Resource Management Programme**

Workshop Report; NGO Co-ordination and Resource Centre (NCRC); Nagapattinam

Available at <http://www.ncrc.in/Others/SembanarKoilBlock.pdf> (PDF Size: 558 KB)

*Reports on orientation of Panchayats, Ward Members and Clerks of Nagapattinam on Participatory Water Resource Management project, implemented through WUAs*

### **Participatory Processes for Integrated Watershed Management**

Field Document; by Prem N. Sharma; FAO; Kathmandu, Nepal; June 1997

Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X5269E/X5269E00.htm>

*Contributes to sustainable use and management of water and other natural resources by enhancing skills and capabilities to plan, implement, evaluate, and monitor PWW*

### ***Recommended Contacts and Experts***

**Ms. Sameena Makhija, National Informatics Centre, New Delhi** (from [M. Moni](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi)

Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Gol), Electronics Niketan, 6 CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003; [sameena@nic.in](mailto:sameena@nic.in); <http://home.nic.in/>

*Project Director in NIC having detailed information on DISNIC-PLAN, a central sector programme providing dataset on resource information for villages for integrated planning*

### ***Recommended Organizations and Programmes***

**National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)** (from [Vikas Kanungo](#), The Society for Promotion of E-governance, New Delhi)

Department of Information Technology, New Delhi, Ministry of Information Technology, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Government of India, Electronics Niketan, 6 CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi- 110003; Tel: 011-24363104, 24301268; <http://www.mit.gov.in/default.aspx?id=827>

*Promotes single window delivery system for better service delivery, ensuring efficiency, transparency and reliability of services at affordable cost*

**National Informatics Centre, New Delhi** (from [M. Moni](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi and [Puran Singh Yadav](#), Government of Haryana, Chandigarh, [response1](#))

Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Gol), Electronics Niketan, 6 CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003; Fax: 011-24362628; <http://home.nic.in/>; Contact Ms. Sameena Mukhija; [sameena@nic.in](mailto:sameena@nic.in)

*Provides a network backbone and e-Governance support to Central Government, State Governments, UT Administrations, Districts and other Government bodies*

**Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), Ministry of Panchayati Raj, New Delhi** (from [N.C Saxena](#), former Secretary Planning Commission, New Delhi and [Amit Agrawal](#), Government of India, New Delhi)

Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 7, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi; <http://www.brgf.gov.in/>

*Scheme for balanced regional development; comprises a capacity building component and support to local bodies for planning, implementing, monitoring programmes*

**MYRADA, Bangalore** (from [Lathamala](#), MYRADA, Bangalore)

No.2, Service Road, Domlur Layout, Bangalore- 560071, Karnataka; Tel: 080-25352028, 25353166; Fax: 080-25350982. [myrada@vsnl.com](mailto:myrada@vsnl.com); <http://www.myrada.org/index.html>

*Manages rural development programmes in three south Indian states; is involved in participatory planning at the gram panchayat level in four districts of Karnataka*

**The Byrraju Foundation, Hyderabad** (from [R.R Prasad](#), NIRD, Hyderabad)

Satyam Enclave, 2-74, Jeedimetla Village, Hyderabad- 500055, Andhra Pradesh; Tel: 040-23191725, 23193881; Fax: 040-23191726. [mail@byrrajufoundation.org](mailto:mail@byrrajufoundation.org); <http://www.byrrajufoundation.org>

*Works in 198 villages in 6 districts in Andhra Pradesh to facilitate development in health, sanitation and education; has developed district visioning guidelines for planning*

**Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi** (from [Junaid Ahmed Usmani](#), Ministry of Rural Development)

9<sup>th</sup> Floor Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi- 110003; Tel: 011-24361043; Fax: 011-24364133. [jstm@water.nic.in](mailto:jstm@water.nic.in); <http://www.ddws.nic.in/>

*Key department implementing and monitoring the flagship Total Sanitation Campaign; using online monitoring with data generation capacity at district, state and central levels*

**Water Households and Rural Livelihoods Project- WHIRL** (from [A.J James](#), Pragmatix Research and Advisory Services PVT Ltd., Gurgaon)

<http://www.nri.org/projects/WSS-IWRM/reports.htm>

*Provides a framework for integrating community based approaches and GIS- based planning in water supply*

**WaterAid India, Bhopal** (from [Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan](#), WaterAid India, Bhopal)

Gate No 1, First Floor, Nursery School Building, C-3, Nelson Mandela Marg Vasant Kunj, New Delhi – 110070; Tel: 011-46084400; Fax: 011- 46084411; [wai@wateraid.org](mailto:wai@wateraid.org); <http://www.wateraid.org/india/default.asp>

*Works to overcome poverty by enabling poor gain access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene; provides good examples of participatory monitoring tools*

### ***Recommended Portals and Information Bases***

**District Informatics Programme-DISNIC, National Informatics Centre, New Delhi** (from [M. Moni](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi)

<http://disnic.nic.in/dataset.htm>; Contact Ms. Sameena Makhija; Project Director; [sameena@nic.in](mailto:sameena@nic.in)

*Provides information on DISNIC PLAN, an informatics tool for development planning and responsive administration that provides village resource data for convergent planning*

### ***Recommended Tools and Technologies***

**DISNIC-PLAN: IT for Micro Level Planning** (from [M. Moni](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi; [Puran Singh Yadav](#), Government of Haryana, Chandigarh)

Software; Owned by National Informatics Centre, New Delhi. Permission Required.

Available at <http://disnic.gov.in>; Contact Ms. Sameena Makhija; Project Director; Tel: 01124362790; [sameena@nic.in](mailto:sameena@nic.in)

*A central sector programme for implementing RSVY, provides a dataset of resources for every village which could provide an information blueprint for integrated planning*

**District Information and Planning System-DIPS** (from [Megha Phanslakar](#), Mumbai)

Computer package; Micro Technologies Pvt Ltd., Mumbai. Permission Required.

Available at <http://www.micromict.net/jidnyasa/dips.html> Contact Tel: 022-7688091; [enquiry@microtechnologies.net](mailto:enquiry@microtechnologies.net)

*GIS based tool for resource planning at village, block and district level with people's participation in plan formulation and implementation*

From [A. J. James](#), Pragmatix Research and Advisory Services PVT Ltd., Gurgaon

### **Quantified Participatory Assessment (QPA)**

Assessment tool; Pragmatix Research & Advisory Services, Gurgaon, India and IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre Delft, Netherlands. Permission Required

Details available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060802.pdf> (PDF; Size: 333 KB)

Contact Mr. A.J James; [ajjames@pragmatix.co.in](mailto:ajjames@pragmatix.co.in)

*A participatory monitoring and evaluation tool that collects and converts qualitative information into numbers for project management*

### **Quantified Information System (QIS)**

Quantitative assessment tool; Pragmatix Research & Advisory Services, Gurgaon, India and IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre Delft, Netherlands. Permission Required

Details available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060804.pdf> (PDF; Size: 362 KB)

Contact Mr. A.J James; [ajjames@pragmatix.co.in](mailto:ajjames@pragmatix.co.in)

*A flexible tool to capture and manage qualitative information that can link assessment and action for project management and communities*

### **Qualitative Information Appraisal (QIA)**

Qualitative assessment tool; Pragmatix Research & Advisory Services, Gurgaon, India and IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre Delft, Netherlands. Permission Required

Details available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res03060803.pdf> (PDF; Size: 191 KB)

Contact Mr. A.J James; [ajjames@pragmatix.co.in](mailto:ajjames@pragmatix.co.in)

*Methodology to capture qualitative information rapidly and cheaply, and to target effective corrective and progressive action at both community and project level*

**Plan Plus** (from [D.C Misra](#), National Informatics Centre, New Delhi and R.R Prasad, NIRD, Hyderabad)

Software; National Informatics Centre, New Delhi. Permission Required

Available at <http://panchayat.gov.in/planplus>

Contact Mr. D.C Misra; [dcmisra@nic.in](mailto:dcmisra@nic.in)

*Open source software to assist demand-based, convergent planning rather than scheme based on line of Planning Commission guidelines; incorporates options for local variations*

---

## **Responses in Full**

**[Satyajit Singh](#), Department of Political Science, University of Delhi**

I am very glad to see this initiative.

On the issue of monitoring, while a lot of material already exists, much of this is supply-driven. There is a purpose in this for at least the basic parameters are listed, however there may be a need to develop and empower local institutions so that the monitoring parameters have some relevance locally. In any case there is a need to collate these in one place and write about them to facilitate its dissemination.

It needs to be emphasized that monitoring need not only have an efficiency objective for public allocations, rather equity and opportunity should be prioritized. There may be a need to break down monitoring, capacity, and allocation of incentives at different levels of government. At the state and national level the focus should be on benchmarking that is linked to a capacity vehicle so that the relative capacity gaps at the local level can be identified and plugged - a *benchmarking tool* that is linked to networks will facilitate cross-learning at the local level and across sectors, and will automatically throw up best-practices and innovative tools of governance. At the local level the focus should be on building blocks for micro M&E that is determined by locally defined outputs and outcomes. If these can be implemented successfully at the local government level then there would be no argument to shy away from this process at the state and national level where there are required more such tools and indeed where the efficiency criteria has a greater role to play. The task in hand would be to build a framework to facilitate this process rather than focus on identifying existing tools and methods on the ground. This

framework that would catalyze partnerships that are demand based, hence linked to core public deliverables.

---

**Kris Dev, Life Line to Business, Chennai**

We have developed and supported the implementation of a customized e-Platform of our e-Administration tool for e-Governance for the Industrial Guidance Bureau, Government of Puducherry. It helps to integrate in a single platform, the licensing activities of various Municipalities and Panchayats in Puducherry and the various functional Departments responsible for rendering various services in the State. We had supported the Government of Bihar in establishing a Proof of Concept for the Rural Development Department for the successful implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

A single e-Administration e-Platform would be required to integrate the various welfare activities from the state to the district to the block to the panchayat level. The e-Platform should integrate the entire vertical and horizontal hierarchy of government from the state level to the last panchayat level on the one hand and the citizens on the other hand for G2C communication and monitoring.

The welfare schemes should be proposed, implemented and monitored bottom-up. Every citizen of the community should have the right and freedom to propose welfare activities for their community and all the welfare schemes aggregated and the total funds equitably distributed among the communities for proper utilization.

Unique identification of beneficiaries should be ensured using multi purpose biometric smart card cum debit card and projects should be selected based on the number of votes polled for each project by local citizens to ensure the long term sustainable growth of the community.

The projects should be uniquely identified and implemented by the local community and monitored by members of other local communities and the best practices of other communities integrated into the local implementation.

Community based reward for good performance and punishment for bad performance should be built into the scheme. Every single deserving beneficiary of the community should be included without fail; not a single non deserving community member should be included for extraneous considerations. Leakages in the system should be plugged fully to derive 100% benefit from the welfare schemes to truly alleviate poverty.

We are ready to support any initiative of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

---

**Vikas Kanungo, The Society for Promotion of E-Governance, New Delhi**

The integration of local plans to district level is a very important but equally challenging task as various programs run at the village level, Panchayat level and district level are run by different central ministries, local departments and state governments. The integration of all the programs through a single initiative will require efforts and administration level (back office), delivery level (Front end delivery mechanisms) and policy level (integration of various programs and local, state and central level). I would like to suggest the following measures:

**Administrative Level**

Government of India has ambitious programs like National e-Governance Plan, Bharat Nirman and Panchayati Raj Ministry's programs which impact the services at the rural and district level. Some of the key projects that are important in this context are:

- e-District - A mission Mode Project under National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) coordinated for planning by DIT, Government of India and implemented by the line departments at district level
- PRI – A mission Mode Project under NeGP coordinated by DIT , Ministry of Panchayati Raj and local institutions
- JnNURM (Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) – A project under Bharat Nirman and coordinated by Ministry of Urban Development with focus on provisioning infrastructure and services at the district level
- PDS – A mission mode project under NeGP and coordinated by the line ministries at the state level to improving Public Distribution systems.
- NREGA – A project under Bharat Nirman aimed at providing livelihood opportunities to the disadvantaged people (BPL) at rural level.

The proposed integration initiative by UN and Planning Commission may look at coordinated planning mechanisms for all the projects mentioned above based upon the similarities in deliverables. The tool kit may contain mechanisms for coordinating the deliverables for all the projects through a joint panel.

### **Delivery Mechanisms**

The delivery of benefits under various projects is currently planned through various mechanisms as per the priorities and resources available with various departments. A single window delivery mechanisms may be worked out through the Common Service Centers (CSCs) planned under National e-Governance Plan. The integration of SCAs (Agencies responsible for setting up CSCs at state level) may be of benefit.

Additionally, availability of mobile devices (the penetration is highest compared to any other ICT tools) has opened the opportunities for provisioning of information and services at the rural level. The potential of the medium is largely un-realized in the context of information and service delivery. UN may like to explore the potential of mobiles as the front end service delivery tool through pilot projects and inviting research in the area. There are increasing examples across the world on innovative use of mobile and voice based (IVR) service delivery mechanisms. The models may be studied for suitability in Indian rural areas.

### **International Best Practices**

There are various models of coordinated delivery of services deployed in various parts of the world. One of the key models to study will be that of Euro Cities. A model based upon the common service requirements is being developed which is then replicated in any cities that want to join the network. This provides an incentive to the cities for joining as they get a test system as well as hand holding for deploying the same.

The subject is complex and requires thorough research as there are many other projects of GOI that target rural areas and require coordination at district level as well as the models of delivery for joined up governance of the projects.

I hope this helps. We would be happy to provide any assistance for the project. Wishing you all the success.

---

[Anil Prasad](#), Finance Department, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram  
(response 1)

I would like to discuss this issue based on the third question that is *"Experience of, and tools for large scale Monitoring and Evaluation of implementation"*.

The conventional view about Monitoring sees it as a business after the implementation has begun and Evaluation as a post-mortem kind of thing after the business is over. But both these shall not help successful implementation of plans. Then when should M&E start? M&E should start from the very beginning of the planning process (inception stage), continue throughout the implementation and end after completion of the implementation, which is what modern management reiterates.

Another thing we should take particular care is selection of M&E tools. M&E is a fast developing and hence fast changing sector also. It has a wide range of tools. Therefore it is practically impossible to have predefined tool sets for a large period of time. It necessitates through awareness about M&E among planners and implementers to select appropriate tools.

When we assess the progress of implementations, doubts begin to popup about the awareness about M&E in the implementer level. Awareness about M&E should definitely reach the implementer and in ideal case it should go below the beneficiary and stakeholder level.

When we look at M&E in the decentralized planning perspective, we find that general awareness of M&E among the public is very much required for decentralized planning, since it is a people's planning. Only then the M&E will start from the inception stage of the decentralized planning process. The very literature of the plan document itself should be receptive to the M&E tools.

Another point that we should take particular care of is that the M&E for the lower level planning should be able to communicate to the state level planning. In another way, lower level M&Es together should make the state level M&E in a modular fashion. This will avoid unnecessary repetition of data collection exercise etc at the cost of implementation time. It also implies that the lower level planning together shall constitute the state level planning.

---

[Vikas Dagur](#), National Rural Health Mission, Jaipur

Integrated planning from grassroot level led by the people for themselves is an excellent concept of participatory approaches and I am happy to see that such approaches are now being adopted at all levels. Major concern of all policy makers have now started initiated planning process from the basic level and community/beneficiaries are involved in each and every step of the program.

The strategies of participatory approaches are visible in various centrally sponsored mega programs implemented in various states of the country. NRHM, NREGA are recent examples of integrated planning and monitoring approach addressing interests of rural community.

I would like to suggest few points in this context based on field experiences:

1. **Planning:** Planning process is generally organized by group of professionals, who visit the area and conduct some survey to analyze the situation based on personal interviews or FGD's. Current approach focuses on involvement of community in the identification of activities and key components of community development for them, by them. NRHM is using such approach on large scale where every district is assigned to submit its annual plan, which will in turn come from village level. Following hurdles/gaps are identified in the integrated planning that are applicable to all community based programs:

- **Facilitation:** Facilitators/agency appointed to work out the planning process along with community lack basic information and poor capacities to facilitate the process with involvement of community. Biased selections of the agencies or individuals
- **Lack of support:** Concerned departments/officials do not provide their complete support. Need for integrated has been realized at upper ladder but district and block level is still not prepared or ready to accept it
- **Participation:** Participatory exercises are taken as a process that has to be completed as per norms, so samples are selected on the basis of suitability of initiators. During the process discussions end up soon after satisfying the participation by providing good treatment and community members involved also take it as a part of their duty to be accomplished for records. People raising queries on various aspects are generally avoided by officials so as to minimize clash and successfully complete one aspect of planning. The situation is same at all levels i.e. village, block and district
- **Weak capacities:** Planning process is initiated with community groups by disseminating the initial concept. Community members having weak capacities are not able to contribute by forecasting long term outcomes of the activities. They are able to see immediate responses of the program and thus include such things. Goal and objectives are not made clear, even sometimes not understood by the facilitator himself/herself
- **Lack of information:** Authorities are not able to provide exact or near to exact information on various indicator of program. Situation analysis results are found different from the records
- **Political Influence:** Political influence of leaders, block and district level PRI members prioritizing their interests have also affected planning for entire community
- **Poor Leadership:** District officials leading the program are also not sensitized and aware of the process completely so as to inculcate it in the system for further approval by subordinates. DM sometimes pushes such programs and other officials take it as a mandatory activity to be furnished
- **Compilation:** Data collected from field is compiled in pre-designed formats and copying of formats is done for most of the activities
- **Lack of Basic Work:** Village, block level committees are still not functional after considerable period of the program so as to participate and evaluate the programs

2. **Implementation:** Program implementation is affected due to several gaps in the system and capacities of the implementing authorities
  - Shortage of manpower
  - Excessive workload of program activities
  - Too many activities implemented simultaneously at one time
  - Weak community involvement in implementation process. Personal interests of the authorities, not to disclose key points of the scheme, poor IEC.
3. **Monitoring & Evaluation:** M&E component of the program also lacks local representations, due to fear of identification of gaps. Follow-up activities are not taken up properly so as to improve the strategy
4. **Lack of model programs and demonstration models to motivate the team members**

Programs are also performing well and creating good examples of participatory planning, but here I have tried to highlight points to be considered consciously to remove above mentioned gaps. Few hurdles can not be removed completely but could be minimized only so that program gets affected minimally.

---

**M. Moni, National Informatics Centre, New Delhi**

Realizing the need for databases for micro level planning, the Planning Commission has desired that NIC should revisit their DISNIC Programme launched during 1980s with the establishment of NICNET in every districts of the country, NIC has launched the "DISNIC-PLAN : IT for Micro Level Planning" as a Central Sector Scheme for implementation in RSVY District in every State (<http://disnic.gov.in>).

As per the UN's need for integration and upward aggregation of the micro level plans, the UN can refer to the DISNIC-PLAN dataset published in the website <https://disnic.gov.in/datast.htm> . This dataset will give an *information blueprint* for villages, all the resources available in each village and the details of the various schemes running at micro level and scheme wise beneficiaries' details, etc.

These details when aggregated at block and district level will be useful for need assessment, planning for various schemes, allocation of resources, funds and effective monitoring and evaluation at various spatial units.

I suggest that the UN can join with the NIC in this national venture. Financial Bid has been opened for the Pilot District Jhajjar (Haryana), Technical Bid has been opened for the State of Goa and Gajapati District (Orissa), Tender documents (Technical and Financial bid) have been received for Gulbarga District (Karnataka), Tender document to be issued for the Ri-Bhoi District (Meghalaya), EOIs have been published for Wayanad District (Kerala), North Sikkim District, North Lakhimpur District (Assam) and Rai Bareilly District (UP).

The Road Map is to get the Pilot projects implemented in 28 RSVY Districts (one per each State) before rolling out for the entire country. Government of Maharashtra has shown its interest to roll out for the entire State and now the Government of Karnataka.

Further details may be had from Mrs. Sameena Makhija ([sameena@nic.in](mailto:sameena@nic.in)).

---

**Abhishek Mendiratta, Consultant, New Delhi**

With respect to the monitoring aspects of the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), previously the Mission monitored the progress of implementation in the various districts manually. This method was time consuming and heavily reliant on the person dealing with data. These bottlenecks could be ironed out by the use of a computer based information system. The present web based technology enables easy data access and retrieval from any location on the globe, over the Internet. The present software has been developed with these goals.

The project needs monitoring on the physical (Households Latrines, School Toilets, Balwadi Toilets, Women Sanitation Complex, SLWM, RSM); financial aspects (Funds released by Mission, States and Beneficiaries, monitoring of Utilization of released fund) and the findings of the baseline survey data (APL, BPL & Anganwadi toilets, Schools toilets and water facility Status). The data inputs / updates made through the software gets automatically reflected in the reports generated by the system, which can be easily retrieved by anyone having access to the Net.

Thus, the use of software for monitoring has benefitted the campaign by providing a centralized database for monitoring, speedy information flow to and from districts, speedy decision making and elimination of human error in the process.

---

**Anil Prasad**, Finance Department, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram  
(response 2)

What Dr. Moni has proposed is a very pertinent matter. One major and common weakness of the development/reform activities as seen over a period of time, in governmental as well as NGO sectors, is their failure in effectively coordinating/communicating with similar initiatives that are going on and use past experiences and existing resources. This problem necessitates 'reinvention of the wheel again and again' at the cost of valuable resources and time. Therefore an effective movement for replication of best practices, revision/remix/reuse of existing resources, over and above coordinating various initiatives of same interests is very much required. This will make various initiatives complementary/supplementary to each other and in turn will produce miracles in the implementation of developmental activities.

I am confident that UNDP's Solution Exchange forum can provide invaluable support in this respect.

---

**Manoj Kumar Teotia**, CRRID, Chandigarh

The local government institutions will have to take lead in evolving micro plans the human settlement as a whole (ULBs in urban and PRIs in Rural areas) for promoting participatory planning. NGOs and civil society groups will also come forward after the process is initiated by LSGIs. The constitution of ward committees and community based organizations will be crucial for the same. This gives community the legal identities and powers for preparing community plans. PLA (Participatory Learnign and Actions) Techniques can also play important role in sensitizing community for thinking and planning for themselves. The process of preparation of strong data base at neighborhood level may help the community to think about certain issues, initiatives and outcomes.

So far lack of adequate participation of local communities has been a major hurdle but NREGA type of initiatives seems to have catalyzed the poor to take benefit of the scheme. On the similar pattern other initiatives could be chalked out. Some studies indicate that fulfillment of economic interests is crucial for ensuring involvement of the poor communities in development and planning projects/ programmes.

---

**P.K. Thampan**, Peekay Tree Crops Development Foundation, Kochi

In the decentralized planning now being followed in Kerala, and possibly in other states as well, the panchayat level development strategy is visualized first by working groups attached to each panchayat. Such groups number around a dozen with 10-15 members each. This vision or ideas is placed before the gram sabhas for discussion and formulation of proposals. After this process, the finalized proposals are discussed and approved by the panchayat committee and, subsequently, converted into projects by the concerned working group in accordance with the government norms in force and passed on to block panchayat for finalization by the block level technical committees before integration of local plans and upward transmission to the DPC.

The limitation of the above practice is that what is placed for discussion in the gram sabhas does not reflect the views, aspirations and felt needs of the local people as expressed by them. Rather it is something identified by another agency and placed before the people. As a result, the initiative of the people to identify local problems and suggest lines of action for addressing them

gets obscured. Over a period of time the people start losing interest in attending the gram sabha meetings and whenever they do their interest and role are confined to identifying beneficiaries for receiving doles. This has to be changed and a system evolved for giving the people at the grassroots level the primary role in identifying local needs and proposing action plan. The panchayat level planning has to commence based on these proposals of the people.

To make peoples planning at the lowest level purposeful participatory approach has to be promoted in which the people are given full freedom to express their views and suggestions without being hindered by the members of the working groups and representatives of line departments. To facilitate this, the discussion shall be on the basis of a semi-structured questionnaire prepared by the working groups. The local development needs as expressed by the participants and their observations and suggestions are to be recorded to serve as the basic document for developing panchayat level plans by the working groups/panchayat committee at later stages. When related programmes are taken up for execution the people will regard them as their own and participate wholeheartedly at different stages of implementation.

In the upward integration of local plans the panchayat level formulations have to pass through the Block panchayat to the district level. The necessity or otherwise of an intermediary arrangement has to be considered as a separate issue. It is definitely essential to have a district vision for development. This visualization, however, shall be the result of a series of participatory studies rather than the theoretical postulations of experts and pseudo experts devoid of practical vision. The district vision has to be made known to the village panchayats so that the essentials could be imbibed in the panchayat level plans.

When the panchayat level plan proposals are considered by the DPC those which do not adhere to the norms and guidelines stipulated by the government often fail to get approval. This happens despite the fact that some of the norms and stipulations are not relevant to the local situations at least in some panchayats. To avoid this DPC shall have the freedom to apply flexibility in the norms and stipulations in accordance with the physical situations prevailing in the concerned panchayats.

In each district line departments are functioning with dual control. This impedes the purposeful planning and execution of development projects. What is needed is unitary control of all development departments under the leadership of the elected president of the district panchayat who shall be regarded as the direct representative of the people and government at district level. The district collector shall be made the executive secretary to the district panchayat under the administrative control of the district panchayat president.

Monitoring and evaluation shall be concurrent not only to assess progress and identify drawbacks by the end of each activity but to introduce changes and improvements in the on-going programme for making them more effective, purposeful and people-friendly. The responsibility for monitoring and evaluation shall, however, shall be assigned to organizations that are not in any way associated with the implementing agency.

---

**Puran Singh Yadav, Government of Haryana, Chandigarh (response 1)**

This is open secret that funds allocated under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes are not only remaining unutilized for a longer period though the utilization certificates have been submitted but the results are also not commensurate with the spending. The leakage of funds is another issue. It is better late than never. The realization on the part of Government is timely. Under the given system of programme based funds releases by the central government, the situation will turn from bad to worse.

Before we go into the further details, let us examine the present system of planning and implementation of centrally sponsored schemes at the district level. Under the existing system, integrated planning and implementation appears to be distant reality till the funds are released in piecemeal manner as at present. For example, funds under NREGA, NRHM, AWRSP, TSC, SSA, JNUURM, Bharat Nirman, ICDS, MDM etc or any other programme are released through different Central Ministries / departments to different agencies in the district which are nodal agencies for implementation of these programmes. The funds are released on the basis of pre-decided criteria fixed either by Government of India, Planning Commission, State Government or Districts authorities. Integration and convergence is difficult to take place in this manner. On one hand, the funds are released to separate agencies at the district level, on the other hand convergence and integration is talked about, there after, which rarely takes place. Integrated / decentralized planning has, therefore, become a 'misnomer'. When, there is absolute lack of coordination at the central and state level, can it then be expected at the district level?

Therefore, the Coordination and Integration should start from the Central level first. All the Ministries should pool their funds /resources. These funds should be kept in a single account to be named 'Single Window Account'. Releases to the districts should be on the basis of the District Plans submitted by the districts. For example; funds earmarked under all the flagship programmes of GoI should be pooled at one place and released to the districts that too to a Single agency like District Collector or any other designated authority / cell at the district level. All the programme implementing agencies should receive the funds through the district Cell so created / designated for this purpose. If this arrangement is not possible, a separate 'district budget' should be provided in the Annual Plans of the country. Funds should flow from the 'district budget' to all the districts for implementing all the flagship programmes. Convergence / integration is possible only in this manner. States should also make such provision in the budget and funds flow should be to the districts as for the Centre. Under this procedure of integration of plans, sector wise % funds should be earmarked in view of the priority of the particular sector .For example:

NRHM	10%
Education including SSA & Mid Day Meal Scheme	10%
Poverty Alleviation (Self- Employment Schemes)	06%
NREGA (Employment Generation) & Hariyali	10%
Bharat Nirman (including Indira Awas Yojana)	15%
AWRSP	05%
TSC	05%
JNUURM	05%
Social Welfare (NSAP)	10%
Upliftment of Weaker Sections	10%
Youth Development	10%
Others	04%

Separate budget allocation for the programmes from the Central level cannot help convergence and integration as there is absolute lack of coordination among the various departments at the district level. The departments concerned are implementing their programmes in 'water tight' compartments.

Monitoring and evaluation of funds utilization will become easy in this manner. The monitoring of utilization of funds will be done at single level in the district by the designated funds releasing authority. One agency will then be responsible for monitoring utilization. Alternatively, online

system of monitoring system should be introduced at the district level. Such software needs to be developed at the Central level. Presently, the Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has developed GP wise online monitoring system. The GP wise out comes can be monitored through this system. Perhaps Ministry of Rural Development, GoI has also introduced such a monitoring system under NREGA.

At present, the concept of integrated district plan is missing today despite euphoria generated all-round. The sectoral plans are prepared in watertight compartments separately for each sector. For example district plans under NREGA, NRHM, AWRSP, TSC, and SSA etc are prepared separately and approved separately without integration and convergence with other sectors. Integration and convergence are talked about afterwards. Hence, no convergence takes place. Convergence and integration remains an empty talk. I have seen that exceptions apart, the so called village plans are nothing but the aggregation of few village needs spelt out by the Sarpanch separately for all programmes as per the directions received from the i) Block Development & Panchayat Officer in case of NREGA, ii) directions received from the from Medical Officer in case of NRHM, iii) direction received from Executive Engineer in case of AWRSP, iv) directions received from the district implementing authorities in case of TSC, and v) directions received from the District Education officer in case of SSA. Sarpanch/ Gram Pradhan are asked to prepare of formal Gram Sabha resolution listing the demands that too separately under all the schemes. There is no participation /involvement of villagers. The villagers are not are not aware of about what is happening in the village. There are multiple reasons behind this situation:

1. Lack of Spirit/ sensitization among the implementers: majority of them are not sensitized towards the needs of the villages and particularly the poor. They have 'mind set' problems. Majority of the officers are not inclined to go, sit and work with people in rural areas. They have become 'white collar babus'. They are officers and not facilitators.
2. Lack of capacity among the programme Managers: Almost all the flagship programmes are based on participatory 'bottom up' approach. The programme managers are not aware of such approach. They do not want to come out of Top down approach they have been following for over five decades. They do not want the villagers to be partners of the programmes from the earlier 'mai bab' approach. There is need to deploy officers, who can act as facilitators and prove to be the leaders of the positive mindset.
3. Too many programmes/ lack of time: With the increasing number of programmes, the manpower to handle them remains the same. Rather it is dwindling slowly.
4. Lack of Training: Though there is provision of training to sensitize the officers before launching of the programme. Very few of them are sent for training. Despite having so many training institutions and funds available for training and capacity building, it happens least. Moreover, the training institutions have also not come to the level of the present requirement. They base their trainings on obsolete / old methodology. Trainings have become pastime formality rather than delivering worth while.
5. Low capacity of Panchayats: Despite lapse of more than 15 years of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, Panchayats have not been allowed to develop their capacity to prepare village plans . Neither the States have made any sincere effort to develop their capacity. Exceptions apart, the present decentralized planning is in name. It is 'centralized decentralization'. Everything is decided at the top. District Planning Committees are either not constituted or if constituted are not functional. There is need of strong team to assist the DPC in integration/ convergence of district plan.

Now Let us discuss the participatory planning at the district level. The Planning should start from the grassroots. Benchmark survey should be conducted in all the Gram Panchayats/ villages through expert agencies with involvement of the people from all sections or through the application of participatory tools/ Participatory Rural Appraisal Exercises (PRAE) in all the villages. Village/ District Development plans should be prepared in this manner after approval by the competent authority i.e., Gram Sabha/ Zila Parishad. Such plan would incorporate all the requirements / needs pertaining to the entire above sectors. For example how many people are willing to do manual work under NREGA, what is the labour demand, what are the works to be taken up along with impact analysis on the district economy? The district plan should also incorporate the all above sectors like health (NRHM) Water Supply( AWRSP) ,Sanitation ( TSC) and Education (SSA) etc. These plans should be aggregated at the block level and finally at the district level.

If the participatory village planning and integrated district plan is to be made a reality, the planning mechanism has to be strong. Under 'DISNIC Plan' NIC prepared formats for village planning. Panchayat wise data should be collected in these formats and a permanent village data base should be created first for foundation of realistic need based village plan for further aggregation at the block level and consolidation at the district level. A dedicated team of local resource persons needs to be developed to facilitate the villagers in data collection to prepare village plans on the basis of the data collected through these formats. It should be done on a campaign basis. Besides, the village community particularly the poor have lost faith in the system. They have realized the difference of what is said and what is done. They do not believe in talks. They want results. Dedicated community motivators need to be deployed in all the villages of the country that can bring a qualitative change in the whole scenario. They can enhance community participation in planning and implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation has been discussed above. The ICT has made it easier to monitor the programmes sitting at the central, state and district level. In order to match the online performance with the field performance, periodic unannounced field visits can work wonders in improving the quality of spending and achieving commensurate results.

---

**N.C Saxena, Former Secretary, Planning Commission, New Delhi**

In the Indian system of planning, budgets are decided first, plans follow later. For instance, the cycle of the XI Five Year Plan started on the 1st April 2007, two annual budgets have been prepared since then but the XI Plan document is still to be given a final shape. This is not unique to the XI Plan, it is a recurring practice. The IX Plan document was put for approval before the National Development Council only in February 1999, though the Plan period began in April 1997. The situation is worse at the state level, where a Plan document is prepared only for submission to the Planning Commission; it is at best an aggregation of sectoral budgets.

The net result is that as budgets and schemes are sectoral in nature, cross-sectoral and non-monetary issues have generally received a low priority. The mid-term Appraisal of the IX Plan had observed:

'Policies and budgetary provisions, despite the rhetoric, have not been integrated so far. They sometimes run on parallel tracks. On lesser-known reason for this isolation is that development and planning in India are associated with spending of money. That Planning = Expenditure = Development is the mindset behind such beliefs. Changes in policy or laws are not seen as an integral part of the development process because these have no direct financial implications. The Indian planner, unfortunately, has still to understand the difference between planning and budgeting.'

**District Planning**

The other implication of scheme orientation is that the concept of district planning has remained a non-starter, despite several efforts since the V Plan period to operationalise it. The fact that states have little discretionary funds to allocate to the districts, and most plan funds to the districts originate from the central Ministries have further worsened prospects for decentralised multi-sectoral planning emerging out of the felt needs of the local bodies and the people.

Thus district planning from below has been undermined by different streams of funding with their origins in the central Ministries. As States have to prepare their annual plans within the framework prescribed by the Government of India, they have no option but to prepare sectoral budgets and submit it to GOI Ministries for funding. They, in turn, often prescribe rigid guidelines, which leave little scope for flexibility to the districts in preparation of their annual plans. Substantial funds are also retained at the State level and schemes are formulated by sectoral departments without much consultation with the Districts. The increase in the number of Ministries, departments and parastatals at the Centre and in the States, and the vertical planning, preparation of programmes and methods of funding, stands in the way of decentralized planning becoming a reality.

The situation did not change even after the 74th Amendment, which (Article 243ZD of the Constitution) provided that every State shall constitute at the district level a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district and to prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole. For years such a Committee was not constituted (even now only 18 States have constituted District Planning Committees in accordance with Article 243ZD), it met infrequently, had little budget to offer to the panchayats and municipalities, who in any case were hardly asked to prepare or submit any plans.

The fact that district bodies have poor capacity to prepare decentralized plans is also relevant. Even when some central schemes such as JNNURM and NRHM insist on district plans, it is seen that Municipalities and districts in poorer states lack the capacity to prepare such plans, and thus lose out on central assistance. If even sectoral plans are not easily forthcoming from these districts, it is idle to expect the local bodies to prepare multi-sectoral plans.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has recently taken some new initiatives to revive the concept of district plans as envisaged under Article 243ZD. In order to support the Ministry's objective of strengthening decentralised plans, the Planning Commission has in April 2008 set up a Task Force for preparation of a Manual on District Plans. The Group would also suggest institutional and other forms of professional support including capacity building to enable the DPCs to consolidate the plans of various tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies.

My field visits to several integrated districts show that though the village plans have in many cases helped in achieving progress on social indicators, preparation of district response plans has not evoked much participation from the district authorities. They have informally called it a 'futile exercise' due to lack of clear directions from above as to how these plans would be funded. Untied funds in a district are not sufficient to meet the aspirations that emanate from the village plans. Moreover the institutional arrangements for linking village plans with untied funds are weak. The only way out is to link the components of the flagship schemes with the village demands. Therefore until such time that government itself owns up the process of preparing district plans, greater thought needs to be given towards integrating village plans with the flagship schemes for which sufficient outlays are available at the district level.

### **New initiatives**

However, there would be a shift in policies and orientation once the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj insist on and monitor the preparation of district plans based on plans submitted by the local bodies and panchayats. Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) can be used to improve the capacity of sub-district units to prepare plans, as creation of capacity for effective planning at district and lower level is a key-pre-requisite to participative planning.

Hence there is a specific component in the BRGF programme for the capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Each Panchayat or Municipality within the backward district concerned will be the unit for planning under BRGF. Plans prepared by each Panchayat or Municipality will be consolidated into the District Plan by the District Planning Committee, constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Such plans should follow a comprehensive macro approach cutting across sectors and meeting inter sectoral requirements.

State Planning Boards should ensure that the district plans are integrated with the State plans that are prepared by them. It should be made mandatory for the States to prepare their development plans only after consolidating the plans of the local bodies. The National Planning Commission has to take the initiative in institutionalising this process.

At the same time it should be remembered that many problems leading to poor delivery are beyond the capacity of districts and panchayats to set them right. Changing the attitude and behaviour of the grassroots workers and making them more effective would require initiating many governance reforms in the field of recruitment, oversight, control over them by the panchayats, linking devolution with performance, accreditation of service providing agencies, and improving outcome monitoring. Panchayats alone cannot take these steps. States and the Centre would have to initiate these reforms in order to take full benefit of the process of decentralised people oriented planning.

---

**M. Neelakantan, Consultant and former Dy. DG, NSSO, Thrissur**

My views and comments on the topic are summarized below. (A detailed note may be seen [here](#)).

It is about two decades that decentralized planning process has been in operation in the country. While it has not been possible for all States to achieve uniform level of progress, it is gratifying to note that all States are sensitized over the importance of this innovative approach to Planning for removal of poverty and ensure all round socio economic development of the people at large. Obviously, a lot more needs to be done to achieve this objective. In this context, there is unanimous view that government resources should be utilized most efficiently by the three tier Panchayati Raj Institutions for maximum benefit of the people. In this context, District Planning assumes great significance and all efforts should be made for convergence of Government resources at District level for Planning and Implementation of various programmes. It goes without saying that there has to be appropriate methods for integrating initiatives on Planning, Implementation and Monitoring of flagship and other programmes.

**Tools and methodologies for effective utilization and convergence of Government resources**

**Participatory Planning- pre-requisites and strategies for implementation**

a) Participatory Planning is an important aspect of decentralized planning. For successful Participatory Planning, there may be several pre-requisites. Eg. Motivating of not only staff engaged in PRIs and people's representatives but people at large through deliberations in Gram Sabha Meetings and other fora, Training of PRI representatives in methods and procedures of District and local Planning and implementation, importance of qualitative monitoring and evaluation of programmes through independent agencies, Resource Mapping at Village level, providing adequate staff and equipments for handling multi tasks at PRIs and their Training etc. One should not expect immediate results as it would be necessary to give adequate time for absorbing the new ideas and get them operationalise.

While preparing micro plans at the local level, it is necessary to lay down suitable guidelines. In this context, the experience of Kerala is worth mentioning. Government of Kerala issued detailed

guidelines to LSGs during 10<sup>th</sup> Plan for preparation and implementation of local level plans but at the same time giving lot of freedom for action within the framework of responsibilities transferred to them and accountability.

### **Strategies for effective implementation of flagship and other programmes**

Effective implementation of flagship programmes like NREGP and other poverty alleviation and other programmes for upliftment of masses would be the cornerstone of effective implementation of decentralization. Several areas of concern in this have already been identified based on concurrent evaluations on, the process and impact evaluations, by independent agencies, research studies and critical reviews by scholars, and also by audit of the CA& AG of India. These include lacunae in identification of beneficiaries leading to extending benefits to ineligible people and leaving eligible beneficiaries, leakages and corruption, harassment of poor people, faulty delivery system, lack of follow ups, non- utilization of funds within the time allotted, use of contractors where it is not allowed, mis-utilisation of funds, construction of low quality assets, lack of maintenance of the assets, and a host of such other shortcomings in the implementation of the programmes. All these result in non-realization of the noble objectives of the programmes and therefore waste of valuable resources. In many instances, it has been observed that programmes are run on a very routine way by staff who are not at all motivated and sensitized on the importance of the programmes. This could be partly due to lack of a proper capacity building programme for the implementation staff as also due to lack of infrastructure facilities at ground level.

It is therefore urgently necessary to tackle these problems on a time bound manner based on a blue print for action. Recent initiatives like introduction of Projects like Unique Identification Code (UID) for all residents in the country, establishment of about one lakh Common Service Centres (CSC) to facilitate E-Governance, etc would be of great help to remove lacunae in identification of beneficiaries and improve delivery system on ground level, in particular.

### **Information on bottlenecks and hurdles which stand in the way for effective Plan Implementation and utilization of Govt. resources**

Perhaps, the most serious bottleneck in effective formulation of Plans at District level and below is lack of reliable and timely database in respect of key productive and other sectors. Due to this, generally, recourse is made to available administrative by-product statistics, which is not validated and also suffering from timeliness. This is a very serious limitation and concerted efforts are not made to tackle this problem. Neither the Statistical nor Planning Departments are adequately staffed with professionals nor are they given enough modern equipment like computers for processing of data collected. Resource mapping is also not done periodically. So, plan formulation may be faulty due to non availability of latest information on the subject particularly on productive sectors of the economy. If there is an effective Nodal Agency, one could expect at least validation of administrative by-product statistics before they are used in local level planning process. When even this does not happen, one could imagine the degree of effectiveness of the plans formulated. Therefore, this aspect needs urgent attention in all States.

### **Need to evolve a suitable scheme for qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation System at District level.**

Monitoring of programmes could be by Line Department as also by outside agencies to ensure objectivity. Detailed guidelines and manuals should be issued for timely monitoring of the flagship and other programmes by Senior Officers from not only the concerned line Department but also from other line departments who have a stake in the programmes. Besides, a Panel of Experts could be drawn from outside who have experience in the relevant field for close monitoring of the schemes while they are implemented. Reputed NGOs could also be entrusted this work. But what is important is to carry out midway corrections in the guidelines on

implementation of programmes if such corrections are warranted based on the suggestions of the monitoring agencies/ Experts.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that an effective Decentralised Planning strategy should aim at convincing the people at large that Government is sensitive and responsive to their needs.

---

**Ashok Kumar Sinha, Karma Consultants, New Delhi**

We are realizing that planning is really difficult processes in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes, if we go through the guideline and structure of the REGS, it has been clearly spell out that planning process is not adequately followed in REGS. And this defaulter planning system invites irregularities in implementation of REGS. Provision of Planning under REGS is:

- The Gram Panchayat has a role in planning of works, registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50 per cent of the works, and monitoring the implementation of the Scheme at the village level
- The Intermediate Panchayat will be responsible for planning at the Block level, and for monitoring and supervision
- District Panchayats will be responsible for finalizing the District Plans and for monitoring and supervising the Employment Guarantee Scheme in the District

But when we observe at grassroots level, the planning process is hardly being followed by associated stakeholders. Real Gram Sabha and Planning Exercise is still a dream for all of us. There are no organic links specially in planning processes in REGS.

We as development practitioners always mobilize the village community for preparing micro plans and integrated plans. But it is not being properly legitimized due to local infighting and panchayat level politics. Still participation of poor, marginalized, dalits and women in the planning processes are challenging factors. And when the planning system requires technical aspects, then it creates another set of problems. There is a need to focus on strengthening of planning mechanism under NREGS.

I am representing Karma Consultants, which is working as Resource Organization in the state of Bihar and assisting the Management Consultants (MC) in coordinating and organizing the NREGS campaign in PACS Interim Phase supported by DFID, UK. And in this NREGA Campaign, we are planning to organize Gram Sabha and assess the planning exercise also – that is to what extent planning exercise is being adhered in the Gram Sabha for NREGS.

---

**Puran Singh Yadav, Government of Haryana, Chandigarh (response 2)**

I beg to differ on some of the points having experience of 25 years at the grassroots as a part of implementation team, planning and implementing various poverty alleviation and social sector programmes, as a trainer for different programmes involving various sections of the people and having widely travelled to see the implementation of programmes in the field..

There are few terms which we use frequently like capacity building, transparency, good governance, people's participation etc.. What capacity? Whose capacity? Who will build capacity? Recently launched BRGF is mentioned as one of the programme for capacity building of PRIs. What are plans of capacity building in BRGF districts? Who are the capacity builders? Our capacity building institutions are sick. They offer obsolete tools of capacity building, which hardly help the PRIs. The trainers need total overhauling of the training methods. Secondly, what is the relevance of capacity building of PRIs when commensurate responsibilities are not transferred to them. Those who prepare capacity building plans, themselves are not interested in their capacity

building. If we want integrated district plan to become reality, we will have to change the mind set of the people right from Planning Commission to the Gram Sachiv / Village worker. We will have to make our minds. We have to be facilitator and not the officers. Because, it is this class which is knowingly and unknowingly creating hurdles in the smooth transfer of power to the people. Millions are spent in the name of capacity building. But results are not commensurate with the spending.

Still there is time. Let us pause and look. Let us think about improving the standards of our capacity building institutions and strengthen not only the PRIs but also the bureaucracy for the good of all as we are all tax payers.

---

**Jasveen Jairath, SaciWaters, Hyderabad (response 1)**

To add to Shri Saxena's message, whenever programmes are sought to be effectively implemented, for example NREGS, the agencies instrumental in pushing for honest grounding are persecuted, reports of criminal assault on them have also come in. Any political challenge to appropriation/monopolization of resources at grassroots is met with violent reaction from vested interests, what has the government done to neutralize this? If we can push for recognizing this problem, we can further pressurize for incapacitating local mafias; that include participation of agents among poorest people also out of desperation. This is a common problem with all top down interventions.

---

**Asoke Basak, NMIMS and Kelvani Vile Parle Trust, Mumbai**

The initiative by UNDP to develop programmes of convergence of government resources at the district level is extremely timely and welcome.

Based on the background of the issue and my own experience, I would like to highlight the following aspects for consideration:

Convergence of public resources at the district level is hampered by, inter alia, the following factors:

[a] Resources at the district level are still not under one umbrella and under one authority. To the extent feasible, as much of resources as possible should be brought under one Authority. There is still a lot of scope to do so, as the Panchayati Raj strengthening still leaves a lot of gaps. Convergence through co-ordination should be only in respect of such resources which are broadly outside the Government's direct control.

[b] There should be empowerment in the real sense of the district level authority [Panchayati Raj institution?] in terms of financial, administrative and legal powers. It is well known that there is duplication of authority and overlapping of responsibilities at the district level, resulting in inefficient deployment of resources. The duplication should be totally avoided in respect of social sectors.

[c] The extent of strengthening public accountability concomitantly go with the above measures. Presently, accountability is defused and can be pushed upwards or downwards quite easily.

[d] Lack of planning expertise at the district level: If District plan should not be a stapling of departmental plans, expertise need to be developed to prepare the plans taking into account the resource endowments of the district and its need which are required to be properly integrated and prioritized into implementable programmes. Perspective plans must be prepared and

updated periodically by following scientific methodology and the various sectors [social sector] could prepare integrated plans for their sector within the frame work of the perspective plan.

[e] Empowerment by implication involves adequate control over the funds and powers to give approvals. The situation in this regard at the district level is very unsatisfactory. Delays and dilution of accountability takes place because of the fact that control over the funds and giving of approvals in many cases do not rest at the district level in spite of 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment of the Constitution.

[f] Besides bringing in professionalism and expertise for ensuring quality monitoring and evaluation of implementation, establishing the system of accountability at different levels will to a large extent improve the quality of implementation and ensure the desired convergence and co-ordination.

Periodic independent evaluation of programmes at the district level will ensure better implementation.

I fully agree about the three elements which can result in effective convergence. But the real issue is, how to achieve the desired levels of effectiveness in respect of each of these elements. I have indicated the problems we often face in the districts and the possible remedies. While working out solutions, models could be developed on pilot basis, at least for the identified social sectors and thereafter lessons could be drawn for replication. Human Development sectors deserve a different approach for being effective.

---

#### **Tarun Seem, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi**

Preparation of the Integrated District Health Action Plan (IDHAP) is one of the core strategies under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). The tool kit for preparation of the IDHAP is available at [http://www.mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/Guidelines\\_index.htm](http://www.mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/Guidelines_index.htm). Many districts have shared their plans with Gol and the same are available at <http://www.mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/DHAP/DHAP.htm>. The district plans are expected to articulate locally sensitive issues for necessary action under NRHM. In many plans, this articulation takes the shape of huge wish lists. In many others the supporting arguments are either very weak or in some cases completely missing. In some plans the spark of decentralised planning is indeed visible. The eventual goal of village plans collating into block plans collating into district plans collating into state Programme Implementation Plans however appears a tough call, given the capacity at respective levels. The answer may not lie (only) in loading flexible funds at the district levels (although it may accelerate the process). In fact in some situations (doing only) this may amount to demonstrating lack of leadership. True decentralisation requires capacity building followed by empowerment leading to local action. The IDHAP tool kit under NRHM seeks to do this. How far it is succeeding is for time to tell.

The observation that planning is often equated with budgeting is indeed the real irony of the process. Many initiatives in the development journey are zero budget activities. Many health sector reforms are really no/low budget reforms concerning HR policies, procurement protocols, MIS reporting, compliance of HR to the terms of employment, follow up to adverse incidents etc. The District plans completely miss this agenda in many cases. In fact so do some State Plans too. The Annual PIP under NRHM is a detailed document prepared by the states. Many of the PIPs appear to only address the budgetary issues. The PIPs are available at <http://www.mohfw.nic.in/NRHM.htm>. However the results of capacity building are quickly evident as is clear from the better quality PIPs under NRHM for FY 2008-09. Many of the state PIPs for 08-09 are self contained vision documents drawing from the District level plan papers. Hopefully the process shall be further refined over the coming years.

Integrated planning would do magic when it happens. Till then the planning process of NRHM may be a good enough stop gap life boat. It will not cross the oceans but it will keep you afloat.

---

**Harsh Singh, UNDP, New Delhi**

The main concern in Suraj's query appears to be the social sectors, and accordingly the focus is on convergence between the activities of the public players. However, I feel that the objective of convergent planning should be to promote public-private community partnerships, and the mechanisms should aim at this broader inclusive process.

---

**P.K Chaubey, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi**

I am in total agreement with Dr. Saxena. But I would like to further add why are there so many centrally sponsored schemes. Why not pass on these schemes to local bodies through States and why not empower local bodies to collect their revenue by passing some of the tax bases.

---

**Ratnakar Gedam, Planning Commission, New Delhi**

Two contradictory views are emerging. First is about the inevitable role of central Planning Commission in resources allocation including that for flagship centrally sponsored schemes and second is that decentralized planning is more valuable than central planning. Not clear but could be called as third view of integrating two models of information flow namely integrating top-down planning with down-top flow of information. Indeed information asymmetry leads to planning failure. What is practised at central level differs at state level.

One may incline to accept the fact that centralized planning is dead. Planning is luxury. It suppresses market mechanism and promotes intervention in the form of injecting tax payers' money which in turn helps corruption to grow commensurately at all levels. Plans are like implementing political manifestos of ruling party (like waiver of loans to farmer, free electricity to farmers, packages to states, enunciation of construction of dams, roads, setting up public sector companies for employment generation etc.). They are supposed to be coterminous with ruling party. Outgoing party cannot approve the five years' plan on behalf of incoming government or Prime Minister who heads cabinet. Planning is like a social engineering which intends to create a society based on blue print. Planning pre-supposes the availability of foolproof information. The accuracy of information and magnitude of the problem determines the accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness of solution. But at the national level one hardly gets all information. One could see the fact that despite huge resources spent on collection of data, census, survey etc. one hardly get accurate information such as percentage of population suffering from hunger, starvation, malnutrition, HIV, water born disease, literacy ratios, drop out ratios, rural electrification and availability of electricity, breast cancer, etc. Most of CSS are based on pre-conceived notion that all information are available, available data are accurate and perfect, but problem exist because of lack of resources due to market failure to allocate resources.

Absence of discretion is pre-requisite for good governance that is based on rule of law. But planning presupposes absence of rule of law and discretion is key to resources allocation. The magnitude of resources allocation is likely to be higher to those states which are in ruling coalition as compared with opposed to central ruling political party. Because, in the absence of any law, discretion of resources allocator prevails regardless of needs of people at grass root level in different states. As far as formulas for devolution of funds (like constitutional or statutory mandate) are concerned those could be anybody's guess as a mock exercise in the absence of accuracy of data of population, per capita income etc.

US has no planning commission nor did they have at any time in the past. Even developed nations like UK, France, Germany, etc. though small but rich enough for centuries had no reliance on planning mechanism. It is said that if you want to be rich like US then follow the policies of US. In other words, transplant the legal system of the country you wish to be. One cannot be rooted to neither socialist nor capitalist system as is found in so called mixed economies like India. Moreover India which pretends to be socialistic has turned into capitalist where few world's richest person live and draw income per month over 45 crore (e.g. Mukesh Ambani, alone is equivalent to 45 lakh Indians with Rs. 12000 per capita annual income) despite the fact millions of people go hungry daily. Feel good factor prevails in several NRI as well socially blind Indian who looks at prosperity of richest Indians and feel as if they have become richer. Indian economic system is capable of both producing poorest of poor and richest among rich, and has little concern in reality for urgent eradicating hunger. For example, Vinoba Bhave's movement for "Bhoodan" has been wasteful if one looks at SEZ growth and government acquiring land for SEZ by depriving land to the tiller. It is reversal of land reform process, nationalization, cooperative movement etc. Had Vinoba Bhave been alive he would have perhaps felt ashamed of what he did for empowerment of poor by persuading zamindars to part away excess land so that it could be distributed to landless poor. SEZ growth is reversal of bhoodan movement.

Chinese proverb says, "in a well governed capitalism one should be ashamed of starvation and hunger, and in socialism one should be ashamed of accumulation wealth in the hands of few". Even India's Constitution under Article 38 it directs state policy to be based on principle that concentration of wealth in the hands of few is detrimental to nation and such concentration must be avoided. In Nepal, King has to leave palace merely for political reasons but in India capitalist are growing disproportionate without being called as Kings despite the facts that their wealth exceeds than wealth of several Kings or even UK's Queen. In mixed economy like India both coexist for the fact its economic, social and political ideals are rooted to neither capitalism nor socialism. No Indian capitalist need advise of Indian planners but today planning is doing what Indian capitalists and MNCs want and not what is needed for social upliftment. Twelve centrally sponsored schemes pre-suppose that social development is like black box syndrome where you put money from one end and social development will emerge from another end. Indeed when corruption is at its peak there would be little social development even if whole of money is spent. Integrating district planning with central planning would facilitate fuelling the corruption as it would mean coalition of bureaucracy.

---

**Megha Phansalkar, Mumbai**

As part of my Doctorate in District Resource Planning and Management, I have developed an ICT application with GIS interface. The application has been updated with latest technology and provides a ready to use tool for district planning, implementation and monitoring. The brief information is as below:

District Information and Planning System (DIPS): The potential of computer model for strengthening the district planning process has been turned into reality by DIPS (District Information and Planning System). It incorporates various tools and methodologies required to be undertaken done by the district agencies / departments / research scholars. DIPS have three tier planning levels viz. village/ block and district. The package can be used for any district of the country. DIPS capture data from various sources, analyses and provide concrete tools for decision making in term of district resource planning in an efficient and simple manner. The output is in textual, graphical and map formats. A paper on the same was published in the GIS development available at

<http://www.gisdevelopment.net/application/urban/overview/urbano0030pf.htm>

The application provides planning and management tools for district / block and village level planning for varied sectors (Agriculture, Education, Health, Finance, Animal husbandry, land etc). It can also be used by institutions to teach district planning and implementation.

---

**Lathamala, MYRADA, Bangalore**

I agree that until the budget at district level is pooled, no coordination is possible. MYRADA is involved in participatory planning from GP level in four districts of Karnataka. It is being prepared for 11th five year plan. We are finding it too difficult to bring effectiveness in the process, because the capacity of GP is too low and time given is also too short. Except a few officers in ZP, no one knows budget availability for each sector. It is impossible to bring all departments together. Mind set of officers about participation of people is another hurdle. But still there is some hope, ZP officials are open for grama sabha planning. We hope that things will slowly change.

Village planning is important, at the same time prioritization of activities (at grama sabha) is very crucial for planning.

---

**Raj Ganguly, New Delhi**

It is very encouraging that we all are discussing this very important topic. The points raised by have surely provided insights and have underlined the need to have a very serious introspection to the entire planning process, beyond the issues of decentralization alone. On one hand it is quite natural to believe that "centralized planning is dead", however it is difficult to accept the view that "Planning is luxury." For a large democratic country like ours with great diversity of resources, and remoteness, planning assumes greater significance to inch forward towards sustainable development and slowly reduce intra-regional disparity. The plan of a large country like ours surely comes with a large budget with possible repercussions on market forces and it may tempt to accept that "Planning....suppresses market mechanism". But we should be cautious against such sentiments, as in India's socio-economic situation the frame work of planning assumes critical role to bridge the gap of intra-regional growth disparity. Planning is important for bringing in growth opportunities to all the nooks and corners of our vast country, which can seldom happen if left alone to market forces.

Also, the situation of our country is very different than US and it will be a folly if we believe in only copying the 'successful models'. I believe we need to bring in fresh thinking - creative and innovative, management strategies and utilize tools like ICT, to plug in the gaps and set a new system rolling. It is interesting to note that "in the Indian system of planning, budgets are decided first, plans follow later." We need to accept the practical difficulties in the entire planning process. In last 60 years we have blindly followed the concept of 'Five Years Plans' backed by annual plans. Why we cannot think of "Three Year Plans". The elected Government is for 5 years and for all practical purpose we cannot expect it to deliver a plan stretched to 5 years. And importantly in this fast changing economy, a shorter plan budget will be more realistic and achievable.

We also need to ask whether we have any strategic road map to which the plans are set. Should we not have a visioning exercise in the lines of Rajiv Gandhi's 21<sup>st</sup> century mission, Mr. A P J Abdul Kalam Azad's Vision 2020, for our plans? The budgetary allocations to different sectors generally undermine the fact that except for some incremental obligations there are no fixed priorities or growth agenda. Are we looking at only 'economic planning' or geared towards 'development planning'? What are the national/state priorities and sectoral goals? Are these properly integrated with UN's MDG's?

Creation of Ministry of North East, Ministry of Renewable Energy etc., reflects positive vision of the government, but these initiatives if agreed as national priorities are seldom backed by matching plan allocations.

Yes there are challenges in the plan implementation, as underlined by Dr. Saxena, "Problems leading to poor delivery are beyond the capacity of districts and panchayats to set them right" and Mr. Gedam that "...information asymmetry leads to planning failure." But we need to effectively utilize the ICT tools to bring in transparency, efficient delivery at local government level and allowing more civil society collaborations.

Planning is critical for putting our limited resources to effective use and envisions a development road map for our country. However, the challenge is to make it inclusive, sustainable and realistically tuned to local priorities. Process re-engineering towards decentralization and improving the delivery mechanism by making it participative in nature can all be steered well, using the available IT/ICT tools and infrastructure, only when it is oriented to strategically set goals and development priorities.

---

**[Manju Panwar](#), Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, New Delhi**

It is a well known fact that the success of any programme largely depends on the effective delivery system and efficient implementation at the grassroots level so that the benefit of the programmes reach to the unreached population. In order to ensure this, it is very important that five strategies should be implemented in full spirits which are as follows:

- (1) Awareness generation
- (2) People's Participation
- (3) Transparency
- (4) Accountability
- (5) Strict Vigilance and monitoring

But the moot question is that how far the above mentioned strategies are practiced in real sense. Keeping this in view, I am sharing some of my experiences based on the study that I conducted in Haryana titled "Impact Assessment of Rural Development Programmes in Haryana". The main objective of this study was to evaluate the performance of the schemes at the field level, to identify the deficiencies in course of implementation and recommendations for effective implementation of rural development programmes.

**Deficiencies encountered**

- **Lack of Communication** There is a complete communication failure between benefit agencies and the target population. Programme details like criteria for assistance, who to contact, how to make effective use of financial assistance is simply not known to the beneficiaries.
- **No linkage:** Under SGSY, it was found that there was no *linkage* between the line departments and SHGs. Because of which SHGs were helpless to start any income generation activities even after getting substantial subsidy and bank loan.
- **Devolution of powers:** No effective powers have been devolved to PRIs. There is total control of district and block officials over rural development programmes. It was observed in the field that when asked about the rural development programmes, Block Development Panchayat officers look upon the officials of DRDA and say that they are the ones who are sitting on the top decide the budget for every scheme. Same with the case of Sarpanch who say that nothing is in their hands and they just do the works directed by B.D.P.O and other officials. The B.D.P.Os blame PRI functionaries as incompetent; the PRI functionaries blame the BDO and officials of State government for not transferring the power to their level. Both groups lack managerial skills, vision and compassion.

- **Shortage of trained staff:** Panchayati Raj officials are poorly trained. Even the BDOs are short of trained and do not have the motivated staff.
- **Non-functioning of Gram Sabha** The PRIs are not playing a vital role in the rural development process. Gram Sabha meetings are not held regularly and not well attended by people. Villagers do not show any interest in attending the GS meetings. The officials implement the programmes and the PRIs are generally being bypassed. It has been seen that process of planning, implementation and monitoring are carried out by government officials.
- **Shortage of critical skills:** For effective implementation of the programmes and schemes related to rural development, it is very important that each block office should have four types of skill which are as follows: Business advisory and development skills, Training need assessment and training skills, Rural engineering skills and General administrative skills. But it is unfortunate that only handful of blocks have this kind of skill.
- **Wrong Identification of beneficiaries:** It was found in the field that block and many elected officials of Panchayat manipulate the process of identification of the needy.
- **Ignorance about the programmes:** This is a serious problem especially when majority of programs are demand driven and the target segment is illiterate. Even the so-called big officials such as B.D.P.O or Sarpanch are not aware about the programs and schemes. Because of this ignorance, information about the programmes and schemes do not trickle down to the lowest i.e villagers. Often the programme beneficiaries did not know which programme they got benefit from.
- **Target Oriented:** Some of the schemes are made target oriented that emphasis achieving the physical targets rather than achieving the quality of works.
- **Absence of business advisory support for rural non-farm sector:** A critical problem for SGSY beneficiaries particularly SHGs is the absence of quality business advice. B.D.Os and others are not business advisors. They lack training to critically look into the sustainability of any enterprise, marketing arrangements and logistical support for sponsored business and pooling of resources and expertise from other departments. Bankers are not business advisors too. Bank managers are not trained to be business advisors as it is a job for business consultants. None of the business has been supported with proper training and marketing arrangement.
- **Inefficient Monitoring Mechanism:** There is an inefficient monitoring mechanism at district and block level. Officials at the district level who were monitoring the execution of schemes were found relying on statistics and data provided by officials at the lower level who were reported to be indulging in corruption and malpractice.
- **Pressure on Gram Panchayats:** Influential persons decide programme of works and select individuals for beneficiary oriented programmes at the village level. Because of this malpractice, objective of the programmes are not fulfilled.

#### **Recommendations for effective implementation of the programmes**

- **Coordination is required:** Shared values can be achieved by holding village level seminars and discussion in open forums involving officials, bankers, PRIs and the people. Without a set of core beliefs, actions and decisions will be haphazard, disjointed and direction-less as the case is now.
- **Quality Business Advice:** SHGs are actually community based business, a new form of enterprise in India, neither cooperative, nor company, nor partnership. In this connection, business advisory skill is critical because success of self-employment programmes depends upon the availability of good quality business advice. In this connection, good NGOs may be invited to upgrade the skills of the members of SHG.
- **Information dissemination strategy:** Because of the lack of awareness, several families are not able to get the benefits under various schemes and programmes which

are meant for them. It is also suggested that various community based organizations like SHGs, Mahila Mandal, youth club and other stakeholders should be involved in dissemination of information. Each ward member should be given responsibility to disseminate information about the programmes.

- **NGO involvement:** There is a need of active involvement of NGO because they play an important role in awareness building imparting training to grassroots functionaries, initiating social mobilization process etc. which will help in strengthening the successful implementation of centrally sponsored rural development programmes at the village level.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** There is a need of proper monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. Every programme is launched with specific objectives and therefore should be evaluated regularly to ascertain whether the results are being achieved by the said programmes or not.
- **Pressure Groups:** The beneficiaries should be organized in order to enable them to act as a pressure groups for protecting their interests against any harassment or exploitations by various implementing agencies.

I hope the above mentioned inputs may be helpful to Shri Suraj Kumar for designing his programme on integrating planning, implementation and monitoring at the district level.

---

#### **R.R Prasad, NIRD, Hyderabad**

The Planning Commission website gives the guidelines of district planning which addresses all the points raised in the query (Ramachandran Committee report). The Ministry of Panchayat Raj along with NIC has developed a soft ware for integration of plans at village, block and district level- Plan Plus is the software. Byrraju Foundation of Hyderabad has also come out with grass root visioning guideline which will also be of some help.

---

#### **Leena and Amitabh Singh, Debate, Bhopal**

Decentralized District Planning has been a dream for us for a very long period. Last year we worked with State of Chhattisgarh and State of Madhya Pradesh and helped States in framing guidelines for decentralized district planning - a process of planning that helps:

- institutions of self governance to plan at habitation level
- second step of the process was to assist Block, districts and other line departments working at district level to integrate the plans prepared by local institutions
- the third step has been to work with line departments to work out resource base at least development block and urban institution wise so that departments are in a position to respond to the plan of the local bodies at grassroots level

Incidentally we got opportunity to work with few districts in to prepare district plan on the same guideline. We followed following process

1. Constitutions of thematic groups on sectoral lines (these sectors are part of guideline): because the guidelines say that planning can only be done at the level of sectors like health, education, and livelihood. The implementation part can be handled best by the departments
2. assisting these sectoral teams to prepare their status and strategy papers
3. finalising vision for each sector based on the assessment of performance and possibility of availability of resources in future
4. sharing vision with block level Panchayat, Gram Panchayat and urban institution level
5. assisting these local institutions in preparing their plan for each sector
6. working out cost implication for each activity identified

7. Integrating these activities and budget
8. sharing these activities and budget with line departments through their sectoral teams
9. asking line departments to respond to each of the activity and also look into the budget demand
10. consolidate the demands coming out of local planning and reading it with sector status and district vision

Some steps were of great help such as data set of departments where it had been organised institution wise e.g. SSA, Vital Statistics, BPL, landholding and financial figure of allocation and utilization - institution wise e.g. NREGS, IAY, SSP, OAP and other such schemes

We had great difficulty in areas where data was not organized institution wise. The difficult sectors have been energy, nutrition and infrastructure. At present we are working on response plan and in some cases it is very difficult to prepare a proper response in areas where departments have no budget GP wise. In some cases difficulty has been to work out a detailed strategy of support because there has not been proper guideline from state headquarter of the concerned departments.

In some cases departments have mentioned that they have already prepared a detailed plan under their centrally sponsored schemes which has been submitted to their respective directorate. There has been difficulty because the process requires time but we were hard pressed and departments focus on completing activities on time.

We have also felt and experienced that planning for creating physical infrastructure is very easy and in government we have a habit of doing that so we prefer a plan where clear cut activities are coming out where norms for expenditure is fixed by state level and national agencies like PWD or CPWD.

From my experiences we feel following learnings are important: State level agencies and departments will have to own the guidelines and circulars, process of parallel planning has to be integrated with overall district planning, a clear-cut guideline from centre should be issued that even if departmental budget is in non-plan they will have to participate in district planning process (in many districts departments are still asking why they need to participate in the planning when they do not have any funds in plan section, impact indicators for each sector need to be developed so that impact of intervention and investment is measured against MDGs, Inter-departmental coordination and convergence is important in areas like water management, agriculture development, wage employment and management of other natural resources, we need to understand how this planning will tackle the issue of ego of officers. In addition the following are important learnings:

- Role of agencies supporting to the planning needs to be specified by state so that they work to achieve the goal and not deliver to the ego and satisfaction of officers
- The time frame is important and realistic assessment of the cost of planning is important
- The treasury in both the states have made allocation and expenditure figures Public and this data must be used at the same time the presentation of data on net can be made more user friendly (PDF format restricts use)
- Office of DPO needs to be strengthened so that they have data and capacity to coordinate. At present they are hard pressed and our experience tells us that merely putting one or two persons are not going to solve the problem, In fact State needs to look in to the issue of manpower required for planning at district and block level
- Urban planning is in complete disarray because there is no data on health, education, nutrition etc.

- The planning department and finance department at State level will have to work together to initiate such a process
- First consultation and agreement needs to be developed at state level
- The thematic sector needs to be constituted at planning board or planning commission of the state level
- Similar pattern can be followed at district level
- The decentralized planning should not be given a name like NREGS or BRGF or NRHM. Rather these programmes can request to planning department and DPC to prepare a decentralized plan for them
- Involvement of technical agencies can be done if state and district both are willing and have some space for such institutions
- The tight time line will complete the task but defeat the overall purpose
- Involvement of local representatives is crucial and a balance between elected members and government officers can be maintained. Things should not be left only on bureaucracy of district

We feel that the process of initiating decentralized district planning requires change in institutional set-up at state and district level. National level institutions need to recognize that there are Panchayats and Municipalities and they have been constituted to implement the constitution. The process of planning requires budgetary support from state budget. Planning will fail to deliver proper results if issues of responding to local plan and developing a proper strategy for implementation are not worked out. If decentralised planning is treated as a task of a particular project then it would be better not to start such a process. There is a need to develop a match between state targets and district and block targets. Difference in two will ensure defeat of the district specific tasks. We have been struggling to get need assessment and plan on soft issues like health awareness, improving the quality of education, improving the health care system but the current stage of decentralized planning has restricted itself to the goal of construction in each sector. Some demand for vocational training has come and some other issues have also been highlighted. We must accept that we have not been able to quantify the need of the community on issues where for which there is hardly any scheme. Qualitative perceptions have been largely left out due to our own inability to quantify them. Large scale training of employees of line departments is required and we feel that the issue needs to be understood properly. No one is going to believe in decentralized planning where role of institutions remains the same as it was before 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment. We have tried to answer the query but still lot need to be answered. We have just initiated district planning in Sehore with our own limited funds and resources. If anyone willing to work as volunteer he or she is most welcome. Experts and resource organization can also assist.

---

**Latha Bhaskar, Kerala**

This is a very fruitful discussion. The ideas expressed by Mr.Raj Ganguly and Ms. Manju Panwar are very comprehensive and concrete. The idea of sectoral allocations considering the significance and priority of each sector, analyzing the data thoroughly by the expert committees, will be helpful , Local plans with local priorities need to be worked out within the broad sectoral allocations , which again need to be flexible to accommodate established exemptions. Grama sabhas are most often, ritualistic, and panchayth authorities don't have any sincere wish to utilize this forum, other than fulfilling the obligatory functions. To strengthen this further, SHGS , NGOs and other active forums need to be linked supported with capacity building and sufficient publicity campaigns. Once local priorities of actions are fixed, it should be tuned and integrated with district, state and national priorities and vision. Specific target/ milestones etc.(MDG goals etc ) should be set which should be monitored for achievements. Officers need capacity development to facilitate these, but local experts /resources available should be utilised to supplement this.

So bottom up planning within the broad frame work of centralised targets supported by good institutional linkages will be helpful to win the goal of effective planning and implementation for true development.

---

**Alok Srivastava, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal**

This is an extremely relevant issue insofar as putting district planning on a firm footing at the ground level is concerned. Mere planning will not mean a big practical role in the development scenario of the district and it will have great impact only if it is combined with implementation and monitoring. I would like to point towards some important elements that could be put in place to make the entire scheme of planning, implementation and monitoring relevant. Let me also say that while planning and implementation are given enough attention in the field, monitoring at best remains a laggard. A reason could be the absence of an independent agency to engage in monitoring.

1. Lack of a proper institutional setup for the three roles: While there is the DPC to take care of these roles (to an extent) the institution needs a permanent structure and the capability to engage experts and consultants, and also take on board independent organizations and NGOs to help in monitoring (including concurrent monitoring).
2. Absence of a clear, practical and effective framework and tools of monitoring: There is an urgent requirement for monitoring framework and tools. The DPC needs to be empowered to spend a small portion of the funds that it plans for in monitoring. even though there doesn't seem to be any bar to carrying out this role, the lack of a framework and enabling set of provisions, plus a strong articulation of the need for monitoring remains absent.
3. Lack of awareness about district planning: While the government at the highest level is pushing for district planning its acceptance is quite weak. The main reason is that the ultimate beneficiaries - the people - are not clear about planning needs and how it can happen in real life. It also appears to a large section as an idea - somewhat esoteric - mostly academic. The government and planning bodies have to carry out an awareness drive. This will help bring all the stakeholders at a common plane and also help everyone understand district planning as it should be understood.

There are many other issues but unless we deal with some very basic issues in the beginning, the concepts of district planning and monitoring will be like the elephant being interpreted by the six blind men.

---

**D.C. Misra, National Informatics Centre (NIC), New Delhi**

I would like to update all concerned that Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has taken an eGovernance initiative **to strengthen grass-root participatory planning exercise by RLBs & ULBs.**

**Framework Details:**

In collaboration with NIC, An application software solution framework to assist Planning i.e. PlanPlus has been prepared. It is web based, multilingual, Open Source, RTI-enabled solution and assist demand-based planning rather than Scheme-driven. The framework draws strength from decentralised Planning guidelines issued by Planning Commission and offers adequate flexibility to states to incorporate local variations in state Planning guidelines (if any).

PlanPlus has an interface with GIS(Village and Village Panchayat Boundaries with overlay of

census-2000 datasets) for BRGF districts and technical possibility exist for plugging-in other datasets such as surveys, DISNIC-Plan data useful for planning. The product could also be used by line departments to plan for non-devolved functions. It can generate ULB/RLB Plan annual report, perspective plan, district Plan and State Plan.

#### **Implementation progress:-**

The prototype was tested in a few RLBs/ULBs of Birbhum(WB), Dhamtari (Chattisgarh), Gulbarga (Karnataka) and Palakkad (Kerala) and demonstrated to members of Planning Commission and senior officials of MoPR. The same has been also demonstrated in various C-DAP (Comprehensive Development of Agriculture Plan) conferences and feedback received is incorporated. Technical Support Institutions (TSIs) identified in BRGF programme to support preparation of local body plans and district plans have also been provided exposure of the same. MoPR has launched the product in national workshop in March for BRGF districts. The national workshop was attended by various departments from BRGF states. State level workshops are being held at the moment to train district level representatives from ZP, DPC, Municipality, DPROs.

#### **Contact:**

The package could be accessed at <http://panchayat.gov.in/planplus>. The password to access it has been shared with state PR department during the national workshop and interested stakeholders (district authorities, TSIs etc) could contact them or me.

---

#### **Ajay Singh Gangwar, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal**

Decentralization of planning and execution at the level of district is required to get optimum result of money which is borne by tax payers of our country. In my opinion every district must have one key focal person and his team who will be responsible to chalk out plan after discussion with local leaders and be also responsible to implement it at village level. Now Dy. Development Commissioners or Chief Executive Officers of Zilla Panchayat are doing this job at district level. But these officers have not proved themselves in bringing positive changes in rural sectors. So government must hire services of professional people from esteemed institutions as C.E.O. / Dy. Development Commissioners on contract basis for a minimum of three years and give them salary as in corporate sector. There is no dearth of tools and designs but there is lack of competency and commitment among government employees. Too much politicization of government servants and a sense of job security are main causes of laxity of government machinery. The hiked salary which government gives hired professional people will definitely be a fraction of money which is siphoned every year by corrupt government officials.

---

#### **A.J James, Pragmatix Research and Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd., Gurgaon**

It is true that an integrated approach is urgently needed for the M&E of water supply and sanitation projects. Tested tools and methodologies are available to do this – but they need to be institutionalized within existing district and programme-level frameworks and structures. A few examples are given below.

1. A district-level planning framework for water supply, integrating community-based approaches and GIS-based planning, was developed by the DFID-supported Water Households and Rural Livelihoods (WHiRL) project in Anantapur Andhra Pradesh (2001 – 2005). Details of this project, including papers and other research output, are available at <http://www.nri.org/projects/WSS-IWRM/>
2. In addition, a participatory M&E tool called Quantified Participatory Assessment (QPA), focusing on community-level qualitative information, has been developed jointly by IRC Water and Sanitation Centre, Delft, and Pragmatix Research &

Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd., Gurgaon, and used to assess various projects in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Vietnam (see attached [paper](#) on QPA).

3. The Qualitative Information Appraisal (QIA) tool adds to these community-level assessment findings, district-level multi-stakeholder meetings where findings are discussed and a future action plan formulated (see attached [paper](#) on QIA). This has been used, for instance, in the independent evaluation of the GOI-Unicef Child's Environment Programme (1999 – 2004), and the third-part review of ADB-supported water supply projects in Sri Lanka and Vietnam.
4. Periodic repetitions of the QIA, with information stored on a simple-to-use MS ACCESS database, tools for community-level information dissemination, and integration with other kinds of qualitative information comprises the Qualitative Information System or QIS (see attached [presentation](#) on QIS). Such quantified qualitative data can also be integrated with other types of project or programme-level quantitative information (e.g., MIS, GIS).

The big question is simple, as usual, and can be posed in terms of well-known clichés: who 'will bell the cat' and 'start the ball rolling' to set up and run effective systems on the ground?!

---

#### **[S.T Chandrasekhar Babu](#), MFTOT ADBI, Secunderabad**

Integrating, implementing and monitoring at district level is a complex task and it requires constant progress monitoring.

In Andhra Pradesh we have DISTRICT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES (DCC) presided by district heads, District Collectors and coordinated by Lead district Manager. In DCC all Banks operating in the district are members apart from heads of district departments like, ITDA (integrated tribal development authority), Child welfare, water management, irrigation, SGSY, DIC, Sc corporation, housing corporation etc. Every year the district annual credit plan will be launched by the lead bank in March. The size of the plan will be decided by the DCC and the state level bankers committee (SLBC) well in advance in February.

The individual district departments will give their yearly plans later duly approved by their departmental heads at State level and normally this happens somewhere in July/August and then these plans have to be approved in DCC and allocated to bank wise and branch wise. The DCC meetings normally take place quarterly and this process of bank wise/branch wise allocations take place somewhere in Oct and to implement them, there is hardly six months left and in case these schemes are to be grounded by banks, only 5 months left as bankers are busy with their annual closing from February onwards.

As a result of this percentage of schemes finally grounded are only to the extent of 40% on an average. To overcome this problem, when I was lead district Manager in Adilabad district, we have finalized district -departmental plans, tentatively in February itself subject the approval by the concerned heads at State level and incorporated them in District annual credit plan and launched in March, itself and that year we achieved 100% in both bankers credit plan district departmental plans.

#### **System of monitoring**

##### *Monthly JMLBC Meetings*

In every district we have Mandal wise review committees (Joint Mandal Level Bankers Committee--JMLBC) headed by lead district manager and all departmental heads of the district

are members and ought to attend all JMLBC monthly meetings. And Project director DRDA is also a member of JMLBC.

#### *Quarterly District Consultative Committees*

As earlier mentioned all participating bankers and the district departmental heads are members .The District head Collector(in AP) reviews the branch wise, bank wise credit plan(crop loans, term loans etc) and each departmental schemes implementation and progress vis-à-vis scheduled in the plan.

Upto 2001, each department's schemes were to be reviewed department wise. In 2002, it was proposed to bring all the departmental schemes under one umbrella what is known as convergence and brought under Project Director DRDA. However as the PD/DRDA is already holding SGSY and some other schemes, we felt that is better to be monitored by the concerned departmental heads who are in turn accountable to the district head i.e. Collector.

This is the methods for Integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at District Level in vogue in Andhra Pradesh

---

#### **Ashok Kumar Paikaray, Mahavir Yubak Sangh, Bhubaneswar**

I fully agree with Alok Srivastava. The structure of DPC is a stop gap arrangement .It should be empowered; functional, equipped with experts and involvement of NGO must be there. Implementation and monitoring are vital in proper planning. While discussing about monitoring it may be internal or external is in question.

---

#### **Aruna Sharma, National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi**

It is really interesting to read about the efforts being made by various sectors to bring in convergence and to bring in effective execution for quality outcomes and sustainable growth pattern. We have success stories of resource convergence model and ICT tool gramDRISHTI (IIT Bombay) by Dairy Federation in MP, linking of water bodies in Jalagoan and agriculture plan in Akola to list few.

The need is to adopt the mindset to plan for activities rather than the schemes. NRHM, NREGA have listed the same in the document.

---

#### **Jasveen Jairath, SaciWaters, Hyderabad (response 2)**

All these ideas - details, institutional structures etc have been known to us for a many years by now. The issue is why have they not worked? Why do all beautifully designed pro-poor programs of the government flounder at grass roots? What is the basic opposition to decentralization ?If effective decentralization - **as power to take decisions** - is a threat to local political vested interest - then that is what we have to seek to neutralize. Political mobilization of community for understanding governance of these programs as political challenge needs to be at the core of such strategies. Merely bureaucratic or managerial or institutional changes will not ensure their actual implementation. I agree with James -who will bell the cat. Is it due to lack of knowledge - expertise - capacity - resources etc etc? Or is it due to the same fundamental bottleneck that is obstructing even such a bold program as NREGS & RTI? Is it the political counters to such initiatives that defeat them or is the problem one of simply management or bureaucratic administration?

---

#### **Junaid Ahmed Usmani, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi**

I work as a Consultant (Monitoring and Evaluation) with the Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) was launched in 1999. It seeks to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with the broader goal to eradicate the practice of open defecation. Currently, it is under implementation in 587 districts, spanning 30 States and UTs. Total outlay of the programme is Rs.13,837.79 crore and it aims to build 11.88 crore individual household latrines, 11.77 lakh school toilets, 4.23 lakh Anganwadi toilets, 27,562 sanitary complexes, 4,275 RSMs/PCs.

Upto 1998-99, the Department monitored the progress of implementation of TSC in the various districts, manually. This method was time consuming and heavily reliant on the person dealing with data. These bottlenecks have been ironed out by the use of a computer based information system. For Successful implementation of any programme, robust monitoring system was required. Therefore, WEB based technology enables easy data access and retrieval from any location on the globe, over the Internet. The online monitoring system has been developed with these goals. The Department's web-site [www.ddws.nic.in](http://www.ddws.nic.in) is accessible to all users providing ready information on various aspects of Sanitation Programme. In this online monitoring system data are entered at district level. Reports on various aspects can be generated at District, State Level and Centre level. The online monitoring systems have increased the transparency in the implementation of Total Sanitation Campaign. One can look district-wise and state-wise report on web site. This system also increased the efficiency of the programme.

---

**Amit Agrawal, Government of India, New Delhi**

I would like to make a few points regarding practical choices to give effect to the proposed intervention and follow up with outlining how the outcome budget methodology can be utilized to help achieve this goal.

Suraj's query deals with 'a common set of tools or methodologies for upward integration of local plans to the district level, collaborative implementation of large programmes and their M&E'. It specifically mentions 'areas of employment, health, education and nutrition'. Since budgets exist at the Central and State levels, any district level planning methodology will have to leverage one or the other (or both).

At the State level, only some States like Kerala have well established frames for district / decentralised planning. Any intervention leveraging State resources will necessarily get limited to a few States.

At the Central level, a few large programmes in the relevant areas will have to be leveraged. The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) in 250 backward districts (approximately 40% of the country) provides the most comprehensive programme vehicle for an effective intervention in decentralised district level planning. In addition, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Sarva Shiksha Programme (SSA) and Jawaharlal National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) provide for decentralised local to district level integrated planning.

Therefore, I would suggest that the intervention could be tried out in select BRGF district and leverage the planning exercises already being followed under BRGF, NREGA, NRHM, SSA and JNNURM (besides any other existing large central / state social sector programmes already having a decentralised planning approach).

This could be enriched by the approach adopted in formulating outcome budgets in the Government of India, after meaningfully adapting it to the district and local body levels. The aim of this is to establish clear one-to-one relationships between the Financial Budget and the Outcome Budget to address the problem of inadequate and non-transparent target-settings in physical terms. This helps by bringing outcome transparency and accountability, and facilitates

aggregation of resources and targets vertically and horizontally, across tiers, schemes and departments. The idea is to track not just the intermediate physical 'outputs' that are more readily measurable, but the 'outcomes', which are the end objectives of State intervention. Sub-targets for coverage of weaker sections of society may also be encouraged, without making them mandatory. The aim is to convert 'outlays' into 'outcomes', and address 'value for money' concerns, while admitting possibilities for varying approaches and modalities that may differ from time to time. Preparation of outcome budgets is an evolving and dynamic process requires detailed scrutiny and examination on periodic basis, with value addition based on earlier experience.

Some of the important steps in this process are as follows:

- a) Defining intermediate and final outcomes specifically in measurable and monitorable terms;
- b) Standardizing unit cost of delivery;
- c) Benchmarking the standards/quality of outcomes and services;
- d) Capacity building for requisite efficiency at all levels, in terms of equipment, technology, knowledge and skills;
- e) Ensuring adequate flow of funds at the appropriate time to the appropriate level, avoiding both delay and 'parking' of funds;
- f) Setting up effective monitoring and evaluation systems, to indicate the direction for further calibration and honing of processes to deliver the intended outcomes;
- g) Involving the community / target groups / recipients of the service, with easy access and feedback systems;
- h) The 'final outcome' need not necessarily be co-terminus with the annual outlays and 'intermediate physical outputs'.

'Final outcomes' may span a longer timeframe than the annual final outlays and corresponding intermediate outputs. Wherever the 'final outcomes' are estimated to take longer than one year, the estimated timeframe should be clearly indicated. In case the gestation is four to five years or longer, the 'partial outcomes' need to be tracked on an annual basis to ensure that the 'final outcomes' once indicated as achievable after five years are not forgotten or mechanically repeated in the document from one year to the other, and that the progress made towards achieving the final goal is reflected. Information should be provided whether the project is in the 'initial' stage, 'intermediate' stage or 'final' stage. Wherever 'physical outputs' are in a sense the 'final outcomes', assessment of 'quality of output' through 'appropriate indicators of quality' should be brought out. Wherever 'final outcomes' are not the direct results of the annual outlays and are the cumulative effect of past several years' outlays, this should be clearly explained. The 'final outcome' component of the Outcome Budget need not necessarily have yearly targets, as final outcomes will vary by Programme. 'Final outcome' wherever possible, can be measured in a five-year timeframe, in line with the Five-Year plans. 'Partial outcome' may be mentioned in these cases in the Outcome Budget of that year. Where the 'final outcomes' are not measurable and quantifiable, the likely benefits that will accrue may be incorporated.

To make this possible, it would be necessary to put in place, wherever not already there, systems of data collection, with the help of special agencies wherever necessary, for the purpose of (i) developing measurable "indices of performance" to measure and assess quality of implementation; (ii) developing norms of standard unit cost of delivery of a service; (iii) quantification/factoring in of environmental outcomes; (iv) quantification of community and empowerment outcomes through social capital formation; and (v) quantification of impact of funds earmarked for publicity/awareness generation. It should also be possible to engage independent evaluators and assessment agencies for scrutiny / evaluation of the achievements

against physical outputs and final outcomes of major flagship schemes. Due care may be taken to avoid duplication of efforts with evaluation studies already being conducted.

---

**Ashok Malhotra, UNDP, New Delhi**

Following establishment of legal framework (73rd and 74th CAs), there is a broad consensus that it allows:

- Greater balancing of spatial, national, state and local priorities;
- More information to flow from the local to state levels; and
- National rural-urban priorities to be grounded in local reality.

Ideally, the Municipality and Panchayat are to:

- Prepare development plans, which are reviewed by District Planning Committee consisting of locally elected representatives;
- This Committee is to consolidate the plans, and prepare a Draft Development Plan for the district as a whole
- Draft development plan is to be prepared with respect to matters of common interest such as spatial planning, sharing of physical and natural resources, and integrating development of infrastructure and environmental conservation;
- This plan is then to be forwarded to the State Government for approval

Many of the projects supported by UNDP in the past over ten years both within and outside India have successfully addressed the above issues with considerable success given the timeframe of the projects.

Under project supported by GIS in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology, GIS-Based Local Level Planning and decision support tools were developed to facilitate management, monitoring and evaluation of centrally and state sponsored schemes. Through GIS-based system for local level planning with spatial data management tools, it was possible to address sectoral issues and prepare district level plan (located in Bankura District Collector's office). At the same time, the applicability of these tools in the application themes like water resources management (CAZRI, Jodhpur), land use planning, energy management and infrastructure development was successfully demonstrated and officials assisted by the project teams were fully trained in their use.

Sectoral decision support software modules were developed in the identified sectors of water resources management, land use planning, energy management and infrastructure development to strengthen the capacity of working on databases, to retrieve the relevant data sets, analyse and provide information useful for local level planning.

While the land and water modules supported data processing to generate information on watershed boundaries in a district, watershed-wise surface water availability, crop productivity, biomass yield, and soil erosion status, the Energy Module helped assess the energy demand and supply situations and identify deficit areas in a district/block requiring extra supply of energy. The Infrastructure Module provided tools for locating facilities like health centres, schools, fair price shops and allocating them optimally among villages/settlements depending on the facilities' capacity.

Along with the above tools useful for assessing the local natural and social resource endowment and spread of facilities, pilot studies were undertaken to examine the socio-economic situation of a district vis-à-vis the next higher planning unit – the state. The integrated database for the

district was utilized to estimate indicators like migration, literacy (including gender gap), work force (including gender gap), agriculture, industry, employment, access to amenities like drinking water, electricity and health services which were compared with the corresponding indicators for the State for drawing up area-specific development strategies. Estimates of the HDI of the district and the State were made by combining life expectancy, adult literacy, enrolment ratio and real GDP Per Capita for use in local level planning.

With the above technological tools and resource databases available at the districts, and the institutions of local self governance in place, it was expected at the end of the project that the process of local level planning will be more scientific and would take into account the local resources, and the locally felt needs of the people while drawing up area development strategies. Based on upgradation of the methodology and tools, the national level programmes and various user departments and ministries were expected to build up the desired spatial data management capabilities into their activities.

It is considered important to mention that absence of DPCs has been recognized as a constraint in most of the discussions under projects and programmes supported in the past. There has been a broad consensus that a DPC type entity (District Team for Planning – DTP) may be highly recommended and may be set up to demonstrate the usefulness of the role of DPC as well as to address the need for suitable planning and coordination mechanism.

On the issue of District level SWOT analysis, it is important to mention that the focus of such analysis needs to be more on economic opportunities not only at the district level but at the Regional and State levels. The focus thus far has been more on the social development issues where economic opportunities that exist at the regional/state level have often been ignored in the district level SWOT analysis.

---

**[Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan](#), WaterAid India, Bhopal**

In large scale programmes, participatory monitoring works out the best. In our large scale projects in WaterAid India, we train a team of staff on Participatory Monitoring tools (village mapping, health walk, focus group discussion, BLS) and they visit villages selected on a sample. It is ensured that every panchayat gets covered or % of panchayats in the block. As the team comes from different NGOs there is good transparency and learning. The computer based information system done under TSC is good as an MIS but not as a monitoring tool for one cannot verify the data that has been given to and there will be instances of false reporting. In Participatory monitoring false reporting can also be tracked. I am attaching the [PME booklet](#) (PDF; Size: 138 KB) we used as a guideline.

---

**[Nishant Bhaskarr](#), Tata Consultancy Services & Aptivate IT International Development, London**

Though I understand the query asks for 'how' of district level integrated planning and monitoring, I would like to give a little more prescriptive 'what' of that planning and monitoring framework.

Based on my experience in large scale IT and public programmes implementation in UK, I would say integration of plans, though a participative process should be governed by a set of principles. Regardless of notion of decentralized planning, I guess the approach towards that planning should be perspective. Here's snapshot of an overall approach for delivery and nine key issues that I ask of various project managers.

1. Accountability and leadership: who is programme sponsor? Say in public context this would mean who is accountable at ministerial and at official level

2. Project Management: On day to day level how will the work be managed and by whom? What is chain for decision making? Who are the key people on that chain and do they have right skill to deliver what is being asked of them?
3. Levers for change: what levers of change are available (eg. Data, inspection, audit or benchmarking)? How will people investment be handled (training and professional development)? How will change agents be recognised? What are carrots and sticks for rewarding success and failure?
4. Feedback and Communication: How will feedback be sought on day to day basis, both from staff and from the end-users? How will this feedback be used to refine policy development and development? How will key messages about programme be communicated to staff and end-users?
5. Time table for implementation: What is the time table? What are the key milestones?
6. Risks and Constraints: What risks and constraints might throw the work off course? How will they be managed?
7. Interdepartmental Collaboration: How will other departments and interdepartmental mechanisms (eg. Central, district groups or cabinet committee) be involved? Are there particular handling issues?
8. Resources: What resources, both manpower and financial, are available?
9. Benchmarking: What benchmarks should be set in place within a service or with other services and sectors, or equivalent overseas?

Hope this helps.

---

**Rajesh Kapoor, Cohesion Foundation Trust, Ahmedabad**

My organization has ground level experience in Integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at Village/Block/District Level. We have worked very closely with PRIs, other CBOs, different Public Sector Organizations and other Civil Society Organizations in this regard. We have standardized to some extent the process for ourselves (see [attached file](#); PDF; Size: 51 KB). This may be of some help.

Regarding bottlenecks, the major hurdle has been the internalization of the process and outcomes of such endeavors by different levels in Government departments. While leadership has generally been pro-active and sensitive, the sensitization at other levels either is generally not attempted at all or not accomplished successfully. The change in mindset is needed as the processes and way of working have to be different from what has been done for the last six decades. I understand that this takes time but most of us involved at facilitation level give little attention to sensitization aspect. I have seen frustrations not only at the faces of community and facilitating agencies but also at leadership level in government departments when the existing processes hamper proper application of these plans into practice.

There is also a need to prepare annual status paper by the concerned agencies on the status related to integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at Block/District Level. This may lead not only to better integration but also avoid queries under RTI too.

---

**Toms K. Thomas, Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Thrissur**

The issues that Suraj has raised are very important. The upward integration issue discussed is some thing which is of my interest and is very important. Unfortunately in planning and governance in spite of the legislative back up the integration is not very much functional. The constitutional amendment in fact was aimed at this. Not only the vertical integration, the horizontal integration that is with various planning and governance compartments with in the district is very important, which also is not adequately strong. There is also a need to ensure

practical local level peoples participation instead of just high intellectual participation. This requires probably even a rearrangement of the membership of DPC which in turn could ensure the best form of people participation and in particular the participation of the marginalized.

To me DPC should include representatives from

- Technical Institutions that are relevant to the district / regions development
- Community Representatives
- Local Experts who have rich insights related to the potential development path of the district.

DPC should act like a lead initiator of a comprehensive development plan and the supportive departments should plan out various programs in consultation with the community to mobilize ideas on strategic development. Every institution should be taken on board to make sure larger inclusion of the development actors. It should not also be a political forum but should be an autonomous authority.

To make the district planning exercise more effective and integrated require making the public institutions accessible to the public (Clients) in real sense and needs more representation of the community in the committee. DPC should identify local technical experts within the district and should include them in the DPC as technical consultants. Not only the so called departmental technical experts. I feel that the local experts like reputed agriculturists, doctors, veterinarians in the district should be included in the district planning committee who has an interest in the overall development of the district. From the status of a high level committee it should be made more participatory and people friendly committee. Innovative mechanisms to ensure public participation are very important. Adopting some of the private sector strategies for client inclusion might be of important to make these committees more responsive to the needs of the local area. DPC could also organize various technical sessions at the local level that is at the Panchayat level and help in deriving a practical local level development plan at the Panchayat level which could be later integrated with the district / region. .

Some thing which may be controversial is the role of DPC in the national state level macro planning. I also seriously doubt their relevance now beyond just an implementer of central schemes. The district planning boards should be innovative and dynamic which means require enterprising leadership with innovative mind.

Is the District Planning really relevant today? Probably it was in 1992. I doubt its relevance today. Moreover, we should also look in to alternative composition of the committees to make it more entrepreneurial. Are the district collectors a default competent authority to be the point persons for DPC (as a secretary) though they could do a lot in monitoring of the plan? There is often a default thinking among the public development planners that collectors can handle everything efficiently at the district and at the regional level. May be true in some cases but not in all the cases. Enterprising collectors could take a step further and can make the DPCs more vibrant and enterprising. More technical and grass root experienced people should be brought in to the forums like DPC which would make it more of a people friendly technical institutions. On the lines of NRHM there is probably a need to integrate various departments that are functioning in a district in the development. A single window system for approaching the development departments is advisable to make them more efficient and accessible to the public.

The inter district development dynamics are much more important today because of the changes in the overall development trend nationally and globally. So a regional development approach is some thing which is more relevant today than just looking at the district level. Regional development boards should be headed by a technical person who has practical expertise in grass root development rather than a mere administrative specialist. Even at the local level a regional

Panchayat is some thing probably relevant to consolidate the potentials with in the region. Consolidating of the local competencies could be better done through a regionalize approach to the local development institutions like Panchayat. Common development policies like various local taxation and other initiatives could be done more effectively if there is a regionalized approach to local governance and development planning. Integration should happen more at the various levels horizontally which would facilitate representation of various departments and organizations at the local level in the development process of the district and the region.

---

### **S.C Jain, Action for Food Production (AFPRO), New Delhi**

I work with Action for Food Production (AFPRO) which is working as Technical Support Institution to facilitate decentralised District Level Planning under BRGF by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj and CADP (Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme) from the initiatives of Planning Commission. I would like to contribute in the discussion based on experiences of facilitation of planning exercise and consolidation of GP level plans at Block and District.

The members have already made the reference of BRGF as vehicle for convergence. It provides an opportunity to carry out effective planning in accordance to the provisions under 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitution amendment for strengthening the decentralised functioning of local institutions. The planning exercise under BRGF is designed as per the recombination of expert group headed by Shri V. Ramachandran which has come out with a report on "Planning at the grassroots level – An action programme for the Eleventh Five Year Plan". This approach is adopted with the purpose to bring convergence in programme planning, execution, monitoring and review at district level. It provides scope to develop response plan at district level based on the emerging needs from GP and ULB by allocating the resources from provision available under the various flagship programmes and other schemes supported by Government of India. BRGF is the untied fund which can be allocated if there is any shortfall in the other sectors requirement from the available provision. Hence this is an excellent opportunity to facilitate the planning from below. But at the same time, there is need to know reasons for slow progress which would help in taking up appropriate measures.

We have been allocated eighteen districts from twelve states to facilitate district level planning exercise under BRGF. Ten districts from eight states have responded favorably to initiate the process of planning by accepting the need of external facilitating agency to provide time to time technical support as well as capacity building input at different level in the district. The sequence of activities carried out as part of facilitation of planning exercise are listed below to elaborate on methodology adopted for participatory planning and steps required for the convergence of resources.

1. **Visioning Exercise:** This exercise has been carried out along with district level functionaries that include head of the line departments and members from district planning committee. During this exercise discussion was held on the gaps and opportunities available for the growth in different sectors. The emphasis was always on socio-economic well-being of community through requirement of technical and capacity building interventions. The assessment of available potential of natural resource development has been given the importance during the visioning exercise. As an outcome of this exercise District Vision document is prepared which contains sector wise analysis of problems and potential available. The specific goals are set which indicates the direction for growth.
2. **Constitution of Technical Support Group at district level:** The purpose of forming this group is to provide necessary technical input during the process of planning at the village level and contribute in the consolidation of district plan.

3. **Orientation of District & Block Functionaries including non-officials:** The capacity building events are conducted in the district for explaining the importance of evolving plan from villages and their role & responsibility in it.
4. **Constitution of Block Level Team to facilitate planning exercise at Block Level:** This is a multidisciplinary team constituted with the purpose to provide backup support during the village level planning exercise and consolidating the plans at Block level.
5. **Orientation of Village Level Functionary:** In this group the Gram Sevak, Village level extension worker, active member from the GP, ICDS worker and Teachers were involved. During the event importance of decentralised planning, steps for conducting planning and roles & responsibility of members were explained. Proper orientation of this group and inclusion in the planning exercise is very crucial as these functionaries are working in close association with community and familiar to local situation.
6. **Organizing Training on micro planning exercise for the block level teams:** This exercise was conducted in the villages to demonstrate participatory methods of planning. During the exercise issue based discussions and demonstration of participatory tools were the main activities. These exercises helped in need assessment and prioritization. After the demonstration of micro planning exercise, village level functionaries and block level teams conducted the planning exercise and discuss the identified needs in gram sabha.
7. **Baseline survey formats** has been developed as part of BRGF planning exercise to collect relevant data set from each village.
8. Once the baseline survey data are collected and village level plans are prepared, one can adopt Plan Plus (Software) which has been referred by D C Mishra from NIC for consolidation. We could not get success in using the Plan Plus due to problem associated with its accessibility at districts in which we are involved. Our team is consolidating plans by adopting standard set of templates in consultation with block level functionaries and members of technical support group.

The above steps has been explained with the purpose to indicate the requirement of institutional arrangement and capacity building input at different level for facilitating the planning exercise. The experiences supports the view that active participation of district and block level functionaries play an important role in taking forward the process and ensures its timely completion.

---

**[Chandan Sinha](#), Government of West Bengal, Kolkata**

I would like to share a note written by me entitled 'Convergence in Planning for Targeting Development Investment'.

Two questions confront us when faced with the challenge of convergence in district planning: what is the convergence for; and, how or with what may convergence in district planning may be accomplished. This note proceeds on the premise that; a) convergence in district planning is for meeting the unmet needs of, first, the neediest and, then, of the not so needy - primarily in rural areas; and, b) convergence is to be realized by utilizing the available data, information and knowledge to identify the requirements of the people of the district, by using all existing resources – funds, skills, technology, personnel, and agencies, to bridge the needs-gap of the district beginning with the most vulnerable populations.

Yet convergence in planning at the district and sub-district levels is complicated by two competing demands: community participation to identify local needs on the one hand and the advantages of a holistic perspective on the other, between disaggregation and integration. This note examines this aspect of convergence in district level planning by questioning two basic assumptions of decentralized planning and then identifying/offering certain mechanisms for

reconciling the two competing needs. The objective of this note is to emphasize that while a participatory planning process is vital for meeting many of the needs of the community, mechanisms for analysis of public data and accurate information are vital for addressing convergent needs at the micro-regional and district levels in an integrated way. This is true not only for reaching the most vulnerable but also for the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources.

To read the complete note (PDF; Size: 35 KB), please click [here](#).

---

**[H.P Shiva Shankar](#), State Administrative Training Institute, Mysore**

It is high time that every one spares some time to see how our limited resources are being badly managed for either improper planning or lack of Vision. It is also very important that we cannot go parallel working in the field and achieve nothing significant. I share my experience as regards the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) which is a flagship program of the department of Women & Child Development Department through out the country but implemented by the State Governments.

The State's contribution in terms of Supplementary Nutrition Program (Which in fact is bulk expenditure) is subjected to too many manipulations not in terms of "Policy" or any objective purpose but for a different cause. The result is very clear that even after 33 years of its implementation the program has not been able to address a single objective i.e. improving the Nutritional standards of the children between 0-6 Years. Mal nourishment among children is still staggering around 50-54%.

You ask anybody who is implementing this project the reason, the answer is the quality and quantity of SNP is very poor. Supply is highly irregular. Budget is inadequate. The position in the most backward districts like Gulbarga, Bijapur, Bagalkot and Raichur is no different.

Current Plan: The State department fixes the target of beneficiaries vis a vis the budget and allocates as per the plan. It fails to take note of the district specific requirement. All compromises and adjustment are made only for these major programs and there will be budget cuts as usual. The Taluk Panchayaths (2nd Tier in the Decentralized Governance) is a mute spectator. Not in a position to add anything and intervene. Accountability is very weak. Transparency as far as selection of food and management is concerned leaves much to be desired. Result, much boosted messiah of driving malnourishment out is like a mirage.

**Integrated approach:** The state is running many nutrition programmes under different programs. Almost all programs are implemented by the PRI Institutions. These institutions are vested with so much power and the state is in the process of further decentralization of powers. Why not transfer this program to the PRIs with a specific objective of tackling hunger and poverty? Now since this program is managed by the department at the state level with little monitoring process. The involvement of TPs is only to fix food transportation agencies and local food items. Every year this cumbersome process is a very time consuming & litigating issue creating lot of administrative problems. In the middle the very purpose of beating the mal nourishment is totally forgotten. And the program continues for year to come because you cannot close down the Anganwadis!

Now the districts are heading towards integrating their District Plans with the HD Goals. While fixing the targets in consonance with the MDGs, the districts may adopt the goal specific targets to ensure definite progress. ICDS is definitely a major program that contributes very significantly towards reducing IMR, MMR, and Improving Mal nourishment and provide strong foundation for Pre-School.

We cannot afford to run this program so badly. Integration is a must and standardization of delivery mechanism is the priority.

---

**K.Gayithri, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore**

I am attaching a presentation on the [Program Performance Budgeting](#) (PDF; Size: 76 KB) which may be of interest with respect to the topic.

---

**Subhransu Tripathy, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Gandhinagar**

Convergence of Government resources is a big problem because there is a lack of coordination among different government agencies/departments functioning at various levels. Targeted gaps for investment department wise assessment is a necessary condition for finding a solution to convergence planning for resources. Need assessment and prioritization of intervention is very clearly spelt and quite visible. Implementation is a key problem due to institutional failures.

---

**Rajan Katoch, Government of Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi\***

In Madhya Pradesh, with the setting up of new Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies, pursuant to the 74th and 76th Constitutional amendments, wide ranging financial and administrative powers have been delegated to enable these bodies to decentralized decision making. The State Plan includes a component for District Plans wherein district-wise allocations are provided for various plan programmes/ activities to the concerned Departments. The District Plans are prepared after detailed consultations and deliberations with elected public representatives and officials of the concerned Departments. The district team is required to make a detailed presentation before the State Planning Board and justify each component of the district Plan Proposal. Once approved, the allocations are provided, by incorporating the proposals under the District Plan component, in the State Plan and funds are released to districts through annual budget of the State Government.

There exists a fairly decentralized planning process in the State for Central Sector flagship schemes and also for other major schemes. Health and education sectors are examples of decentralized sectoral planning.

Preparation of annual district plan is done following a detailed consultative process involving field officers, experts available within the district, representatives from the State Head-Quarters and officers of the related departments.

While preparing the annual work plan for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, annual targets for enrolment, retention, teacher-pupil ratio, girl child education, mainstreaming of out of school children, availability of school building and infrastructure, etc. are indicated from the State level. In addition, the quantum of funds likely to be available is also indicated to the Districts.

On the basis of the targets indicated from the State level and the data (which are digitised) gathered from detailed annual survey of schools, a core team headed by the district Collector prepares a draft plan. While preparing the draft the officers upto the Development Blocks and School Clusters levels are consulted. Deliberations on the draft Plan take place in the full meeting of the District level SSA committee headed by the Chairman of the Zila Panchayat wherein the representatives of all related departments participate. They comment upon areas concerning them and indicate difficulty, if any, in attaining the expected targets concerning them.

There is invariably a gap between the targets set and actual achievements, including expenditure. The reasons include setting up of ambitious targets, non-availability of capable

Project team at the district level, lack of exposure to the core team - very often they are not well versed/trained in plan making. Frequent changes at the District/State Project Directors takes its toll too.

With increasing focus of the Central and State Governments in the last couple of years on social sectors, there has been a huge increase in allocations of funds to districts. However, the managerial and planning capacity required to handle huge funds have not kept pace with the expansion in the work. The officers/ teachers who had never handled large funds are now required to manage funds running into millions of rupees. Poor remuneration to the personnel deployed in the District/ State Project Offices do not allow deployment of well qualified and trained personnel either in the district team or the State office. Adequate steps are also needed for capacity building of extant officers.

With regard to the monitoring, the data are collected on salient predetermined criteria periodically, periodicity varying from monthly to quarterly and annual. The data captured from field are digitised at district level and invariably put on the relevant website e.g data for the SSA is put on the website of the Rajya Shiksha Kendra. Similar exercise for data capturing and collating takes place in other Departments for their respective schemes. These data need to be used as tools for periodic monitoring, which depends on the officers manning the Districts/ State Projects. With a view to ensure high quality of data and also to assess impact of the programmes, some Departments do carry out sample studies from time to time. Information Communication Tools (ICT) are being used increasingly by most Departments to strengthen the monitoring.

---

**Phil Crook, Singapore\***

My fear is that monitoring and evaluation of implementation will become a huge data collection exercise which occupies too much of people's time for little effect. I think that we are too glib when we use M&E as a term, since the tools for monitoring are not necessarily the same as those for evaluation. Evaluation of outcomes is something you might want to do every few years, perhaps as a special exercise and maybe only on a geographical sample. Monitoring implementation is something you want to do through regular monthly or quarterly reports with indicators which are created as a normal part of the administrative process. So my only suggestion is that the two are separated out and not lumped together as is so often the case.

---

**Anant G. Nadkarni, Tata Council for Community Initiatives\***

Here are some thoughts which occur to my mind:

1. Most programmes generally report financial and physical statistics, some human stories and tangibles. In the Tata group, we have found it useful to also state the following:
  - a. The concern addressed. If there are more concerns, prioritize them.
  - b. We define the rationale to select key communities benefited.
  - c. We try to develop human indicators such as access, empowerment, capacity building, and creation of networks and so on. It is important too that we have a base line study on these and then compare what we have actually achieved / changed against the felt needs and the dependencies we fought. It helps if factors to make the program sustainable are put down. These are some value-add that help measurement.
2. The Tata Index is based on qualitative methodology. There are processes such as Reflection, Convergence, Aggregation and Debate at the end of which certain

quantitative figures are put. The figures against each parameter are a collective decision. This helps both measurement and evaluation tremendously.

Another insight is that of ensuring and encouraging self-evaluation rather than third party evaluation. Third party evaluations happen only if the scores are too low or too high.

It is important to have in place recognition and an event where high performance is celebrated.

---

**Ruturaj Pattanaik, RCDC, Bhubaneswar**

Convergence is required at the lower level to maximize the benefit. As per the 73rd Amendment, funds can also be transferred to block level, district level and Panchayat level to different departments. As the different departments are setting their own budget and disbursing according to their own processes and procedures problem of convergence arises. In this context district level sector planning and block level sectoral planning are also required. As the planning made by the Panchayats is only relating to DRDA fund or to support some social security schemes, planning should include budgetary allocation made by the Department, then only fund flow will be in the right direction providing maximum social advantage for the target people.

---

**Chandreyee Das, INSPIRATION, Kolkata**

In response to the article by Mr Chandan Sinha I just wanted to share a few points based on my experiences of working with the concept of decentralization and people's planning.

People's planning should not be understood as "people's judgments only" but " people judgments first " even in identifying felt needs as the list often does not include basic education as a felt need.

People centred planning process is basically a corrective exercise where needs get translated to gaps and immediate solutions are planned in the form of proposals. However the local community lacks a long term perspective and a vision. The people's representatives should be thus be oriented towards an envisioning exercise so that they have certain milestones to achieve in the shorter and longer timeframes.

We all realise that information is key to successful planning but I and many of us are not comfortable with the authenticity of the information obtained from varied sources. For us government sources are considered authentic but again there are discrepancies between two different sources. How can this be managed? With our experience of handling district level databases for thematic studies and local government planning exercises we adopt a mixed approach of query schedule based sample survey, participatory tools for information generation and GIS based inventory mapping. This definitely provides a meaningful database - adequate for planning. How could this be achieved in general? Can't we involve different groups particularly youths like college and university students in this information authentication exercise??

Resource linkage is another very crucial function to achieve outcome efficiency and take care of overlaps and redundancies. We are involved in the preparation of Draft Development Plans for the Urban Local Bodies in the KMA and non KMA areas where the Financial Plan meticulously handles resource convergence including tied and untied funds and a comprehensive proposal planning is done to establish linkages between different subcomponents/ departments / programmes but avoids overlaps of any form.

---

---

**[Anjan Mitra](#), The Appropriate Alternative, Kolkata**

We are comparatively new in this field in the decentralised planning. We have been involved in SAARC Model Village initiative programme in West Bengal. After the field visits and going through the other information sources we have realised that the process adopted are very generalised and failed to address the local variations and complexities. In fact the seven villages that we have studied varied considerably in terms of development issues, spatial organisation, and social patterns. We have been collecting the data that are irrelevant or have very little consequences. Even the authenticity of the data is questionable. There is critical information that is missing simply because we don't even know what to look at.

To day we have technology and technique by which we can carry out planning in a systematic manner. This when corroborated with specific information from the village can form a reliable base that is monitorable, quantifiable.

Being planner and urban designer we know how effectively this information can be brought together and how to make a valued judgment between the regional issues and the local issues and what ways to strike a balance are. Somehow the existing planning system do not try to figure out the practical ways, rather they remained as an academic exercise and therefore fail to deliver the benefits or improve the livelihood.

We have worked with RIDDHI Management service to figure out an alternative way to this approach and willing to share this. There is no problem with the public policies but it is the system through which it is carried out and the methodology it followed is a question.

One needs to look at this issue more objectively.

---

**[R.S Julaniya](#), Government of Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi**

I would like to share a [note](#) on the topic, which members may find useful.

---

**[Rohit Asthana & M.S.Vani](#), Development Centre for Alternative Policies, New Delhi**

Please find attached a [note](#) on integrated district planning in furtherance of the discussion on the subject.

---

**[Rajendra Joshi](#), SAATH, Ahmedabad**

Two examples Ahmedabad demonstrate how greater decentralisation can be achieved and how benefits of Government funded programmes can be made more effective.

Both the interventions are implemented by SAATH-an NGO. For the ICDS Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation partnered with SAATH for implementation of the programme in 200 anganwadis. The other is the Community Resource Centre which enables greater to Government programmes for the poor.

**The ICDS Experience**

SAATH runs about 200 aanganwadis spread around the Ahmedabad city under the ICDS program. The critical factor for providing and maintaining quality services is the involvement of slum residents in management and monitoring of ICDS related activities. The key to ensuring quality services to the poor is the involvement of clients (the word beneficiary is not used

consciously) through the parent's committees. In addition, the overall process of mobilising, planning and monitoring is facilitated by empowered women from another slum area in Ahmedabad where SAATH has been involved for over 12 years.

Involvement of communities is through the formation of parents committees who monitor all aspects of the nutrition and pre-school components. In the nutrition component, parent committees monitor the procurement and quality of nutrition, the menu for cooked food, the process of cooking (type of vessels, oil used, time taken, etc) and finally the quality of cooked food.

In the pre-school education component, the aanganwadi workers have to follow a regular schedule for meeting parents and appraising them about the progress of the children. Simultaneously, the parents committees are made aware of the preschool inputs that the workers are supposed to make. SAATH has also started taking financial contributions from parents for taking the children on outings and purchasing teaching aids.

Thus, while overall quality of activities and nutrition in the aanganwadis has improved and parents in the slums are involved in the monitoring of the quality of inputs, AMC has reduced its direct involvement at the implementation level. SAATH provides monthly reports to AMC.

This approach and method, if replicated in rural areas with some minor modifications, would ensure that Government funds would be utilised more effectively and children would benefit greatly from well-run aanganwadis.

In addition, the aanganwadi workers, not only run the aanganwadis but also identify participants for livelihoods training and micro-finance for which they get financial incentives.

SAATH also partners with AMC for other initiatives, for example, SAATH runs RCH programme in 2 wards and conducts livelihood training in 10 centres across the city. The livelihoods model has been introduced in other parts of Gujarat by the State Government

### **The Community Resource Centres**

To provide a background: Saath has designed and implemented an Integrated Slum Development Program (ISDP) in Ahmedabad which covers about 400 slum pockets. One objective of ISDP is to enhance the quality of life of slum residents by increasing access to government programmes and services. To reach this objective, Saath implements government schemes and programs and its own programmes such as micro finance and market based livelihoods training and employment.

The hub for Saath's activities is a ward based Community Resource Centre, which connects service providers - namely government, NGO and private sector schemes, services and products with service users who are mostly the urban poor. Community based staff of the Resource Centres prepare micro-plans with individuals, families and communities at the slum level. Through the micro-plans, appropriate products - which could be government, NGO programs and private sector schemes are identified and staff of the resource centre proactively create linkages. There is an element of fees for preparing microplans and creating linkages to bring in accountability and sustainability. The service providers are happy as their targets and objectives are met and the users are happy because they have a tangible benefit.

The other function of the resource centre is to monitor the service delivery aspects of existing schemes. For example an Urban Health Centre is monitored by a resource centre and has led to improvement of quality.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation uses the resource centre to monitor the sanitation and public health status at the slum level. The Public Distribution System asks the resource centre to keep a check on PD shops.

We have found that a community run resource centre with appropriate information collecting and collating skills can transform information into knowledge and can use this effectively in service delivery, monitoring, advocacy and designing new products. Such centres of facilitating convergence create backward and forward linkages and are welcomed by all stakeholders as it is win-win for government as its targets are met, for NGOs as their programs become widely known, for the private sector who can engage with the "Base of the Pyramid" market more effectively. Above all the community as the consumer or client receives gets to make an informed choice.

---

### **Ramakrishna Nallathiga, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad**

Under the Department for International Development (DFID), UK supported Andhra Pradesh Urban Services for the Poor (APUSP), there were several initiatives undertaken towards wholesale reorganisation and delivery of services for the urban poor. An important aspect of the programme is the Participatory Micro Level Planning (PMLP) of the infrastructure services at Municipal level. This process has been mapped and documented by the APUSP both as hard copy manual as well as videodocument (which might be available with the DFID India or MEMA, GoAP).

Under the same programme, Municipal Action Plan for Poverty (MAPP) was prepared in 42 Class I APUSP towns to identify the civic infrastructure needs in urban slums that lead to plan for service delivery. This followed a highly participatory method involving all stakeholders - public, politicians, bureaucrats and civil society groups. This was later translated into CMAPP in a more comprehensive manner. The experience of this has been brought out recently as a Lessons learnt document of Service Delivery now available with DfID India.

Likewise, under the APUSP an IT based tool for M&E was developed for the various users - municipalities - administration and technical depts, civil society and programme unit (APUSP), which would capture the progress on implementation of various schemes and works by the ULBs. A detailed manual was developed for the same. Details can be found on the website of APUSP - [www.apusp.gov.in](http://www.apusp.gov.in).

---

*\*Offline Contribution*

***Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!***

*If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community in India at [se-decn\\_se-wes\\_se-emp@solutionexchange-un.net.in](mailto:se-decn_se-wes_se-emp@solutionexchange-un.net.in) with the subject heading "Re: [se-decn][se-watr][se-emp]Query: Methods for Integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at District Level- Examples; Experiences. Additional Reply."*

***Disclaimer:*** *In posting messages or incorporating these messages into synthesized responses, the UN accepts no responsibility for their veracity or authenticity. Members intending to use or transmit the information contained in these messages should be aware that they are relying on their own judgment.*



Copyrighted under Creative Commons License "[Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/)". Re-users of this material must cite as their source Solution Exchange as well as the item's recommender, if relevant, and must share any derivative work with the Solution Exchange Community.



Solution Exchange is a UN initiative for development practitioners in India. For more information please visit [www.solutionexchange-un.net.in](http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in)

---