



Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)- An Approach to Develop Area and Promote Human Development Indicators Through Panchayat Bodies

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Executive Summary

Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) is a comprehensive action orientated document which focuses on development of a Gram Panchayat stage - wise both in the field of area and human development by ensuring participation of the local people by fixing priorities of their requirements. GPDP emphasises need based approach of development through local stakeholders who themselves involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of development agenda. This paper has been divided into six categories comprises with Part- I, Panchayati Raj and its Approach of Functioning, Part -II, Process of Gram Panchayats Development Plan (GPDP), Part - III, Allocation of Funds under 14th Finance Commission, Part- IV Success Stories of Gram Panchayat Development Plan carried out by development professionals, Part -V, Linkages between Panchayati Raj and Rural Development and Part-VI, Field Observations.

Part - I

Panchayati Raj and its Approach of Functioning

The system of village assemblies or panchayats was existed in our country since time immemorial in the form of self-governing institutions which had distinct and well-defined mode of functions. The term Panchayat not only represents collective will of the local people but also fulfil wisdom of the entire local community living in rural areas. The concept of Village Panchayat exists across the country in one or other form. No empire, invaders or even ruler could damage the functions of such local institutions at grassroots level. However, ups and down has been recorded in the functions of these institutions. The British rule has introduced decentralized system of administering justice which has declined functions of Village Panchayats but Viceroy Lord Ripon (1880; who known as the father of local self- government) has made an attempt to establish such local bodies viewing his liberal thought. After Independence, on the basis of

recommendations of Balwantrai Mehta Committee, a three - tier system of Panchayati Raj was introduced in many of the States.

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- In order to strengthening Panchayati Raj system across the country, The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act was passed in 1992 which enforces on 24th April 1993. Panchayati Raj Institutions comprises three bodies such as District Panchayat (Zila Panchayat), Intermediate Panchayat (block Panchayat) and Gram Panchayat. There are, at present 595 District Panchayats, 6283 Block or Intermediate Panchayats, and 2,47,166 Gram Panchayats which cover 31.27 lakh elected representatives in all the three - tiers system comprising 0.17 lack District Panchayats, 1.80 lakh (block Panchayats), and 29.27 lack in Gram Panchayats with coverage of 47.88 %, 44.67 % and 46.04% women elected representatives from top to bottom tiers of the PRIs across the country. Since 2009 the Union Cabinet has approved 50% reservation for women in all the tree tiers PRIs. The Panchayati Raj system has established to ensure people participation in local administration, design innovative methods which enhances their involvement in the process of development and promotes a sense of responsibility among the people living in the rural areas, and similarly, shares benefits of the development which emerges through their contribution. Keeping in the view, the process of GPDP has been assigned to the Gram Panchayats which ensures commitment of the development by taking people into confidence at grassroots level.



Effectiveness of the Seventy-Third Amendment

- The Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act 1992 makes a land mark Amendment in the history of Panchayati Raj. For the first time, Constitutional status has been conferred upon the Panchayati Raj Institutions, and PRIs declared as the Constitutional entities, and similarly, made a mandatory provision for the PRIs to organize elections once in five years. The 73rd Amendment Act of Constitution has been the most significant booster to the cause of local self- governance through PRIs. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment is an important land mark which has changed the scenario of the Panchayati Raj and Rural Development.

- The 73rd Constitution Amendment has accorded new status and significance to the Panchayat Raj Institution (PRIs). These bodies now have Constitutional status. The Constitutional provisions about their formation, membership, term, reservation for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Women in membership and chairpersons, powers and functions, elections and financial resources have certainly contributed to the status and creditability of these bodies.

- The Constitution (73rd Amendment), Act 1992 empowers Local Governments - rural as Constitutional entities, and initiated a new chapter in the process of democratic decentralization across the country. Under this legislation, Panchayats at all the three levels have been entrusted with duties and functions with regard to all the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

- Article 243 D (4) of the Constitution of India provides that not less than one third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women. However, the actual number of offices reserved is determined by the provisions in the Panchayati Raj Act by each of the States.

- Article 243 G empowers PRIs by taking responsibility of following departments comes under the 11th Schedule of the Act such as 1) Agriculture, including agricultural extension. 2) Land Improvement, Implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation. 3) Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development. 4) Animal Husbandry, Dairying and poultry. 5) Fisheries. 6) Social Forestry. 7) Minor forest produces. 8) Small-scale industries. 9) Khadi, Village and Cottage Industries. 10) Rural Housing. 11) Drinking water. 12) Fuel and Fodder. 13) Roads,

Culverts, Bridges, Ferries, waterways and other means of communication. 14) Rural Electrification including distribution of electricity. 15) Non-conventional energy sources. 16) Poverty alleviation programme. 17) Education including primary and secondary schools. 18) Technical training and vocational education. 19) Adult and non-formal education. 20) Libraries 21) Cultural activities. 22) Market and fairs. 23) Health and sanitation, Including hospitals, primary health centers and dispensaries. 24) Family welfare. 25) Women and child development. 26) Social welfare including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded. 27) Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. 28) Public distribution system, and 29) Maintenance of community assets.

- By this Act, a new chapter: 'Part -IX, the Panchayat's was inserted in the Constitution of India. This Amendment sought to remove the inherent weaknesses of the Panchayati Raj System in the country.

Main features of the 73rd Amendment, (1992 Act) are

By inserting 'Part-IX: The Panchayat's in the Constitution of India, the Panchayat Raj Institutions in India have become Constitutional bodies.

(i) Establishment of Panchayats in every State have become mandatory under Article 243-B.

(ii) Provisions of mandatory devolution of powers, authority and responsibilities by the State government to the Panchayats have been made in Article 243-G.

(iii) The tenures of the village Panchayats have been fixed to five years under Article 243-E.

(iv) Provision of State Election Commission has been ensured to conduct Independent Election under Article 243-K.

(v) Ensured representation of the population belongs to Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Women in the Village Panchayats under the provision of Article 243-D.

(vi) Provision to review the financial position of the Panchayats once in 5 years through State Finance Commission through the provision of Article 243-I.

Functions of Panchayats after the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992

This Act has brought many expectations amongst the Panchayati Raj Institutions and their members in the country. The Government of



Rajasthan has implemented most of the Constitutional provisions of Part IX. The Government of Rajasthan has taken good steps in devolution of Power, authority and responsibilities to the Panchayats. The State government has carried out activity mapping, and devolving 3 Fs (Function, Fund and Functionaries) to PRIs relating 29 subjects listed in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution.

Gender equality is embedded in Constitutional provisions, including substantive equality where the States are also empowered to make special provisions for women in order to undo the historical disadvantageous position of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution provide reservation of seats in the Local Bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision-making at the local levels. The 80s and 90s saw India ratifying a string of international conventions and human rights instruments which secure equal rights of women.

The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 has notably increased political participation of the women in governance but women are still lagging behind in the fields of concrete governance, and in the decision making process because of various reasons such as male dominated structure of the society, lack of education and awareness among the women about the rules, and policies, low interaction with the officials who work with Panchayat bodies, secondary treatment to the women, women are denied to participate actively., etc., push back interest of the women.

The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act 1992 has been strengthening the provision of urban local bodies (municipalities) including empowering women through participation.

Valuable responsibility of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti (Block Panchayat) and Zilla Parishad (District Panchayat)

Gram Panchayat

- The PRIs has three levels of system such as Gram Panchayat (at village level), Panchayat Samiti (Block or Mandal level) and Zilla Parishad (district level).

- Gram Panchayats are the basic unit of local administration. Government of India has allotted 29 subjects (under the 11th Schedule (Article 243-G) which cover most of the developmental activities. Gram Panchayats function through different Committees under the leadership of Gram Panchayat President.

- Gram Panchayats focuses on implementation of welfare plans, social justice and development covering development of women, economic, and infrastructure such as roads, waterways, ensure social justice, make arrangement for drinking water, improvement in agricultural methods, development of improved irrigation methods, development of small-scale, cottage and food-processing units, eradicate of poverty, create houses for the poor families, make arrangement for elementary and secondary education with basic facilities, fight against illiteracy and encourage adults to learn to read and write, improve hygiene and sanitation infrastructure, curative and preventive measures in respect of any epidemic, removal of encroachments of public streets or public places, management and care of public tanks, control and administration of the Gram Panchayat fund, imposition, assessment and collection of the taxes, rates or fees; administration of Nyay Panchayat, maintenance/repair of village infrastructure, construction and protection of public streets, etc.

- The Gram Panchayats prepare plans for economic development and social justice and execute them.

- Gram Panchayats collect revenues from taxes (on land and house), custom duty, toll tax, license fees on transport, communication, services provided to the public, professional, trade, commerce, street lights schools, hospitals, dispensaries, markets, etc.

- Gram Panchayats are the hub of delivering basic services to the people living in their premises.

Panchayat Samiti (Block Panchayat)

- The Panchayat Samiti is placed between the Gram Panchayat and the Zilla Parishad (District Panchayat). It acts primarily as a coordinating agency between the two PRI bodies.

- Block Panchayat co-ordinates the welfare and development activities of the Gram Panchayat of the block relating to agriculture, cottage industries, co-operatives and rural credit, water supply, irrigation, sanitation, public health and primary education.

- Maintenance of public utilities, co-ordination and integration of development plans, adoption of relief measures in times of natural calamities, etc., are some of the important functions of the Panchayat Samities.



- Panchayat Samitis approve budget proposals by the Gram Panchayats.
- Block Panchayats also need to promote all such activities which directed by the government.
- The new Panchayat Act has assigned tasks like planning for comprehensive water supply, to send representatives in the management of the Central Co-operative Banks and other organizations, to supervise the schools and health centers within the block under its jurisdiction, transfer, posting and disbursement of salary of the primary teachers, recommend Government land for house construction to the weaker sections, inspection of industrial training institutions which are located in their jurisdiction, and prepare ration cards.
- Block Panchayat is responsible for Implementation of schemes like development of agriculture and infrastructure, establishment of primary health centres and primary schools, supply of drinking water, drainage and construction or repair of roads, development of a cottage and small-scale industries, and opening of the cooperative societies, establishment of youth organisations, ensure minimum wages under employment programmes, and
- Block Panchayat consolidates Gram Panchayat Development Plans, and forward to the District Panchayat for its approval and to execute works.
- In some States like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana the functional areas of blocks are further

bifurcated into mandals for accessibility of administrative task.

Zila Parishad (District Panchayat)

- Zila Parishad provide essential services and facilities to the rural population, supply improved seeds to farmers and inform them of new farming techniques, set up and run schools and libraries in rural areas, start primary health centers and hospitals in villages, start vaccination drives against epidemics, execute plans for the development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, run ashram schools for tribal children; set up free hostels for them, ensure proper functioning of the primary schools in the district, encourage entrepreneurs to establish small-scale industries, implement rural employment schemes, supervise and implementation of ICDS (Integrate Child Development Services), implement other programmes assigned by the State government, coordination and supervision of the activities taken up by the PRIs.
- Construct bridges, roads and other public facilities and their maintenance, provide employment, approve plan of the development prepared by individual Gram Panchayat, and
- Approve Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs) and Action plan of the Panchayat Samiti.

The following table shows number of Panchayati Raj Institutions and their numerical strength of the elected representatives in all the three tiers across the country.

Scenario of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India

% of Women Elected Representatives	S. No.	Panchayats	Number across the country	Total Number of Elected Representatives (in lakhs)
46.04	1	Gram Panchayat	2,47,186	29.30
44.67	2	Block Panchayat	6,283	1.80
47.88	3	District Panchayat	595	0.17
46.19 (average)		Total	2,54,044	31.27

Note: Gram panchayat hold status of village level administrative body. The Sarpanch (President of GP) is an elected head of the GP. Similarly, Pradhan and Pramuk hold status of President of Block and District Panchayat. The members of all the three tiers are elected for five years. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been celebrating the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) on 24 April since 2010. On this day, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment came into force in 1993.



Part -II

Process of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

GPDP is a process which ensures development of Gram Panchayat (which covers one or more than one villages or hamlets in its administrative boundary) by active participation of the people with prioritising of local needs through local and non-local resources (which collect from different channels) for socio-economic development of the people living in premises of Gram Panchayat.

Advantages and Benefits of GPDP

GPDP incorporates GP (Gram Panchayat) as a local government, brings out needs of the people, arrange needs priority-wise, and inspire people to engage in planning, address issues of local development, endorse demand based convergence of resources, build enthusiasm, confidence and support to find out solutions, developed collect efficiency for unitization of human and natural resource available with the GP, pay attention on requirement of the local people, activate Gram Sabha in tune of responsive governance, facilitates holistic approach of local development, minimize overlapping expenditure, etc.

Constitutional Provision

Article 243 of the Constitution of India acknowledges Panchayats as institutions of local self-government and mandates them to prepare plans for economic -development and social justices. Gram Panchayats being a local self -government are responsible for delivery of basic services to the citizens and address problems of poor and marginalized sections. This is possible through well planning by utilizing resource available with them. GPDP captures fair, inclusive, transparency, and participatory nature with focus on local development issues, local perception, local needs with prioritizing them, local analysis of problems and solutions, management skill of local resource with collective vision.

Grants Mobilization

In recent years, functionaries of Government both Central and States have realized that without involving people at the grassroots level, the concept of development is not completed and not effective. Development required mobilization of resources, adequate facilitation, capacity building, and participation of local people. Government of India, under 14th Finance Commission has allocated a grant of 200292.20 Crore to Gram Panchayats

across the country for a period of five years to develop planning and strengthening basic services of the Gram Panchayats. GPs also get funds under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), State Finance Commission, Centrally and State sponsored schemes, revenues from own source, grants, and donation which extend support to GPDP. All Gram Panchayats have prepared development plan by instruction of the Ministry of Finance.

Importance of Environment Creation

GPDP is a process of development through effective planning at grassroots level. Therefore, environment for mass mobilization is a healthy component. The campaign mode comprises multiple dimensions like fast mobilization of officials, infusing energy and creating ownership among the GP functionaries and local people, ensures mobilization and participation, create learning environment for all stakeholders. In this process local or State slogan, documentary, camps, unbiased thought, innovative ideas, dedicated approach (work culture), etc., are useful.

Plan Cycle

GPDP is a time bound activity therefore, process of the GPDP needs to perform within a stipulated duration. The cycle of GPDP covers i) massive awareness about local planning among the GP functionaries and other key stakeholders, ii) environment generation and community mobilization, iii) identifying or determining the resource involve, iv) suitable analysis and need assessment, v) organize Gram Sabha for collective vision, vi) project development and plan finalization, vii) appraisal and approval of GPDP, viii) implementation of GPDP, and xi) monitoring and evaluation.

Support System

The process of GPDP required continues support from various levels such as State, District, Block, Cluster and GP level:

State level – State needs to form Committee or resource groups, and get support from State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Panchayati Raj Training Institutions (PRTI), Extension Training Centres (ETCs which are affiliated to the SIRDs) or other capacity building institutions. District level - District Committee or resource or supportive group, District technical support group, and District Planning Committee. Block level – Block Resource or support group, Block technical support group, Block level charge officer. Cluster level – cluster



support group, charge officer, functionaries, and at the GP level – GP Committee, GP standing Committee, GP task force or support teams or Working Groups, GP functionaries, Line department officials working at the GP, Accredited volunteers like ASHA, SHGs, Federations, CBOs (community-based organizations), People's Committees, Functional Committees.

Other Support Arrangement Required

Training for elected representatives and for the panchayat functionaries required periodically, including beneficiaries within the GP who associated with the planning need capacity building on time, various kits of training like hand books, brochures, training films on various steps and aspects of GPDP need to be developed, media campaigns with suitable slogan should be launched for conducive environment creation, professional support groups like technical committees, block level mobile teams and similarly, facility of help lines need to constitute to address difficulties face by the development agents at grassroots level.

Steps for Preparation of GPDP

Step I: Role of Panchayat Committee/Working Group

i) The GP Committee and other stakeholders need to understand the process and steps of GPDP prior to grounding the plan, ii) identify role of the Panchayat Committee and other stakeholders in participatory planning process, iii) understand about the resources available with them and how best utilize resource, iv) GP Committee should focus on agenda of meeting and campaign, v) Committee or working group should incorporate elected representatives or members of standing committees, former elected representatives, in service or retired government employees including teachers, serving teachers, leaders of self-help group and federation, women leaders and activists, youth, students, certified trainers of National Sample Survey, National Cadet Corps, Nehru Yuva Kendra, community volunteers, frontline workers, members of functional committees, representatives of non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, social activists, vi) tasks to be assigned to the GPDP Committee or working groups, vii) members of GPDP Committee need to train, viii) determine timelines for the GPDP Committee, ix) assign activity or responsibility to each of the members, x) discuss issues of poverty, education, sanitation, water supply, public health, local economic development, strategy for utilization of natural resources, strategy for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, gender

issues, migration, etc., in the present context and past five years, xii), Committee should know about existing resources and strategy of how to mobilize resources locally and which should match with planned activities, xiii) in the process of resource evolve (combined tied resources like Swatch Bharat Mission, National Rural Health Mission and other Centrally and state sponsored schemes funds in which GP has command) with united resources (14th finance commission grant, state finance grant, own source of revenue like taxes, non-tax, rents, fees, funds from MGNREGS, community contribution both in cash or kind, corporate social responsibility funds, etc., along with human resources (while implementing planned), xiv) develop strategy for applying different tools for environment creation, etc.

Step II: Role of Gram Sabha

The role of Gram Sabha is important in the process of GPDP therefore; people (including members of self-help group and members of functional committee) need to be informed earlier about the Gram Sabha to ensure maximum participation. The Gram Sabha should focus on each of the agenda and answer should be given to each of the queries, decision should be read out before end of the Gram Sabha and minutes should be recorded of Gram Sabha with signature of members, etc.

Step III: Situation Analysis

People are well versed with the situations which influences their lives on every stage. Situation analysis fills up gaps between issues and needs of the local community through intervention. Situation analysis provides information of existing and required resources, infrastructure, amenities, and services which influence development process. Situation analysis set priorities in the process of GPDP. The primary objective of GPDP is to identify and formulate ways of addressing real needs of the local people. While performing situation analysis following things are required such as i) existing conditions and development status of GP required on health, education, poverty, socio-economic background of vulnerable sections, ii) quality of existing services and quality of life of the people need to collect, iii) deficiencies and gaps in basic services, infrastructure and amenities covering potable drinking waters, sanitation, drainage, road condition, cleanness, etc. Situation analysis required rich information of primary and secondary data; list of existing resources obtained from the exercise of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) prior to ground the initiate situation analysis. Situation analysis focus on analysis of sectors such as infrastructure,



education, housing, health, agriculture and allied, forestry, social security, public distribution system, disaster management, natural resources, etc., with the focus on vulnerable and weaker sections, women and children. Excise of situation analysis beings out requirement of the Gram Panchayat on priority basis.

Step IV: Step Gram Panchayat Meeting

The draft development status report of the GPDP required to be presented in the GP meeting soon. This process will enhance understanding about community needs and gaps. This status report should be approved by the GP committee but prior to this report should be placed in Gram Sabha for its modification, if required? But there is a need to call healthy participation of people.

Step V: Visioning and Prioritisation of Gram Sabha

This step focuses on discussion and approval of Gram Sabha on draft development report. Gram Sabha finalises annual and five-year plan area-wise. Under this step, pre activity (environment generation and mobilization of people), activity (presentation, discussion, approval of report), visioning, discussion on the resource envelop, community contribution to bridge the gap, prioritization, approval of proposed activities, etc., need to focus.

Step VI: Draft Plan Preparation

On the basis of draft status development report, a draft plan should be prepared by considering visioning and prioritizes of Gram Sabha. The plan covers allocated of resources sector-wise. The issues of cost less and low-cost development are to be incorporated in this step.

Step VII: Project Preparation

This step comprises preparation of detailed project estimate on the basis fund allocation and technical section. The content of the project comprising of project title, introduction (background, brief project summary,) logical of project, objective of project, location of the project, project components with detail activities, budget (component-wise), time frame, implementation plan, expected output, operation and maintenance, monitoring need to follow.

Step VIII: GP Committee Meeting

GP Committee need to organize for validating the final prepared based on technically sanctioned of projects and resource allocation. The GP committee need to ensure that the plan is prepared as per the decision of Gram Sabha.

Step IX: GP Approval of GPDP by Gram Sabha

Prepared plan (GPDP) needs to place before the Gram Sabha for its approval stating that plan (GPDP) has been prepared by following State guidelines. In the process of Plan implementation, GP should ensure project initiative with the people, procurement of materials, engagement of labour, supervision of work, measurement of works, payment of bills, maintenance of account and records, preparation of work, completion of work, completion report through prescribed format.

In brief, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) needs to incorporate active participation of the people in development of local areas by asserting priorities of the people on demand-based development covering areas development as well as human development through utilizing existing resources obtained from different sources both in kind (natural, labour) or in cash (own source of revenues, donation, funds from government, etc).

Part -III

Allocation of Funds under 14th Finance Commission

The Government of India, under 14th Francine Commission has released Rs. 200,292.2 Crores to the Panchayats (2.47 lakhs Gram Panchayats) for the tenure of five years between 2015 and 2020 which was much higher compared to 13th Finance Commission. Under the provision of 14th Finance Commission each GP gets an average of Rs. Rs. 17 lakh per year covering Rs. 85 lakhs for the period of five years. The above grant covers 90 per cent allocation for creating of basic services such as sanitation, drinking water, maintenance of community assets, etc., whereas 10 per cent of the allocation was allocated in favour of performance grant. This entire amount of funds has earmarked for the Gram Panchayats. On Aprils 23, 2015 onwards all the Gram Panchayats were asked to prepare their development plan by incorporating above basic services for development and social justice of the people covering vulnerable and disadvantaged sections. The Central government had released funds yearly in two instalments first in the month of June, and second in the month of October. The performance grant was released along with second instalment. The Government of India had prioritized weightage based on population (90 per cent) and areas (10 percent) while releasing funds to the Gram Panchayats.



Other source of Grants and Income for Gram Panchayats

In addition to Central Finance Commission, the concerned State government (through State Finance Commission) also release funds to the Gram Panchayats, and other two tiers (block and district panchayats) to meet their basic requirements in terms of payment of electricity, maintenance of basic amenities (drinking water supply, sanitation, roads and street lights, etc). On the other side, these local bodies generate incomes from taxes, revenues, lease, trades, rents, license, service delivery charges, fee, etc., but such mode of income generation is not equally existing in each of the Panchayats due to lack of affluence of enough resources locally.

Part -IV

Success Stories of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

1. Success Story - How Gram Panchayat Development Plan is changing the villages of India:
by Nidhi Sharma

For Latak in Assam's Dhemaji district, floods are a living reality. But this remote village of about 300 houses has found a novel cost-effective way to connect flood-affected areas - a bridge made out of neatly stacked bamboo. It may not sound like a big success story but, for the village panchayat, it is a cause for much celebration. The panchayat planned the project after deliberations with villagers and funded it from its own resources: an example of complete decentralization of planning.

From a bamboo bridge in flood-affected Latak to rainwater harvesting in Jharkhand's drought-hit regions and sensitisation programmes on open defecation in Goa, India's villages are deciding what they want to solve age-old problems. The mantra behind focused planning is simple: your money, your plan.

The idea emanated in February 2015 from Fourteenth Finance Commission's recommendation to give Rs 2 lakh crore to gram panchayats between 2015 and 2020. The idea was to give the panchayats the money through state governments and allow them to spend it. Even as the government accepted the recommendations, it was clear that this enormous kitty could not be given in the hands of panchayat functionaries, who had not been trained in planning, accounting and auditing.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj came up with the idea of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) - an annual plan of each panchayat where the villagers

would decide where the money should be spent. State government communicates the "resource envelope" to all local bodies. At the end, every panchayat knows how much money it has under different schemes and how it should plan. Once a plan is formulated, the gram sabha passes it.

Joint Secretary Sarada G Muraleedharan, spearheading the project at the ministry, explains: "Planning is generally a very technical exercise. But here we were ready to take a leap of faith and take planning all the way to the people. A massive training exercise had to be undertaken. First, we took all the states for a workshop in Kerala last July. After this, states formulated their GPDP guidelines.

The response from the states has been surprising. States which have been low on the devolution index have shown the most enthusiasm. "Assam, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa are some states that have shown good progress in terms of undertaking meticulous exercises for capacity building and generating momentum on the ground" says Muraleedharan.

2. Success Story

At the grassroots, the villages are thinking out-of-the-box to address local issues. In Jharkhand, Chief Minister Raghubar Das was struck by the statistics on rainfall in the state. Jharkhand gets ample rainfall, but of the last 15 years, 10 have been drought years. This triggered a state-wide campaign with the theme "Every drop of water that falls on the village remains in the villages."

On the extent of the campaign, Muraleedharan says: "In a village in Khunti district during a gram sabha, an old lady got up and said, 'We are only talking about water for human beings. What about the animals? This was the extent of the campaign.'"

For Jharkhand, this was a complete turnaround. Officials remember that when GPDP was launched, the 'Yojana banao abhiyan' (Plan preparatory campaign) was jokingly called 'Panchayat kholo abhiyan' (Open panchayats campaign). "The mass mobilisation was immense in the state. In a largely tribal-dominated state, the increase in women participation in gram sabhas was anywhere between 25 per cent and 80 per cent," recalls Muraleedharan.

If Jharkhand is concentrating on rainwater harvesting



and human trafficking in the tribal belt, Goa has taken up open defecation as a blot on its global image. Punjab villages have decided to take up projects to address the skewed sex ratio and drug abuse. Uttarakhand, which had seen a year of political uncertainty, was prompt in its implementation of the programme conducting 7,950 gram sabhas to pass plans in 2015-16. By the end of the first quarter of 2016-17, it has passed 1,632 plans.

Assam decided that it would need three-gram sabha meetings to finalise the plans. The first is held to generate awareness about the exercise and form working groups that prepare draft situation reports. The second gram sabha meeting discusses these reports and identifies different projects. The final plan is passed in the third meeting. The ministry's statistics show that 92,842 gram sabhas have been conducted in nine states to discuss annual plans. About 7,042 gram panchayats have approved their annual plans. However, there are several challenges before the systems are put in place and start working. Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Mizoram and Tamil Nadu have to walk the extra mile to train functionaries and make their processes participatory. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh remain difficult states with very little progress.

Budget 2015-16 had brought bad news for the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Its Rs 7,000 crore budget outlay had been brought down to a meagre Rs 94 crore and major flagship schemes - the Backward regions Grants Fund (BRGF) and Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA) — had been transferred to the states. Amid rumours that the ministry would be folded up and turned into a department under rural development ministry, SM Vijayanand took charge as the Panchayati raj secretary. The 1981 batch IAS officer got down to his job from the word goes. In his 11 years as secretary (local self-government) in Kerala, Vijayanand had played a key role in conceptualizing and shaping the local self-governance institutions. He drew from his experience in the state. Vijayanand, who has since taken over as Kerala chief secretary, started out with writing to chief secretaries of all states and speaking personally to them. The states were asked to form state-level core groups to help guide in framing GPDG guidelines. In July 2015, the ministry organized a five-day intensive workshop for all states.

Vijayanand entrusted the job of implementing the programme to an old Kerala hand: Joint Secretary Sarada G Muraleedharan. The 1990 batch IAS officer has seen the processes in Kerala closely as district collector and head of the state's

Kudumbashree woman empowerment mission. As she speaks passionately about the initiative showing detailed manuals and data sheets, Muraleedharan says: "All you need is a champion in the state."

Like above, some Gram Panchayats cross the country have formulated their own plan with the help of local people and implemented for human and infrastructural development. Similarly, there are certain Gram Panchayats have developed infrastructure because of active and dynamic leadership of GP presidents.

Part - V **Linkages between Panchayati Raj and Rural Development**

India is a country of rural origin. A large number of populations (64.61%: Census 2021) live in the rural areas because of the agriculture which is a backbone of the rural economy. Land holding is an important parameter to maintain livelihoods even though our agriculture system is not so advanced compared to other countries. The population in rural areas by and large face challenges of health, education, malnutrition, employment, infrastructure, environment, deforestation, climate change, depletion of ground water, drought, loss of cottage industry, etc. The inequality and injustice both are deeply rooted in India's social structure from time immemorial. The unequal distribution of the resources (which emerged by and large from traditional caste bound society) has made challenge for the livelihood of the people especially for those who do not obtain resource. All these issues are challenge for sustainable development goals.

India is a democratic country. The last unit of governance body so called Gram Panchayat has been alive since long time in India and has been functioning in the form of village administration and governance. Internal disputes (relating to property, land, social and cultural) used to resolve under the framework of this local self-government body. The Constitution of India has given statutory power to the PR bodies. The Gram Panchayats are now made healthier under the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. GPs are now more empowered than earlier. Gram Panchayats are now free to identify and use their own resources. Gram Panchayats are now hubs of issuing different kind of certificates, collect bills, take responsibility of supply of drinking water, create drainages, remove garbage, carcasses, issue land patta, etc., along with monitoring the functions of primary and upper primary schools, public distribution system (shops), local health intuitions



including Aganwadi centres, registration of Aadhar Card, chose applicants for the pension of social security schemes, and similarly process applications. All these efforts promote social and economic development of the people living in rural areas.

The Article 243 G, as mentioned above advocates for a wide range of rural development activities (29 subjects) prescribed in the 11th Schedule of India Constitution (73rd Amendment Act, 1992) which empowers Panchayats comparatively earlier days. Panchayats now share responsibilities of development, welfare of the needy, resolve local disputes (non-judicial), and focus on environment protection.

GPDP take cares for human and environmental development which establishes a link between the resources and development for present and next generation. The concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emerged in 2015 with the effort of United Nation Development Programme which has identified 17 major problems across the 193 countries which are facing challenges of poverty, hunger, good health and well -being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry -innovation and infrastructure, reduce inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life and land, peace - justice and strong institutions, and finally partnership for the goals. By 2030 United Nation Development Programme has set a target to address above challenges. GPDP is an initiative to establish a link between the development of human kind and promoting of environmental issues with the nexus of rural development programmes.

Part -VI

Field Observations

In present scenario, Panchayati Raj Institutions have become a back bone of development for the people living in the rural society. Panchayat Raj Institutions are involved in development of infrastructure, resolve local non-judicial issues, support to the government both Centra and States for implementation of welfare and social security schemes, promote human development indicators by associating with government programmes, campaign benefits of the different modules of development, provides basic services to the people at grassroots level through e-seva, encourage and motivate people

to participate in development process, delegate various works by formulating different committees, etc. But on the other hand, people because of various reasons such as migration, socio-economic barriers (people priorities income generation for day to day needs), social prejudices, caste influence (domination of elite sections), poverty, barriers for active and healthy participation of the women, lack of proper training especially for elected representatives both in field of foundation and upgradation of their skill periodically, monopoly of influential persons and local officials in the Gram Subhas, lack of proper awareness among the people about developmental activities, unhappiness of people from one to other political ideology in village itself, attitude of local officials who want to run system without interference of people at grassroots level, non-availability of enough resources at local level, non-availability of electricity on time, lack of abundant infrastructure and staff with the Gram Panchayats, misguided to the Gram Panchayat Presidents by the local officials and other influential families, interference of the sarpanch's husbands, etc., are unable to show healthy out put of the GPDP and other implemented schemes in the rural areas despite healthy approach of development.

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Annexure - I

Table – 1: Release of Basic Grants and Performance Grants by the 14th Finance Commission to the Rural Local Bodies in last three years (State - wise)

(in crore)

S. No.	States	Basic Grants			Performance Grants		
		2015-2016	2016-17	2017-18	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1	Andhra Pradesh	934.34	1293.75	1494.81	169.70	192.04	218.09
2	Arunachal Pradesh	88.52	122.58	141.62	16.08	18.20	20.66
3	Assam	584.80	809.76	935.60	106.22	120.20	136.50
4	Bihar	2269.18	3142.08	3630.39	412.15	466.41	529.67
5	Chhattisgarh	566.18	783.98	905.81	102.84	116.37	132.16
6	Goa	14.44	20.00	23.10	2.62	2.97	3.37
7	Gujarat	932.25	1290.86	1491.47	169.32	191.61	217.60
8	Haryana	419.28	580.57	670.80	76.15	86.18	97.87
9	Himachal Pradesh	195.39	270.56	312.60	35.49	40.16	45.61
10	Jammu & Kashmir	373.96	517.81	598.29	67.92	76.86	87.29
11	Jharkhand	652.83	903.96	1044.45	118.57	134.18	152.38
12	Karnataka	1002.85	1388.62	1704.42	182.15	206.13	234.08
13	Kerala	433.76	600.62	693.96	78.78	89.16	101.25
14	Madhya Pradesh	1463.61	2026.62	2341.57	265.84	300.83	341.63
15	Maharashtra	1623.32	2247.77	2597.10	294.84	333.66	378.91
16	Manipur	22.25	30.80	35.59	4.04	4.57	5.19
17	Odisha	955.52	1323.09	1528.71	173.55	196.40	223.04
18	Punjab	441.70	611.61	706.66	80.23	90.79	103.10
19	Rajasthan	1471.95	2038.17	2354.92	267.35	302.55	343.58
20	Sikkim	16.03	22.20	25.65	2.91	3.30	3.74
21	Tamil Nadu	947.65	1312.19	1516.12	172.12	194.78	221.20
22	Telangana	580.34	803.58	928.47	105.41	119.288	135.46
23	Tripura	36.24	50.18	57.98	6.58	7.45	8.46
24	Uttar Pradesh	3862.60	5348.45	6179.65	701.57	793.92	901.60
25	Uttarakhand	203.26	281.45	325.19	36.92	41.78	47.45
26	West Bengal	1532.21	2121.61	2451.33	278.30	319.93	357.64
	Total	21624.46	29942.77	34596.26	3927.65	4444.71	5047.53

Source: <http://planningonline.gov.in/documents/Guidelines.pdf>

Annexure - II

Table -3: Grants released to the Local Bodies by the 13th Central Finance Commission.

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Village Panchayats	Total
2011-12	352.62	352.62
2012-13	416.11	416.11
2013-14	471.65	471.65
2014-15	515.52	515.52

Source: <http://www.tnrd.gov.in/fundsrelease.htm#1>

Annexure –III



Table -2: Grants released to the Local Bodies by the Fourth State Finance Commission.

(Rs. in crores)

Fourth State Finance Commission Grant				
Year	Village Panchayats	Panchayat Unions	District Panchayats	Total
2012-13	2440.88	1301.80	325.45	4068.13
2013-14	2732.62	1564.06	391.02	4687.70
2014-15	2564.30	1367.63	341.91	4273.84
2015-16	2599.78	1386.55	346.64	4332.97
2016-17	2077.56	1386.54	346.63	3810.73
Total	10337.58	5620.04	1405.02	17362

Source: <http://www.tnrd.gov.in/fundsrelease.htm#1>
